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About the British Association for Korean Studies

The British Association for Korean Studies (BAKS) was founded in 1987 as a forum to host conferences and workshops on Korean Studies around the UK. At such events, papers have been presented on a wide range of subjects including archaeology, art, economics, literature, politics, and society. BAKS continues to hold annual conferences, sometimes in partnership with her sister organisations, The British Association for Chinese Studies (BACS) and The British Association for Japanese Studies (BAJS).

Papers of the British Association for Korean Studies (BAKS Papers) was founded in 1991 to publish the editorially approved transactions of the then annual conferences of the Association. The journal for several years actively solicited submissions from outside the conferences as well. Fifteen volumes were published, the final two issues digitally.

Initially the quality of *BAKS Papers* was maintained by an internal editorial board and the editor. Since Volume 14 (2012), *BAKS Papers* became a fully peer-reviewed journal. There was established an external editorial board of 20 international scholars covering a range of areas within the humanities and the social sciences. The Editorial Board is under the leadership of the Editor. There are prescribed rules for the examination of submissions and regulations for writers making a submission. Just under half of the submissions (including external submissions) were rejected for publication in Volume 15 (2013).

Since its inception in the late 1980s, the *Papers of the British Association for Korean Studies* has focused on modern and contemporary Korea but has not neglected traditional culture and history. For example, Volume 5 (1994) was a special issue devoted to archaeology and material culture. The journal has published other special issues, such as Volume 6, which focused on 'Nationality and Nationalism in East Asia', reflecting the Association's broader interests in contemporary East Asia, and Volume 14 (2012), which focused on British witnesses to the social, cultural, political and economic changes in late twentieth-century Korea.

About the *European Journal of Korean Studies*

At the General Meeting for The British Association for Korean Studies in London on 9 September 2016 the Association decided to re-launch *Papers of the British Association for Korean Studies* (BAKS Papers) as the *European Journal of Korean Studies*.

The new name better reflects the existing breadth of the editorial board as well as the extensive range of submissions that result from expanded offerings on Korean Studies across the European continent, including Great Britain. Using our experience gained in publishing the *BAKS Papers* over the last 25 years, we are delighted to relaunch the publication as a Europe-wide journal dedicated to Korean Studies.

BAKS Papers has been blind, peer-reviewed since volume 15, and the *European Journal of Korean Studies* will carry on being blind, peer-reviewed. The new *Journal* will be published twice a year, rather than just annually. It is the only English-language journal in Europe devoted to the broad field of Korean Studies, and we hope that it will become the show-case journal for the outstanding work on Korea being done in Europe.

First published in 1991 and originally available in printed format, *Papers of the British Association for Korean Studies* (informally known as *BAKS Papers*) is now available on-line through the Association's website. Volumes 1–16 are available for download, as will future issues of the *European Journal of Korean Studies*. Since Volume 17 (1) the *European Journal of Korean Studies* is also available again in print and we endeavour to keep back issues physically available in the future. The *Journal* is free to BAKS members and those who want copies can access them on www.ejks.org.uk or contact Robert Winstanley-Chesters: treasurer@baks.org.uk

Editors

Adam Cathcart, Editor in Chief

Robert Winstanley-Chesters, Managing Editor

Editor's Note

Welcome to the Autumn 2019 issue of the *European Journal of Korean Studies*. Whereas the previous issue marked a real growth in the accessibility of our journal through the launch of our website www.ejks.org.uk, this issue, a truly bumper edition marks a real growth in terms of size and ambition. As was the case with the previous issue, Vol 19 (1) includes a special section of coordinated papers, *Imagined Futures: spaces, places, architectures of Pyongyang & North Korea*. This special section was born out of a project initiated by Seoul National University Professor of Design, Annie Pedret with her graduate students titled *Pyongyang 2050: spatial narratives and imagination*. An exercise in design led futurology for the urban environments of North Korea, this project became a panel at 2018's *World Congress of Korean Studies* at the Academy of Korean Studies in Seoul and more recently at 2019's *Asian Studies Conference Japan* at Saitama University, just outside Tokyo. Papers from original contributors Annie Pedret and Jelena Mandić are joined by work from Hongik University's Dongwoo Kim and rather closer to home, Robert Winstanley-Chesters. Oliver Wainwright, *The Guardian* newspaper's architecture critic has also generously allowed us to reprint a version of the introduction to his recent volume for Taschen, *Inside North Korea* which serves as complimentary companion piece to the papers in the special section.

Beyond architecture, imagination and futurology further research papers in this issue include work on the place of the modern individual in the colonial era writing of Kim Tong-in by Georgetown University's Min Koo Choi and the processes and pressures involved in labor migration from Korea to the Japanese mainland during that same period from the University of Cambridge's Mikwi Cho. Rather more up to the minute, Gooyong Kim of Cheyney University of Pennsylvania explores hybridity, hyper-reality, "dollification," idol-worship and neo-liberal subjectivities surrounding the K-pop of Miss-A. Finally, this issue contains Professor Young-hwan Chong of Meiji Gakuin University, Tokyo's robust contestation of Park Yu-ha's *Comfort Women of the Empire* which had been due to appear in Vol 18 (2)'s special section on Korean historical controversies, guest edited by Owen Miller. We hope its later arrival does not blunt its piquancy and reduce interest in this fine paper which we have had translated and revised from previous versions in Japanese and in Korean.

This issue also includes an extended research note from the University of Hong Kong's Assistant Professor of architecture, Xiaoxuan Lu. *Divergent Memories of Tumen Shan-shui* recounts an exploration of the Tuman/Tumen river valley and its hard to reach and encounter spaces, through the medium of architectural drawing. We feature architecture of a more securitized kind via a research note from the University of Leeds' Yujin Lim on the troop withdrawal plans on the Korean peninsula of the Carter Administration, timely given the current US government's concern with cost and burden sharing in the Pacific and elsewhere. As always, the issue concludes with a number of book reviews, including a tripled headed consideration of Monica Kim of New York University's recent landmark tome, *The Interrogation Rooms of the Korean War: The Untold Story*. As always sincere thanks go to the Academy of Korean Studies without whose generous support (AKS-2019-P04), it would not be possible to produce the journal in this form. Thanks also go to the University of Leeds, School of History for hosting the *European Journal of Korean Studies*, particularly to Michelle Ridge, Simon Ball, and Head of School Andrea Major, and to Rob Hayford our web designer who has made www.ejks.org.uk so functional and attractive.

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Special Section: Imagined Futures— Spaces, Places, Architectures of Pyongyang and North Korea

Inside North Korea

OLIVER WAINWRIGHT *The Guardian*¹

“The leader’s image must always be placed in the centre of the architectural space.” Kim Jong Il

The beaming faces of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il shine out from the wall at the end of the room, offering a cheery smile to all who enter. Their portraits hang in the very centre of the wall, where nothing else may be fixed, at the end of a long central axis, around which all other elements of the room are symmetrically arranged. Rows of columns march back either side of their gaze, chandeliers dutifully step down, mosaic tiles swirl in line and bouquets of flowers bow deferentially before the presence of the Eternal President and the Eternal Chairman.

The North Korean interior is a fascinating stage set, a precisely choreographed world where an idealised image of power and order is played out. It operates as a tool to command emotion, devotion and obedience, employing theatrical architectural devices to elicit a sense of wonder and veneration of the country’s leaders. And it is a phenomenon that extends far beyond the bounds of the room alone, to the wider formation of the city itself—with urban space conceived as a contained interior, through which the country’s unique attitude to space, power and ideology can be understood.

Constructing a Socialist Fairyland

When you're standing at the top of the Tower of the Juche Idea, below the 20-metre high red glass flame that rises from a great golden base, the North Korean capital of Pyongyang stretches out beneath you as a pastel-coloured panorama. It is a rolling field of tower blocks painted in terracotta and yellow ochre, turquoise and baby blue, punctuated by the novel silhouettes of landmark buildings designed with a distinctly sci-fi air. It looks as if someone has emptied a packet of candy across the city, sugary pastilles jumbled up with jelly spaceships.

The white concrete teepee of the Pyongyang Ice Rink rises behind the sweeping green-tiled roof of the Grand People's Study House, looking on to the vast expanse of Kim Il Sung Square. The mirrored-glass pyramid of the Ryugyong Hotel stands across the river from the billowing silver flower of the May Day Stadium, while the wavy roof of a leisure centre ripples in the foreground, next to the red armadillo's shell of the Central Youth Hall. A group of women strolls along the new riverside path, their glittery lace parasols sparkling in the afternoon sunshine.

The capital of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea isn't the monotonous grey world that you might expect it to be, and this book is an attempt to offer a glimpse behind the closed doors of the Hermit Kingdom, providing a snapshot of the reclusive country in all its kaleidoscopic colour.

I spent a week in Pyongyang in July 2015 with Koryo Tours, a Beijing-based company that has been taking groups of foreigners into North Korea since 1993. I first met its founder, the UK-born Nick Bonner, at the Venice architecture biennale in 2014, where he had curated an eye-opening exhibition of paintings by North Korean architects, imagining what the future of tourism might look like in their isolated country. There were space-age scenes of hoverships and conical mirrored-glass hotels clinging to clifftops, with a decidedly retro style, as if taken straight from the *Jetsons* or the pages of a Dan Dare comic. Bonner told me that these scenes weren't too far from what they were actually building in Pyongyang now. I wasn't sure if he was joking, but there was only one way to find out.

A Great Garden of Juche Architecture

Entirely flattened by U.S. bombing during the Korean War, Pyongyang was rebuilt from scratch from 1953 onwards, conceived by the country's founding father, the Eternal President Kim Il Sung, as "a great garden of Juche architecture." Juche (pronounced ju-chay) is the national state ideology of self-reliance that he developed—a kind of Marxism-Leninism with a hint of Confucianism—and architecture was to be one of the key tools in embodying its principles.

“Juche means that all the problems of the revolution and of building construction must be solved independently,” wrote Kim Il Sung, “and mostly without outside help according to the country’s abilities.”

Despite the claims of no external influence, the city plan was drawn up by a Moscow-trained architect, Kim Jong-hui, and follows classic Soviet planning principles. Imposing squares are linked by vast axial boulevards, setting up long vistas that terminate in monumental structures. The result creates a highly theatrical city, made up of interconnecting processional sequences, where every vista is carefully framed, every route designed for maximum spatial impact. Walking the streets of Pyongyang feels like moving through a series of stage sets taken from one of the country’s socialist realist operas. The perspectival effects of marching colonnades of columns and the flanking wings of symmetrical monuments are consistently used to amplify the significance of whatever lies at the end of the grand axis—usually a statue of one of the leaders—and consequentially diminish the status of the individual. Surrounded by these great granite edifices, you feel very small indeed.

However, unlike many Soviet cities, with their relentless concrete blocks and windswept squares, the garden quality of Pyongyang’s plan is palpable. Bisected by the broad Taedong River and its looping tributary, the Pothong River, the city is set on a rolling landscape between two hills, Moranbong and Namsan, forming a flowing, picturesque topography. Kim Jong-hui’s master plan specified that just 25 percent of the city’s area should be occupied by buildings, allowing space for parks, gardens and wide avenues, which lends Pyongyang an open, campus-like feeling. The sparsity of buildings served a practical purpose too: the greater distance between the blocks would help to minimise the damage of bombing should war break out again. And, just like Baron Haussmann’s Paris, the wide streets would allow easy access for troops to be mobilised in the event of an uprising.

While the initial post-war reconstruction was heavily steered by Soviet planning and Stalinist neoclassicism, Korean architects were soon encouraged to mine their country’s historic past to distance their work from any outside influence. Kim Il Sung’s General Guidelines for Architecture called for the explicit inclusion of architectural elements from the Joseon period (1392–1897), including octagonal stone columns, recalling the pillars of ancient Korean temples, and overhanging giwa tiled roofs. Two of the earliest surviving buildings, the Moranbong Theatre (1954) and Taedongmun Cinema (1955), are striking examples of this tendency: both are neo-classical in form, with templelike porticos, but incorporate octagonal columns and green-tiled rooftops, giving them a uniquely Korean air.

Crucially, by tying their architecture back to ancient dynasties, the Kim regime could bestow upon its showcase city an eternal, timeless quality, standing as the product of Korea and Korean ingenuity alone. It is a patriotic policy that became increasingly emphatic as time went on. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, which plunged North Korea into mass starvation, any whiff of foreign influence had to be entirely expunged.

Kim Il Sung's son, the Eternal Chairman Kim Jong Il, who became leader following his father's death in 1994, stressed the importance of self-reliance in his 160-page treatise *On Architecture*, published in 1991. "In the difficult days after the war, when we had to start everything again from scratch," he wrote, "the sycophants, dogmatists and anti-Party counter-revolutionary elements that had wormed their way into the capital construction sector adopted foreign designs mechanically, asserting their erroneous views, ignoring the country's economic situation and turning a deaf ear to the people's aspirations and demands." Apartments of the post-war era were equipped with Russian style pechika heating stoves, rather than the traditional Korean underfloor ondol heating, and the country had been overrun, as he puts it, with "European-style buildings [...] which did not accord with our people's customs and sentiments."

The solution was actively to turn away from the outside world, cut architecture off from being polluted by foreign meddling and follow the Juche way at all times. "An architect who is convinced that his country and his things are the best will not look upon foreign things or try to copy them," Kim Jong Il concludes, "but make tireless efforts to create architecture amenable to his people."

Happy in the Leader's Embrace

Isolated from outside influence for so long, and therefore free from the usual urban pressures of commercial speculation and inward migration, Pyongyang is one of the few cities in the world where the original intentions remain intact. The city is still governed and shaped by the very same ideology it was first built to revere. Visiting the principal sites is therefore less like discovering the historic artefacts of a post-Soviet city than like time-travelling to a realm where the system is still in full force—and where the founding fathers are very much still present.

As a foreign visitor, your experience of the city is meticulously controlled. Our small group of architecture enthusiasts was accompanied by three official guides at all times, who would dutifully recite the statistics of each building on our itinerary, never straying from the script as we were shuttled between ever bigger monuments in our minibus. At each site we were welcomed by a hostess in the traditional Joseon-ot, the Korean national costume of a brightly coloured

floral dress (known as Hanbok in South Korea, where it is enjoying an unexpected revival amongst the youth). They would regale us with the total square meterage and visitor capacity of the building in question, along with the astonishingly short time in which the structure was apparently built. But the most important statistic was how many times the leaders had visited the site, a fact of almost sacred significance, always inscribed in a hallowed red and gold plaque above the building's entrance.

The importance of the leaders in the formation of the city, from the scale of the room to the street, is hard to overstate. Whether cast in bronze, inlaid in colourful mosaic tiles or depicted in paintings, the Eternal President and Eternal Chairman are always there, forever watching over their subjects.

“Architectural space must be composed to ensure that the leader's image dominates all the elements of the space,” wrote Kim Jong Il, “and that all the architectural components throw the leader's image in bold relief. This will help people to look up at the leader's image at all times and inspire them with the pride and consciousness that they are happy in the leader's embrace.”

The effect is no more evident than at the Grand Monument on Mansu Hill, where a pair of 20-metre high bronze statues of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il stand in front of an expansive stone plaza, the father in a long flowing business coat, the son in his trademark zip-up leisure suit, anorak and Cuban heels. Side by side, they survey an axis that extends for two kilometres down the hill and across the Taedong River, to where the Party Foundation Monument stands. Three clenched stone fists hold aloft a hammer, signifying the workers, a sickle, denoting the peasantry, and a calligraphy brush, placing the intellectual class among the people—a feature that sets the North Korean communist party apart from its siblings around the world. Rising 50 metres up in the air, the monument is flanked by a symmetrical pair of stepped buildings, just as the bronze Kims are framed by two gigantic wings of red granite flags, book-ending this entire chunk of the city into a single, immutable whole.

In such a composition, the surrounding buildings play an important role in bolstering the significance of the statues, stepping down away from the focus of attention like deferential crowds. “The buildings that stand around the great leader's bronze statue on Mansu Hill remind us of an impressive picture of all the Korean people looking up at the leader and cheering,” writes Kim Jong Il, “and give us the feeling of their single-hearted unity behind the leader.”

The leaders' omnipresence extends to interior space too. Their immaculate portraits are usually the first things you see when you enter a building, placed directly in line with the entrance, often at the end of a central axis. Regulations state that an entire wall in every room must be devoted to their portraits, on which

nothing else may be hung, and that they must always be placed high up, so that no one else can stand higher than the leaders.

Even when their statues or portraits are not visible, the presence of the leaders is ensured throughout the city in the form of their two namesake flowers, the Kimilsungia and Kimjongilia. The former is a violet orchid, which was first presented to Kim Il Sung in 1965 by Indonesia's founding president, Sukarno; the latter is a bright scarlet begonia, gifted by a Japanese botanist in 1988. These floral signifiers are to be found all over Pyongyang, spilling from the balconies of patriotic citizens, adorning gigantic billboards at the top of apartment towers and emblazoned on roadside hoardings. Grown on a vast scale in army-run breeding centres the flowers are brought out by the thousands of pots for national events, their longevity ensured by a chemical agent developed after years of research, according to the Korea Central News Agency (KCNA), which lengthens the blooming period by a week in summer and by 20 days in winter. The state mouthpiece often runs stories about selfless Koreans who kept their flowers warm throughout the winter during the disastrous years of famine, even when their houses were freezing. When the Kimjongilia was introduced in the 1980s, a song was composed to ensure that it would command as much loyalty as the Kimilsungia.

The red flowers that are blossoming over our land
Are like hearts:
full of love for the leader.
Our hearts follow the young buds of Kimjongilia;
Oh! The flower of our loyalty!

Originality is the Essential Requirement of Architecture

Under Kim Jong Il, who had risen to become the heir apparent by the early 1980s, Pyongyang's architectural ambitions took on a bold new direction. The country's grand building projects have always been spurred on by major milestone deadlines, and none were more significant than the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students, a kind of communist Olympics, which was held in Pyongyang in 1989.

Providing a chance to show off the capital on the world stage, to no fewer than 177 visiting countries, the festival was the impetus for a series of huge set-piece construction projects. Riverbanks were greened, roads were widened and thousands of homes were built in new high-rise residential districts. Two of the centrepieces were the daring metal-vaulted shell of the Rungrado May Day Stadium, reputedly the world's largest at the time, built on an island in the Taedong River, and the huge apartment blocks of Kwangbok Street, which march for four kilometres either side of a deserted six-lane highway, providing enough flats to house 20,000 families, mostly for members of the ruling elite.

“To ensure variety in the formation of a street, the street must be formed in three dimensions,” wrote Kim Jong Il, describing Kwangbok as being carefully composed to “give the feeling of magnificence through the overlapping rows of buildings, and stimulate modern tastes by means of openness and depth.” The effect is utterly crushing, giving the impression of a street made for giants, down which the visiting sports teams were duly forced to process as insignificant specks.

The sporting events themselves took place in specially designed arenas along Chongchun Street, where ten different venues were built, lining the wide road with expressive concrete structures, each coloured with a different pastel hue. They include a weightlifting gymnasium shaped like a pair of dumb-bells and a badminton hall whose barrel-vaulted roof is modelled on the arc of a flying shuttlecock. Such symbolism is a hallmark of Pyongyang’s landmark buildings: our guides proudly told us that the Pyongyang Ice Rink, built in 1981—which bears a striking resemblance to Frederick Gibberd’s Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, built in 1967—is “shaped like a skater’s cap.”

Kim Jong Il writes approvingly of these symbolic structures, picking out the capital’s maternity hospital as a major triumph of such didactic representation. It is a complex whose form “reminds us of the benevolent features of a mother who embraces in her arms [...] twin babies that have just begun to find their feet,” he says. “A mere glimpse of it is enough to see that it is for women.” But woe betide any architect who takes the symbolic approach too far: “The practice of clinging to fantastic symbolic shapes out of a subjective desire will invite ‘expressionist architecture,’ a school of bourgeois formalism.”

Numerical symbolism has also played a key part in North Korean architecture, ensuring that the patriotic credentials of every monument are embedded deep in its very substance. The Arch of Triumph—modelled on the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, but allegedly 10 metres taller because of its great triple-decker stack of rooftops—employs 25,500 blocks of dressed white granite to represent the number of days of Kim Il Sung’s life on his 70th birthday, when the structure was unveiled in 1982. The same is said of the Tower of the Juche Idea—a similar tapering shape to the Washington Monument, but one metre taller—which was also built for the Eternal President’s 70th birthday.

Birthdays and anniversaries have always been used as the key deadlines for achieving the country’s major construction projects, built at ferocious speed by shock troops of soldier-builders, to the close “on the spot guidance” of the leaders. Their work is spurred on by successive “speed campaigns,” which began in the 1950s with the Chollima Movement, named after the mythical winged horse who was able to cover 1,000 li (around 400 kilometres) in a single day. Similar to China’s Great Leap Forward, it was designed to galvanise the nation’s collective energy

immediately after the war, urging workers to reach new heights in construction, agriculture and industrial production. More recently, the regime has declared an era of “Masikryong speed,” named after a new showcase ski resort, which was apparently built in just ten months, and “Mallima speed,” named after another imaginary horse that can run 10 times faster than Chollima.

“To be riders and front-runners in the Mallima Movement,” wrote the national party newspaper, *Rodong Sinmun*, in March 2017, “is the bounden duty and noble obligation of our generations who were born in the motherland of Juche and grew up learning the epic of the Chollima age.”

A Hot Wind of Construction

One of the most unexpected sights for foreign visitors to Pyongyang today, imagining they will find a place largely in stasis since the 1950s, is the number of cranes that dot the city’s skyline. The present leader, Marshal Kim Jong Un, who succeeded his father Kim Jong Il on his death in 2011, has made a name for himself at home as something of a builder-president, dotting the capital with grand trophy projects. Under his policy of *byungjin*—to strengthen the country’s economy, alongside its nuclear arsenal—Pyongyang is undergoing a construction boom.

When the 18 cylindrical apartment towers of Changjon Street sprouted in 2012, rising up to 48 storeys on the banks of the Taedong River, foreign diplomats jokingly nicknamed the development “Pyonghattan.” They generally assumed the project was a one-off publicity stunt, designed to court international attention with shiny facades of prosperity. It was no coincidence that the buildings looked like teetering stacks of coins.

Yet, to many North Korea-watchers’ surprise, the high-rise wave has continued. Kim Jong Un has inaugurated a brand-new apartment complex almost every year since he assumed power. 2013 and 2014 saw the completion of housing districts dedicated to the scientists behind the country’s space satellite programme, in the form of the pastel-coloured blocks of Unha Scientists Street and Wisong Scientists Street. At the time of my visit in 2015, armies of soldier-builders were racing to complete Mirae Scientists Street in time for the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the Workers’ Party at the end of the year. This new riverside district of 2,500 apartments for “scientists of the future” is designed in the form of tapering orange and green towers, “modelled on the shape of an intellectual’s calligraphy brush,” according to our guides. In 2017, Kim Jong Un honoured the 105th birthday of his grandfather with the opening of Ryomyong Street, a complex

of more than 5,000 apartments in towers that rise up to 70 storeys, all built at Mallima speed in less than a year.

Over 200 foreign journalists were summoned to Pyongyang for the launch of the project, although the reason for their visit was unbeknown to them. They had been invited with the promise of witnessing “a big and important event,” as tensions were rising with the United States. Woken at dawn and stripped of their mobile phones, they were piled on to a bus, expecting to be taken to a nuclear launch site, to marvel at a display of military might. What awaited them was not an intercontinental ballistic missile, but a wide boulevard lined with skyscrapers.

“The completion of this street is more powerful than a hundred nuclear warheads,” said Pak Pong-ju at the opening of the project. Pak was ousted as prime minister in 2007 for pushing market-based reforms, but he has been reinstated and now oversees the economy, marking a telling shift in the regime’s outlook. Ryomyong Street, he continued, was a demonstration of “the ‘do or die’ spirit of our people and army who are willing to implement the Party’s orders in all cases, and a victory against imperialists’ sanctions.”

The architecture continues the retro-futuristic style of previous years, with heavily sculpted concrete towers clad in gleaming white tiles, with brightly coloured accents of minty green and orange, along with the occasional glass dome or orb encircled with a metal spiral. A pair of white cylindrical towers rises from a plinth of shops with petal-shaped rooftops, sculpted to evoke flowers bursting into bloom. Further down the road stands another pair of gleaming shafts with bulbous turrets at each corner, shooting up from tapering conical bases like rockets ready for take-off. A third pair of towers is octagonal in form, once again recalling the pillars of ancient Korean temples, banded with undulating ribbons of white balconies.

“Combine national identity properly with modernity,” urged Kim Jong Un in his 2016 manifesto, *For Building a Thriving Nation*, “and build at an extraordinary speed monumental structures that will surpass global standards and remain immaculate even in the distant future.”

These flagship projects might give the outward appearance of global standards, but, as we drove past construction sites across the city, they didn’t provide much confidence that they were being built to last. Hastily poured concrete spilled from its shuttering, while some walls didn’t quite seem to line up with the floors below. The building techniques looked almost medieval, and the obsession with the breakneck speed of construction has already had tragic consequences. In 2014, a brand new 23-storey apartment block collapsed, killing dozens or perhaps even hundreds of people who had already moved in. According to South Korean media

reports, the deputy minister of construction and building material industries, Choe Yong-gon, has since been executed.

The hiccup hasn't persuaded Kim Jong Un to slow down. "We should raise a hot wind of construction across all the provinces, cities and counties," he exhorted in his manifesto, "to remodel them in a beautiful fashion as suited to their characteristic features. By so doing we can turn the country into a socialist fairyland."

Masters of Money

In Pyongyang at least, he is already part way there to achieving his goal. Since coming to power, the young Kim's focus has been on the infrastructure of leisure and pleasure, catering to millennials and the emerging middle class, along with the desire to increase tourist numbers. The reclusive country now has a goal of attracting two million visitors by 2020—an ambitious target, given that it represents a 20-fold increase on current figures.

In 2014, Kim Jong Un opened the country's first ski resort near the east-coast port city of Wonsan, the first part of a \$1.5bn plan to turn it into a tourist hub, with a new airport and an underwater hotel. On an island in Pyongyang's Taedong River he has summoned the Rungna People's Pleasure Ground, a theme park complete with pink-painted rollercoasters, mini-golf course, swimming pool and a 4D cinema, fitted out with "rhythmic moving seats." At its heart is the Dolphinarium, a building shaped like a big white whale, where Chinese dolphins perform somersaults on demand, leaping from a pool of salt-water that was apparently pumped here along a 100-kilometre pipeline. As KCNA reported, the presence of dolphins "makes it possible to bring great benefit to the country [...] and contribute to the cultural and emotional life of the people." The capital also boasts a high tech shooting range, where visitors can take potshots at pheasants, as well as a new horse-riding centre, where children of the elite can have a taste of rural life for the equivalent of \$5 an hour—around the average weekly wage of most North Koreans.

Freshly painted bike lanes now skirt many of Pyongyang's pavements and planted pathways wind along the riverbanks, where young couples stroll of an evening. The roads still feel empty, owing to the fact that privately owned cars remain largely forbidden, but there are plenty of shiny new taxis (imported from China) along with traffic lights and even the occasional traffic jam. The first commercial billboards have appeared, complementing the ubiquitous banners of patriotic slogans and images of the leaders, advertising the national car manufacturer, Pyeonghwa Motors, the result of a rare joint venture with South Korea. In

the Hall of Heavy Industry, a gargantuan shed in the Three Revolutions Exhibition Park, our tour group admires the three models the company produces.

Along with these physical changes to the city, there are other signs of what looks like a more prosperous nation beginning to emerge. Kids zoom around the expansive public spaces on rollerblades, while women sport brightly coloured fitted jackets and high heels, shading their faces from the sun with metallic lace parasols and oversized sunglasses—fashion accessories that were unheard of in the country just a few years ago. One of our guides is proud to tell us of her taste for coffee, as we pass the city's first coffee shop, where waitresses stand ready with digital tablet menus. We find more consumerism in action at the Kwangbok department store, a multi-storey shopping centre where Koreans browse aisles of imported drinks and snacks, and teenage girls jostle at the cosmetics counter. A joint venture with a Chinese company, it is one of the few places where foreign currency can be exchanged at the black-market rate of around 8,000 won to the dollar—compared to the official rate of 109 won.

These are all signs of North Korea's fledgling market economy, operated by the rising class of *donju*, or “masters of money,” who operate unofficial enterprises that are tacitly tolerated by the regime. Their businesses are typically set up within government ministries, where wealthy individuals can bribe officials for the right to establish a company, paying 30 percent of their income in “loyalty donations.” Known as “red capitalists” by South Korean scholars, *donju* also invest in construction projects, establish partnerships with struggling state-owned factories and bankroll imports from China to supply retailers in the country's growing number of markets—from which the state is also profiting. In March 2017, the authorities reportedly ordered people selling goods from their homes to move into formal marketplaces, in an effort to collect more tax. The Institute for Unification Education of South Korea estimates that the government collects as much as \$222,000 per day in taxes from the growing network of markets it manages.

Capitalist fever is spreading: according to Lee Byung-ho, former director of South Korea's intelligence service, at least 40 percent of the North Korean population is now engaged in some form of private enterprise, creating a class with money to spend. A cellphone service launched in 2008 now has more than three million subscribers, while imported solar panels have become a middle-class status symbol, with the state still struggling to produce enough electricity. Apartments are no longer just assigned by working group, but traded on the black market, creating an appetite for domestic goods and aspirational furnishings, fuelled by the desire to ape the modern interiors of homes they have seen on South Korean TV shows, illicitly shared on USB sticks.

Our scheduled visit to see inside a Pyongyang apartment is abruptly cancelled one morning, but the interiors of other new or recently refurbished buildings all exhibit the desire to do away with the old and embrace the shiny and new. Soviet-era interiors are increasingly under threat, with decorative terrazzo floors being ripped out and replaced with wipe-clean lino and glossy Chinese granite tiles in the interests of presenting an image of modernity. The host of one of the theatres we visit proudly explains how an old-fashioned wooden parquet floor has been replaced with modern rubber, “convenience and durability” being chief tenets of the Juche ideology.

There is a certain eerie beauty to these new squeaky-clean interiors, which sometimes have the unsettling perfection of a Thomas Demand paper sculpture. They often deploy complementary colour schemes and shiny synthetic surfaces, the pre-school colour palettes and axial symmetry giving the surreal feeling of walking into a Wes Anderson film set, or a life-size Polly Pocket toy. Such interiors reach their peak in the new support rooms of the May Day stadium, where we move from a changing-room of salmon-coloured lino floors offset with turquoise banquettes, to a physiotherapy studio decked out in powder blue and peach, complete with gold vinyl massage tables. Freshly pumped footballs await in a training-room, optimistically adorned with FIFA’s logo and the Olympic rings.

Most of these heady visions are concocted in the studios of the Paektusan Academy of Architecture, the main state architecture bureau, where we find designers working on digital models of new restaurants and hotels, all rendered in shades of lilac and tangerine. Images of forthcoming projects line the walls, a symphony of pastel-coloured confections iced with curvaceous plastic mouldings and futuristic touches. One depicts a new science centre, designed as a circular complex with spherical protrusions. Another room contains a permanent exhibition of foreign architectural precedents to inspire the designers; they are all monumental megastructures, from Moscow’s Seven Sisters to Terry Farrell’s headquarters for the Secret Intelligence Service in London, a ziggurat of cream concrete and green glass on the Thames. Having moved from palatial Stalinist piles to expressive concrete structures, via the odd techno-futuristic whim, kindergarten kitsch is the logical next step for a regime intent on projecting an image of carefree prosperity. It is architecture as anaesthetic, a powerful tool for the state to infantilise its people.

It is only when we leave Pyongyang that it becomes clear that this image of jolly prosperity is confined to the showcase capital alone, that the “great garden of Juche architecture” is a bubble for the privileged few. On the three-hour journey along a crack-riddled road heading south to the border, during which we barely pass another vehicle, we get a glimpse of how the rest of the country

lives. Abandoned factories stand rusting next to crumbling concrete apartments, without the cheerful pastel hues. We pass a scene of ragged children playing in the river, while shaven-headed men in striped prison uniforms toil in the fields beyond, watched over by soldiers. Outside the pleasure dome, in zones off limits to foreign visitors, most of the socialist fairyland still suffers from frequent power shortages, chronic food insecurity and deteriorating standards of healthcare and education—realities that are safely obscured inside Pyongyang's candy-coloured mirage.

Note

1. Oliver Wainwright is Architecture and Design critic for the Guardian newspaper. He recently published with Taschen the book *Inside North Korea*. Oliver Wainwright has given the European Journal of Korean Studies permission to reprint this introduction to 'Inside North Korea' as part of this special section. Further information about Oliver can be found at www.oliverwainwright.co.uk, and his Guardian writing can be found at www.theguardian.com/profile/oliver-wainwright. He can be contacted at mail@oliverwainwright.co.uk and he is at @ollywainwright on Twitter and on Instagram. Introduction from *Inside North Korea* by Oliver Wainwright. Copyright © Oliver Wainwright 2018, used by permission of The Wylie Agency (UK) Limited. The text was first published in *Inside North Korea* by Oliver Wainwright, Taschen, 2018.

Imagination as a Research Method: Spatial Futures for Pyongyang in 2050

ANNIE PEDRET Associate Professor, Seoul National University¹

Abstract

Conventional methods are necessary for addressing certain types of problems, but they are inadequate for investigating subjects that cannot be known in an increasingly complex and emergent world. The method proposed in this paper acknowledges the role of imagination as a cognitive function involved in all human activities from perception and reasoning to experiment and speculation. It forms the theoretical basis for an inter-disciplinary research method that combines the scenario method from Future Studies, fictive narrative, and design thinking and visualization for examining the projects for alternative plausible spatial futures of Pyongyang in the context of a unified Korean peninsula.

Keywords: Imagination; scenarios; architecture; urbanism; design methods; future design; unification

Introduction

“The years to come will be defined by the struggle over the imagination.”
Max Haiven²

Imagining what Pyongyang will look like in 30–35 years in a reconciled or unified Korea as a research subject raises epistemological challenges. The future of Pyongyang is inextricably linked to the form that the unification, or reconciliation of the Korean peninsula will take. North Korea is one of the most inaccessible

countries in the world. The country is strict about its privacy and has imposed many bans and restrictions.³ Access to Pyongyang is controlled by “regimes of visibility” that determine what visitors can experience depending on the degree and nature of the connection they have with the country.⁴ Field research is not often or easily possible. Unification is impossible to predict because of “wild card” events. The issue of reconciliation to which the urban future of Pyongyang is so intricately tied, has incomplete, contradictory and changing requirements. There is no final solution for unification. It is an “irreducibly complex” situation in which all the elements—politics, geopolitics, economy, shared culture and history function as a system of interacting parts that would stop functioning in its current form if any one of the parts were removed or altered. Reconciliation is a “wicked,” problem which, like climate change, social and economic inequality, and mass-migrations are increasing, but which we are ill-equipped to handle.

The second challenge of investigating Pyongyang stems from the poor quality of the sources and the difficulty of getting accurate information.⁵ While the physical urban characteristics of Pyongyang can be known with some detail with Google Earth and to a lesser degree with Google Maps, there is still an extreme lack of reliable information about daily life in this “reclusive” country and its capital. The main information about the country is testimony, or propositions about the country put forward by someone else on the internet, television, radio, articles by journalists, and books.⁶ Much information about North Korea is from South Korean media which is distorted through the long-standing conflict between the two states. There are few full time-journalistic correspondents in North Korea, and an absence of on-site reporting.⁷ First-hand accounts by defectors, are a key source, but they are reluctant to trust anybody, and with a few exceptions tend towards the kind of sensational and superficial narratives attuned to the narratives of Western media.⁸ For this investigation the nature of the subject of the urban future of Pyongyang, and the nature of the sources raises methodological issues and epistemological challenges.

Traditional epistemology generates a specific kind of knowledge that is the knowledge of *propositions*, or “justified true belief.”⁹ This type of knowledge, which is different from say knowledge of how to do something or personal knowledge of a person place or thing, must meet several “necessary and sufficient conditions” for it to be considered knowledge, or “justified true belief”: there must be a subject that has knowledge of a proposition that is known, the belief of the proposition must be justifiable, justification is accomplished with evidence, and evidence must come from “reliable” sources. Sources of knowledge and justification are perception, introspection, reason, testimony and memory.¹⁰

Sources of knowledge and justification for the subject of the urban future of Pyongyang are compromised. Direct experience, or *perception* of the city through

the five senses is controlled or prohibited. With the absence of perception, *introspection*, or reflecting on how the world appears to us in our perceptual experiences, is not possible. With the absence of introspection we are unable to form a firm foundation for our beliefs; *memory* as justification is already considered to be “fallible” and already considered as a less reliable source or “mere imagination”¹¹ which renders *reason*, or the *a priori* justification before experience, useless. *Testimony* by defectors and the media, which is the source of much of the knowledge of North Korea, is not always reliable. Thus, the urban future of Pyongyang as a subject does not meet the “necessary and sufficient conditions”¹² for “justified true belief” not only because the proposition is not knowable, but because “reliable” sources are not accessible and thus belief of propositions cannot be justified.

This raises the question of whether a subject for which a proposition cannot be known, and a belief cannot be justified can be considered as a subject for serious scholarship at all. This question is of particular urgency today in a world that is rapidly changing and radically contingent and where we are being asked to investigate propositions which, because of their nature cannot be known.¹³ I argue that it is not only possible to investigate propositions for complex and emergent subjects, but a matter of urgency today. This requires however, critically re-evaluating the role that traditional epistemology and methodologies can play, if any, for investigating subjects that meet the “necessary and sufficient conditions” of knowledge. I am not arguing that the methods and criteria of traditional epistemology are not at all useful for knowledge in general. Rather, they are inadequate for investigating complex, contingent, unknowable, and rapidly changing subjects like the urban future of Pyongyang. As some scholars are beginning to recognize, “the future we wish to create does not include ‘research’ as we are accustomed to imagining it.”¹⁴

Method

The epistemological challenge raised by the complex and emergent problems we are facing today demands new methods and premises. Investigating this particular complex and emergent problem, of the context of unification and the impact that it will have on the urban future of Pyongyang, a subject for which knowledge of propositions are not known and sources are inaccessible or unreliable, required: re-calibrating the status of traditional epistemology, acknowledging imagination as a crucial cognitive function that is engaged in all thinking and action, recognizing design as a “reflective practice,”¹⁵ is a valid form of knowledge, and combining research methodologies from other disciplines as

necessary for a particular subject and the available sources. For this investigation methodologies were adopted from design, future studies, and narrative fiction. Each method engaged different modes of thought and produced different kinds of knowledge.

The process for imagining alternative future contexts of unification, and the future urban “objects” that inhabit those contexts—be they spaces, buildings, urban environments, or began with using conventional epistemological methods of collecting and analyzing data, followed by developing alternative possible future contexts using the five-step process of the scenario method from Future Studies (discussed below), validating the coherence of the scenarios through narrative fiction, to speculating and giving form to the types of “things” that could inhabit this future scenario through design process and visualization. This method engages different types of thinking: analysis (data), analytical discourse (scenario method), fiction (narrative), experimentation, speculation, free play, and projective thinking (narrative and design). Each step generated a different aspect of the vision: the scenario method generated future contexts, fictive narratives prepared the ground for future social actions, and design materialized the urban futures that inhabit those spatial futures (Figure 1). The process was roughly linear, but highly reiterative where discoveries made in one part of the process required constantly reexamining the propositions made in another.

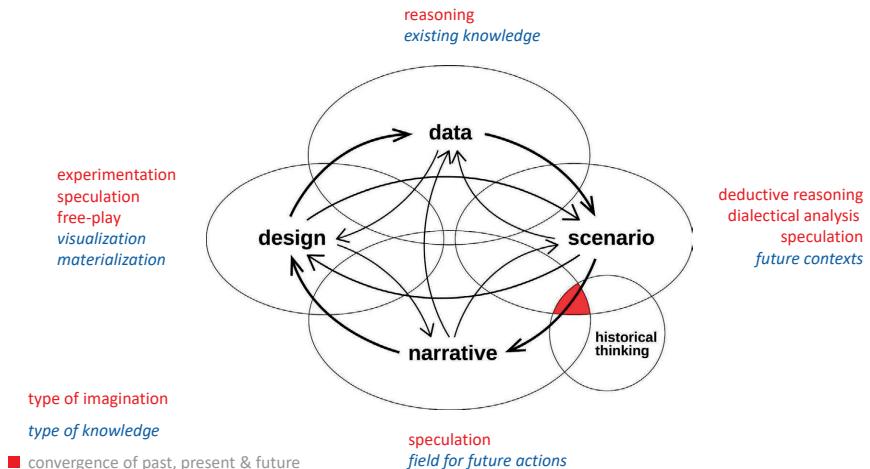


Figure 1 Methods, modes of thought and types of knowledge for imagining urban futures of Pyongyang in 2050.

This inter-disciplinary method is based on the fundamental premise that imagination, which is the cognitive function humans have for image-making in their heads, is crucial for investigating subjects that are unfamiliar, novel, and do not yet exist and which cannot meet the sufficient and necessary conditions of conventional epistemology. Imagination is a special form of knowing that is crucial for certain subjects including those that cannot meet the conditions necessary for knowledge as defined by conventional epistemology.

Accepting novel methods and imagination as a valid form of knowing requires recognizing the role imagination plays in the biology of perception and to varying degrees in every cognitive function we engage in from reason to speculation, experimentation and free play. Each kind of imagination allows us to have a different kind of knowledge about subjects that cannot be known using conventional means of justification to bring truth to belief. For the discipline of design it requires that designers accept that while the twentieth century was one of making “things”—products, industries, economic structures, societal norms, cultural responses, identities—the twenty-first century is one of imagination and shaping future contexts how we can be as individuals and in a community.¹⁶

Imagination

Imagination is not dreaming Utopias, or flights of fancy, or a sophisticated critique of the status quo. Imagination is not creativity, although imagination is necessary for creativity. It is not simply the irrational, undisciplined cognitive function belonging to artists, and is the counter-faculty to reasoning and science. In creation, *poietic* imagination is engaged to project novel, hitherto not see things.¹⁷ Imagination is not only about producing novelty that fuels creativity.¹⁸ It is not a marginalized or specialized activity of the mind.

Imagination is the image-making cognitive process of our mind. It is the power or capacity of humans to form internal visual or auditory images of objects and situations.¹⁹ It lies at the center of human cognitive processes.²⁰ It is the filter through which we interpret our own experience,²¹ our attempt to cognitively order disparate elements of a disorderly world when we see something for the first time, and the way we make sense of the world.²² Imagination is “our capacity to think about those things we do not or cannot directly experience. It is the filter through which we interpret our own experience. It informs our actions and is, in turn, shaped by our actions. Imagination creates reality, and in turn reality creates imagination.²³ Imagination is a special form of knowing,²⁴ and a crucial way faculty for investigating what we do not know. Imagination is a “special form of agency.”²⁵

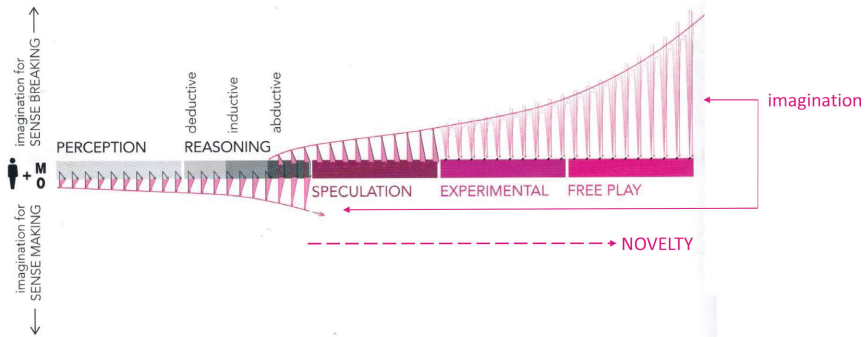


Figure 2 Spectrum of cognitive functions in which imagination functions. (Source: Modified from Pendleton-Jullian & Seely Brown, 2018)

We need imagination for its coherent synthetic “image-making” and “sense-making capacity” of known phenomena, but also for the disruptive side of “sense-breaking” required for projecting new things.²⁶ It is also a valid form of knowing what cannot be known, the unfamiliar, the novel, and what does not yet exist. Imagination is associated with a wide spectrum of cognitive functions from sense-making capacity of perception and reasoning, to the sense-breaking capacity of speculation, experiment, and free play (Figure 2).²⁷ Imagination does not function to tell you how things are, but functions provisionally. In the method described here, different forms of imagination are involved in the processes of data analysis, formulating scenarios, narrative fiction, and design (Figure 1). Imagination is particularly suited for investigating the future. It bridges fact and fiction, and the past, present, and future. “To imagine is to imagine a future in which thought and action are meaningful, which is to say that it is by drawing on the past that the imagination is able to work out a future within which to think or act in the present.”²⁸

Perception

Imagination is integral to the sense-making cognitive function of perception²⁹ and its role in making the world stable and coherent. It does not only come into play when an object is absent to the senses, as is commonly understood, but also when an object is present to the senses.³⁰ This counter-intuitive conclusion about human perception is explained physiologically. Our visual organ of perception, our eyes, are in constant motion, not only by the voluntary movement of the eyes and head when we track something, but the involuntary saccadic movements of the eye that are 20 to 200 milliseconds in duration³¹ and micro-saccadic movements of even

shorter duration that occur while are looking at static objects. Experiments have shown that when there is a perfect correspondence or alignment of the intervals between the saccadic eye movements and the projected image of a static object, the visual field goes grey and the object disappears.³² It is the changes and differences in luminance resulting from the saccadic movement of the retina and the free play of light across the cells of the retina that gives humans the capacity to project images of static objects. Human perception of static objects is the result of the discontinuity of sensory input. Human cognition is a process of constant image formation for the whole world to arise so that thought and action can occur. How is it then that we experience the world as stable and continuous?

Cognitive continuity, or a stable mental image of the world is made possible by means of a ‘resolving activity’ comprising three parts: biological (direct pathway), cultural mediation (indirect pathway), and individual imagination (fills the gap).³³ The direct pathway that connects the subject (oneself) to an object (event or object in the world) occurs biologically through the senses. Biologically, a stable image of the world is possible due to “cell assemblies” or “cortical firmware” that facilitates the maintenance and internal organization that is part of human phylogenetics. Simultaneously, there is an indirect pathway that connects the individual to an object/event that is mediated—through “images” we hold in our minds and feelings and memories associated with an individual’s history and culture, which also mediates or interprets the connection between the subject and object through ontology, behavior protocols, and epistemology³⁴ (Figure 3). Culturally mediated thought is future-oriented, because actions in the present are motivated by the

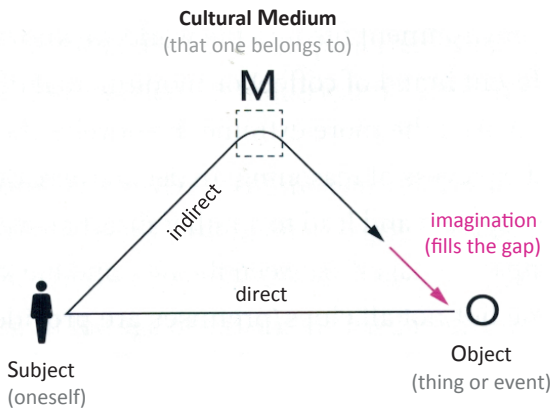


Figure 3 The components of human perception. (Source: Pelaprat & Cole, 2011; diagram modified from Pendleton-Julian & Seely Brown, *Design Unbound*, 2018)

need to reduce uncertainty about the future. There are differences between the input of the direct and indirect pathways such that the mental images do not correspond exactly or come together. This results in a gap. The gap between what we experience, and how we perceive the experience through our cultural and ontological frames, requires cognitive resolution. The world has a stable image because of the active ability of individuals to cognitively resolve, reconcile, and fill-in the gap between the discordant moment-to-moment sensory input by imagination.³⁵ This process of resolving the gap between experience and cultural and ontological frameworks is always working.

The more unfamiliar the phenomena or setting, the larger the gap and the more the imagination has to work to understand what they are seeing to produce an image of the world so that they can act and think in the present. "Every engagement we have with the world has a degree of novelty associated with it,"³⁶ a degree of the unknown. From a psychological perspective imagination is how humans order disparate elements of a disorderly world, and assigns it meaning.³⁷ When the gap is too large to resolve with normal reasoning, the imagination must come up with alternative, different, often novel possibilities to work on the space of the gap³⁸ such as speculation, experimental, and free-play.

Reasoning

Contrary to epistemological assumptions about objectivity and reason, imagination is a human faculty associated with the sense-making cognitive processes of reasoning.³⁹ Reasoning processes of deduction, induction, and abduction all depend on imagination in different forms and with different functions. Deductive reasoning, in which a conclusion is drawn directly from a premise. Inductive reasoning, in which a conclusion is supported by evidence but does not directly follow from conclusions,⁴⁰ relies on observation and logical inference and some imagination to fill the gaps. Abductive reasoning, which can be understood as "best guess" hypothetical reasoning, is a process of logical inference from observation to a hypothesis that might explain the observation followed by testing for validity and meaning and circulating back to formulating a new hypothesis recursively. This kind of reasoning is as dependent on imagination as it is on reasoning. Abductive imagination leads, and reasoning cleans up. It is the kind of imaginative understanding that is activated when faced with knowledge and problematic data to "frame a possible explanatory hypothesis."⁴¹ Designers engage in abductive reasoning and it is used in complex situations as an agent of both reasoning and imagination. Defined by pragmatic philosopher, mathematician and logician Charles S. Peirce, abductive reasoning is "an imaginative effort of

understanding beginning with an ‘aesthetic-hypothetic’ response to the world.”⁴² At the extreme end of abductive reasoning imagination functions to do more than make sense of the world through perception and reasoning, but is an agent of our ability to think about things that we do not or cannot experience directly.⁴³

Speculation, Experiment and Free Play

The unknowable can be knowable through the sense-breaking capacity of imagination in the cognitive functions of speculation, experiment and free-play for making new things. In the act of making something that did not exist before there is a widening gap to escape from the known and familiar to generate novelty, or going after strangeness when going after “radical novelty.”⁴⁴ Imagination functioning differently and at differing degrees in each of these cognitive processes. In these capacities, there is less reliance on facts and an increasing depending on imagination.⁴⁵

Speculative imagination, is not fantasizing, but is a cognitive function grounded in research of present reality and creatively explores the play of possibility in the present through imaginative speculation about the future.⁴⁶ It is based on the actual, projects possibility, and is generative of ideas, images and possible actions to achieve those images and ideas. Speculation functions synthetically and generatively as a form of inquiry which drives action, which in turn drives knowledge building, which in turn leads back to alter the way we act today. Speculative imagination is a sense-breaking cognitive faculty. It serves us in learning about the world. As a speculative faculty it is a necessary anchor for scaffolding understanding of an action. Speculation is a vehicle for problem solving.⁴⁷

Experimental imagination in the generative portion of the cognitive spectrum. It demands a wider field of play than the imaginations of perception, reasoning and speculation. Experimental imagination tries out new and foreign things turning off the critical faculties and relying on the key function of improvisational making and action with images—be they visual, auditory or movement.⁴⁸ It is an imagination that forms images in a back and forth between imagination and action.

Free-play is the function that is most generative in nature in the cognitive spectrum. It generates novelty rather than synthesize sensations, and produces images that are unplanned and unforeseen. It energizes and surprises. It is more associated with the unconscious mind, emotions, serendipity and intuition. It may be catalyzed by a question, but does not need to be. It is guided by “the act of playing itself” and “gets lost in the play.”⁴⁹ It is a divergent activity rather than a convergent one of reasoning and speculation. It is not ordered thought

but free-association. Free-play is after crossing and breaking boundaries rather than pushing boundaries, disrupting rather than experimenting, breaking with creative history and what it knows it can do.⁵⁰

Imagination thrives in contexts without boundaries or normative logic and where the gap between the familiar and unfamiliar is large and it can be allowed to be lost in a space of play. Play is a form of understanding what surrounds us, who we are, and a way of engaging with other. Through the understanding we gain from play, it functions to challenge the status quo, leading to knowledge, making new connections and breaking old ones.⁵¹ The realm of play, “if participated in openly, offers obvious opportunities to explore alternative modes of awareness, to develop insights into and knowledge of new modes of being, and to explore the radically different possibilities perhaps not readily available elsewhere.”⁵² Play has transformative potential.⁵³

Imagination has extreme generative power. It is a necessary cognitive faculty for creating and making something novel and meaningful. Imagination plays a fundamental role in how we perceive the world and create the world and then re-imagine the world again. It fuels creativity which is how we interact with the world through the domains of society and culture. Validating imaginative practices of abductive reasoning, speculation, experimentation, and free play as legitimate forms of knowing is necessary in an increasingly complex and emergent phenomena.⁵⁴ In such a world, we need to imagine what could be, and create the opportunity to test it, and move it forward.⁵⁵ The validity of imagination lies in its capacity to envision worlds that do not yet exist and its function in preparing the ground for actions yet to come. It guides our strategies and actions. This capacity of humans to make mental images allows them to create surprising and novel worlds that do not yet exist, by making them “as if” they already do exist.⁵⁶

Scenarios

There are several problems with futures as a subject for scholarly research. They are commonly conflated with science fiction. Science fiction is a kind of prediction of an imagined and speculative world that is typically set in the future or outer space and characterized by technological and social innovations through a blend of scientific rationalism and literary artifice.⁵⁷ As predictions, futures prescribe a single route from the present to the future. Their history of failure predictions are met with skepticism.⁵⁸ Depending on the method used to generate futures they fail to predict contingency and “wild card” events. However, predictions are only one way of understanding the future. Scenarios of futures which has been a method used by corporations and the military since the 1960s to develop

alternative plausible futures, and fictive world building more recently, are two practices that more adequately address the problem of predictions and futures as they are commonly understood.

The scenario method is a way of investigating the future that does not rely on single-route predictions because the complexities of the social, political and economic forces impacting the subject and the high probability of “wild card” event can produce wildly different outcomes.⁵⁹ Scenarios do not produce the most likely image of the future, but possible and even plausible equally valid alternative futures. Unlike predictions, scenarios incorporate the possibility of innovation, contingency, and unexpected outcomes.⁶⁰ Simply defined, they are “consistent and coherent descriptions of alternative hypothetical futures that reflect different perspectives on past, present, and future developments, which can serve as a basis for action.”⁶¹ They are “less a prediction *of*, than a systematic reflection *on* the future.”⁶² Scenarios do not aim at “calibrated probabilistic accuracy,” but greater openness to what may seem at first to be unlikely, but nonetheless possible outcomes. They describe the conditions of life of people living in, in a specific future and offer a method for analyzing certain developments and the necessary measures for resilience to deal with the most likely risks. The goal of the scenarios is to evoke a “much wider and deeper set of plausible futures” so that politicians, economists, or citizens—in the case of the futures of Pyongyang—are given a plausible basis for the strategic decisions that will take them into the future. Scenarios fall on a spectrum from models to narrative fiction depending on their goals (from pre-policy research to exploration), processes (from analytical to intuitive) and methods (from quantitative to qualitative).⁶³ Scenarios exhibit a spectrum from the possible to the plausible, or probable. They all begin with the speculative question: “What If?”

Scenarios are a way to prepare the ground for future action that begins with the question, “What if?” and once this is visualized, proceeds to ask the question, “How will we go towards the future that we want to inhabit.” Exploration was the goal of these scenarios. This demanded relying more on imagination than reason, synthesis than analysis, speculation over pre-policy research.

The scenario method was a five-step reiterative process that aims at envisioning a scenario based on trends of key factors of the present through imagination. The first step was to identify the key factors and sub-factors that would impact the urban form of Pyongyang in the future to most followed by a dialectic discourse to determine which two key factors would impact this future the most. The second step was to collect and analyze data of the past trends and project different future trajectories for those trends. The third step was to develop alternative scenarios based on the two-key factors and brining in the

many sub-factors that are entangled with the key factors. In most cases this step was aided by writing an origin story of the scenario or a history of the future of unification of the Korean Peninsula. The fourth step was to check the coherence and consistency of the scenarios through analytic discourse. The fifth step was to write or draw fictive narratives with fictive characters and plot set in a future scenario. Fictive narratives provide a way to check the coherence of a scenario, and gives texture and tactile visualizations of the impact that abstract numeric quantitative data can have on everyday life.

These scenarios provided possible future contexts—political, economic, ecological, social etc.—that would impact the future urban form of Pyongyang. The urban form that Pyongyang could take were visualized and given form through design which has its own set of practices and process.

Fictive Narratives

Fictive narratives function as a tool for testing the plausibility of a future reality, and providing a synthetic image of a future society from the collected data and future trends. Narratives of life in a future scenarios are a tool for “radical empathy” for the kinds of experiences, emotions, social rituals and the setting where the daily life of the people inhabiting the future scenario are played out. Literary fiction is probably “the most active experimental laboratory of the world-constructing enterprise.”⁶⁴ Literary fictions of possible future worlds create a free space to speculate and a space where imagination can connect with reality. Fictive narratives can also be counterfactual histories of the future also begin by asking the question, “What if?” Counterfactual histories of the future changes the “focalization” or view point of the historian who is neither in the present looking to the past, or in the present looking to the future, but writing a fictional history from the vantage point of a plausible or possible future beginning with the question “What if?” and based on evidence from the past and present. Counterfactual histories operate from the premise that history itself is a textual construct and thus the supremacy of fact over fiction must be suppressed. Drawings, zines, graphic narratives and other forms of visual fictions are another form of spatial story about the future (Figure 4). Like other forms of fictive narrative, these also “found” and “create the field” for actions that are yet to come. Fictive counterfactual histories allow us to go beyond visions of incremental change.

Fictive narratives pre-figure futures. They function as “spatial stories” in the sense defined by Michel de Certeau in that they “found” and “create the field” that precedes the historical realization of social actions that are yet to come.⁶⁵ They



Figure 4 Jeemin Sohn, Zine excerpt, “Pyongyang Project 2050: A Day in the Life,” The Pyongyang Projects, 2050.

function as a “fixation,” which means that they do what they say they will do which gives spatial stories, or narrative fiction “distributive power” and “performative force.”⁶⁶

Narrative fictions are powerful tools beyond the pragmatic role they play in checking the reliability of a scenario by creating as a free space for the imagination to speculate. They provide a space for play—a space where play is understood as being a form of understanding.⁶⁷ Narrative fictions also provide a “narrative buffer” that is permeable, allowing us to cross between our present world and a simulated future. Fictional narrative function as a “diegetic buffer”⁶⁸ for investigating dystopian futures or psychologically difficult scenarios, and as pre-figuring future actions. Narratives can be textual or visual in the form of zines, drawings, or storyboards. Design is at once a medium of inquiry, a free space for the imagination to speculate and engage in free-play, and allows us to insulate ourselves from the psychological difficulties and emotional consequences of contemplating dystopian scenarios by creating space to play with, and explore alternative visions of the future.

Design

Like narrative fiction, design fiction as play is the kind of playful thinking that connects imagination and reality.⁶⁹ Design fiction” is a design practice that articulates fictive objects and events in the context of a fictive future.⁷⁰ Design fiction is a kind of play that allows for free speculation. When the usual constraints of designing for the market are removed, design fiction is at once a way of making things, a form of understanding, and method for exploring the consequences of different commitments and values. If imagination is a material process, then design is the process that makes it material.⁷¹ Visualizations produced by Design Fiction are the most material phase of this method. Materializing spatial futures through visualizing them, and giving them form is what distinguishes literary fiction from design fiction. Design fiction extends beyond pre-figuring space to configuring a future space “as if” it already exists.⁷² Design fiction has transformative potential.⁷³ It takes the pre-figuration developed by narrative fiction one step closer to its possible realization by giving it form.

Designers are well-suited to this form of research because “design makes futures. What designers make becomes the futures we inhabit.”⁷⁴ Designers have the capacity to navigate easily between real and imagined worlds.⁷⁵ The provisional way that designers work, their method of abductive reasoning and projective capacities to imagine futures makes their form of practice particularly effective for addressing the kinds of emergent problems we are facing in a rapidly changing and radically contingent world.

Design fiction engages various forms of imagination: “fictive imagination” as a free space to speculate, play and one that insulates us from psychologically difficult dystopian futures; “informed imagination”⁷⁶ integrates fact and fiction; “speculative imagination”⁷⁷ treats speculative ideas as already actualized within a future context; and “radical imagination”⁷⁸ is the ability to imagine the world, life, and social institutions not as they are, but as they might otherwise be. In its less superficial form radical imagination is the courage and the intelligence to recognize that the world can and should be changed. Radical imagination is not just about dreaming of different futures but about bringing those possibilities back from the future to work on the present, to inspire action and new forms of solidarity today.⁷⁹ “Pragmatic imagination”—imagination put to purpose—is the form of imagination that sets imagination in motion.⁸⁰ All of them are a way of understanding the reality of our surroundings and change with imagination.⁸¹

This was a recursive process where insights gathered at each step required re-examining and conducting additional research of the impact factors which in turn required changing provisionally held design hypotheses. It was a space of

generating knowledge by means of a dialogue between imagination, in various degrees from abductive reasoning to free-play, and reasoning.

Projects

The projects that emerged from this method were developed by the Spatial Strategies Lab at Seoul National University, which is a design studio that focuses on methodological experimentation in an academic setting. The method and premises described here were not designed with pedagogical intentions, but developed and tested as an approach that could be used to address this type of problem in any context. The time period of projecting 30–35 years into the future is the time period used in the practice of the scenario method. This medium-term projection into the future is not like projecting 100 years that could more easily lead to fantasy futures. It is also not a short-term future that prevents us from projecting the cumulative effect of current trends. More importantly, scenarios were designed as a way to make decisions today to create more desired futures. Thus, a medium-term projection into the future in a span of time that is within a person's lifetime makes agency and taking certain decisions more real.

The only pre-condition for these future of Pyongyang projects was that reconciliation of the Korean peninsula could not take the form of a winner-loser scenario. This would result in obvious and easily imaginable scenarios in which the political and economic systems of the winner are imposed on the loser to create conditions we already have. Thus, reunification for these projects could only take the form of some kind of *rapprochement* which could only occur if each side gives something up. The term unification as it is used here is conceived in terms of reconciliation in order to distinguish it from “reunification.” Reunification has embedded in it the assumption that the peninsula will become a single country as it was “before” with a shared political and economic system. Reunification is a problematic concept since it is never clear what “before” refers to: Korea before the Korean War (1950–1953) and the Joint Trusteeship over Korea in which two separate governments were formed in the DPRK and South Korea (1948–1950) could be the Korean peninsula under the United States Army Military Government in Korea (1945–1948), under forced Japanese Occupation (1910–1945), the Korean Empire (1897–1910), or the Chosŏn Era (1392–1897).

The following projects that resulted from this method range from the ironic and dystopic to the subtle and exhilarating. The projects are published in full in *Pyongyang 2050: Spatial Futures*.⁸²

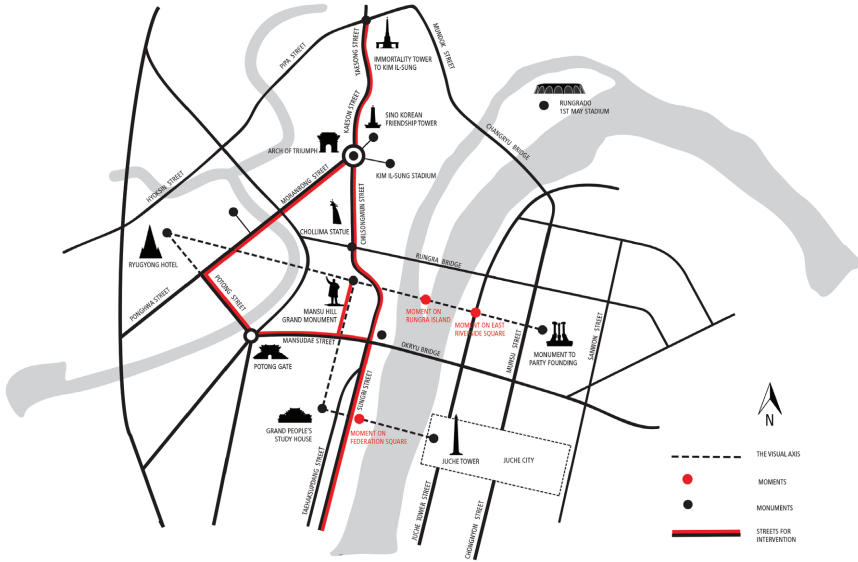


Figure 5 Jelena Mandić, proposed location new monuments in a unified Korea, Monuments and Moments City, Pyongyang, 2050.

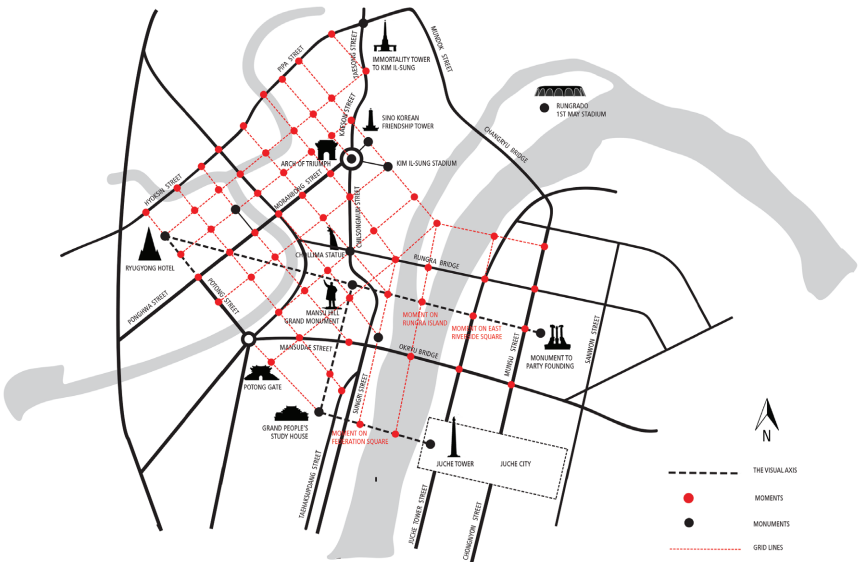


Figure 6 Jelena Mandić, proposed grid of "moments" in a unified Korea, Monuments and Moments City, Pyongyang, 2050.

Monuments and Moments City

Monuments and Moments City proposes not destroying the existing monuments to the Kim dynasty, the people of Korea and Juche ideology in a unified Korea. Instead, an urban policy for the capital city is developed that adds new layers of “monuments” that respect existing view corridors between the large-scale monuments to the leaders, people and Juche ideology. The new layer of monuments function represents the on-going political and economic shifts that occur over a long process of unification (Figures 5–6). The current identity of Pyongyang as a symbolic stage-set for the Kim regime is maintained and a finer grained grid of “moments” are added to add life to the currently lifeless and overly spacious streets.⁸³

Juche City

The scenario for this project begins between 2015–2020 when unification is resolved by forming the Federation of Korea (FK), comprising two highly autonomous republics—Republic of South Korea (RSK) and the Republic of North Korea (RNK).⁸⁴ The Federation of Korea is governed by a new political party, Korea Party (KP) comprising an equal number of representatives from former North and South Korea. The powers of the Federation of Korea are set forth in the “Constitution of the Federal Republic of Korea” (2020). The New Korea Party begins the gradual process of unification. The Republic of South Korea (RSK) continues to function as a free-market economy with special economic zones, and the Republic of North Korea (RNK) as a socialist economy that adopts South Korea’s model of special economic zones to attract foreign investors. With the influx of new foreign investment infrastructural problems, such as the lack of electricity are solved and import/export rations improve. Permission to live in Pyongyang is no longer necessary leading to a large internal migration to Pyongyang. New illegal settlements of poor quality housing are formed along the main roads of the southern portion of Pyongyang. The influx of citizens to Pyongyang results in high unemployment for several years. From 2025–2030 special business zones, or “new town” of super-modern high rises are constructed on the north side of Pyongyang. The New Town catalyzes tourism and provides jobs for the residents of the illegal settlements on the south side. Two new political parties are formed: In 2025 a splinter group of the New Korea Party forms the Conservative Party of Korea whose objective was to preserve North Korean culture and identity by limiting foreign investment as a vehicle for building a stronger national economy. In 2045, a third party, the Progressive Party of Korea (PPK) is formed consisting mostly of young former North Korean citizens who support the full unification of Korea, a

free economy that align with global economic, cultural and lifestyle trends which is partially financed by international countries, corporations and organizations interested in the Korean economy. By 2050, more *sindosi* [신도시], or international business districts are established as the city continues to polarize into different political zones. As part of the unification negotiations, both sides agree that an independent state, called the Juche City to be built in Pyongyang. Modelled on the Vatican City the Juche City/주체 시티 is a politically and economically self-sufficient monarchical state based on the fundamental tenets of autonomy and the *Juche* ideology of “self-reliance.” Kim Jong-un, the leader of former North Korea at the time of unification and about 1000 of his staunchest supporters inhabit the Juche City which was completed in 2036. The Juche City is located on the east side of the Taedong River on axis with both the Juche Tower (1982) and Kim Il Sung Square (1954). The concept of Juche City is to symbolize, through its architectural hyper-monumentality, the power of the ruling Kim dynasty in former North Korea in the newly establish Republic of North Korea (RNK). Succession for leadership is hereditary.

The proposal of Juche City takes the form of a large scale enclave inserted into the existing fabric of Pyongyang occupying an area of 850,000 square meters. Juche City steps up from the most public area by the river and the Juche Tower to the most private residential estate of the leader. There are three levels of accessibility on successively higher levels: the public area around the Juche Tower that is accessible to tourists and residents of Pyongyang by foot along the river, and the Juche Pyramid that functions as an entrance to the Juche Mega Mall; a semi-private area that is the site of the Juche Army Base and large parade grounds opened to the public every year on April 15 when Juche City celebrates Kim Il Sung’s birthday, and the Juche State Building accessible only to the Juche Leader and state officials; and the top level, the most private area, is the Great Juche Building that houses is the residential complex of the Juche Leader. Each level is connected by ramps on each side wide enough to allow for the movement of tanks between levels and separated a 5-meter high gate guarded by the Juche City Security Forces (Figures 7–8).

Beneath this monumental and intimidating urban landscape is the Juche Mega Mall. It is accessible through the glass Juche Pyramid located in the public area above the level of the Juche Tower. Its large scale is intentionally larger than I. M. Pei’s glass pyramid at the Louvre in Paris, with access also controlled by Juche City Security Forces. The mall is twice the size (635,000 square meters) of the Mall of America in Minnesota which is currently the largest mall in the world, but more importantly the largest mall in the United States. The walls of the Juche City that face the city are lined with shops and other commercial venues also controlled

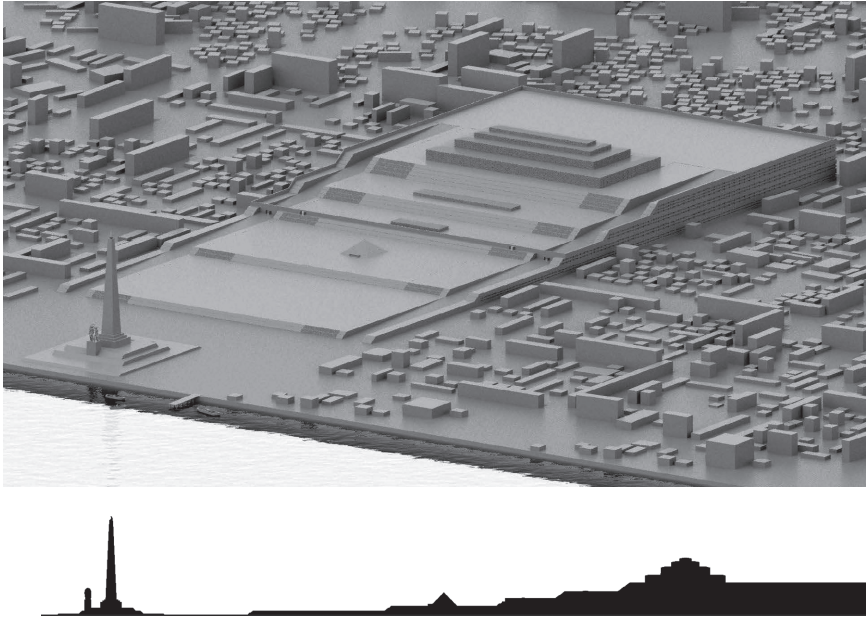


Figure 7 Klara Romigioli, Juche City, Pyongyang, 2050.

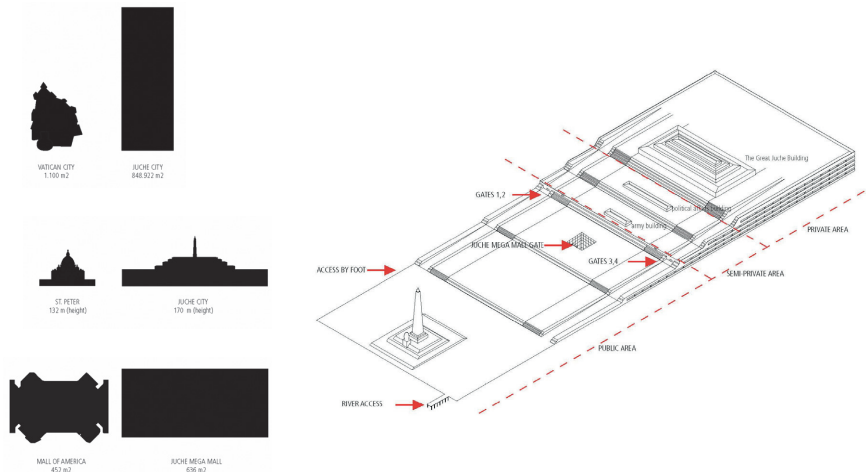


Figure 8 Klara Romigioli, Juche City, Pyongyang, 2050.

by the Juche City Security Forces. The Juche Mega Mall supports the sovereign state financially through profits from retail outlets, manufacturing facilities, the sale of designs and, as was the case in former North Korea, the construction expertise of monuments and monumental architecture, large panoramic paintings of historical events, cinemas, and the Museum of Juche Ideology and Museum of North Korea.

The Pyongyang Projects

This scenario begins with the fall of Kim Jong-Un in 2019. With the US involvement increasing gradually and UN Security Council sanctions against North Korea limiting travel and trade, the reunification of North and South Korea was inevitable.⁸⁵ The peaceful transition of power and the establishment of a new country called Unified Korea was met with great enthusiasm on the global front. Families were reunited, safer energy alternatives were developed, the job market expanded, and the industrialization of the northern region occurred at an incredible pace. Though it was a sudden transition for the residents of the northern region, many seemed to adapt to it well through the introduction of government programs focused on introducing former North Korea to the more economically advanced life of the south.

Pyongyang, welcomed a new political and economic changes and a new environmental approach to urban development that focused on energy infrastructure. In keeping with South Korea's pre-unification goal of becoming an exporter of energy, a new nuclear power plant was constructed outside the city limits that included privately and government-funded research facilities that focused on clean energy strategies housed in the existing government buildings of the former regime. Buildings, monuments, and squares that once represented the fear and pride of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) were transformed to become the social hub of this semi-urban city.

Migration from the north to the southern regions of the peninsula after unification in 2025 was forecasted as being inevitable given the isolated and underdeveloped state of the northern provinces that left poor housing and few industrial opportunities for the struggling lower class. The dramatic flow of people to the south would lead to severe gentrification and extreme housing costs forcing the homeless and jobless to return to Pyongyang and engage in the growing energy and agricultural industry. This would allow Pyongyang, along with the northern provinces to match the industrial scale of the south within ten years by 2035. The Korean Clean Energy Initiative (KCEI) was almost able to fuel the entire country reducing the amount imported oil. Echoing the spectacular growth of South Korea

after the Korean War, Unified Korea grew at such a fast pace that the overall GDP surpassed that of the Germany and Japan by 2045.

This progress was marred by the unfortunate nuclear power plant explosion in 2045 that destroyed Pyongyang along with wild fires that ravished the northern region. Nuclear radiation spread to a large portion of the northern region. The impact of the third major nuclear disaster after Chernobyl (1986) and Fukushima (2011) had an impact globally not only with spreading radiation, but also on the nuclear energy industry in its entirety. The risk of nuclear energy as a clean energy alternative proved to outweigh the immediate need for an energy alternative.

The economic impact of the failed energy industry, cost of reconstruction, and relocation delayed urban growth. Despite the delay, the plan for the complete reconstruction was put in place for the development of The Pyongyang Projects, a new sustainable city scheduled to be completed in 2030. Through a series of internal investments from the southern regions, a model for remediating nuclear sites, The Projects were completed within two years of the explosion and the nuclear power plant restored and running to its full capacity. Most of the radiation in the air and water was dispersed within the year, yet the remaining isotopic particles settled onto the ground surface of what was now a ghost city. The government cleared a 500-meter radius at the heart of the city by removing the debris and 12 cm of top soil. While radiation levels remained slightly higher than Seoul, the amount of radiation within the 500-meter clearing was not harmful to people over extended periods of time. However, there was a general wariness of moving back into a city that had slightly higher radiation levels than those of other countries. Despite these concerns, a small portion of the citizens of Unified Korea volunteered to move into the Pyongyang Projects by 2050.

The Pyongyang Projects, became the icon of the new city, as the home-base for global researchers and environmentalists to develop sustainable farming methods, environmental preservation policies, and alternative energy sources to best sustain the health of this city in the anthropogenic era. Its unique research opportunities attract young researchers and single-member households. The city is characterized by a heavy dependence on technology and virtual communication to extend its research reach to more global collaboration. A Public Works Program (PWP) established in 2048 marked the beginning transition for the city's effort to revitalize the northern region. The Public Works Program offered above average wages and housing for the residents of The Projects. This stimulated an increase in the number of younger middle-class families living in The Projects who were taking advantage of the favourable conditions of the government assistance program. With the job market in the south at a low, due to the sudden shift in job

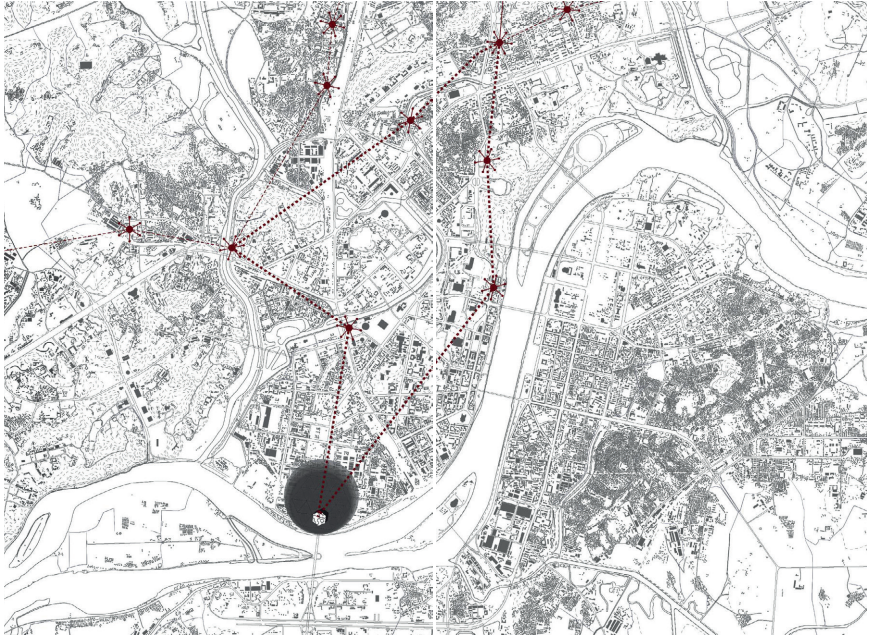
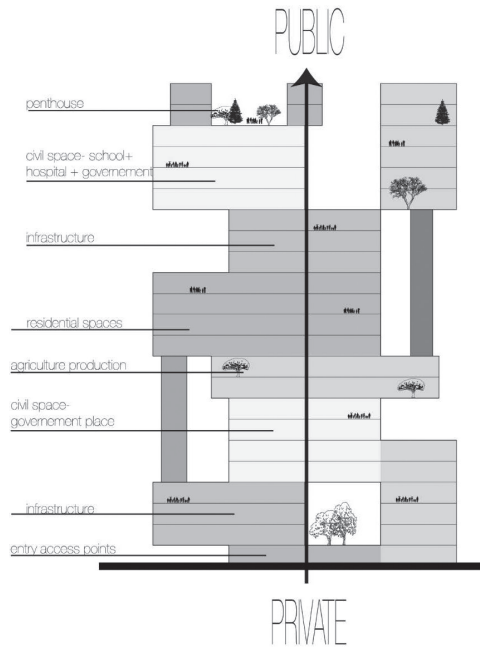


Figure 9a & 9b Jeemin Sohn, site plan and conceptual section of mega-structure and underground connections, The Pyongyang Projects, 2050.



opportunities after the reunification, many educated students were out of work after graduation. Therefore, The Projects, along with the Public Works Program provided them the opportunity to transition into a new life.

The Pyongyang Projects takes the form of a multi-level mega-structure housing about 960,000 citizens, within an urban farm facility that has the capacity to feed over a million people. It also includes a four-story mall, and numerous research facilities. The multi-purpose mega-structure is secured inside an artificial façade that protects the city from additional radiation and acts as not only a scientific research centre, but also a centre for social research that monitors daily life in close proximity. The government of United Korea plans to expand the habitation of the city by remediating more land and building more projects in future phases. The site for each phase is divided into five major zones: agriculture and research, agriculture and production, infrastructure, residential, and commercial. Each zone has a main entry point ensuring a degree of environmental security.

The vertical mega-structure is divided and contains each of the five zones as well to ensure that any issues can be isolated within each block rather than endanger the entirety of The Projects. Because the footprint of The Projects is only 100 x 100 meters the remaining cleared area is left as an experimental field for research about how to revitalize the soil after a nuclear disaster. This field hosts a large variety of planting patterns that range from those used for researching new soil conditions to those used solely for agricultural production for The Project.

The Pyongyang Projects faces the problem of becoming an isolated city with temporary residents. Though popular with the younger generation, the city lacks a strong family-oriented demographic, and wide range of ages. The technocratic government system constantly employs new members of The Pyongyang Projects community, making any significant changes to government extremely difficult to complete. The city itself is almost treated as a campus, or facility rather than as a city despite having its own legal, infrastructural, and residential system. Despite the internal difficulties, Pyongyang is the heart of leading-edge research in post-nuclear urban agriculture and a leader in global clean agriculture development (Figure 9a & 9b).

Linear City

The *Linear City* projects the future development of Pyongyang and Seoul as reciprocal. Over time Pyongyang grows south and Seoul grows north along an existing and new railway line between the two cities making it easy to commute from these “new towns” and between the capital cities and at the same time alleviating future population problems faced by both cities as specified in the scenario

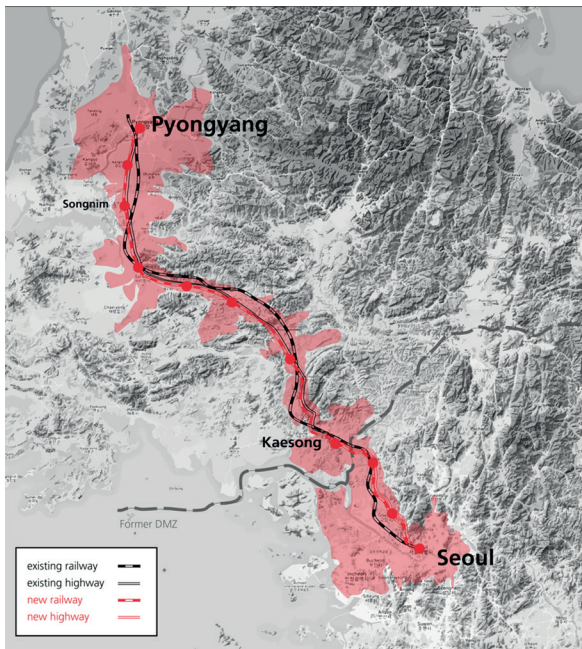
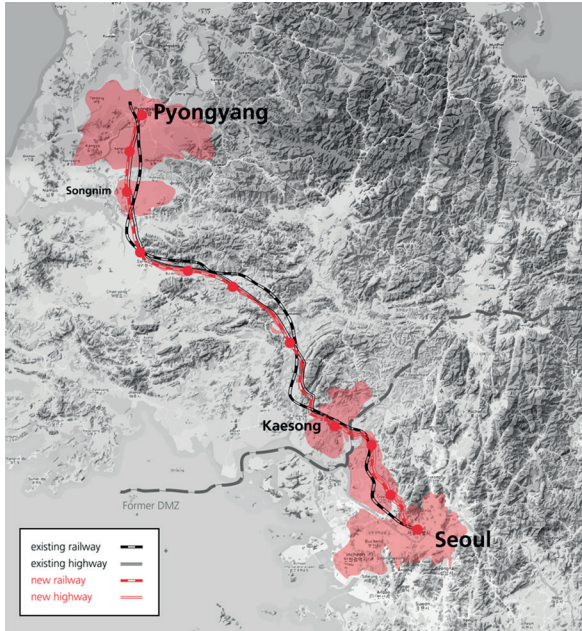


Figure 10 Chingwei Liu, Linear City connecting Seoul and Pyongyang, 2030 & 2050.

(Figure 10). The context of the Linear City is a political system with multiple parties and a mixed economy that is a combination of an open but controlled market modelled on China's economic system.⁸⁶ In this scenario improvements in the communication and transportation infrastructure attract international investment. They proposed re-opening the existing railway line for transport of goods, and building a new parallel line for a high-speed train for passengers; and extending the highway to connect Seoul to Pyongyang. Migration to North Korea is fueled by an aging society in South Korea and Seoul residents seeking lower density and housing costs in Pyongyang, but with easy access to Seoul with the new train and highway infrastructure. International migration is stimulated by incentivizing tax-free zones and an otherwise free market economy.

The Linear City grows south from Pyongyang which grows to towards the south to accommodate influx from the rural areas of North Korea, and grows north from Seoul to alleviate the high real estate costs and density. The structure of the linear city replicates the administrative structure of the *gu*/구 used in Seoul. The *gu* take on the socialist ideal of North Korea of equally sharing resources—government, cultural, medical, public transport, schools, and a Personal Rapid Transit provides every resident of the *gu* access to rapid train transit to both Seoul and Pyongyang.

Roller Coaster City

The scenario for the Urban Roller Coaster for Pyongyang is one in which the Kim regime collapses and the dictatorship of its current leader, Kim Jung Un, is replaced by a multi-party democracy and a socially-inspired humanistic market-driven free-market economy.⁸⁷ The intention behind the Pyongyang Urban Roller Coaster is for public spaces of Pyongyang to provide the citizens of the DPRK with a mechanism to change their memories of their difficult past. In 2050, the Pyongyang Urban Roller Coasters is the longest (15km) and at its highest point (150m) the tallest in the world. It physically connects what before were only visual corridors between the monuments commemorating the leaders, symbols of the North Korean people, and *Juche* philosophy of the DPRK. The intention of the roller coasters however, was to both change the perspective and memories of North Korea citizens. The urban roller coaster for Pyongyang is a proposal for changing the individual and collective memories of the DPRK in a unified Korea without removing or destroying the monuments and the past they represent that give Pyongyang its iconic and identity. Public space is put at the service of transforming difficult memories of people who have lived through the difficult years of the authoritarian Kim family regime.

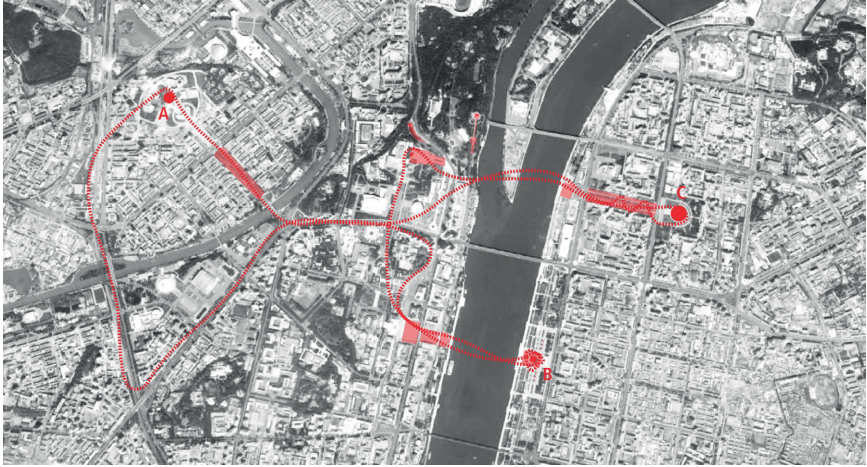


Figure 11 Jae Ho Lee, Routes A, B & C, Urban Roller Coaster routes, Pyongyang, 2050.

The Pyongyang Urban Roller Coaster comprises three roller coaster routes of varying types, heights, speeds and locations around the city (Figure 11). In addition, the currently empty Ryugyong Tower hosts a roof top roller coaster, and two tunnel slides. The rooftop roller coaster winds around the central mast of the tower providing riders with a so-far unimaginable 360-degree unobstructed birds-eye-view of the city. Two slides, one from the hotel level and one from the residential level, slithers in and out of the Ryugyong Tower to the 100 level all the while being taken through a visual history of Pyongyang projected on the glass panels of the slide that is superimposed on the real scenery of the city beyond (Figures 12–17). At the 100m level is the station for roller coaster routes A and B that run along a wide and long street at a high speed towards the Potong Gate heading up to a small hill along Mansudae Street that leads to the junction of Kim Il Sung Square and the Mansu Hill Grand Monument (Figures 18–19).

Routes B & C begin at this point and diverge after passing the Potong Gate. Route B takes passengers through the symbolic space of the old city. The roller coaster loops its way across Kim Il Sung Square, crossing the Taedong River. Riders are taken up and swirled around the symbolic 170m high column of *Juche* ideology (Figures 20–22). Route C takes riders towards the symbolic space of the revolution Mansu Hill Grand Monument and the Monument to the Foundation of the Korean Workers' Party. The riders come back through the symbols of the hammer, sickle and brush of the Monument to the Workers' Party and are whirled towards the two colossal statues of the Kims standing high on Mansu hill against

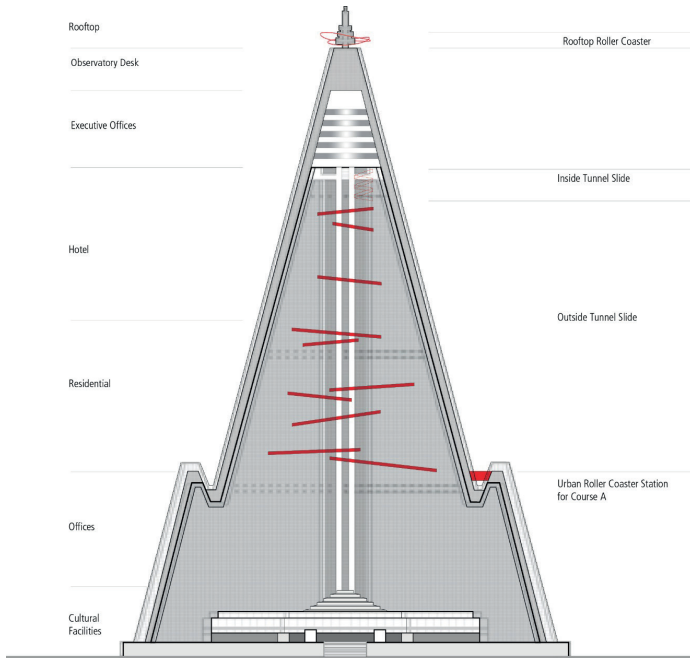


Figure 12 Jae Ho Lee, Ryugyong Tower, section, tunnel and slides, Pyongyang, 2050.

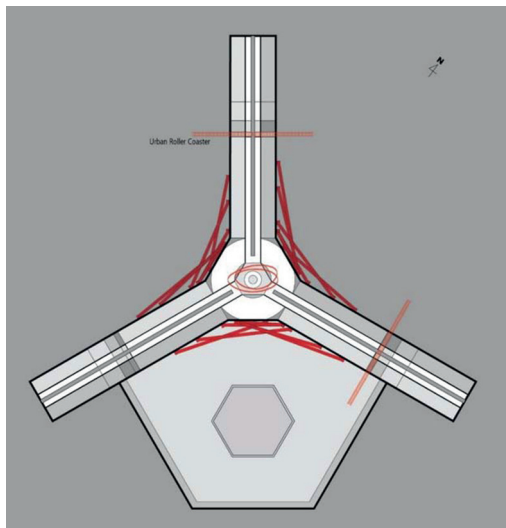


Figure 13 Jae Ho Lee, Ryugyong Tower, plan, tunnel and slides, Pyongyang, 2050.



Figure 14 Jae Ho Lee, Ryugyong Tower, slide at residential level, Pyongyang, 2050.



Figure 15 Jae Ho Lee, Ryugyong Tower, slide at hotel level, Pyongyang, 2050.



Figure 16 Jae Ho Lee, Ryugyong Tower, slide at hotel level, Pyongyang, 2050.



Figure 17 Jae Ho Lee, Rooftop Roller Coaster, Ryugyong Tower, Pyongyang, 2050.

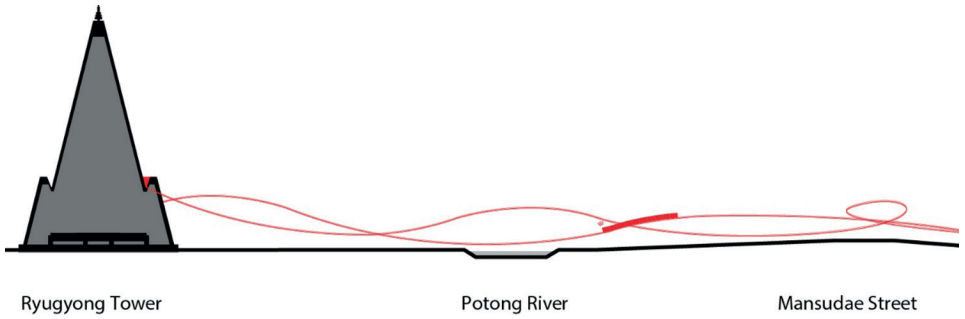


Figure 18 Jae Ho Lee, Section, Routes A & B, Urban Roller Coaster, Pyongyang, 2050.



Figure 19 Jae Ho Lee, Route A, Urban Roller Coaster view looking at Ryugyong Tower, Pyongyang, 2050.

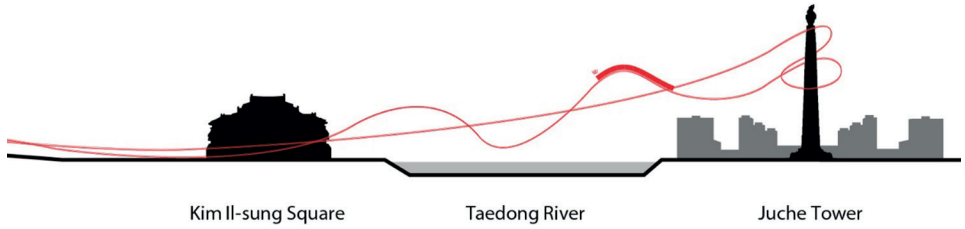
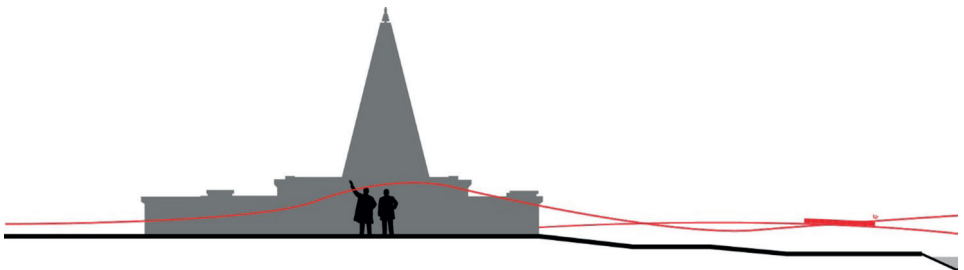


Figure 20 Jae Ho Lee, Route B, Urban Roller Coaster looking towards the Juche Tower from Kim Il Sung Square, Roller Coaster City, Pyongyang, 2050.



Figure 21 Jae Ho Lee, Route B, Urban Roller Coaster looking towards The People's Grand Study House, Kim IL-Sung Square, Pyongyang, 2050.

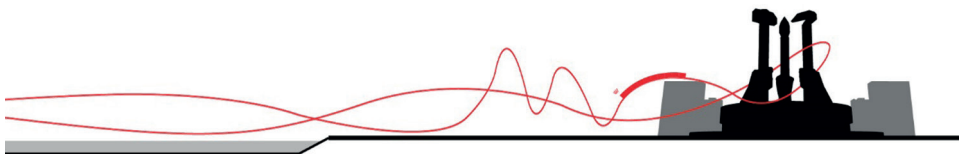


Korean Revolution Museum &
Kim Il-sung & Kim Jung-il Statue

Figure 23 Jae Ho Lee, Section, Route C, Urban Roller Coaster, Pyongyang, 2050.



Figure 22 Jae Ho Lee, Route B, Urban Roller Coaster winding around the Juche Tower, Pyongyang, 2050.



Taedong River

The Monument to the Foundation
of the Workers' Party



Figure 24 Jae Ho Lee, Route C, Urban Roller Coaster looking towards Mansu Hill Grand Monuments and the Ryugyong Tower, Pyongyang, 2050.



Figure 25 Jae Ho Lee, Route C, Urban Roller Coaster looking towards Monument to Party Founding, Pyongyang, 2050.

the backdrop of the Ryugyong Tower (Figures 23–25). Courses B and C take riders up steep inclines and spin them around and around monuments allowing them to escape their familiar meanings of a socialist collective-centered ideology to life as thought-centered individuals, and from a solemn life to one of leisure and amusement. In the end, the thrills of these rides leave riders with only the excitement and new real experience to be engraved in their memories letting past memory of the place fall into oblivion where the roller coaster now exists.

The roller coaster provides the North Korean people with the unfamiliar experience of an exhilarating loss of control that counters the experience of absolute control many have experienced their entire lives. No longer are they made to feel small at the foot of over-scaled monuments of Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il, or looking up to the ever-visible Juche Tower. Instead the roller coasters take them up and circle around these monuments, physically and psychically changing the perspective of the people riding. They can now able to look at their leaders in the eye.

The over-sized roller coasters provide people with an extreme experience that allows them to forget, even if temporarily at first, the difficult memories they have of their political and economic past. With repetition and over time refreshing and new experiences will transform those memories into new and more fun memories. The roller coasters allow citizens to engage in an ongoing process of forming and re-forming a new sense of a familiar place and in the process generating new individual memories and eventually new collective memories of North Koreans and the world at large.

Imagination as Knowledge

The inadequacy of epistemology or traditional knowledge lies in its inability to address subjects and problems that do not comply with its “necessary and sufficient conditions” for knowledge. Traditional knowledge cannot address propositions that cannot be known, or justify beliefs that are not based on “reliable” sources. While conventional epistemology has served us well for addressing propositions that are known, and beliefs that can be justified, it is ill-equipped to address certain kinds subjects—those that are emergent, irreducibly complex and that present us with novel and irreducible unknowns. The validity of the method used here does not lie in its particularities of combining data analysis, the scenario technique, fictive narrative, speculative design to visualize future contexts and future objects and spaces that inhabit them. The validity of this method and its acknowledgement of imagination as a special form of knowing allows us to know of subjects that cannot be accessed using conventional epistemology. Its value lies

in accepting the full spectrum of imagination as a crucial cognitive function for understanding unknowable and unfamiliar realities and devising new methods for new problems. The value of this method also lies in being comfortable with provisional thinking rather than irrevocable conclusions, and aiming for alternatives rather than predictions. In short, the values of this method lies in replacing epistemology with imagination when required by the subject and nature of the sources. The validity of this research method lies in its ability to materialize our imaginings of the future impact of our current commitments and values, which has transformative power and influences the actions today that already are already forming the future. Whether this method is considered to be valid or not may be beside the point, if we do not have a method at all for investigating unknowable propositions and subjects that cannot be justified through reliable sources that are increasingly threatening our very existence on the planet.

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'Moments of the Future': Imagining the City and Monuments of Pyongyang in 2050

JELENA MANDIĆ PhD Student, Seoul National University

Abstract

The possibility of reconciliation between the two Koreas and a potential change of the political regime in North Korea raises the question of the urban futures of North Korean cities, which at the moment serve as a stage for power consolidation through the monumental propaganda of the present regime. This paper examines an urban design project that imagines urban future of Pyongyang in 2050 and its colossal socialist era monuments after an assumed unification. Instead of erasing the socialist past of the city by removing the existing monuments (which was the practice in other socialist countries), this project proposes adding new layers of monuments that would represent and commemorate the new political and economic realities of 'unification,' and at the same time preserve the identity and legibility of the city. This alternative strategy was made possible by combining design thinking with the scenario technique utilized in Future Studies. Within the framework of the established scenario and politico-economic circumstances it compels, the method of writing *History of the future* was developed as a tool for envisioning an urban reality of 2050 Pyongyang, from which the *Grid of Moments* project would arise. The resulting project, conceived within the fictional story, allows historical and future ideologies, represented by the historical and new monuments, to coexist in Pyongyang through concurrent and respective acknowledgement. In this way, the role of architecture is shifted from serving the political regime towards acting as a social critique, as well as inducing a social transformation. These thought strategies were enabled by approaching design through

scenario and storytelling method developed within it, as it left space for more imagination and creativity, and introduced a degree of objectivity to the design process by allowing different ideologies to be considered.

Keywords: Socialist monuments, urban future, Pyongyang, urban design, urban theory.

Introduction

‘As the past is gathered into the present and the gathering body of experience finds a home in the mind, the present acquires temporal depth—loses its acrid instantaneity, its razorblade quality. One might call this interiorization of the time or time rendered transparent.

It seems to me that past, present and future must be active in the mind’s interior as a continuum. If they are not, the artefact we make will be without temporal depth or associative perspective.’

Aldo Van Eyck

This paper examines an urban project that delved into the urban future of Pyongyang by 2050, questioning the methodology behind the design process and exploring its contribution to the transformative role of architecture in society as well as its relationship with the political regime that the project envisions.¹ With particular regard to Pyongyang, issues concerning future urban development and the role of architecture in society offer a valuable case study. However, approaching the design for the future brings significant methodological problems, as the input information regarding social and urban circumstances within which a design of an urban project commonly departs, is not immediately available. The project presented here, is focused on the urban future of Pyongyang’s colossal monuments, and it was designed within an academic studio,² in which scenario technique was used to approach design looking 35 years into the future—a period of time commonly used by scenario practitioners as an interval that it is possible to grasp in a grounded way in one’s lifetime. Scenarios, however, are not design focused, but intended to give a better understanding of the plausible future. Hence, to be able to approach design within the scenario³ a new method which extends the common design process, and which we discuss in this paper, was created.

Pyongyang is a socialist city, predominantly untouched by global changes, and is commonly referred to as an ‘open-air museum of socialist architecture.’⁴ Apart from providing everyone with a home, any socialist city has important political

brought to another level. Not only were the sculptures of ‘revolutionary’ leaders and revolution inspired monuments placed at key junctures throughout the city, but the central part of Pyongyang also became organized around three main visual and communicational axes (Figure 1) of great political value, albeit achieved rather spontaneously.⁶ The first visual line was formed between Kim Il Sung Square (金日成廣場 *Kimilsŏng Gwangjang*) and the Mansu Hill Grand Monument (萬壽臺大紀念碑 *Mansudae Daeginyŏmbi*, completed in 1972). The second axis was established in 1975 when the Juche Tower (主體思想塔 *Chuch’e Sasang T’ap*) was built on the east bank of the Taedong River (大同江 *Taedonggang*), facing the Square from across the river. The third axis connected the Monument to the Founding of the Party (黨創建紀念塔 *Tangch’ang Gŏn’ginyŏm T’ap*, completed in 1995) with the Mansu Hill Grand Monument and, indeed, extended as far as incorporating the pyramid shaped Ryugyong (*Ryugyŏng*) Hotel.⁷ Important governmental and representational buildings were also built along these three main urban axes, highlighting their political importance and visual effect.⁸

Due to the close ties between these monuments and the governing political regime as well as the socialist history of the country, any vision alluding to an alternate urban future of the city would necessarily raise a question of what to do with these historic landmarks full of political importance when the political ideology they represent no longer exists. When other former socialist states began transitioning to governance of a different political nature, the general practice concerning these kinds of monuments was to have them removed, or collected for display in a historical park, where they lose their original role and meaning but their historical importance remains acknowledged.

Envisioning the urban reality of Pyongyang in 2050, the urban project presented here proposes an alternative strategy, whereby existing aspects of urban architecture remain utilized, but for purposes different to former ideologies. Through careful staging and positioning of the existing monuments, such as the oversized sculptures of former leaders and symbols of ideology, they became important urban landmarks, carriers of the city’s identity recognizable in city panoramas and the most popular tourist spots. For this reason, instead of erasing the socialist past of the city by removing existing monuments, this project proposes adding new layers of monuments, called *Moments*, that represent and commemorate the new political and economic realities of ‘unification’, whilst blending in with existing structures to form a new architectural reality for Pyongyang.

This paper argues that this kind of approach was made possible by coupling design thinking with the scenario technique used in Future Studies, providing opportunities for architects to investigate alternative political outcomes. Scenarios do not aim to give accurate predictions nor probable future realities but more

so plausible alternatives, open to the unlikely yet possible outcomes.⁹ In order to produce a spectrum of unlikely outcomes, they combine qualitative data and trend analysis with intuitive thinking in the form of writing a fictional narrative.¹⁰ The general approach to predicting future situations and occurrences is based on experience, however scenarios are challenging through compelling us to cope with unfamiliar situations.¹¹ This was the case with created scenarios for *Pyongyang 2050*, within which the project that deals with Pyongyang's monuments, called *Grid of Moments* was conceived.

The challenge of creating a project within the framework of the scenario and unfamiliar political and socio-economic setting, which it envisions, raised methodological issues in the design process. A typical design for an urban project starts with an analysis of current conditions and is directed towards an aspired future, where both of these are given by a plan and a program. In circumstances where both of these were unknown, and the data necessary for the analysis is not immediately available, a method of "storytelling" was created to incorporate the dimension of time by writing *History of the future*. This method extended the common design process by employing the element of imagination through writing in the pre-design phase to compensate for the lack of the input data. It also enabled an approach to the future beyond the mechanical ways trusted by the scientific clock, incorporating subjective time,¹² in which past, present and future make a continuum in the social and spatial development. Thus, the project *Grid of Moments*, which was conceived within this fictional story, is a result of a study not only concerned with the current state of affairs, but one that examines the flow in a city development. It was created as a response to dynamic processes in the city life which the *History of the Future* illuminates through time focused approach. As a consequence, the resulting project values the city's history and continuity, simultaneously shifting the role of architecture from adapting the urban space at the behest of existing political structures toward creating a space of social change by constructing a scene, where opposing ideologies and systems of power coexist.

The Scenario

The principal methodology of the scenario technique consists of selecting and combining two key factors in order to create a spectrum of plausible futures. The two key factors we identified as crucial for the spatial future of Pyongyang were the economic and political systems. These two factors lie at the core of separation of North and South Korea, and their different future development could give extreme opposite end results.

In the scenario within which the *Grid of Moments* project was developed, the two states unite in the form of a federation: the Federal Republic of Korea, in which both states—the Republic of North Korea and Republic of South Korea—have a large degree of economic and political autonomy. A federal government is formed with the equal participation of both states, with the seat of the government and the capital of the Federation located in the former Demilitarized Zone. In the former DPRK, the Korean Worker’s Party (朝鮮勞動黨 *Chosŏllodongdang*) was disbanded and three new political parties were formed. The Kim dynasty still has a large number of supporters among the *conservatives* in the country, but a strong body of opposition is also present, mostly young progressives who want radical changes in the country. Political tensions between the two sides persist long after the unification. Economically, the Republic of North Korea will continue to function as a largely Socialist country, but the economic circumstances are changing as Free Economic Zones (FEZ) are formed within overall limited market economy of the Republic of North Korea.¹³

These political and economic developments bring changes to Pyongyang’s cityscape. On the north side of Pyongyang, a special economic zone called *Shindoshi* (The New Town) is built as a centre for international economic relationships. This new city area is characterized by super-modern high-rise office buildings. The south side of the city becomes the place of migration of the poor and unemployed from all regions of North Korea. This settlement of squatters, poor services and low-quality residential buildings is called ‘Newcomers Town’. The sharp contrast between these two new neighbourhoods reflects the continued differences in the social and material status of citizens in the newly formed Republic of North Korea.¹⁴

With the opening of the Republic of North Korea’s borders to tourists and changes in lifestyle for the local population, such as shorter working hours and more leisure time, there is an increased need for public facilities and outdoor activities in the city that was formerly characterized by its empty and deserted streets.¹⁵

History of the future as a Method

The unfamiliar political setting of the scenario has challenged the design process by creating a situation where it is not possible to rely on experience to approach design problems encountered. To imagine how Pyongyang would develop in this scenario, and to design space within it, storytelling as a method in the form of writing *History of the future* was fabricated within the framework of the given scenario. This “history” places a “historian” in the future, writing about the

developments that occurred in the past and at present up until 2050. The story begins as a narrative of the city's history and develops into fiction, following the presumed change of political and economic circumstances after the establishment of the Federation. The fictional narrative further envisions the imaginary protagonists, their personal feelings and attitudes towards the political and economic changes, and how these affected their everyday life. Finally, the project for *Grid of Moments* arose from these envisioned circumstances, as a part of the fictional story, presumably created by the protagonists. Further, unlike the usual design representations, the design of this project was presented inside the fictional story, with design drawings as illustrations together with historical images and maps.

Writing a *History of the future* extended the common design procedure by using imagination to cross the bridge between now and then, what we know, and what will be known at that time, thus creating circumstances grounded on the predictions given by the scenario in a systematic way. By applying this method, we were able to imagine how the city would change and how the actors of the story would behave under this new set of circumstances. This fictive narrative was a way to place ourselves in such a situation in order to develop a sense of empathy with relevant characters living in this new reality, "learning" how these actors might think, act or react under these conditions, rather than merely pushing our own ungrounded ideas forward. Through this approach social circumstances, as well as the urban problems to be solved, which would otherwise be impossible to predict, were brought to light. The project of Moments was a strategic solution for these issues and, therefore, it would not be possible to create such project without the element of imagination employed through storytelling.

In the *History of the future* the project *Grid of Moments* was initiated by planners and designers to address two problems that the fictional development of Pyongyang faced after the unification—how to bring life to the deserted streets of Pyongyang and how to develop a solution for the existing monuments that will represent a past ideology in the future. The former goal was openly brought forward; the latter one was not openly admitted.

Throughout the depiction of this emerging scenario, the monuments of Pyongyang are closely tied to its social past, emerging present and future political system. Any system that has gone through transition dealt with this propaganda by removing it, and in a way erasing part of the city's history. However, within the *History of the future*, the actors decided to keep the monuments for reasons that extend beyond their political and symbolic roles. First, according to the scenario for the project, the political regime they represent still has a large number of supporters among conservatives who hold significant economic power in the country. Their removing would cause political tensions and threat to the peace

contrast the environment, are visible from different distances and are arranged in continuous sequences that become extremely useful in any perception of the urban environment. Therefore, the socialist monuments of Pyongyang do not only serve the purpose of political propaganda, but also contribute to legibility of the city and play an important role in the city's identity. Without these historical monuments, Pyongyang could revert into being just another city with endless residential blocks lacking notable and apparent character. The protagonists of the *History of the future* are aware of this, and therefore try to find a solution for not only keeping the monuments, but also maintaining their visibility and clarity within Pyongyang's urban corridors. In these circumstances, the *Grid of Moments* (Figure 2) arises as an understated, nonaggressive solution for Pyongyang's urban problems arisen in a post-unification reality.

The Grid Strategy: A New Layer of Memory, Commemoration and Meaning

The design of the *Grid of Moments* was initiated, within the fictional story, to address a lack of public life in Pyongyang, and as an attempt to humanize oversized streets and squares intended for political representation and mass spectacles, which in everyday life became void, little more than deserted urban spaces. The concept for this project was to treat the future Pyongyang as a palimpsest for another layer of monuments called *Moments*, arranged in a grid, which would be added to the framework of the existing monuments. This was a simple strategy of creating nodes of public life in the streets, parks and squares of Pyongyang to encourage social interactions through spatial interventions on different scales. Rather than an authoritative master plan, this project represents merely a policy imposing a finer abstract grid, relating to the view corridors of the existing socialist era monuments, to determine the location of these nodes. Each *Moment* would be designed by a different architect or a designer, and would have a different content. These measures would bring life, tourism and diversity to the city and encourage social interactions through public spaces for public events, festivals, exhibitions etc. The *Moments* would be built slowly over time, and the *Grid* would subsequently expand from the historic centre of Pyongyang towards more remote neighbourhoods and areas. The guidelines developed by the municipal government of Pyongyang had no strict rules for designing these interventions, except not to interfere with the clarity of the city's corridors, paths and staged views, around which the city was organized. For this reason, majority of the *Moments* are designed to be open but submerged interventions.

The open policy of the *Grid* gave an opportunity to architects, artists and urbanites to find new and different approaches to implement changes into the urban landscape of Pyongyang in the way, in which it does not interfere with the positive qualities of the city, nor does it try to erase its history. The value of the *Grid of Moments* as an urban project is twofold: first, it values the political and urban history of the city, and, secondly, it creates greater “walkability” and promotes active public life in the socialist-modernist city. However, as the *History of the future* implies, although not openly admitted, the *Moments* (just like monuments) have hidden meanings and are fabricated as part of a strategy to address issues surrounding socialist monuments in a discrete and diplomatic way. This strategy is purely architectural and it is contained through an opposition between the composition based on grid to the one based on axes, and the opposing nature of architectural approach of monuments and *Moments*.

Throughout the history of urban planning, the axis is recognized as a symbol of power and authority, and the compositions based on the axis are associated with social order and hierarchy. In contrast, the composition of *Grid of Moments* is hierarchically neutral and politically democratic. Moreover, unlike modernist urbanism grid plans, which also aimed towards hierarchical neutrality, it did not erase older layers of the city, but conformed to the existing urban tissue instead. Furthermore, the *Grid of Moments* incorporated the main axes and socialist monuments and thus neutralized the political importance of the axes on one level, whilst concurrently allowing it to persist on another.

The point grid as an urban design strategy has precedent in Bernard Tschumi’s project for *Parc de la Villette*. This park, built in Paris in 1987, was a practical application of Tschumi’s architectural theory. The point grid of *La Villette* had a role of downplaying the hierarchy of traditional urban projects and compositions based on the spatial order that mirrors social hierarchy.²⁰ The grid is articulated and activated by the *follies*, autonomous objects without any historical reference or meaning attached, situated in the nodes of the grid.²¹ The system of *follies* is superimposed with two other systems, the system of gardens and the system of paths, which are also designed without traditional hierarchy and historical reference, overall, rendering *Parc de la Villette* as an abstract composition which mediates between the site and a concept.²² In that sense, the political message of an anti-hierarchical grid at *La Villette* is only theoretical. In the case of *Grid of Moments*, the inscription of the grid over the existing urban matrix in Pyongyang works as an unambiguous critique, as it is directly inscribed on a city, which was founded upon the social order that is being criticized by it.

The second strategy of the *Grid of Moments* is contained in the approach to the design of the *Moments*. They are comparable in their role to the *follies*, as they

are designed to connect and involve people with the space. However, the political role of the *Moments* and the way they critique the established social order and hierarchy is dissimilar, with their critique being embedded in the way that they are different from the existing monuments. The understated approach to building *Moments* is indeed the opposite of what was traditionally employed by the North Korean regime—the intimidating oversized sculptures. *Moments* do not impose or dominate; instead they have a subtler strategy and a political message; they are less focused on symbolism and are concerned more with transmitting their message through spatial experiences; they are intended to be approachable and liveable.

In the *History of the future*, the understated spatial strategy and lack of physical impact on the urban setting of this project is interpreted not only as a way to preserve the visual corridors, but also to neutralize the impact of existing monuments. Just like the existing monuments, the *Moments* are also strategically positioned, but with different intentions: not to be visible, but to hide the views, and reduce the impact of the *Juche* (主體 *Chuch'e*) ideology on the space without eradicating it. Citizens of Pyongyang were never free of perceiving this propaganda, poured not only into public spaces, but also into the interior spaces, with pictures of the Leaders present in every public institution and in every home. By hiding the views on monuments, *Moments* provide a setting where one is not compulsively reminded of the ideology. The *Moments* arranged in grid oppose and reverse the system, where the axis (as a tool of power) orientates the people toward a political and/or ideological idea, embodied in the shape of a monument. They achieve this in removing the existing monuments only from constant visual line of sight, not literally. In this way they allow for two opposing ideologies to coexist and compete in the same urban setting inscribed in pathways and public spaces, both telling their own message. In the *History of the future*, this kind of approach is called 'diplomatic' as it shows how architecture plays an important role in changing social circumstances other than aggressive destruction and building anew.

This reinforces the idea behind the approach that the city consists of many cities, and serves as a palimpsest, in which new histories are to be inscribed. In this way the physical structure of the city can remain essentially the same, with a new layer of memory and meaning inscribed in discrete and understated ways. These are not only historical layers of the city's structure that coexist, but also different ideologies. A moment spent inside one of the *Moment* is time spent in an alternate city, which still remains a part of Pyongyang with all its historical layers. The dimension of time in this project is not only employed in the sense of designing for the future or valuing the importance of continuity in the city, but also emphasising individual time, human experience, memories and anticipations.

Moments

The political role of *Moments* and the impact that they attempt to have on the observer is most apparent in the first few *Moments* that were built. From these individual spatial interventions, the idea of the grid emerged. The first one, called *Moment of Unification* (Figure 3), was built on the Rungra Island (綾羅島 *Rüngrado*) in the Taedong River to commemorate the reconciliation of the two countries, cutting into the southern tip of this island along the axis formed between the Mansu Hill Grand Monument and the Monument to Party Founding. The symbolic form of this *Moment* represents separated individual histories of North and South Korea, which are eventually reconciled. The cut into the island forms a zigzag line of two walls with different curvatures. Each of these walls commemorates the history of one of the countries: the South Wall has inscriptions about the most important events in South Korea's history, and the North Wall—about the history of North Korea. Along each of the walls runs a path—the North Path and the South Path—separated by the river. These paths connect in the end symbolically representing the unification of two separated histories. On each of the two sides of the wall, a small exhibition space is located, with a staircase that leads outside to the grass fields on the island. Even though this *Moment* is aligned with one of the main visual axes in the city, one can momentarily escape this dominant view

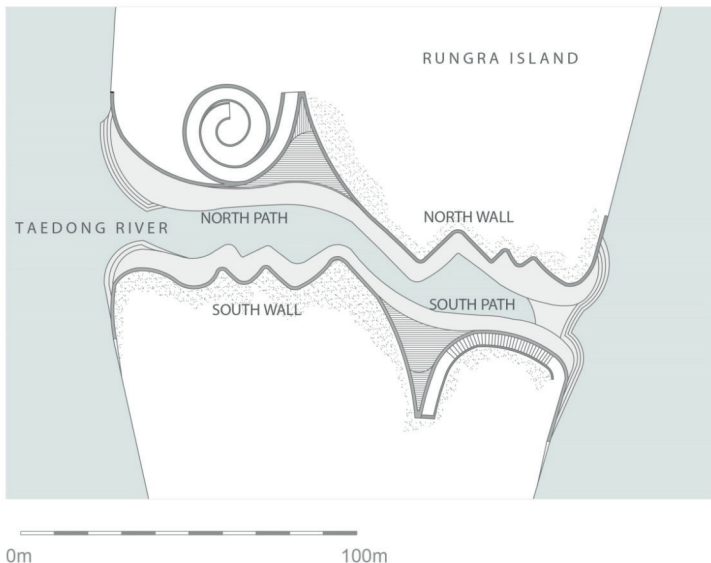


Figure 3 Moment on Rungra Island. By author.

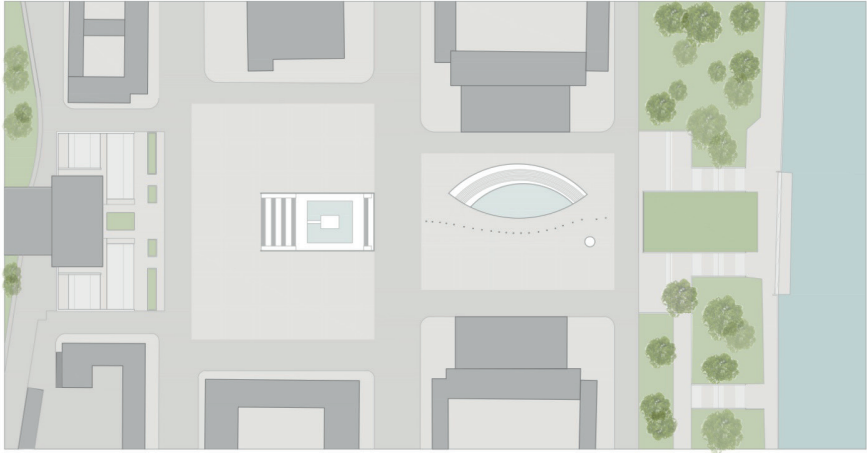


Figure 4 Moment on Kim Il-Sung Square. By author.

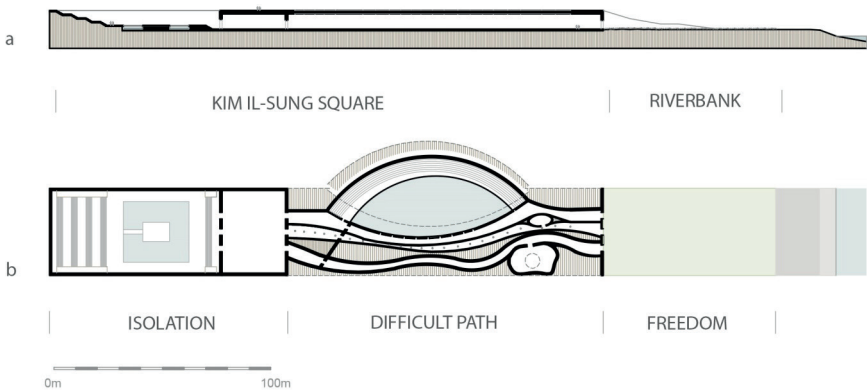


Figure 5 Moment on Kim Il-Sung Square; a. section; b. underground level plan. By author.

whilst inside. Similarly, the *Moment* itself is not visible from the city, but only when inside the cut, where one is visually ‘cut out’ of the city landscape.

The second *Moment* is constructed in Kim Il-Sung Square (Figures 4–5). This square is the spiritual and political centre of Pyongyang, and the spot where the reconstruction of the city started after the Korean War.²³ Settled between important buildings and overlooking the Juche Tower, this square has an important political role to fulfil: 75,000 square meters in size, and with the capacity to host 100,000 people, it is intended for mass performances and military

parades. However, on regular days it is a large, deserted public space with little relationship to the surrounding buildings. In redesigning it into an inhabitable public space, the predominant challenge was the sheer size of the square, and its position against existing monuments and representational buildings. Similar to the *Moment of Unification*, this *Moment* is dug into the ground in a way that does not change the visual qualities of the square and relationship of the buildings. It is designed as a series of alternative submerged paths that run from the entrance situated in the middle of the square, under the monumental square, and lead to an open green field at the end towards the Taedong River. The main path consists of three parts: “isolation,” “difficult path” and “freedom.” Each of these paths is not only named as a commemoration but it is meant to produce the feelings of isolation, difficulty and freedom. Comparatively to the previous *Moment*, it is focused on the experience and the feelings of the visitors. The *Moment* is a living monument where memory and symbolism are transmitted through the atmosphere, experience and immanent feelings. In this particular scenario’s context, the political role of this kind of *Moment* is twofold: one symbolic interpretation of this *Moment* is that it represents the suffering of the North Korean people, which ends in freedom; another is that it prevents large public gatherings and performances that were characteristic of the pre-reconciliation era. Just as is the case with the *Moment of Unification*, it gives the visitors chance to escape the open city museum for an instant.

In the *History of the future*, after these first two interventions, a number of smaller and less symbolic *Moments* were built on the main streets of the city centre before gradually expanding outwards toward peripheral areas in the composition of the grid visible only from the air.

Scenarios as Method: Toward Architecture as a Tool of Social Transformation

The Project of *Grid of Moment* conceived within the fictive future of Pyongyang with a dual role of each *Moment* in a way achieves Tschumi’s idea of space as “a peaceful instrument of social transformation.”²⁴ Tschumi’s theoretical work was concerned with design methods that could alter the role of architecture from attuning the space to existing socio-economic political structures toward becoming a catalyst for social and political change. This would also mean that architects, instead of merely serving state powers, become intellectual critics who use their environmental knowledge (‘understanding of cities and the mechanisms of architecture’) to contribute to emerging new urban and social structures.²⁵ Tschumi’s work was not focused on the formal aspect of architecture but the

importance of programs and events, whereby he saw the interaction between spaces and activities as a way to provide an alternative route for bypassing the issues regarding social and political role of architecture.²⁶

The project of *Moments* explores similar concepts, but through different strategies. In the *History of the future*, it is implied that young authors were familiar with these theories from 20th century, and that they used this knowledge of mechanisms of the cities and architecture, not to serve any political power but to act as social critics. Architecture does not change society but can, through spatial interventions, create ground for the negotiation within a new society, where what once was a stage for the dominant power becomes the stage of inner struggles of transition. The *Moments* are focused on events rather than form—their aesthetics and shape are rather understated, which aligns with Tschumi's ideas. However, their altering role lies not in their program but critical and nonaggressive attitude, with which they treat the historical values of the city, and shifting focus from the aesthetic of abstract symbols of ideology toward people and their experiences.

The originality of the project for Pyongyang's urban future was achieved by approaching design through the scenario technique. The fictive setting of the scenario created room for writing *History of the future* that addresses the issues within the scenario. *History of the future* as a method is process-oriented; it is a design procedure, which does not aim toward a specific outcome but to give a clearer idea of what could be done for the 2050 Pyongyang. Writing of a fictional story allowed the incorporation in an urban project not only a temporal dimension, but also many other factors such as economic system, political struggles and different ideologies, which are normally taken for granted by architects and designers, and rarely considered when approaching city design and urban planning. It did not aim toward a specific project but, by employing imagination in the process of writing, helped to illuminate possible issues to be solved in this plausible future given by the scenario. Having these urban and social issues postulated, it was possible to create a strategy, a plan of action specifically designed to address these issues through urban design. Thus this method of writing prevented us from creating the future we ourselves aspire and from imposing our own sense of wilfulness as architects often do. On the contrary, it compelled the problem to be approached with objectivity and imagination to explore possibilities even if they seem unreachable.

This strategy was executed out by building a system of Moments which through design (hiding views) and positioning (grid system) directly address the issues raised within the *History*—the problem of the lack of the public facilities and life on the streets, and the problem of the socialist monuments. The project of the *Grid of Moments*, where each *Moment* fulfils a dual role, would not be possible

to design without envisioning the political struggle and the and specific social circumstances that the *History of the future* describes. The *Moments* arranged in the grid, and the changed role of architecture they assume, could have been designed only in that context. Therefore, we do not argue that the *History of the future* is the method in design that contributed directly to creating a project that transforms the role of architecture in the city, but it does it by allowing imagination to play important role in the process.

The scenarios are one of many and not the only plausible option for the spatial future of Pyongyang after reconciliation. They provide us with settings that are not based on historical experience, and challenge us to find a solution beyond what we already know is feasible. The answer to the given problem is, by necessity, new and innovative, and, in this way, scenarios allow for more imagination and creativity. This exercise on imagination could serve to create some compelling options, where a theoretical work does not serve only as a critique or commentary on the past, but can also contribute to more creative future.

Notes

1. See the project in Jelena Mandić, “City, Monuments and Moments”, in 평양 2050: 미래공간 = *Pyongyang 2050: Spatial Futures*, ed. Annie Pedret (Seoul, Damdi Publishing Co., 2018), 104–129.
2. The project was designed within Professor Annie Pedret’s Design Studio 21, Seoul National University, fall semester 2015.
3. For the process of the scenario see Annie Pedret, “Designing Futures”, in 평양 2050: 미래공간 = *Pyongyang 2050: Spatial Futures*, ed. Annie Pedret (Seoul, Damdi Publishing Co., 2018), 12–23.
4. Philipp Meuser. “An Architectural Cabinet of Curiosities. A Stroll through Pyongyang”, in *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang*, ed. Philipp Meuser (Berlin: DOM publishers, 2012), 41.
5. Roger Mateos Miret and Jelena Prokopljević. *Corea del Norte: utopía de hormigón; arquitectura y urbanismo al servicio de una ideología* (Brenes: Muñoz Moya, 2011), 26–27.
6. Miret and Prokopljević, *Corea del Norte*, 149–151.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Johannes Tschapka. “Scenario Technique”, in 평양 2050: 미래공간 = *Pyongyang 2050: Spatial Futures*, ed. Annie Pedret (Seoul: Damdi Publishing Co., 2018), 32–35.
10. Ibid. 32–33.
11. Ibid. 32–33.
12. Bergson’s notion of *durée*.
13. See Klara Lucilla Romigioli and Jelena Mandić. “Scenario,” in 평양 2050: 미래공간 = *Pyongyang 2050: Spatial Futures*, ed. Annie Pedret (Seoul, Damdi Publishing Co., 2018), 104–129.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Philipp Meuser. “An Architectural Cabinet of Curiosities”, 44–51.

17. For differences between artificial and natural cities see Christopher Alexander. "A City Is Not a Tree." *Design* 206 (1966): 44–55.
18. Kevin Lynch. *The Image of the City* (Nachdr. Publication of the Joint Center for Urban Studies. Cambridge, Mass: MIT PRESS, 2005), 2–4.
19. An urban redevelopment plan for central Paris designed in 1925 by Le Corbusier.
20. Bernard Tschumi. *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1994), 179.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*, 192.
23. Miret and Prokopljević. *Corea del Norte*, 151–155.
24. Bernard Tschumi. *Architecture and Disjunction*, 7.
25. *Ibid.*, 9–10.
26. *Ibid.*, 16.

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Rise and Fall of the Microdistrict in Pyongyang, North Korea

DONGWOO YIM Hongik University¹

Abstract

Recent residential developments in Pyongyang (P'yŏngyang) show a pattern distinguished from previous eras in the Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il periods. Since Kim Jong Un's rise to power, major developments, such as the Mirae Scientist Street and Ryomyong Street developments, resemble real estate developments in other capitalist cities. Instead of repeating the same designs, they provide unique designs in each building, and dedicate more to commercial spaces and residential units, while reducing supporting amenities such as daycares, schools and civic amenities that are not profitable in the market. With signs of the transformation of Pyongyang, this paper addresses how residential developments have been occurring since the reconstruction of the city in relationship to socialist microdistricts, and how recent developments challenge the idea of the socialist microdistrict.

Keywords: Pyongyang; microdistrict; housing; development; socialist

Introduction

Aside from all other political or military changes, there are a few signs that indicate a transformation of Pyongyang (P'yŏngyang), the capital of North Korea. Since the new regime under Kim Jong Un began in 2011, a number of developments have happened in the city. Munsoo Street, built in 2012, Mirae Scientist Street, built in 2015, and Ryomyong Street, built in 2017, are key signs that show

a shift of the residential development strategy from the socialist microdistrict to capitalist real estate development.

The shift is not surprising at all considering increasing numbers of *donju*/돈주인 in the city and other precedents in post-socialist cities in the 1990s. As people with money emerged, there were new demands in the housing market that departed from previous housing models in the socialist period. Not only had the quality of housing gotten better but also the locations and types of housing development had become different. Luxurious condos, as part of redevelopment plans, emerged in city centers, while single-family houses or gated communities for a new rich class arose on the outskirts of cities.

Learning from post-socialist cities, which already have gone through the massive transition from socialist society to a market-oriented one, recent changes in Pyongyang can be understood as the beginning of a larger wave that is about to come. Although the regime officially says recent developments are for the public, there is evidence that these new apartments are sold to *donju*.² Even if they were not sold to *donju*, they still show the tendencies of real estate development in a post-socialist city in the way that they are located in prime real estate in the city and designed uniquely rather than homogeneously, which used to be an important value in socialist cities where little differentiation between houses was allowed.

Despite its recent transitions towards a market economy, Pyongyang was built based on the ideas of socialist urban planning, and along with these ideas, the microdistrict is applied as part of the residential development plan of the city.

History of Pyongyang

Pre-Socialist Period

The history of Pyongyang starts in the fifth century BCE, when it was first formed as capital city of Koguryŏ (BCE 668–37) in 427. Like many other cities on the Korean peninsula then, in the sixth century, Pyongyang constructed walls to define the city boundary, which is called Pyongyangsong, which could be traced until the early twentieth century. The city wall consisted of four different areas: Naesŏng (inner wall), Oesŏng (outer wall), Puksŏng (North wall), and Chungŏng (middle wall). These four areas are designated, but loosely, by use. The royal palace was in the Naesŏng, and the Puksŏng functioned as a watchtower, as it was formed on a hilly area. Most of the public lived in Oesŏng, while a higher class lived in Chungŏng, which was in-between Oesŏng and Naesŏng. It was during the Koryŏ Dynasty (918–1392) when Pyongyang flourished both economically and culturally. During that time, Pyongyang was called Sŏgyŏng, which means “Western Capital,”

along with Seoul, K'aesŏng, and K'yungju. These four capitals once used to be capital cities on the Korean peninsula. K'aesŏng was the capital in the Koryŏ Dynasty, K'yungju was the capital in the earlier Shilla Dynasty (57 BC–935 AD), and Seoul has been the capital since the Chosŏn Dynasty (1392–1897). Pyongyang has been the capital of North Korea since 1948. Although K'aesŏng was still the main capital, Pyongyang, as the western capital, took on important roles on the peninsula economically and culturally.³

Pyongyang became the second largest city on the Korean peninsula during the Chosŏn Dynasty. When Pyongyang opened its port for foreign trade for the first time in 1897, the population grew radically. After the opening of the port, many international businesses emerged, as did Christian missionaries from the West, which led to the Pyongyang revival movement in 1907. During the Japanese colonial period (1910–1945), the population grew from forty thousand to nearly three hundred thousand. It was during the colonial period that the city started to expand to the other side of the Taedong River, called East Pyongyang. It was also during the colonial period that the city started to implement the manufacturing and chemical industries. Pyongyang was strategically used as a city for military logistics during the period when Japan prepared for war against China and other East Asian countries. As part of the expansion plan, imperial Japan applied a master plan to develop the East Pyongyang area for Japanese residences. The master plan in the 1930s expected the city to grow to 500,000 in population with an area of one hundred ten square kilometers in twenty years.⁴ Although this plan was not fully realized, it did become, especially for the size and boundary of the city, the basic background of North Korea's reconstruction plan in the 1950s.

Socialist Pyongyang

The Korean War (1950–1953) totally wiped out structures of the city. After more than a thousand episodes of bombing, hardly any structure from Pyongyongsong or the Japanese colonial period remained. More than sixty thousand houses, one thousand five hundred stores, two hundred cultural facilities, and three hundred industrial buildings were demolished. Even though this might have been a tragedy for the Korean peninsula, it was also a great chance for North Korea to construct a city based on its ideology of socialism.

Unlike many other socialist cities that had to apply the ideas of a socialist city in existing city structures, Pyongyang and other North Korean cities had a unique opportunity to construct socialist cities on an ad-hoc condition. It was not just an ideological victory that the city removed traces of imperialism but also a realistic chance to start over for a city that had suffered from bad sanitation and living conditions before the war.⁵

Therefore, Kim Il Sung, the first leader of the nation, requested that Kim Jeong-Hui, an architect who was studying in Moscow, draft a reconstruction plan for Pyongyang, even before the war ended. To Kim's mind, the city had to be the face of the nation that would showcase victory in the war and an ideal socialist city.⁶ The first reconstruction plan that Kim Jeong-Hui drew up was not much different from the master plan that the Japanese had had for the city in the 1930s. However, a couple of years later, towards the end of the war, a new master plan was introduced, and it implied a couple of important socialist urban planning aspects in the plan, such as ideas on limiting expansion of the city and applying urban squares as centers for each district development.⁷

The master plan suggested several satellite districts, and parks and landscapes were introduced between districts. They functioned as buffer zones to prevent extreme expansion of each district. It was to limit the city to a certain size—one million in population as planned—as socialist cities objected to becoming mega-cities that only maximized the discrepancies with rural areas. These aspects shown in the later master plan, such as emphasizing parks, symbolic spaces, and spatial equality through zoning, are apparent features of a socialist city. As James H. Bater summarized, there are ten things that can show the character of a socialist city: 1. the limited size of a city; 2. state-controlled housing; 3. planned residential areas; 4. equality in urban spaces; 5. minimized commuting distances; 6. control of land use; 7. a reasonable public transportation system; 8. enough green space; 9. urban planning as part of state development; and 10. a symbolic and centralized city.⁸ These can be understood as socialists' efforts to manage urban problems in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that were mainly caused by rapid industrialization and urbanization.

The time from the end of the war until the mid-1960s is considered as the reconstruction period of the city. In this period, with the help of the socialist bloc, including the Soviet Union, GDR, and China, massive reconstruction happened throughout the whole country. Pyongyang received aid from many socialist countries, while Hamhung received aid mainly from the GDR and Chongjin got aid from Czechoslovakia. In this period, Pyongyang followed the master plan well. It reconstructed the city center, which later became Kim Il Sung Square, based on the master plan, and developed East Pyongyang, on the east side of the Taedong River, from the square where the Juche Tower is currently, according to the plan. These two areas together are considered as a central area in the master plan.⁹ Although later development of the city in the late 1970s did not really follow the master plan well but rather followed strategic plans that were developed every several years, the urban structure of Pyongyang still can be understood based on the master plan.¹⁰

The Microdistrict

Socialist City and the Microdistrict

The microdistrict, also called a microrajon (or mikrorajon) микрорайон in Russian, is a socialist urban planning concept of a residential community that can sustain itself by providing not only residential units but also other supporting amenities such as daycares, schools, stores, civic amenities, parks, and so on. As socialism arose with an idea of providing better living environments for working-class people, the residential development model was a crucial element for a socialist city to apply. The idea was first introduced in the 1930s in Russia, but it was not until the end of World War II that the idea spread out to other socialist countries, including North Korea.

The Socialist model of urban development was itself developed in light of the crises in urban areas following the period of the industrial revolution in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Socialist ideologies focused on reducing the gap between urban and rural life and working experience, which socialists thought the most crucial issue when it came to urbanization. Therefore the main goal of socialist urban planning was to limit the size of city and distribute production facilities throughout cities and territories.¹¹ Socialist urban planners borrowed ideas from Ebenezer Howard's Garden City Movement, which was introduced in 1898 as an alternative model for the development of urban areas that controlled the expansion of cities through the inclusion of parklands and public amenities, limiting the size of the city and attempting to mitigate the differences between urban and rural. For instance, the Moscow master plan of 1935, which was the first master plan in which socialist urban planners applied their ideas and ideology on the fabric of a major city, showed how the city could expand radially while keeping a network of parklands that functioned as buffer zone between developments.¹² As part of efforts to reduce and mediate the gap in incomes, amenity and life and work experience between urban and rural, socialist cities also controlled population and restricted migration between cities.

At the same time as wider urban development, the problems of industrial factories and facilities was also a key issue for socialist planners to consider. As working-class people were the main supporters and target of socialist ideologies, it was important for planners to optimize factory location. Ideas like "Linear City" by Nicolay A. Milutin or "Cite Industrielle" by Tony Garnier reveal that a close relationship between factories and housing deeply influenced socialist urban planning. Both these concepts demonstrate how a new socialist city could provide a better living environment than previous industrial cities, while keeping factories within the city, and as socialists these planners thought that working-class

people should be main citizens of it. These ideas were applied very strongly in the planning and construction of socialist cities. For instance, Ivan Leonidov's competition proposal for the Town of Magnitogorsk showed how the chemical and metallurgical factories of Magnitogorsk could be developed along with its areas for residential settlement.¹³ As a Disurbanist, who argued that settlements should be dispersed across the whole Soviet Union to abolish differences between urban and rural, Leonidov introduced this radical linear city idea as part of socialist strategy for urban planning. However, the Linear City Model, including Leonidov's idea, was criticized for its lack of urbanity and ineffectiveness.

Nonetheless, socialist ideas of both locating the production function in city and developing *commune* were pursued consistently, and borrowing the concept of a superblock from the Anglo-Saxon world,¹⁴ planners inspired by these ideologies developed the microdistrict as a basic unit with which to build a city. Although the microdistrict followed the idea of population distribution from the Linear City Model, it contains a fundamental difference from that strategy as its progenitors understood that, instead of an infinite, unlimited city model, limiting the size of neighborhoods is extremely important in the creation of the socialist commune. Regarding this, Juliana Maxim argues that microdistrict is profound as "the word micro implies planning of a radically different scale, one that engulfs the entirety of the national territory, and of which the microdistrict is but one small constitutive part."¹⁵ Ever since the microdistrict model for socialist urban planning was introduced in the 1930s, it became the basic tool in urban and city development at a variety of scales, from residential units to community, and from community block to city.

Each microdistrict covered between ten and twenty hectares with from ten thousand to twenty thousand inhabitants. A minimum number of inhabitants is set because each microdistrict should be able to sustain certain public amenities, such as schools, daycares, and stores. As the socialist planners distinguished automobile traffic from pedestrian traffic, the microdistrict had to be designed as a pedestrian-oriented block without allowing any automobile traffic through, and the distance to public amenities could not exceed five hundred meters.¹⁶

In many cases, with a few exceptions like a Vietnamese microdistrict that was built in brick, microdistricts were built with prefab concrete. There were a couple of advantages to this prefab housing in a microdistrict, including the fast and cheap construction allowing for mass production of housing, and the chance to build factories for prefab concrete. Most socialist countries adopted the idea of microdistricts to introduce socialist modern life in their cities, which are engaged in replacing old village-type houses with urban residential complexes and accommodating an increasing population in the city during industrialization.

Therefore, the affordability and speed of construction were important features of microdistricts so that they could be mass produced in many other locations. Also, in socialist society, all people work, and some work in factories; therefore, setting up prefab concrete factories was an even better choice for socialists than on-site concrete.¹⁷ Although massive numbers of housing units could be provided with these advantages, microdistricts are often criticized for their homogeneous design and lack of individuality.

The microdistrict idea is often compared to Clarence Perry's "neighborhood unit" idea, developed through his paper "1929 Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs," as both ideas attempt to design functional, self-sustainable, and desirable residential communities by regulating the size of the community and providing supporting amenities. Despite their similarities in goals, there are differences between the two. First, the microdistrict is developed for urban living, and therefore, collective dwelling buildings are at least five or six stories high, often reaching thirty stories, while neighborhood units in suburban areas have single-family detached houses. Second, a microdistrict emphasizes co-op living, and therefore, some microdistricts provide shared kitchens, whereas neighborhood units keep the privacy of individual tenants. Thirdly, as all people should work in socialist cities, the microdistrict is close to production facilities or factories, and occasionally includes them in the district as co-production facilities.

The microdistrict idea has been massively applied in the post-war period in most socialist countries, including in the former Soviet Union, in Eastern Europe, and in China. However, since the 1990s, along with the adoption of a market-oriented economy, transformations in microdistricts have happened on both a big and small scale. Due to the need to reveal individuality, inhabitants started to have their own interior designs for their units, which are evident to the outside in most cases. And in other cases, like East Berlin, new buildings, for both dwellings and public amenities, are implemented in the existing microdistrict, which had low density and thus a higher ratio of open space. Meanwhile, many post-socialist cities have plans to demolish outdated microdistricts and replace them with more modern housing, such as in Moscow, which recently announced its plan to demolish 8,000 building units of a microdistrict.

Rise of the Microdistrict in Pyongyang

In North Korea, *ju-taek-so-ku-yuk*, which literally means microdistrict housing, was first introduced in the 1950s during reconstruction of the nation following the Korean War; later, guidelines for it were published in 1963. The idea was introduced through two channels: the Soviet Union and East Germany. In the

first channel, students studied in the Soviet Union, including Kim Jeong-Hui, who was the master architect of the master plan for reconstructing Pyongyang in the 1950s, and who returned to North Korea with the idea. In the second channel, the idea was applied by professionals and engineers from the GDR, who played a major role in reconstructing Hamhung, the second largest city in North Korea.¹⁸

In the reconstruction period, Pyongyang was planned as a city of one million. The master plan, drawn up by Kim Jeong-Hui, introduced several satellite districts, similar to Howard's Garden City diagram. Each district was composed of micro-districts, and each microdistrict was composed of from four to five different residential groups. After the guideline for microdistrict planning was set, this idea of the microdistrict was further clarified by introducing goals and rules for the planning. The guideline clearly says a microdistrict must be planned in order to have the most convenient environment for residents, and must be constructed to be efficient as well as aesthetically pleasing.¹⁹

During the reconstruction in the 1950s and 1960s, the Tongdaewon area was considered as a central area, along with the area around Kim Il Sung Square, which was across the Taedong River, and the area was developed with a micro-district. As it was one of the first microdistricts in the city, it followed the original guidelines for a microdistrict. A rough city grid was formed to outline the boundary of the microdistrict, and production facilities, such as cottage industry factories, were embedded in the microdistrict. Amongst the four different layouts of the microdistrict—parallel, peripheral, mixed, and free—the mixed type is the layout mostly applied in the area, and, originally, residential buildings of from five to seven stories were constructed at the perimeters of each block, which were later replaced with buildings of fifteen to twenty stories.

Also, as it was still during the reconstruction period that the socialist bloc's support was still strong, many apartment buildings that had a linear form and were several stories high were influenced by Eastern European architecture at the time. Although the influence from other socialist countries, including the Soviet Union, was apparent, it was also in the 1960s when North Korea started to develop its own terminology and typology of residential prototypes and guidelines for *ju-taek-so-ku-yuk*/주택소구역.

The Second Phase of the Microdistrict

After the first phase of reconstruction, the second major residential developments based on *ju-taek-so-ku-yuk*/주택소구역, such as Kwangbok Street and T'ongil Street, happened in the late 1980s through the early 1990s in Pyongyang.²⁰ Unlike the first phase, the second phase was developed on the outskirts of the urbanized

area of the city, and residential buildings started to be as high as thirty stories. The areas were not part of the original master plan, drawn up in the 1950s, but as the city's population increased the city needed to expand its urban boundary westward by developing new residential districts. The original master plan foresaw the population being one million, but in the late 1980s, the population of Pyongyang already exceeded two million. For this reason, Tongil Street, which is on the southern bank of the Taedong River, and Kwangbok Street, on the northern bank of the river, were developed to house nearly 50,000 residents in the area. As they were developed to house more people in the city, high-rise apartments were introduced in these areas.

Unlike the mid-rise apartments in the Tongdaewon area in the first phase of microdistrict development, the second-phase developments had more apartment buildings that were more than thirty stories high. Although there was a change in height, these developments still followed the microdistrict guideline. They implemented daycares, schools and stores along with plenty of open spaces on the ground level to provide a better quality of living environment. It was the influence of the Soviet Union then that also started to develop high-rise microdistrict apartments. The difference was, however, the form of buildings. As Kim Jong Il, the second leader of the nation, emphasized, the esthetics of architecture in the high-rise apartments came in certain forms, such as windmills or waves, while the Soviet Union's apartments still looked like panels.

Even though the height and the form of apartment buildings changed, the idea of a microdistrict, providing enough open space with schools, daycares, and civic amenities, was kept. However, the idea started to fall off in recent years.

The Fall of the Microdistrict

It was not until recent development, which I argue was the third phase of residential development in Pyongyang, that the idea of *ju-taek-so-ku-yuk*/주택소구역, or the microdistrict, started to fall apart. Since the new regime began in 2011 under Kim Jong Un, these developments, such as Changjeon Street, Mirae Scientist Street, and Ryomyong Street, have had three major aspects that distinguish them from the previous developments. The first aspect is the location. Unlike the second-phase developments that happened on the outskirts of the city center, new developments came back to the city center. If the second-phase residential developments in Tongil Street and Kwangbok Street were mainly to provide more residential units to meet the lack of housing, the third-phase ones are less about a lack of housing than about providing a modern style of housing. Those three major developments mentioned above as the third-phase developments are all

redevelopment projects that demolished obsolete apartment buildings in the city center and replaced them with new high-rise apartment buildings. Also, these locations are considered as desirable areas in the city as they are close to subway stations, major boulevards, and the riverside, which implies that the idea of real estate value is being applied.

Another aspect of these developments is that, especially with regard to the Ryomyong Street and Mirae Scientist Street developments, they have various designs in each building. The socialist microdistrict was part of a mass housing production plan, and therefore, residential buildings were standardized with pre-fab construction, which allowed little variations in residential building designs. In the previous two phases of microdistrict development in Pyongyang, as mentioned above, although some formal gestures in residential buildings were made in the Tongil Street and Kwangbok Street developments, most of the residential buildings had homogeneous and paternalistic designs. Unlike previous cases, new developments are filled with variously designed residential buildings that do not appear to be part of one single development.

The last aspect, which is the most crucial one, is programmatic change in these developments. As mentioned, one of the key features of a microdistrict is that it provides supporting amenities and spaces, such as daycares, schools, stores, and open spaces, to enhance the quality of living environment. Along with these, in microdistricts in Pyongyang, production facilities are also implemented so that the proximity between residential life and work can be realized. However, recent developments in the city do not really follow these aspects. Although schools and daycares are still provided, there is little open space in the developments and no factories are implemented. Meanwhile, more commercial stores are being introduced than in previous microdistricts.

All these changes in new residential developments in Pyongyang show the trend of real estate development in the city. Developments in prime real estate locations, variations in designs that have trends, and mixed-use developments are all features that we can find in real estate developments in market-oriented cities.

Conclusions

The changes that this paper has considered in the development and organization of both microdistricts and the wider retail market has not been limited to only Pyongyang. Even though Pyongyang is the most well-seen city from outside of North Korea, some other cities in the country have even more chances to be transformed by the processes and trends described by this paper. For instance, Rason Special Economic Zone recently announced early this year that the city

will estimate prices of state-owned houses and give opportunities to households to buy their units. According to the Korea Development Bank (KDB) think tank report, this was the first time that the North Korean government officially offered a housing policy that allowed the privatization of housing, and people have option of paying in full at once or pay in twenty-five years' time with certain amount of interest.²¹ These prices are based on many factors, such as location, built year, view and orientation, and number of floors, which are not much different criteria from any other capitalist real estate market. And price in the zone varies from one dollar to five dollar per square meter in regular house, and often the times, it goes beyond five thousand dollars per unit in center of the city.²²

Of course, house sales are not new in North Korea. Since the Arduous March in the 1990s, exchanges and sales of housing started to emerge to overcome the lack of food distribution. Empty apartments increased both in rural and city, due to defection or starve to death, and as a result, brokers emerged to find and sell those apartments to people. It was also in this period when small scale private housing construction and sales started to happen. As municipal governments failed to meet planned number for housing units, privates, such as *donju*, borrowed permission for housing supply from public and provided housing stock.²³

Kim Jong Un's model of economic reform and openness in 2012, in fact sought to systemize what had already been committed unofficially in the society. Under this policy, Kim allowed each corporation to decide the price of economic items, which might eventually reflect market demand, and therefore, the government housing corporation is now allowed to estimate the price of each housing unit which will lead to the development of a real estate market.²⁴ In a way, the policy indirectly questioned the effective value of the notion of the microdistrict. As the policy allowed pricing of only non-production facilities, such as housing units, production facilities within microdistrict still could not be marketized. Also, in many cases, open spaces, schools, or daycare facilities are overlooked as they are not easy to be privatized. Therefore, the basic structure of the microdistrict, a complex of residential stock along with open space, schools, and daycare started to fall, and only facilities that can be priced and privatized, such as residential units and commercial spaces, remain and are amplified.

Along with the new economic reform policy, Kim Jong Un's new strategy to give more autonomy to municipal governments allowed some cities to announce policies such as that in Rason. As giving more autonomy to municipal government meant that each would have its own strategy to find enough funding to invest in the city they are responsible for, many North Korean cities already have developed or are on the process of developing their own development plan, and those plans include the privatization of real estate for both domestic *donju* and international

investors.²⁵ This, of course, will influence physical morphology of those cities, as now locations, scales, or types of developments shall reflect demands of investors.

For instance, cities like Sinuiju and Chongjin introduced new urban development plans along with real estate investment policies.²⁶ In both cases, new policies will influence the physical form of the cities as well. In the development plans, high-rise and mixed-use type residential towers are introduced as major residential typology along so-called prime real estate locations, such as river, parks, or squares. In short, these plans are following the successful real estate development model that has happened in Pyongyang. Their master plan models show series of apartment developments that resemble Mirae Scientist Street or Ryomyong Street developments that are more of mixed-use development type than microdistrict model. And it is obvious that socialist microdistrict housing model will fall or decline in importance in the near future in most of major cities in North Korea.

The microdistrict, one of the core ideas for a socialist city, has obvious weak points that can be broken in a market-oriented system. Not only does it have a paternalistic approach that overlooks personal identities, but it also conflicts with the profitability of real estate in the city. From the point of view of real estate, the microdistrict provides too much open space, which can be filled with more developments and other support facilities such as schools and daycares that cannot be used for profit. Therefore, already, most of the microdistricts in post-socialist cities are considered to be a form of obsolete residential typology that needs to be removed. For instance, Moscow recently announced a plan to demolish the existing 8,000 building units of a microdistrict, and it seems this will be followed by many other demolitions in this city and others. Even though there are still many efforts to keep microdistricts by providing new developments within such districts as infill developments, it is still obvious that the original form of a microdistrict cannot reflect a market-driven economy.

This phenomenon of losing the idea of a microdistrict during the transition to a market economy is already happening in Pyongyang as well as other major cities in North Korea. When we investigate recent major developments of these city, there is less paternalism in developments that are providing buildings of different designs and types of units. Also, there are fewer open spaces and supporting amenities. It is hard to distinguish these developments from other mixed-use developments in other capitalist cities.

In this sense, the recent residential developments in Pyongyang tell demonstrate the developmental path will occur in the future in other North Korean cities, led by the capital itself. The microdistrict strategy, reflecting a socialist ideology of urban living, will slowly disappear, and a more market-driven real estate development logic will take over in its place.

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Ruins, Memory and Vibrant Matter: Imagining Future North Korean Rural Terrains

DR ROBERT WINSTANLEY-CHESTERS University of Leeds¹

Abstract

With recent work in mind from the fields of Critical and Human Geography and Philosophy on webs of political life and ruins as lively matters, in process and becoming the paper considers the futures for North Korean non-urban landscapes from a temporal (and spatial) frame beyond that of Pyongyang's present. Following a change of status quo on the Korean Peninsula in which North Korea as we know now it ceases to exist, how will both state bureaucracy and popular cultural power impact on terrains so heavily transformed by the ideology and political culture of North Korea? Will post-transformation forces consider architectures of ideological memory entirely ruined, attempt to write their own cultures and memories on these spaces, or unwrite previous ones, co-producing new landscapes of memory on the Korean Peninsula? In particular, this paper examines the physical and material futures for two important sites in North Korea. Firstly, the Samjiyon Grand Monument and the Birch Trees of Lake Samji, representative within North Korea's historical narrative of both military struggles in the area and the first acknowledgement of Kim Il Sung and his first wife, Kim Jong Suk's relationship. Secondly the paper considers Mt. Paektu and very specifically the Secret Guerrilla Camp below it, and Jong Il Peak, part of the mountain now graced by Kim Jong Il's signature written in huge Korean script. Both sites, along with North Korea's wider rural and wild spaces are in a sense ruined by their enmeshing with the political narratives of Pyongyang. However, in their ruination the paper sees the

unpicking and untwining of this state, through the processes of time and cultural-political re-configurations.

Keywords: North Korea, Ruins, Memory, Mt Paektu, Samjiyon

“Nostalgia for Socialism has become a commodity, but not for those who still live in its ruins, because they are at home.”²

While this paper in part deploys its authors’ imagination, the landscapes on which it focuses are not imagined. North Korean history, mythology and politics can often seem rooted in a process of ideological construction built up over many years deep within its institutional mind, but its physical terrains are certainly not fiction. North Korea’s material and historical presence affects global, regional and local landscapes, and deeply impacts the emotional, political and security landscapes of South Korea and East Asia. North Korea’s landscapes are not matters of the past and memory as much as they are matters of imagination. They are real, present and material, as much as the landscapes outside the window behind which the author of this paper writes. Much analysis focused on North Korea in recent years has centred on desires or aspirations for its landscapes to no longer be real, to be deconstructed, reconfigured, destroyed even. While these desires may particularly focus on North Korea’s military, fissile or nuclear landscapes, it cannot be denied that consigning the entirety of what are currently terrains under Pyongyang’s control and sovereignty to the realm of memory and the past, namely, the collapse of the state altogether, is also sought and dreamed of by many. It would in a sense make a great number of people across the globe very happy indeed if North Korea were no longer there, if it ceased to exist. A problem for all of these desires, and imagined outcomes however is the fact these dreams for North Korea to become a figment of memory, for the most part lack a consideration as to what that temporal shift would mean for its landscapes and inhabitants. While many desire the ruination of North Korea and its consignment to memory, what might a ruined North Korea or a ruin of North Korea look like. What will be remembered from North Korea and how will memory of the country operate in the context of its ruination is not clear.

This paper cannot possibly hope to have all of the answers to these questions, it cannot even hope to have most of the answers; in fact, it does not seek to. While this paper will not address all North Korean landscapes there are many examples of academic work which imaginatively considers North Korean urban spaces.³ Pyongyang with its dense agglomeration of monumental and dramatic

architectures has received the lion's share of interest so far as the future of North Korea is concerned. In contrast this paper moves beyond the city and the urban, beyond the vast majority of North Korea's population to places and spaces in its rural hinterland, the terrains in the span of Korean history which were once decidedly wild, but are now very much part of the nation's political narratives. In particular this paper considers places in Ryanggang Province such as Samjiyon, the Samjiyon Grand Monument and the various memorial landscapes surrounding Mt Paektu. While these places are not populated in a conventional sense and are peripheral in comparison to the urban population centres of North Korea, they are not peripheral to the nation's politics. Once wild, rural places have throughout the nation's history become key points in both North Korea's memory and in ideological narratives.

This paper therefore ventures some distance from the conventional conceptual frame in which North Korean is normally situated. The paper sits theoretically at a junction between politics, memory, geography and imagination which takes the reader through the past and present of North Korea and the intersections between its politics, ideology and topography. The paper is primarily concerned with considering North Korean topographies as potentially ruined, abandoned places and therefore uses the framework constructed by scholars such as Tim Edensor,⁴ Thomas Lahusen⁵ and Caitlin DeSilvey⁶ and more generally Geography's "ruin turn." Landscapes marked by autocracy and specifically the logics of Socialism and Communism have been ruined and abandoned many times in recent years. Even places once important to the functioning of government such as East Germany's Palace of the Republic in the middle of Berlin have been left to rack, ruin, abandonment and finally demolition (in this case, in order to reconstruct architectures from the Prussian Imperial past).⁷ The many examples of war memorials built to honour what the Soviet Union perceived as its liberation of eastern Europe from Nazi and fascist tyranny are further examples for this paper. While many were built into the core urban infrastructure of towns and cities, there are other examples on the edge of towns and in the countryside for the most part which have been left to ruination in our present.⁸ In countries such as Estonia, the policing of memory and the development of new and nationalistic legal frameworks focused on legitimate and appropriate remembrance have banished such places into graveyards on the edge of town, rendering them into places in which no commemoration is possible or legal.⁹ Other ruins include the various architectures of control and security from the socialist era such as air and army bases, missile silos, bunkers and border watch towers. This author himself remembers childhood encounters with the complicated and technological infrastructures of the German internal border in the Harz mountains. Revisiting the

area some 20 years later, he found these topographies to be scattered fragments of concrete, broken barbed wire and collapsed buildings deep in abandoned forest and scrubland. While much of Geography's ruin turn and "Ruinenlust" has focused on understanding and analysing the propensity of Capitalist politics to ruin and to make ruins of landscapes and communities, from post-industrial Detroit¹⁰ to the plastic stuffed wastelands of some South Asian urban environments,¹¹ the ruins of Socialism have also gained substantial interest. So, this paper takes DeSilvey and Edensor's reckoning with ruins¹² and extends it with a degree of perceived resilience and endurance into the realm of the un-Capitalist. Such theorizing of forgotten spaces and peripheral Socialist memorial spaces¹³ is extremely useful for this paper. This is also the case with the work of Hayden Lorimer and others on ruined contemporary sacred spaces.¹⁴ The ruins of North Korea are and will be material as well as ideological or intangible. Thus, this paper also uses the enormously important work of Jane Bennett¹⁵ and Sarah Whatmore¹⁶ on the generation, function and existence of what they have termed "vibrant" matter or political matter. Bennett has provided a conceptual frame in which materials either intangible or tangible are active participants, agents within the network of political actors. When this paper uses the word vibrant it means to deploy that sense of active, urgent, agential power. The author of the paper certainly bears in mind the critical writing from Lemke and others on Bennett's new approach to materials and matters, in particular the assertion that the dialectical politics of ownership, usage and access can be lost in the ethical claims of the energetic material landscapes she outlines. Such questions and critiques the author of this paper suggests may be more for a North Korea of the future than a North Korea of the present, whose ideology is essentially not concerned with dialectical relationships, and so for whom such questions are moot. Indeed the author reads the work of Bennett and in tandem with the work of Jason Moore and his theorisation of webs of ecological life and their enmeshing with human politics, ideologies and economics.¹⁷ Thus when this paper also uses the phrase 'web of life' it means to convey Moore's sense of networked enmeshing; that is to say that the fabric and terrain of a nation, society and culture are more than simply the product of its human parts, but are a complex assembly and mix of human, beyond-human, material and intangible. Despite its lack of conventional politics as identified by Lemke and others, Moore, Bennett and Whatmore's concepts function as well in a North Korean political framework marked by Juché, Songun or Byungjin as by any ideology of capitalism, and in North Korean rural and ruined terrains.

In contrast and perhaps in tension with the theoretical elements derived from non-constructivist, non-materialist approaches outlined in the previous section, this paper also deploys theoretical material from a constructivist tradition. This

is of course unusual, and perhaps contradictory; how can environmental or ecological elements of a political or ideological tradition be both intrinsic and constructed? North Korea is an unusual, if not unique case where that might be possible given its politics ability to hold multiple positions and adopt entirely different shapes and aspirations depending on circumstance. North Korea's politics depends on a greater level of performance and performativity for its function and energy, so that political practice is both real and imagined, constructed and unconstructed at the same time. Holding in mind the work of Max Weber on political charisma and Clifford Geertz on theatre states,¹⁸ Heonik Kwon and Byung-ho Chung's landmark work in the field *Beyond Charismatic Politics*,¹⁹ reads North Korean politics as a 'theatric politics.' In this theatre, North Korea's charismatic politics spills out beyond the realm of conventional political interaction, marking, constructing, reconstructing and deconstructing both physical topography and historical or cultural narratives. Thus, if all politics is theatre, is it necessary to redesign or reconfigure the stage and terrain in which that politics performs. Such reconstruction or reconfiguration is not new, unique or unusual to North Korea, Denis Cosgrove,²⁰ for instance, demonstrated how in fact the reconfiguration of terrain is a basic tool of statecraft and state building in contexts like a young United States. Settlers moving west across North America literally constructed new urbane landscapes as they travelled. Similarly, the work of Noel Castree²¹ posits the generation of new terrains through social construction. It might therefore be suggested that in North Korea charismatic politics, necessarily requires the construction of a charismatic landscape.²² Holding in tandem and tension these constructivist and de-constructivist perspectives the author of this paper also finds the work of Jamie Lorimer on non-human charisma²³ useful for the insights it offers towards the use of topographic features in these landscapes of political charisma.

This theoretical frame hopefully, supports the reader through the past and present of North Korea and the intersections with its politics, ideology and topography. However, this paper is concerned with a future North Korea, and in particular a future in which its current political frameworks and logics have transformed and disappeared. In that the paper is also a work of futurology (as suggested elsewhere in the special section this paper is a component of by Annie Pedret), disconnected from the realities of constructed, de-constructed or re-constructed landscapes, but not part of fictive or literary terrains.²⁴ Given the huge importance Pyongyang places on its constructed and in part imagined histories and mythologies and the extraordinary way the landscapes of important places within them are marked by these narratives, such a change would have dramatic impacts on such places. Unification for instance with South Korea and

the diminution or abandonment of North Korea's historical frameworks would render the vast majority of such commemorative or monumental places pointless and immaterial to new political realities. The actual material of these architectures would of course remain, unless completely demolished and eradicated. It is the presumption of this author that a wholesale annihilation of the charismatic places of North Korean politics would be expensive, time consuming and institutionally complicated in a time period when the integration of the two countries would be extraordinarily challenging. For the most part therefore the author suggests the likely outcome for North Korea's political terrains and landscapes of ideological memory would be a wholesale withdrawal of funding for their maintenance as well as the collapse of bureaucratic structures supporting them, the end of the yearly timetable of visits and pilgrimage to and around them and institutional disinterest and neglect. Perhaps within cities like Pyongyang, Wonsan and Chongjin it would be necessary for the larger of the physical places of memorial to be maintained structurally for public safety's sake; in the rural hinterland and wilder spaces of the north it would not be hard to envisage their whole scale abandonment.

Birch Trees and Lake Samji

“Leaning on a birch tree on which spring tints were emerging, he posed with the commanding officers as well as with other guerrillas. One of them suggested to him that he should have a photo taken with Kim Jong Suk. Hearing this, Kim Jong Suk grew shy, and hid behind the backs of the women guerrillas. They pushed her forward to his side. In order not to miss the moment, the ‘cameraman’ clicked the shutter. For Kim Jong Suk, it was as good as a wedding photo.”²⁵

It is debatable of course whether this brief moment in the lives of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Suk captured in euphemism the actual moment of their matrimony. The photo so often used which attests to record the moment is itself, in part at least, a work of fiction, reminiscent of touched up and manipulated early Victorian photographs, almost painterly in appearance.²⁶ There is certainly a birch tree behind them in the photo, perhaps two and it is North Korea's repeated contention that a stand of birch trees by Lake Samji have survived since this moment in the early 1930s. These trees by the lake are now used for rituals and ceremonies on the anniversary not just of the day on which the photo was taken, whatever it actually represented, but also the birth and death anniversaries of Kim Jong Suk and moments in Kim Il Sung's life. These trees are no longer objects in the background of this now ancient photo, but in line with the work of this author

on the use of topography in North Korean politics and Kwon and Chung's work on charismatic politics of that country, actors on the stage of that theatre.²⁷ The trees serve as reliable and capable witness to that moment and to the powerful energies of authority, legitimacy and authenticity that underpin and sustain the political mythologies of North Korea. This author has written on the processes and practices engaged by Pyongyang to scale and rescale political messages, authority, practice and power across time and space, from the grandest of North Korean governmental spaces to the most quiet and parochial of family places.²⁸ Lake Samji's birch trees are key to the rescaling of the energy, power and reality of its first family's relationship. In a conventional political framework the birch trees and their surroundings would be protected and conserved, attractive arboreal elements within a landscape of natural beauty. This is certainly not what has happened in the case of North Korea. Lake Samji, its waters and the birch trees have become part of an extensive terrain of political memory which includes the 15 metre tall statue of Kim Il Sung dressed as a young man in his army fatigues, extensive drill squares, statues commemorating the various battles claimed to have occurred in the area, hotels and other facilities for visiting groups of young pioneers, bureaucrats and others on political pilgrimage to the area.²⁹ North Korea is also currently building new roads and refurbishing local railways to make the lakeside and the birch trees more accessible.³⁰ Far from the remote wilderness in the far north of the Korean peninsula that Samjiyon surely was at the time of Kim Jong Suk and Kim Il Sung's struggles against the Japanese, the area is one of the key geographies of North Korea's political memory. It is deeply and almost intrinsically marked with the politics and ideologies of the nation, each year this marking becoming more dramatic.³¹

How might we imagine the future for Lake Samji and its trees and the Samjiyon Grand Monument and its wide open concrete spaces loomed over by the enormous bronze figure of a young Kim Il Sung. At this moment North Korea's institutions are focused on future infrastructural developments to integrate the area into the wider networks of the nation. Its spaces and constituent materials currently are vibrant and active in the projection of the current politics of Pyongyang, the gleaming bronze representing the perceived functionality of North Korea's governmental offering, the newly laid standard gauge tracks of the Samjiyon Line, replacing the problematic old narrow gauge tracks attest to the interest being paid to the region by central institutions once again.³² Railway lines and infrastructure in this part of North Korea have long been problematic and plans to connect Ryanggang with the far northeast along the northern border taking pressure off the coastal lines have been underway unsuccessfully for many decades. While there have since the Japanese colonial period, been extensive

industrial facilities amidst northern Korea's valleys and mountains, the connectivity of these places has always been problematic. It is not hard to imagine given the collapse or diminution of Pyongyang's central authority, problems arising with the future funding or support of these infrastructures. While the mines, factories and smelters of the north would surely survive changes in sovereignty on the peninsula, owing in part to the rarity of the mineral resources in this area, it cannot be clear whether Samjiyon would continue to be important to future governments. Perhaps the birch trees of Lake Samji would continue to have a certain curiosity factor given their place in the life narratives of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Suk. It must be surmised that whatever institutional control succeeded the current Kim dynasty it would not be as concerned to maintain the material fabric of some of the more ephemeral or peripheral elements of these narratives. The trees therefore would perhaps not be as well maintained, their straight trunks and well cared for branches and crowns might degrade a little, but it is doubtful whether they would not be subject to arboreal husbandry enough to reach the normal life span for a birch tree, which is around 140 years (Samji's have at a minimum reached half of this already).

What would befall the concrete, alloys and bronze of the Samjiyon Grand Monument is another case entirely. As has been seen across the landscapes of the former socialist nations of eastern Europe, following the transformation of ideological frameworks and the degradation of past institutional structures, the material life of the grand complexes of parade, drill and presentation is not long and certainly not subject to a great deal of resource. While elements of Samjiyon's memorial spaces can certainly make a claim on future memories and histories of a unified or different Korea, many more of course will not. It is not hard therefore to conceive of the drill and parade square falling into disuse and becoming derelict. It might be expected that the giant bronze statue of Kim Il Sung will disappear or be vandalised, though its accompanying statuary of supportive guerrilla fighters might be more resilient and less subject to whatever punishments and humiliations the larger statues will be subject to. Much of the areas memorial architecture will, in time, fade into disrepair, to be occasionally discovered or rediscovered by adventurous walkers, half buried in shrubs and overgrowth. It may be that the tourist infrastructures such as the hotels, guest houses and eating facilities built recently survive for other purposes, primarily those of the next place this paper is interested in, but their original purpose could well be lost to time, the necessary memories of the intricacies of moments in North Korea's complicated historical narratives forgotten. Ultimately it may be that while the material of these very much political places is vibrant and lively now in the wider politics of North Korea, without this memory, without this history it is much less active

and energetic. Its ruin will stand forgotten, testament to a ruined memory and a degraded and dispossessed history.

While Samjiyon and its monument may have a fairly negative future, this is not true for all the places and spaces of the northern areas of the nation. At first glance in the political and media productions of North Korea the spaces around Mt Paektu which are focused on the memory of the guerrilla struggle of Kim Il Sung's band of communist partisans in the early to mid-1930s might be considered extremely problematic. After all much of the political and ideological energy on which North Korean politics has driven for many years and contradicting each other, scholars such as Kwon and Chung and their notion of charismatic politics³³ and BR Myers focused on North Korean ideology as an extension of Japanese ethno militarism and quasi blood fascism³⁴ have claimed is the psychological and psycho-geographic root of its claim to authority and legitimacy, The mythologies of the Paektusan Generals are extremely deeply rooted in North Korean history and politics.³⁵ This paper has already in a sense considered this with the focus on the birch trees of Lake Samji, but for the rest of the paper we will need to move closer to the mountain and then onto and into the mountain itself.

Paektu Secret Camp and Jong Il Peak

For current North Korean politics and commemorative practice arguably the most important physical landscape for its memory is the Paektu Secret Guerrilla Camp. While Pyongyang's historical narratives freely and frequently admit the camp underneath the mountain was at one time but one of a number of similar camps used by the small groups of anti-Japanese communist fighters in the 1930s, these alternative sites have for the most part become diminished in importance. While the slogan trees, some of the bivouacs and cooking areas used by Kim Jong Suk and her smaller band of female fighters are repeatedly used in North Korean media publications and writings and are used in a similar way to the trees at Lake Samji for political tourism, they are not conceptualised as being on the same level of significance as the Secret Guerrilla Camp. This small collection of log buildings which North Korea insists are the original buildings of the camp and the original location forms a dual pole with Mangyongdae (Kim Il Sung's birthplace and the home of his father and family outside of Pyongyang) of 'authentic' architectures of revolutionary importance prior to the Liberation of Korea in 1945. The Guerrilla Camp is also of course not simply renowned as the hide out of Kim Il Sung's band of fighters, but also as the birthplace of Kim Jong Il and therefore the place in which the Kim dynasty which still rules the nation was crystallised. The camp itself is certainly a substantial building and the grounds around it have been

well trodden and extended to cope with the numbers of political and institutional tourists that must visit it through the course of each year. For South Korean politics the dynasty at the heart of North Korean governmentality is as problematic as the ideological direction taken by the country. However, the space above the camp is similarly problematic and riven with complication for the future.

The Secret Guerrilla Camp is at the base of Mt Paektu, one of the most important mountains in Korean spiritual and cultural traditions, a conduit for sacred and powerful energy flows in following the concept of *Paektutaegan* across the peninsula.³⁶ While its importance for Korean nationalism and national sensibility may be considered a modern convention, its place as a spiritually significant landscape in Korean cultural traditions is not. Whether new or old the mountain is now sacred ground for all Koreans, its peak, scree, lake and caldera an important place to visit for citizens of both nations. On the mountains' slopes above the Secret Guerrilla Camp however is a rock outcrop whose terrain will surely need to be reconfigured in the years following any change to the institutional structures of the Korean nations. North Korea on that outcrop above the camp has inscribed the signature of Kim Jong Il in huge letters and renamed the topographic feature "Jong Il Peak." While it is possible that some of the legacies and memories of Kim Il Sung as a figure of nationalist resistance against the Japanese in the 1930s may survive radical changes to the status quo of politics and sovereignty on the peninsula, it is unclear whether Kim Jong Il could be disconnected from the narratives of threat and danger to South Korea's population, his seeming intense disregard for ordinary North Koreans and the economic catastrophe that befell the nation under his reign. It is the assumption of this paper therefore that it would be impossible for future Korean administrations to justify maintaining or repairing the inscribed signature on the mountain. It is also likely that future political authorities and institutions on the Korean peninsula would undertake a wide scale renaming exercise following changes to the political and government status quo. Similar exercises in renaming occurred in many eastern European states following political transformations in the 1990s with towns such as Karl Marx Stadt and streets being renamed to their original names (in that particular case to Chemnitz),³⁷ and in the former Soviet Union following changes in political organisations after the death of Stalin and the dissolution of the union in the 1990 (Stalingrad's renaming as Volgograd for instance).³⁸ Local authorities and urban planners in other less politically tumultuous nations, such as the United Kingdom have also sought to rename streets and urban areas whose names mark difficult or contested histories (for example the renaming of streets which commemorated Imperial British victories in the Boer and Zulu Wars such as Mafeking). It is highly likely that Jong Il Peak would be renamed according to its previous historical nomenclature. It is also

highly likely that although a difficult task, political institutions in a reconfigured Korea would seek to remove the signature from the mountain side.

As the paper has suggested while it is likely that a great deal of the historical and political memory and narrative of North Korea would be subject to deletion, removal and reconfiguration in a future Korean nation. Other examples of such moments elsewhere in the world require the complete abandonment of previous narratives, such as in Estonia, the recovery of whose sovereignty has demanded the complete abandonment of models of history forged during the Soviet period, and Ukraine in which developments in national sensibility have required the generation of an entirely new historical narrative. However, some reconfigurations allow for uncomfortable historical dualisms to continue. Berlin for example, once capital of East Germany (GDR/DDR), now capital of a unified Germany still contains Rosa Luxemburg Platz, a square named after one of the most famous communist political agitators of the first half of the twentieth century and Kaliningrad Oblast of the Russia Federation still has a town named Pionersky, named after the Soviet Union's Young Pioneers youth organisation. While it is perhaps not credible that a future Korean government would be prepared to support a budget large enough to fund the current level of maintenance underneath Mt Paektu at the Secret Guerrilla Camp, it is possible that with a reconfiguration of historical narratives to avoid or downplay the element focusing on Kim Jong Il, the camp could still avoid ruination as a site connected to the less problematic narratives of anti-Japanese resistance. The camp facilities could be considered as less problematic themselves as it is not surrounded by statuary and architecture overtly focused on the ideological memory of communism or socialism. It is not clear of course whether the architectures and spaces commemorating other elements of the narrative would be or could be maintained in any new political era for Korea. It is likely that the slogan trees, bivouacs, cooking areas and other spaces which underpin the thick web of history among the mountains' slopes would be abandoned and left to ruin, unless they were close to access routes and walking trails leading to the summit.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to imagine future possibilities for specific currently highly political and ideological terrains in North Korea's more peripheral northern areas and those abutting Mt Paektu. The ideology embedded within these spaces and architectures by the theatric and charismatic politics of North Korea has under Pyongyang's sovereignty made the material of these places, vibrant and lively. In the historical narratives written, constructed and at times imagined by North Korea the rocks, trees and soil of the mountain and its surrounding area have

become important players and elements in the story, supportive of the struggles of Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Suk and other anti-Japanese guerrillas and important players in their memory. During the period of North Korea's sovereignty many other materials have been implanted and built into the landscapes of the area and in conjunction with the natural elements of its topography these together have produced a terrain of memory and political power. From the perspective of those seeking to counter Pyongyang's political power these terrains have already been ruined, ruined by the ideology of North Korea's autocratic political dynasty and system. These natural spaces have also surely been ruined by the construction of absurd monumental architectures designed to promote and develop elements of the personality cults surrounding Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, the bronze and concrete of statues and parade squares littering the landscape of the area. We might also consider the area, in common with many other places of politics and development in the era of Socialism and Capitalism on this earth to be permanently in a state of ruination due to human interaction. Geographers, Earth and Environmental Scientists call our current geological epoch the Anthropocene or Capitalocene as humans and their accumulations of Capital are responsible for a ruination of the planet's environments, ecosystems, atmospheres and landscapes at a scale that will be recorded by geology itself. The impact of human politics and ideology will thus be traceable in the planet's rocks for aeons to come. While North Korea will certainly have contributed to this global ruination, the impact of its politics on the spaces encountered by this paper is not as dramatic or on as large a scale. Lake Samji and the area to the south of Mt Paektu have indeed been impacted and transformed by North Korean politics, but their ruination is at a smaller scale.

In the future however, outside of the scale of geologic time and the Anthropocene/Capitalocene, this paper posits the potential for their ruination according to different parameters. The paper suggests that it is highly likely in the even of changes to the political status quo on the Korean Peninsula, that elements of the complicated network of architectures in this area, in reality a highly rural and peripheral space in Korea, will be subject to abandonment, neglect and ruination of a type. While Lake Samji's birch trees, the wood of the Secret Guerrilla Camp and the terrain of Mt Paektu itself will very much as material objects and participants in history, survive the collapse or replacement of North Korea's political ideology and sense of history, many other places in the ecosystem of memory surrounding them will not. For some of these the future holds the prospect of a passive neglect as the funding which supported their maintenance and the political imperatives which drove institutional, public and even private tourism to visit them disappears or is substantially reduced. The slogan trees, camp grounds and cooking areas on and around Mt Paektu which are important to memories of

the guerrilla struggle will for the most part disappear into increased forest cover and unmaintained ground cover, eventually to become ruined, deconstructed and atomised. The concrete of the Samjiyon Grand Monument as well will crack, fragment and diffuse over time as it is no longer repaired or used for ceremony and ritual. These places will fall into ruin both literally and in the memory, their vibrancy and liveliness becoming dimmer and dimmer as their place within an abandoned historical narrative is forgotten. Other materials in the area such as the giant bronze statue of Kim Il Sung, the many statues of communist fighters and the enormous signature of Kim Jong Il on the side of the mountain will befall a very active form of ruination. The paper considers that it is very likely these will be deliberately destroyed following a moment of political and institutional reconfiguration. It is likely that many statues of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il will suffer the same fate as Saddam Hussein's statue in Firdos Square, Baghdad on 9 April 2003, unceremoniously torn down as symbolic of a previous era.³⁹ Quite how the signature on Jong Il peak will be deconstructed is unclear, but the fate of Albania's slogan stones implanted throughout the nation on mountainsides under the role of Enver Hoxha might demonstrate that even large impacts on topography can be disappeared given time.⁴⁰ Perhaps the destruction and dramatic ruination of such elements of the landscape will bring them to the forefront of public consciousness for a time, revivifying them in national memory, however it is clear that even given these circumstances their memory will fade. It is conceivably that at some point in the years to come no one will be able to point out the spot on which a young Kim Il Sung's bronze boots once touched the concrete at Samjiyon.

What is most likely to survive without ruination and long into the memory are those physical places which might be amenable or translatable into the political and historical realities of whatever Korean institutions and powers follow a transformation of the status quo. The paper thus suggests that the most likely survivals in the area are likely to be the material of the Secret Guerrilla Camp, the birch trees of Lake Samji and the physical spaces on Mt Paektu which allow public access from the Korean side of the mountain. All of these places have been hugely important to the memory and vibrancy of North Korean politics and history, however all could, with some reconfiguration or repurposing become vibrant, lively materials in the memory, politics and history of a new Korean sovereignty. While it is likely that the area of the camp and the trees will be subject to some infrastructural diminution, they are unlikely to become ruined. Mt Paektu itself will for a long time to come be important to Korean national, cultural and spiritual sensibilities and so is extremely unlikely to become subject to ruination as we might understand it in the practical sense. As this paper has also touched on, the ecosystems of Mt Paektu and its surroundings are in this era

of the Anthropocene/Capitalocene, subject to a potential ruination on a much greater scale at the hands of climate change and environmental crisis. It may be ultimately this ruination that lives longer in the memory than the moments of ruin to which many North Korean political terrains will be subject to.

Notes

1. Dr Robert Winstanley-Chesters is a Geographer based at the University of Leeds. His forthcoming book *Fish, Fishing and Community in North Korea and Neighbours* will be published by Springer Nature (ISBN 9789811500411) in December, 2019 (<https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9789811500411>). Robert can be reached at r.winstanley-chesters@leeds.ac.uk.
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The Creation of the Modern Individual in Modern Korean Literature: Kim Tong-in's Novella *Maŭm i yŏt'un chayŏ* (A Person with a Weak Heart, 1919–1920)

MIN KOO CHOI Assistant Teaching Professor, Georgetown University¹

Abstract

Kim Tong-in (1900–1951) strove to not only refine the form of the modern novel but also to create a new type of modern individual character. This paper examines Kim Tong-in's novella *Maŭm i yŏt'un chayŏ* (A Person with a Weak Heart, 1919–1920), which draws on the modern Korean intellectual's self-portrait of the inner self engaged in the pursuit of modern love. Through the analysis of Kim Tong-in's novella, this paper will argue that the characterization of the modern individual as a superfluous man alienated from society and confined to his inner subject is a manifestation of the ambivalent status of the modern Korean intellectual in colonial Korea.

Keywords: Kim Tong-in, modern Korean literature, modern individual, Korean intellectual, Japanese colonialism

Introduction

The literary movement, which commenced in the 1920s in colonial Korea, was inspired by the so-called cultural policy that intended to appease the Korean people, who were under Japanese colonial rule, after the March First Movement

of 1919. Through the exploitation of this limited freedom, the cultural industry in colonial Korea flourished, and the increase in newspapers and journals that published Korean writing expanded the cultural and public space of literary writers.² The Korean literary youths, who studied abroad in Japan and were inspired by this cultural environment, started to organize literary coterie and publish literary journals—for example, *Ch'angjo* (Creation), *P'yehö* (Ruins), and *Paekjo* (Swan)—in the 1920s, with many prominent writers emerging from these publications. Kim Tong-in (1900–1951) and his literary group, *Ch'angjo* (Creation),³ spearheaded this literary movement. By publishing his literary works in a coterie literary journal of the same name, *Ch'angjo* (Creation), Kim Tong-in strove to not only refine the form of the modern novel but also to create a new type of character, which became the archetype of the individual with a modern identity situated in colonial Korea.

This article epitomizes the fictional character that Kim created through his novella, *Maüm i yöt'un chayö* (A Person with a Weak Heart, 1919–1920), as the modern individual. The term “modern,” in this context, implied a new kind of personality or identity, and a new role attributed to the individual. The concept of the modern individual developed from Western humanism through the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, which started in the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries respectively. It originated from the writings of Rene Descartes (1596–1650), in which the individual is configured as the autonomous and unified self whose identity is located in the subject. The Cartesian distinction between subject and object based on the substantiality of subject over object guaranteed to the individual the privilege of being one to whom the external world could be known, and one who could know, judge, rule, control, and dominate it through their perception and understanding of it.⁴ Through the rise of capitalism and nationalism in the eighteenth century, and with the developments of science and the Industrial Revolution, the individual was conceptualized as an entity of social and political movement and the economic system of capitalism, and a basic unit of collective identity—such as community, society, and nation.⁵

Ideas of modern nationalism developed in Korea in response to imperialism. With the encroachment of Western and Japanese imperialism in Korea in the late nineteenth century, modernization became an important mandate for Korea in order to build up a modern nation-state, which was conceived as the only path for Korea to take in order to survive the competition among imperial powers and preserve its autonomy and independence. The Korean term *Kaein* (individual)⁶ is itself a term imported from the Japanese interpretation of the Western concept of the modern individual, developed around the turn of the twentieth century. The concept of the modern individual was embraced within nationalistic discourse

and, from its introduction in Korea, incorporated the individual person into the unit of society and the nation through various newspapers and journals, such as *Tongnip sinmun* (The Independent, 1896–99), *Taehan maeil sinbo* (Korean Daily News, 1904–1910), *T'aekukhakbo* (T'aekuk Bulletin, 1906–1908), *Hakchikwang* (The Light of Knowledge, 1914–30), *Sonyŏn* (Boys, 1908–11), and *Ch'ŏngch'un* (Youth, 1914–18). It was a significant transformation of the perception of the individual that attempted to bind each individual to equal status, regardless of their traditional hierarchical stratum as based on family, society, and nation. This nationalistic discourse prioritized society and the nation over the individual in the sense that an individual could discover their true identity and meaning only through their dedication to the common good of society and the nation. However, this was a new kind of personhood for Korean people, who found themselves the agents of a collective group with equal status.⁷ After Korea became a colony of Japan in 1910, nationalist and modernization movements were placed under the influence of Japanese colonial rule. Korean nationalism had taken different shapes and agendas through its interaction with Japanese colonial authority. The modernization movement was therefore intertwined with a colonial modernity that characterized the unique modern development transplanted by colonial rule in its telos of controlling and managing its colony, which brought about the establishment of a modern governmental system, a public order system, industry, social and cultural infrastructure, and the educational system.⁸

Around the 1920s, particularly in the discursive field of modern literature and its narratives in fiction, the seemingly apolitical individual character, freed from its role as the agent of collective commitment to nationalism, was promoted. As Kim notes in the postscript of *Ch'angjo*'s first issue, “we simply reveal the records of our thoughts, pain, and predicaments in here.”⁹ Kim and his colleagues, in the literary coterie *Ch'angjo*, delved into a literary embodiment of the authors' self-portraits, their private lives, and their predicaments. The autobiographical elements indicate not so much a reflection of the author's biographical facts in fiction as the modern and colonial identity of the fictional characters that were shared with the authors. Much of their fiction, mostly short stories, appeared in the journal *Ch'angjo* (Creation), which from its first publication in 1919 portrayed the modern individual, who identified with modern education, culture, and literary talent but was alienated from society. Their literary works displayed their unique predicament: they were caught between modernity and tradition under a colonial rule that precipitated tensions and fissures in Korea, which suffered turmoil and confusion at the junction of modernity, tradition, colonialism, and nationalism. Their characters' modern education in Korea and/or Japan precipitated conflict with a traditional family that did not understand their values or vision. This

conflict was expressed through their pursuit of art and its realization in life, love in opposition to arranged marriages, and the pursuit of earthly success in colonial Korea.¹⁰ Love and art were given a separate value and identity that expressed and defined the self, being validated as a symbol of true modernity in the colonial society from which they were alienated. In this regard, the new literary movement in the 1920s was not only the product of the authors' concern for self-realization and awareness, which were neglected by the nationalist discourse, but also their attempts to forge a public space for literary professionals that was independent from other fields of political, social, and cultural movement.¹¹

This paper examines Kim's *Maüm i yōt'un chayō* (A Person with a Weak Heart, 1919–1920)¹² in order to discern how the protagonist's inner self is shaped as the subject of love as he attempts to acquire a modern identity in society. In the text, love functions as a cultural code that endows the protagonist, K, with a modern identity, and foregrounds his predicament of being caught between modernity and tradition. This is expressed through his discontent with a traditional-minded wife and his falling in love with Y. This paper argues that K's predicament, dominated by the desire for love, is a trope that ties K to the modern individual; both his failure of love and the loss of his traditional family signify his superfluous status, both in modernity and tradition. His place within two conflicting realms of society is expressed through his relationship with his wife and his lover, Y, in which he can neither fully align with the modern woman, nor his traditional wife.

The Individuality of the Author and the Fictional Character in the Creation of the Modern Novel

Kim attempts to establish a foundation for the modern novel in both his works of fiction and his critical essays. Like his fiction, his critical essays reflect his vision and understanding about what qualifies as the conditions for a novel, which are closely related to the status of the author through identification with an exemplary modern individual who is characterized as one who discovers and expresses their true self through creativity in the novel's creation. In his essay, "Sosōre taehan chosōnsaram ūi sasang ūl (Korean People's Perception of the Novel, 1918),"¹³ Kim elevates the status of the novel to an art form, which is, he believes, the essence of modern civilization. Kim differentiates the true form of the novel from the popular novel, which is created to attract the reader's attention. The popular novel is described as a traditional narrative centered on family and love affairs with the theme of conflict between good and evil, and a happy ending with a moral conclusion that encourages good and punishes evil.¹⁴ In contrast, the true artistic value of the modern novel is described as requiring an author's creativity

to reflect the author's thoughts and state of mind, the characterization of fictional characters with unique personalities that govern their psychologies and actions, and the characters' conflict and struggles with society. In his theorization of the novel, Kim highlights the author's creativity and the unique personality of the character that he creates as the qualification of the modern individual.

Kim also sets out his view of the novel in opposition to that of reform-minded leaders in society, such as social and religious leaders, and educators. Kim castigates those who judge the value of a novel based on its utility for social and public good, and those who view it negatively on the assumption that the novel corrupts social morality. According to Kim, however, a true sense of reform does not lie in the nationalist reform movement,¹⁵ which prioritizes society and the nation, but in the discovery of the true self, true life, and the true path of the individual, which is only possible through the understanding of true art. The novel divulges the true sense of self, which is not part of collective identity, but claims itself as an independent and autonomous individual. In this sense, Kim launches an attack on both the popular novel and the nationalist social reformer who subordinates the individual to the collective identity and values. As he states, "the novelist is an artist and art is the mind and thought of life, true love for the self, and social reform, and pursues the confluence of mind and body."¹⁶ He extols the novelist as the true agent of modernity in charge of the progress of the mind and body, and of society as well. However, what he means by social reform is not so much reforming people with modern values and culture, but paving the way for them to discover their own selves and the true value of their lives. In this sense, the creator of literature—particularly of the novel, in this context—is the person who possesses the essence of modernity and who realizes the power of individual inspiration and expresses it through literature.

Kim pays particular attention to a manner of fiction writing that guarantees the accomplishment of the ideal form of the novel. However, in "Chagi ùi ch'angjohan segye (The World Created by the Self, 1920),"¹⁷ he instead places an emphasis on the status of the writer, whose creativity is equivalent to God, and the fictional world that the writer creates. Kim compares the creation of fiction to God's creation of the world. The literary author is conceptualized as a representative individual and is empowered as an agent to create a fictional world. The author has a sense of self that distinguishes himself from God and cannot be content with the world created by God. This leads the author to create a world by himself in the form of a novel. In this world of his own creation, an author should control the character and narrative development in his hands as one controls a doll. In his approach to the development of the motivation for creating a novel, Kim manifests the individual self as an autonomous and sensible being who can create a perfect world that he

can control. The fictional world emerges through a reflection of the real world; however, it is not merely its replica, but a representation of it through an author's subject. The individual can perceive an external world, but not without limits, because a world created by a God transcends human perception. By simplifying and configuring a world that is imperfect, irrational, and indigestible, the author embodies the world through his vision, which is more perfect than real.¹⁸ In this sense, the author's subject is given privileges within the external world and the fictional world that he creates is prioritized over the real world.

The narrative world that Kim creates in God's stead is confined to the inner subject of a protagonist who is given absolute status over the narrative events and their background. He notes in *Sosŏl chakbŏp* (Technique of Writing a Novel, 1925)¹⁹ that the structure of the novel consists of narrative events, character, and background—but how it is structured by the author is of the utmost importance. In his opinion, the novel has its own internal mechanism independent of reality, and the novel is itself the outcome of the author's creative acts, which then interact with the novel's unique mechanisms. What Kim prioritizes in writing the novel is focalization on the individual character's subject. His classification of the different focalizations are *irwŏnmyosa* (single-dimensional description), *tawŏnmyosa* (multi-dimensional description), and *sun'gaekkwanyosa* (objective description).²⁰ Kim prefers *irwŏnmyosa* (single-dimensional description), which he picked up from Japanese confessional novels and which focuses on one main character's perception, consciousness, emotions, and desires.²¹ This is because he believes that presenting various characters' viewpoints damages the unity of the novel. The importance of focalization in his theory of the novel means that he regards the interiority of a character as the most significant element constituting the individual identity and worldview of a character. However, Kim does not clearly state how the construction of the fictional world is related to the representation of the real world and how it locates the author as an individual in society to place the creation of the novel in the context of social practice. This lack of the social aspect of a novel entails the characterization of the individual in fiction who, rather than shaping their identity through their interaction with society, is in discord with society and is confined to the inner subject.

The Modern Individual as a Literary and Superfluous Man Caught between Love and Traditional Family

Kim's ambitious project to create the modern individual independent of a political mandate, such as nationalism in colonial Korea, requires its own theme and social setting. Love was an effective theme for the early stage of modern writers

across the different literary groups and schools in Korea. However, in contrast to nationalist writers such as Yi Kwang-su (1892–1950), who exploits love as a motif of nationalist discourse to reform traditional Korea in his novel, *Mujǒng* (Heartless, 1917),²² and in this regard provides a balanced depiction of both modern and traditional values in Korea, Kim delves into the subject of desire in *Maūm i yǒt'un chayǒ* (A Person with a Weak Heart, 1919–1920). In the process, narrative events are underdeveloped to the extent that they do not provide a solid social background for the fictional world. Love is posited as an absolute value and Kim creates a narrative space where the protagonist's desire for it can develop. However, it should be understood as a new way of establishing the relationship between the individual and society. Although the protagonist's subject is given privilege over a fictional world that does not reflect the meticulous observation and representation of social reality, Kim's novella brings about the theme of a problematic individual who has literary talent, but is superfluous to society, configured through the narrative of indulgence in romantic love in conflict with society and the traditional family. This became the recurrent motif of the fiction that followed his novella.

In the novella, the protagonist, K, is portrayed as a superfluous man—a type of character which emerged in nineteenth-century Russian literature. There are similarities between K and the superfluous heroes of Russian novels in the sense that K realizes that the individual whose knowledge, values, and identity are associated with modernity do not fit the existing society, which is still dominated by tradition.²³ Korea underwent a colonial modern transformation while traditional values still wielded formidable power over the lives of individuals. While K is a colonial intellectual with a secondary education, the product of a colonial education system, he is also a modern intellectual who cherishes and is identified with modern culture, as it characterizes his literary sensibility for Western literature and his desire for love, mediated by modern Japan as the cultural provider. In this sense, modernity is intersected with colonialism. K's pursuit of Western literature and love in opposition to his traditional marriage alludes to the conflict and predicament of a superfluous man who is caught between modernity and tradition, but cannot find his role or status in colonial society.

Love is a foreign cultural icon that developed in the West and was imported through Japan. The new coinage, *Yōnae* 戀愛,²⁴ emerged in the late nineteenth century and circulated in the cultural and discursive field of Korean journalism, literary works, art, film, and performances during Japanese colonial rule (1910–1945). This new cultural keyword, the Japanese translation of the Western concept of love, expressed a new kind of romantic relationship and instigated new hope in the hearts of young people who were bound by unwanted arranged marriages.²⁵

After its influx into Korea, it was diversified in colonial Korea based on its association with different political groups and ideas. Romantic love was the most dominant tendency tolerated by both the Japanese colonial authorities and Korean nationalists.²⁶ It was regarded as the outpost for establishing a modern family through marriage, based on love that could produce citizens. While positioning Koreans—the colonized—as subjects of the Japanese Empire, romantic love was not in conflict with the project of establishing family as a basic unit of society. It also harmonized with the nationalist project that regarded love, sex, and marriage as the means for maintaining family, society, and the nation. Romantic love underscores the spiritual aspect over the sexual aspect, which is often the basis for criticism of arranged marriages, in which the couple's relationship is limited to producing descendants to continue the patriarchal family line.²⁷

Love is an essential concept in shaping and embodying the protagonist's identity, because it is related to what is understood as true, and is an experience that validates K, a protagonist for a modern identity. Whether or not K realizes true love in the narrative is tied to the question of whether he can acquire a modern identity. K's desire for love contains various strands of sensibility and desire, which find their origin in his reading of Western novels in the form of Japanese translations and modern Japanese novels. Love and modern literature are two sides of the same coin in the sense that the association with love is literary and based on aspiration for the West, mediated by the modern Japan that produced the translation of Western literature. Reading Western literature in Japanese nourishes his fantasy, as he imagines himself a participant in a love story. When K starts to date Y, he describes their relationship as *robŭ*, the Korean equivalent of the English word *love*, which refers to romantic love in Western culture. The term *robŭ* is what he picks up from reading novels, and to be a participant in modern love is to attempt to live out the novels that he reads and to project himself into the story. K feels that he attains a new identity through his relationship with Y and this elevates him to a new level to the extent that he can proclaim "the world is mine" and "the world gives in to me."²⁸ This indicates that he associates himself with the world where his idea of love originates, and sees himself as a member of a higher civilization, placing himself above those who remain embedded in the traditional culture of Korea.

However, the practice of modern love is flawed at the point of its introduction, and destroys the traditional family to a great degree. The previous generations of women did not have access to modern education and were heavily dependent on their husbands and in-law families for their survival. The New Woman's²⁹ relationship with a modern intellectual, who married a traditional woman at an early age, caused the breakdown of the family and sometimes displaced

the traditional woman, depriving her of an in-law family and thus her only protection.³⁰ The Japanese colonial era of Korea in this sense went through a process of experimentation and conflicting ideas about modern love and marriage. In the novella, love is placed in opposition to the tradition that shapes the world of family: *mother*, *wife*, and *child*. The protagonist is constrained by his arranged marriage to a traditional woman, leaving him discontented with her. Although the accomplishment of love gains its value in the sense of breaking down tradition and realizing the true self, it is unavoidable that the abandonment of family also requires a convincing justification in the narrative of fiction. However, K simply drives his wife away by sending her, his mother, and his child to Hamjong, on the outskirts of Pyŏngyang, without any guilty feeling or sense of moral predicament after acquiring a teaching job at Pyŏngyang. The love in the narrative is clearly patriarchal in the sense that light is only shed on K's viewpoints regarding the backwardness of his traditional marriage.

K's wife's disqualification as a love partner is related to how he defines modernity and tradition. Education and refinement in modern culture and knowledge are important qualifications for identification with modern life. A wife who does not have a formal education and is from a farming family cannot meet K's needs because he craves a partner who can empathize with him. K has also confined his relationship with his wife to the context of a mere sexual union. By discriminating the marriage based on family arrangement from his relationship with the New Woman, which he believes is spiritual, his relationship with Y attains the modern status. In this way, K separates spiritual love from bodily love, in which the former is given a higher value than the latter. In his understanding, love should be something that is dominated by the spiritual aspect, which requires shared culture, intellect, understanding, and empathy. However, behind these formal reasons, there is his wife's declining physical attractiveness, such as her sunburned face from her work on the farm and her weight gain, which are among the reasons that K disregards his wife. Moreover, what infuriates K when he returns home is not solely his wife's lack of modern refinement, but his perception of her lack of devotion to his own family. For the previous five years, while he was away from home studying in Seoul, she left their son with his mother and stayed with her own family to help with their farming. K regards this as a violation of the duty of a wife, who is obliged to serve her in-law family and children. In this sense, what he thinks of as an ideal partner for love is one who is a mixture of both modern and traditional refinement, who possesses the virtue of a traditional woman with intellect, and who has sexual attractiveness, but performs a supportive role as a wife.

Subject of Desire in Love

Kim's *Maūm i yōt'un chayō* (*A Person with a Weak Heart*, 1919–1920) casts the protagonist's interiority as a backdrop where the important identification of a modern individual takes place. This new way of narrative structure and language use embodies the new kind of individual and its subject. The first half of the text is written in the first-person, taking the form of letters, including parts of his diary, regarding K's relationship with Y; these are sent by K to his valued friend, C. On the other hand, the second half of the text, which accounts for his trip to Mount Kungang with C, is in the third-person. Despite the different narrative points of view, the narrative is heavily focalized on the protagonist, K. It is also worth noting that what is happening to the subject of the protagonist is prioritized over external narrative events. In this sense, the presentation of the main character's inner landscape, as it is captured by love, is more important than the narrative development. What K thinks about love, and his daydreaming, fantasies, despair, and misunderstandings are the main concerns of the novella, and there is no space in which another viewpoint can be integrated. In this narrative structure that takes up the protagonist's inner subject, the carnal desire of a married man for a woman other than his wife is meticulously examined. K's subject, full of emotion guided by desire, authenticates his genuineness and truthfulness, which exposes his true nature and hidden truth, becoming a true representation of the modern individual.³¹

Love rooted in modern culture plays a pivotal role in shaping K's subject as unfamiliar and exotic sensibility. K's daily setting is conveyed through his consciousness, which directs inwards rather than outwards. He regards his daily life, confined to his teaching job, as boring and meaningless; his core of life lies in his inner subject, which spans around reverie. What materializes from this reverie is the erotic consumption of the modern look on the street and love stories in Western literature. Women on the street attract K through what is seen as a modern look, as demonstrated in the following:

I caught sight of a young *Kisaeng* [female entertainer] who was singing a sad song: 'Play, play, let's play when we are young. If we are old, we cannot play'; 16- to 18-year-old female students going out in pairs with modern hairstyles; a female student from S middle school hurrying with books and a black parasol; a young married couple walking together happily on the wide road; and then I saw new couples every week who were married in church, alas!³²

The protagonist is full of desire when he looks at the group of women around him, who arouse him with their "modern looks."³³ *Kisaeng*,³⁴ young female students, and a young wife refined in modern fashion achieve modern looks through their

hairstyles, clothes, and accessories, such as books and black parasols. Most of all, the young couples who date publicly or tie the knot in a modern church wedding remind him of the modernity that he lacks. Love is envisaged in its modern image, and K is avariciously consumed by his erotic desire. K can only realize the love that he longs for by placing himself in a love story from Western literature translated into Japanese. It is worth noting that his refinement in and pursuit of modern culture helps to shape the motivation for his desire. His desire is developed in the process of his own new understanding of love. In this regard, his desire acquires significant meaning as more than merely sexual or as a human instinct, in that it shows how the dissemination of the image of modern lifestyles regarding love, marriage, and fashion as represented in Western literature triggers a new kind of desire that is escalated by his awe and envy as he aspires to it.

The way that love is represented in the text is groundbreaking when compared with previous novels, in the sense that the sexual act becomes an important means of enacting the love between K and Y. More important than this, it foregrounds K's consciousness, which perceives and feels the sexual act sensuously. The narrative scenes that are involved with the love affair are comprised of K's sexual desire and the consummation of it through a sexual relationship. In the initiation of their relationship, the attention falls upon his emotion and feeling of intimacy as presented through a sensational description of the sexual/erotic pleasure that he experiences with Y. In the scene in which Y visits K's boarding house for the first time, the light physical contact between their legs is paralleled in their conversation. Their conversation covers light topics and a love story in the classical novel, *Ch'unhyang*, while their real empathy is built through physical contact. Since they sit close together on the floor, sharing cookies, K nudges his leg to touch Y's leg and then slowly withdraws. Y responds to K by stretching her leg so that it touches K's leg and then takes it back. As this exchange continues, their touching becomes more solid and extended, and this physical contact thrills him. This incident is bound up in a more developed physical relationship, as time goes by, involving hugging and kissing, and a sexual relationship. His recount of this physical intimacy so vividly highlights how K amuses himself with sexual contact, such as touch and the sight of her attractive body, as is depicted in the lines: "my cheeks jump over her soft cheek like silk. My lips are on fire over her red lips" and "I became a man who can enjoy the taste of her body through hugging her naked body and kissing her red lips."³⁵ Y's sexual desire is given attention through her active response to K's sexual advances, such as when she actively advances her own legs to touch his. K even feels that Y's trembling results from her excitement during the first physical contact between their legs, and this excites him. However, Y remains the object of desire that triggers K's desire rather than the subject of

love, someone that K understands and with whom he shares empathy. As shown when he describes hugging Y, “she embraces me without resistance while she pretends to shake me off,”³⁶ Y’s desire is only readable through K’s perception and only plays a role in intensifying K’s excitement.

As his love affair develops, there appears a rupture between the ideal conception of romantic love and the actual affair. K is afflicted by anxiety and nervousness. His emotional highs and lows give way to his suspicion about whether his affair is true love. The narrative pattern goes through the ups and downs of K’s mental state through his sexual desire, satisfaction, feelings of guilt about the sexual relationship, and doubt as to whether his relationship with Y is true love. In the beginning, he aligns his relationship with Y with romantic love, a spiritual one that transcends personal interests and earthly desires, and one in which he elevates himself to a different level. However, the contradiction between his perception of love and its practice makes him doubt whether his practice of love is identical to the modern values that he learns from a love story in Western literature.

I only seek sexual satisfaction from her. Y’s love for me is only bodily love. Spiritual contentment? There is no spiritual contentment except that there is one when our physical pleasure inspires it somewhat. The romantic longing that I had before I met Y, where is it?³⁷

K laments that his experience of love has destroyed his fantasy and has taken away his longing and romantic feelings. His relationship with Y does not realize the values of modern love that he had envisioned, and his perception of it does not derive from material grounds, such as experiences and pre-existing relationships in society, but is merely selected from his reading and shaped by his fantasy. K vaguely anticipates that his bodily love will turn into a more spiritual one. In addition, his unstable mental state worsens with his obsession with Y, and he loses all interest in other areas of his daily life, such as teaching at school and attending church. It is worth noting that his obsession focuses on Y’s body and sexual attraction. When she is not with him, he recalls and visualizes her naked body and their previous sexual encounter. In the justification of a relationship that is too bound up in sexual relations, he eventually revises his original perception of love, and affirms the sexual aspect of love as more fundamental to romantic love, with an unconditional blindness that does not distinguish the spiritual from the bodily.

The gap between his idea and the reality is inherent in the beginning of narrative in the fact that K’s relationship with Y is of K’s own making in a fantasy created by his blind and unconditional desire for modern love, which cannot be explained by the rational and reasonable development of the feeling of love.

In other words, K blindly desires the object of love rather than an actual love with his potential beloved. K is more interested in experiencing love than experiencing the person with whom he falls in love. The development of the relationship between K and Y is contrived, and is less than convincing. In his account of his first impressions of Y, K is not attracted to her. Particularly, he notes that her face is a triangular shape that he usually dislikes. However, he is mesmerized by Y through sexual contact; he hypnotizes himself by fantasizing about Y's face in a new way, to the extent that her triangular face turns to round. If her physical appearance is a far cry from his ideal type, what attracts him to Y? The mandate for obtaining a partner of romantic love is the most important motivation for his development of a relationship, and Y is a convenient object that can satisfy K's selfishness in completing his project of modernity by acquiring love. He knows many female teachers in Y's school who are more beautiful and attractive, but K feels that they are too good for him and are beyond his reach. Y's approach and confession of her love for him gives him an opportunity to enter into the world of love that he so desperately longs for. Outside of K's secluded interiority, full of self-centered ego and only caring for his own feelings and emotions, the elaboration of the individuality of two characters does not develop and the narrative is limited to procuring a narrative place, such as his boarding house, where his vision for a spiritual love turns to a sexual one.

Although K shapes Y within his own imagination, she always diverges from it. In this sense, she is posited as an entity signifying modernity that K can never make sense of and emotionally take root in. As their relationship develops and K becomes more deeply involved in the relationship with Y, K suffers from nervousness due to his premonition that she will eventually leave him. Y is not a being that gives him a sense of comfort or emotional stability. Instead, she captivates him to the extent that he deviates from his normal life. K loses sensible consciousness to reflect on his relationship and is influenced by emotional anxiety and nervousness, swinging between his doubts about the true nature of his love and the reliability and truthfulness of Y. This establishes an ambivalent relationship between K and Y in the sense that Y helps K to gain a modern identity through becoming an object of his love, but at the same time prevents him from settling down in it. However, this obstacle is simply resolved by excluding her from the qualification of becoming a true subject of love. Y is characterized as a strange woman, demonstrated by her active role in initiating the relationship by confessing her love first, as well as her sexual drive. Her subject is not fully configured in the narrative; she does not experience any predicament or struggle through an extramarital relationship or unwanted marriage. At the same time, she is deprived of her modern identity through her submission to the marriage

arranged by family. K questions why Y cannot turn down an arranged marriage, and suspects that her motivation for approaching him in the first place was the satisfaction of her sexual desire rather than love. Although he does not intend to divorce his wife due to his fear of social stigmatization, and does not attempt to perpetuate his relationship with Y, he concludes that his project of acquiring a modern identity through love has ended with Y's betrayal, since she cannot be a true object of love, which indicates the weakness of women in general.

The Individual, the Landscape, and Colonial Reality

The physical landscape is presented in the modern novel through a character's subject, who can discover and objectify it through perception and understanding, which is also the qualification of the modern subject. In this process, the landscape becomes the space where the individual character interacts, which is somehow related to the representation of social reality. It plays a role in realizing the subject as a concrete form in the material world. Karatani Kōjin uses the term "discovery of landscape" in his examination of the origins of modern Japanese literature; the term refers to the way that the landscape is discovered through the formation of a modern subject. According to Karatani, the objective presentation of the landscape is not so much the result of the subject's perception as it is a new mode of writing that can position an image of the objective world as perceived through an individual subject. As Karatani states, "it is only within the 'inner man', who appears to be indifferent to his external surroundings, that landscape is discovered. It is perceived by those who do not look 'outside'."³⁸ The landscape appears in modern writing through the individual subject's examination of the inner self. This is because the depiction of the landscape always presumes its subject as distinctive from the external world. Ko also notes that nature and scenery become a landscape when the individual can secure a distance from the exterior world for contemplation. If you are too familiar with exteriority, it becomes a part of your daily life. However, it is also prevented from becoming a landscape if it is so unfamiliar and extraneous that it moves beyond the reach of your perception.³⁹

In order to form a landscape through the mechanism of narrative development that spurs the attainment of a new kind of self-identity and self-perception for a character, the setting of a new relation between a character as an observer and a landscape as an external world should be established first. The landscape in the narrative structure usually functions as a literary device that appears on the road during a protagonist's search for self-discovery and paves the way for him to acquire a new kind of understanding and perception about the self. The landscape plays a role in mirroring the new version of the self that it triggers or that a

character has already attained. In this sense, relating one's subject to the external world is the process of defining the self for a protagonist. However, K's interiority has not developed to that degree in the text. His perception of the landscape remains the residue of his fantasy, which is presented as a form of abstraction, and is made crooked and capricious by his subjective mind and emotions.

On the train, K makes an attempt to account for his current state of mind. His sense of sadness and loneliness makes him feel like he is being left alone in this world. This space of self-examination is mixed with exotic images of the West in his fantasy, which places K in a European building reading a romantic story of a knight, which is not clearly related to his despair resulting from broken-heartedness. What changes K's mood is the sound of the train, which overlaps with his whistling of a tune from Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*. Soon he senses the joy and enlightenment as "he thought that he was becoming aware of the philosophical principle of life."⁴⁰ In this moment, the external world meets K's perception in the following description:

He looked at the scene in front of him. There was a light. It was neither sunlight nor moonlight. Magical light refracted through magical eyes, a light shining bright was there. K's eyes penetrated a mountain and reached further into it. There was an endless and wide field that was widespread, and there was also a mysterious light shining. (The Buddhist Land of Happiness one trillion miles from Earth and Paradise across Jordan.)⁴¹

In the passage above, K blurs the distinction between the protagonist's subject and the objective world so that he cannot distance himself from his surroundings, examine himself, and objectify his surroundings by filtering them through his inner self. There is no detailed description or image of the landscape, but merely a space comprising darkness and mountain. The magical light, which comes from a subjective perception grounded in his fantasy rather than from K's observation, shades the realistic representation of the landscape. What his sight is directed towards is an ambiguous place referred to as "there"—a "wide field" which does not exist in reality, such as the Buddhist next world or the promised paradise of Christianity. This indicates that K's landscape is still not grounded in a relationship with the external world, but is a landscape constituted by K's fantasy, mixed with images of modern conventions and cultural codes that could lead to sudden enlightenment. This is because K does not have an interiority that is developed enough to define his identity and place him in the external world.⁴²

What is problematic is that the scene of K's awakening occurs at the beginning of his trip, and K has fallen into the same pattern of obsessing before he achieves the sense of awakening which he projects into the scene described above. His sense of enlightenment through his experience of landscape turns to his unstable

state of mind, manipulated by jealousy and hatred toward Y again and again. His unstable mental state continues through the trip so that he shifts from his sense of the outer world to his fantasizing about Y and the other way around. His imaginings of a scene in which Y is enjoying leisure hours with her husband shifts to another scene of Y lying in bed with her husband, her hair rolling over the pillow. He gnashes his teeth in anger and attempts to change the image of her husband's appearance from manly and sophisticated to ugly and unclean.

This degeneration of K into his own subjective and secluded interiority does not fully eclipse the social consciousness that points to his ambivalent status as a colonial modern intellectual. At first, the landscape depicted in the text bears the mark of K's attempt to discover a national identity in the Korean local landscape. Physical nature is connected to locality by being linked with the term *Chosŏn*,⁴³ which relates K's search for the self to a specific identity. Although the depiction of landscape does not provide any locality specific to the degree that it can be any landscape in any location—a mere reprint of a composition of mountains, seas, and country villages—the word *Chosŏn* indexes the nationality that K explores, and shapes his identity in relation to it. K's pursuit of relating nationality and locality of the landscape to his modern identity, is, however, intermingled with the colonial discourse that K might internalize. This is revealed through his perception of landscape as an indicator of the backwardness of Korea, which is depicted as a place that has declined from its prosperous history of 4000 years and is now uncivilized. In his observation of a Korean sea from the top of Mount Kumgang, K senses the vitality of the possibility of world peace, which indicates the mood of temporary tranquillity and sense of flourishing that victorious countries, including Japan, acquired after World War I. In this scene, he posits himself in the place of the Japanese: the colonizer and the origin of colonial modernity. In this sense, K is lost between his national identity as a Korean and his modern identity originating in the colonial system.

K's final transformation takes place through his alignment with traditional values and his repentance for his reckless indulgence in extramarital affairs. When K begins to doubt the true nature of his relationship with Y, which focuses heavily on a sexual relationship, he momentarily turns his attention to his wife, who has played her role as a faithful daughter-in-law and mother by devoting herself to K's mother and his son in Hamjong. In contrast to the untamed and changeable character of Y, whom he cannot control, K's wife repents for her past—when she stayed with her own family, helping in their farming, and leaving behind her son and mother-in-law while K was studying abroad in Seoul—demonstrating her dedication and willingness to sacrifice for K's family. This practice of traditional women is regarded as true love by K, who shifts from an aspiration for

modern love to the values of a traditional family. Becoming sick during the trip, K suddenly feels loneliness, and this stirs memories of his childhood with his family. In addition, he meets his wife in a dream. This changes his attitude and softens his heart towards his traditional family, from whom he had originally wanted to distance himself. When he returns to his hometown, he discovers that his wife and son were victims of a flu epidemic and have died. This incident makes him repent his indulgence in modern love and all the modern values that he attached to his affair with Y, and he becomes a person who cherishes the traditional values of family. K laments his past actions and concludes that his abandonment of wife and son was due to his indulgence in a modern trend that ignores the rights of women.

The narrative development heavily depends on chains of coincidence; the moral conclusion of the narrative is contradictory to the characterisation of the protagonist developed throughout the novella. K's project for love ends in the necessary denial of his modern identity. His aspiration for realizing love, and its failure, seemingly leads to an affirmation of tradition. However, it is worth noting that the deaths of both his wife and son prevent any possibility of reunion with them. They attain their significance because they are permanently lost. In this sense, modernity is treated as very attractive, to the extent that it makes K lose his sense, but it is an object that K cannot fully acquire. On the other hand, tradition is configured as backward and uncivilized, such that K strives to escape from it. However, it cannot be completely abandoned. K's complicated relationship with modernity and tradition indicates his ambivalent status as a colonial modern intellectual who is shaped by modern values and beliefs mediated by Japan but cannot be fully assimilated into colonial society. K distances himself from tradition in order to acquire his modern identity, but never ignores it.

Conclusion

This story of adultery and a disharmonious family implies the conflicted relationship between tradition, modernity, and colonialism. Modernity was introduced to Korea in the form of colonialism. Under Japanese colonial rule, Korea underwent a transformation to a modern colonial state that became the basis of Japanese colonial expansion. The Western concept of romantic love, imported through modern Japan, emphasizes marriage based on love rather than familial arrangement or contract. This modern love is elevated to the status of the condition of individual self-realization which validates modern identity. This new trend of love that is blindly followed by modern Korean intellectuals is often posited as a trope that describes the conflict between modernity and tradition. Kim's project to create a modern individual in his novella brought about

new kinds of narratives that highlight an individual character's identity, which is located in the subject of his thoughts, emotions, and desires, but it fails to create a convincing narrative world. K is embodied as a subject, characterized by excessive emotion and irrationality, who cannot locate himself in social reality. The novella ends with K's repentance of his adultery, which seems like a confirmation of the status quo of traditional morality. This moral conclusion warns of the dangers of modern love, which can destroy the traditional way of life.

However, it is worth noting that Kim attempts to shape new kinds of sensibility and employs a form of the novel that was unprecedented in the Korean novel. First of all, through focalizing on K's inner subject, Kim's novella foregrounds K's inner subject as freighted with sexual desire, jealousy, and the obsession that he experiences in modern love. Those emotions and that sensibility of the individual are far from an ideal modern individual who would have the rationality and agency to rule and change an external world. However, the literary convention that regards expressions of instinct, desire, and ugly emotion as the assertion of a genuine portrait of a modern individual took root in modern Korean literature through Kim Tong-in's literary works. In addition, Kim attempts to experiment with the narrative of an individual's quest and the discovery of self through the narrative event of K's trip to Mount Kungang, placing K's self-examination in relation to the discovery of landscape at the center of the narrative development. The protagonist may be a portrait of a modern individual who is motivated by the call of modernity but cannot realize it in the reality of colonial Korea. The characterisation of the modern individual as a superfluous man alienated from society and confined to his inner subject is therefore a manifestation of the ambivalent status of modern Korean intellectuals who identify themselves as modern individuals that cannot find a place for themselves in colonial Korea.

Notes

1. Min Koo Choi, East Asian Languages and Cultures, Georgetown University, mc1783@georgetown.edu.
2. Michael E Robinson. *Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 57–61.
3. The literary coterie *Changjo* (Creation), which consisted of 13 members, was initiated in 1919 and published a coterie literary journal of the same name, with nine issues published between the year of its creation and May 1921. Kim Tong-in was a leader of the group and editor of its journal. Chang Sök-chu, *20 segi han'guk munhak üi t'amhöm 1 1900–1934* (20세기 한국 문학의 탐험 1 1900–1934) (Seoul: Sigongsa, 2008), 218–227.
4. Sidonie Smith. *A Poetic of Women's Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 22–24.
5. Hall suggests three types of individual identity: the enlightenment subject, the sociological subject, and the post-modern subject. The enlightenment subject places its focus

- on the individual identity; its essential being is located in nothing but it is subject to the knower via reason and logic. However, in modern society it becomes more complicated, as the individual is related to a larger collective, shaped by particular values and culture, becoming the sociological subject. The post-modern subject indicates the phenomenon in which the unified and autonomous concept of the individual was decentralized in contemporary society. Stuart Hall, “The Question of Cultural Identity,” in *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, eds. Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert, and Kenneth Thompson (Cambridge: Blackwell Publisher Inc, 1996), 597–598, 603–604.
6. *Kaenin* is an imported word of the Japanese *Kojin*, represented by Chinese characters 個人, which was experimented and settled on by Japanese modern reformist and nationalist Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901). See Yoon Sun Yang, *From Domestic Women to Sensitive Young Men: Translating the Individual in Early Colonial Korea* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017), 9.
 7. Although there were literary movements that started to search for an individual identity separate from the nationalist discourse of the 1920s, the attempt to embody an individual in the context of the nationalist discourse continued throughout the time of Japanese colonial rule (1910–1945). In the nationalist discourse before and after Japanese colonial rule, the individual is called to be the subject of enlightenment, a constituent of a modern nation. But the nationalistic paradigm envisions the creation of an individual with a sensible and perceptive subjectivity that is only defined by its relationship with the common good of the collective, such as society and the nation. Pak Suk-cha, *Han’guk munhak kwa kaeinsöng* (한국문학과 개인성) (Seoul: Somyöngch’ulp’an, 2008), 90–97.
 8. Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson. “Introduction: Rethinking Colonial Korea,” in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, eds. Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 9–13.
 9. Kim Tong-in. “Nam-un mal (남은말),” *Ch’angjo* (창조) 1 (1919), 81.
 10. Yi Hye-ryöng. *Han’guk kundaesösöl kwa seksyuöllit’i üi söshak* (한국 근대소설과 섹슈얼리티의 서사학) (Seoul: Somyöngch’ulp’an, 2007), 50, 77.
 11. Ch’a Hye-yöng. *Han’guk kunda munhak chedo wa sööl yangsik üi hyöngsöng* (한국 근대 문학 제도와 소설 양식의 형성) (Seoul: Yöngnak, 2004), 56–62.
 12. Kim Tong-in’s *Maüm i yöt’un chayö* (A Person with a Weak Heart) was serialized in *Ch’angjo* (Creation) between December 1919 and May 1920. In this paper, I used the pdf version of the original text downloaded from Wiki Source, https://ko.wikisource.org/wiki/%EB%A7%88%EC%9D%8C%EC%9D%B4_%EC%98%85%EC%9D%80_%EC%9E%90%EC%97%AC (accessed October 6, 2018).
 13. Kim Tong-in. “Sosöre taehan chosönsaram üi sasang üil (소설에 대한 조선 사람의 사상을),” in Kim Tong-in p’yöngnon sönjip (김동인 평론 선집), ed. Yang Chin-o (Seoul: chsikulmandununjisik, 2015), 1–10.
 14. The popular novel that Kim refers to include both traditional and many early modern fiction works which, he believes, possess moral themes such as promoting good and punishing evil, didacticism, and the uniformed characterization of protagonists with wit and beauty. He undervalues Yi Kwang-su’s (1892–1950) novels due to their similarity with traditional fiction. See Kim Tong-in. *Chosöngundaesösölgo* (조선소설근대고), in Kim Tong-in in p’yöngnon sönjip (김동인 평론 선집), ed. Yang Chin-o (Seoul: chsikulmandununjisik, 2015), 53–64.
 15. Kim distinguishes his literary activities from the nationalist reform movement that aimed to educate and reform Korean people with modern knowledge and values while emphasizing collective identity and inspiring national consciousness. Kim’s project is to establish an autonomous space for literary society; he focuses on the discovery and understanding of the self at the individual level.
 16. Kim Tong-in. “Sosöre taehan chosönsaram üi sasang üil,” 6.

17. Kim's "Chagi ūi ch'angjohan segye (자기의 창조한 세계)" was originally published in *Ch'angjo* (Creation) in July 1920. In this paper, I used the version in Kim Tong-in's *P'yŏngnon sŏnjinp* (김동인 평론선집), ed. Yang Chin-o (Seoul: Chishikŭlmandŭnŭnjishik, 2015), 33–41.
18. Kang Hŏn-kuk. "Kim Tongin Sosŏllon (김동인 소설론)," *Han'gugŏ Munhak Kukche Haksul P'orŏm* (한국어문학국제학술포럼), 7 (2008), 218–220.
19. Kim's *Sosŏl chakbŏp* (소설 작법) was originally published in *Chosŏnmundan* (Literary Society of Chosŏn) from April to July, 1925. The pdf version of the original text, downloaded from Featured Shared Yard, is used in this paper, <https://gongu.copyright.or.kr/gongu/wrt/view.do?wrtSn=9021584&menuNo=200025> (accessed October 6, 2018).
20. Kim, in *Sosŏl chakbŏp* (소설 작법), explicates that *irwŏnmyosa* (一元描寫) conveys the narrative event through the viewpoint of a singular (type A) or plural focalizer (type B). Type B has more than one focalizer, but the specific chapter or part of the text is viewed through one focalizer rather than switching from one to another rapidly and freely, which is *tawŏnmyosa* (多元描寫). *Sun'gaekkwanyosa* (純客觀描寫) is not associated with characters in the text but views the narrative world from outside the story. Kang Hŏn-kuk compares Kim's concept of focalization with Gerard Genette's theory by equating *irwŏnmyosa* with internal focalization, *tawŏnmyosa* with zero or non-focalization, and *sun'gaekkwanyosa* with external focalization. Kang Hŏn-kuk. "Kim Tongin Sosŏllon (김동인 소설론)," 216–218; Manfred Jahn. "Focalization," in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 97–99.
21. Kim's theory of focalization is heavily dependent on Japanese literary writer Iwano Hōmei (1873–1920), who is a strong proponent of *irwŏnmyosa* (single-dimensional description) and believes that literature is the product of literary reflection on the self. The term *irwŏnmyosa* is the Korean pronunciation of the Japanese literary term 一元描寫 represented in classical Chinese. Song Myŏng-jin, "Kūndae sosŏrŏ ūi hyŏngsŏng kwajŏng yŏn'gu-Kim Tong-in ūi 'sosŏlchakbŏp' kwa sosŏllon ūl chungshim ūro (근대 소설어의 형성 과정 연구-김동인의 '소설 작법'과 소설론을 중심으로)," *Kugŏgungmunhak* (국어국문학) 173 (2015), pp. 164–165; Edward Fowler. *The Rhetoric of Confession: Shishōsetsu in Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Fiction* (California: University of California Press, 1988), 125–127.
22. *Mujŏng* (Heartless) by Yi Kwangsu (1892–1950) was serialized in *Maeil Sinbo* (Maeil Daily) from 1 January to 14 June 1917. It is regarded as the first modern Korean novel. For a detailed analysis of the text in the context of modernity and nationalism, see Sheila Miyoshi Jager. "Woman and the Promise of Modernity: Signs of Love for the Nation in Korea," *New Literary History* 29–1 (1998), 121–134.
23. Ellen Chances. "The Superfluous Man in Russian Literature," in *The Routledge Companion to Russian Literature*, ed. Neil Cornwell (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001), 111–122.
24. The term *Yŏnae* 戀愛 is the translation of 'romantic love', coined in Japan. It first appeared in Yu Kil-chun's travelogue *Sōyu kyŏnmun* (Observations on Travels in the West), published in 1895, in which the term describes the courtship culture of upper-class Europeans. It is also used as the indicator of romantic love in Cho Chunghwan's novel *Ssangongnu* (Tears in Two Eyes), serialized in *Maeil Sinbo* (Maeil Daily) from 17 July 1912 to 3 February 1913. The novel emphasizes the spiritual aspect of romantic love by warning of the dangers of love when people indulge their sexual desires. Chiyoung Kim. "The Conceptual History of 'Yŏnae (Love) in the Korean Colonial Period,'" *Acta Koreana* 16–1 (2013), 115–119; Kwŏn Bodŭrae. *Yŏnae-ŭi Sidae* (연애의 시대) (Seoul: Hyŏnshilmunhwayŏn'gu, 2003), 12.
25. Chiyoung Kim. "The Conceptual History of 'Yŏnae (Love) in the Korean Colonial Period,'" 120–127.
26. Sonja M. Kim. "Women, Gender, and Social Change in Colonial Korea," in *Routledge Handbook of Modern Korean History*, ed. Michael J. Seth (London: Routledge, 2016), 143–146.
27. The liberal nationalists highlighted the spiritual aspect of love and the secular and material conditions of love, sex, and marriage, because they saw them as the means for maintaining

- the family, society, and nation. Kim Kyöngil. *Yösöng üi Kündae, Kündae üi Yösöng* (여성의 근대, 근대의 여성) (Seoul: P'urünnyöksa, 2004), 126–130.
28. Kim Tong-in. *Maüm i yöt'un chayö*, 2.
 29. The 'new woman' indicates one of the female intellectuals educated in modern schools, who emerged in Korea in the 1920s. They soon became cultural icons of new a kind of womanhood that asserted women's self-realization and emancipation from the patriarchal family system and attempted to procure a place for women in the public arena. However, this group of women was regarded as a challenge to male dominance and they were often represented as being vain and sexually licentious. Theodore Jun Yoo. *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910–1945* (California, CA: University of California Press, 2008). 79–81.
 30. Jiyoung Suh. "The 'New Woman' and the Topography of Modernity in Colonial Korea," *Korean Studies* 37 (2014), 25–31.
 31. In her analysis of the same text, Yang sees that K's interiority with excessive emotion is constituted through its association with mental illness, which is drawn from Western psychopathology. My paper examines K's subject by focusing more on desire triggered by his aspiration for modernity and his unstable mental state, and the obsession resulting from his conflicted identity as a colonial and modern intellectual. This conflict sees him alienated from both tradition and modernity. See Yoon Sun Yang. "Madness, Medicine, and Masculinity in Kim Tongin's 'Oh, the Frail-Hearted!,'" *Journal of Korean Studies* 23–2 (2018), 423–442.
 32. Kim Tong-in. *Maüm i yöt'un chayö*, 1.
 33. 'Modern look' is a term borrowed from Dong's analysis of the Chinese Modern Girl phenomenon. The modern image was introduced to Korean society through the new fashions of various women who emulated this 'modern look'. Madeleine Yue Dong. "Who Is Afraid of the Chinese Modern Girl?" in *The Modern Girl Around the World*, ed. The Modern Girl Around the World Research Group (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 194–219.
 34. In the 1920s, *Kisaeng* and a female student sought public attention for their modern look. Some journalists complained that it was difficult to distinguish a female student from *Kisaeng*. *Kisaeng* had been female entertainers for the upper-classes and the property of the Chosön court until they were released from government control through the Kabo Reforms of 1894. They established a private entertainment quarter. In 1908, all *Kisaeng* were registered with and were regulated by the colonial police. Kwön Bodürae. *Yönae-üi Sidae* (연애의 시대), 36–39, 48–53.
 35. Kim Tong-in. *Maüm i yöt'un chayö*, 10.
 36. *Ibid.*, 8.
 37. *Ibid.*, 9.
 38. Kōjin Karatani. *Origin of Modern Japanese Literature*, Trans. Brett de Bary (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 25.
 39. Sö Yöng-ch'ae. "Chöltae konggan ürosö üi p'unggyöng—tu pöntchae p'unggyöng kwa chonjaeronjök sun'gan" (절대 공간으로서의 풍경—두 번째 풍경과 존재론적 순간), *Han'guk'hyöndaemunhakyöng'u* (한국현대문학연구) 41 (2013), 570–573.
 40. Kim Tong-in. *Maüm i yöt'un chayö*, 22.
 41. *Ibid.*, 22.
 42. Chöng Hye-yöng. P'unggyöng-üi pujae-Kim Tong-in üi [Maümi yöt'un chayö] rül chungshim üro (풍경의 부재 [마음이 열은 자여]를 중심으로), *Han'guk munhag iron kwa pip'yöng hak'oe* (한국문학이론과 비평학회) 40 (2008), 478–79.
 43. *Chosön* is the name of the dynasty that existed before Korea formally became a Japanese colony in 1910. Throughout Japanese colonial rule (1910–1945), it represented Korea as indigenous, traditional, and possessed by ethnic identities.

From Hybridity of Cultural Production to Hyperreality of Post-feminism in K-pop: A Theoretical Reconsideration for Critical Approaches to Cultural Assemblages in Neoliberal Culture Industry

GOOYONG KIM Assistant Professor, Cheyney University of Pennsylvania¹

Abstract

This paper evaluates a current discourse of cultural hybridity that is deployed to examine the global success of local popular culture from South Korea. Indicating the discourse is descriptive without retaining an explanatory merit, I propose an alternative perspective based on Jean Baudrillard's notion of simulation and hyperreality, while focusing on the political economy of cultural hybridization. Examining how the Korean popular music (K-pop) industry mixes various audio-visual elements, I argue cultural hybridity in K-pop is not so much an autonomous, self-reflective cultural endeavor as an industrial means to maximize profits while perpetuating the status quo of gender relations. Re-inserting K-pop within the industry's structural configurations, I analyze how and why a hyper-real personality of female idols who sport contradictory characteristics, innocence and explicit sexuality, becomes a new ideal femininity. Indicating neoliberal and post-feminist ramifications in K-pop's hybridity, I redress the myopic, descriptive nature of the current scholarship.

Keywords: Korean Popular Music (K-pop), Cultural Hybridity, Hyper-reality, Post-feminism, Neoliberal Culture Industry.

Introduction

This paper aims to help better understand K-pop's neoliberal and post-feminist ramifications, examining female idols' hybridized stage personalities and sexualities. With its international success since the mid 2000s, especially the global fame of Psy, Girls' Generation, and BTS, an increasing number of scholarly endeavors have attempted to analyze the various dynamics behind the phenomenon. However, as Patrick Galbraith and Jason Karlin lament "scholars do analyze idols, but often without theoretical motivation or engagement" in their ever-increasing implications and importance,² nothing is more troublesome than the existing literature on cultural hybridity. Adopting Homi Bhabha's theorization on the post-colonial experiences of elite migrants who navigate the in-betweenness of their national and cultural identities, scholars commend K-pop's dexterity in mixing American pop culture genres with what is considered to be Koreanness. By a re-constitutive process that nullifies essentialist cultural authenticity, hybridity allows audiences to relate their sentiment to K-pop's glossy features: furthermore, it successfully practices a counter-flow of cultural production from the peripheral country to metropolitan centers. In this regard, JungBong Choi and Roald Maliangkay claim that the decades-long issue of cultural domination by the West has been ameliorated, if not overcome by K-pop's "presentational mode and content" and global popularity.³ This counter-flow of cultural production, or what they call "the role reversal in the global creative industry,"⁴ has been celebrated since Doobo Shim's work.⁵ More recently, despite a bold statement to address hybridity's empirical dimensions in K-pop fans' experiences, Kyong Yoon reifies a mere sign of cultural mixture as a "creative reinterpretation" of dominant Western cultural genres, and focuses on a consumption side of the cultural commodity just like the previous literature before his.⁶ Describing what fans think about K-pop and celebrating their consumerist agency, he is not able to correctly comprehend their limited perspectives on K-pop hybridity, which is context-specific to their locality, identity, class, race, gender and so on. Furthermore, Yoon misconstrues what causes the fans' inability to recognize unique Korean attributes in the "hybridized" cultural texts as their disinterest in the locality or origination of the cultural commodity.⁷ Rather than this individual fan's different degree of cultural competency or criticism, I examine how K-pop's business imperatives and interests shape the music genre as "odorless" cultural commodity in the market. In other words, as opposed to the current celebratory, descriptive or functionalist scholarship, I re-consider broader political economic dimensions of cultural production processes where concrete economic, historical, industrial, and social factors contribute to generating cultural hybridity. By doing so, I aim to overcome the current literature that fetishizes locality in cultural production.

Compared to the growing number of female idols and their increasing influence, the current scholarship is not capable of explicating what is behind the K-pop industry's strategic rationale to create and promote their certain personality, subjectivity, and/or sexuality. While there are works that examine femininity in K-pop,⁸ Suan Lee's lament on a paucity of studies that critically examine how sexualized female bodies are promoted and consumed still holds true.⁹ Since K-pop is produced in a mode of commodity manufacturing, anything about the idols is pre-determined, conditioned, and maintained to address industry's profiteering imperatives: If the idols' certain personality is systematically manufactured and/or promoted by hybridization, one has to ask how and why it emerges and becomes popular. However, as Soo-Ah Kim indicates,¹⁰ the critical, discursive examination on the female idols' sexualization and hybridized personification lost its validity during debates on the nature and autonomy of the fandom: Subsequently, the literature tends to merely celebrate its economic contributions.¹¹

However, I re-situate the topic back to its political economic backgrounds and motivations. As an exportation item in the post-IMF neoliberal service industry, the idols have strategically been incepted, crafted, and modified to cater to the fleeting tastes of targeted audiences domestically or internationally. Re-packaged to appeal to most susceptible, profitable audiences, the idols are cultural commodities that are promoted and proliferated by state-private partnership to exploit culture as a mere commercial profiteering strategy.¹² In this respect, it is important to acknowledge the idols are manufactured by a rigorous industrial practice of culture technology that deploys certain aesthetic, musical, and performative components to attract specific audiences who have different cultural, historical, economic, and social backgrounds.¹³

With the industry's control over virtually all aspects of the idols' lives, cultural hybridity they sport has to be analyzed in the industry's broader business strategies. Considering a disposability/replace-ability or interchangeability of idols as the industry's key management practice and an alleged lack of the idols' creative inputs, critical examination on the political economy of the K-pop business provides a better explanatory account for K-pop's cultural hybridity. However, as Soo-Ah Kim indicates, there has been a severe lack of attempts to analyze the agency's roles in idol manufacturing procedures.¹⁴ As a commercial strategy of commodity portfolio or differentiation, the industry has rendered various feminine images from a traditionally submissive, demure lady to hyper-sexualized female provocateur: however, by its tight control over representational possibilities, the industry treats a female image as affective spectacle for "catering to male fantasies of innocence yet willing throngs of young females, a conscious manipulation of the male gaze, or narcissistic self-exploitation directed at same-sex

peers that dismisses patriarchy only to careen onto the similarly problematic dictates of consumerist late capitalism.”¹⁵ Examining factors in the production, circulation, and consumption of K-pop female idols for their “prominence as a site for the transmission of, and contestation over, gender roles,”¹⁶ I provide an alternative way to understand femininity in K-pop not only on a microscopic, textual level, but also from structural, political economic perspectives. With this multi-perspectival approach, I provide a better answer to a question that asks whose interest is promoted in the cultural/industrial practices of K-pop’s hybridity. While a hybridity of various masculinities contributes to K-pop male idols’ successes,¹⁷ this paper is limited to those of female idols for their unprecedented ubiquity, success, and plasticity of images.

As a local, intensified adaptation of the Japanese popular music industry’s idol system,¹⁸ K-pop has pushed boundaries of commodifying the cultural and the immaterial in the markets. Since S.E.S.’s debut in 1997, K-pop female idols are “[m]odelled after the typical Japanese female idol groups and carefully formed to be marketable internationally.”¹⁹ While “identical to the typical *aidoru* band practice in Japan” albeit a greater intensity in its training regimen and commercial application of idols,²⁰ the K-pop industry has taken advantage of the existing, and/or diversified spectrum of audience groups, created, expanded and maintained by Japanese predecessors; However, it has to secure a competitive edge by product diversification and quality improvement as a latecomer strategy. As an apex of Korea’s neoliberal economy that depends on foreign markets, K-pop has retained Japan’s previous industrial experiences and expertise, and in turn targeted to tastes of international audiences by modifying and/or updating commercially proven audio-visual repertoires of J-pop.

While I do appreciate growing scholarly endeavors to explicate audiences’ active engagement in the media as a means of practicing their agency for a cause,²¹ this paper deals with the celebrity phenomenon itself. Any meaning of cultural artifact is generated within a complex interaction between a text’s material properties and production backgrounds, and an audience’s specific location in cultural, economic, political, and social milieus. However, the current K-pop literature is limited to how the content is circulated and consumed in microscopic or celebratory manners, leaving the production aspect uncovered. As opposed to the current, functionalist scholarship on the fans’ engagements, I analyze the idols as a media text that carries various significations so as to contextualize the audiences’ cultural consumption practices more acutely. Also, while there is a growing attention to how fans construct their own meanings, it does not pay due attention to what implicit or latent messages are embedded or prevalent to the extent that audiences still consume no matter how they are active in negotiating

with it. In other words, I reconsider a fundamental asymmetry of agency and resource between the industry and the individual in cultural (re) production.

For fans' active participation, Suk-Young Kim indicates they are integral to the idol manufacturing processes in "the malleable interchangeability of positions between various agents of K-pop and the communal sensibility."²² In "two-way love affair by deploying various media platforms, where affection travels in multiple directions," she maintains K-pop is able to encourage audiences to feel liveliness and entitled in their contribution to the music genre's success.²³ However, with its narcissistic, consumerist messages in flashing audio-visual modalities, K-pop merely opens up an audience's transformative chance to appropriate its messages. For example, while there was an occasion where students of Ewha Women's University used Girls' Generation's song, "Into the New World" in their efforts to protest the administration's neoliberal plan to sell diplomas, their movement was confined to individualist consumer activism to protect their prerogative the membership in the school ensures perceived or real cultural, economic, political and social status.²⁴ In this respect, Suk-Young Kim ignores individual audiences' structural situatedness in neoliberal culture industry that gives them a sense of empowerment, participation, and agency as a part of its business strategies.²⁵ While she is right that K-pop's participatory power comes from a unique Korean concept, "*heung* [that] refers to the innate energy in every human being that is reserved for the spontaneous joy of playing that shines through despite counterforces," it is strategically re-packaged/re-staged and promoted by the industry's commercial imperatives, which is far from a result of communal, convivial, and egalitarian cultural experiences or experiments.²⁶ In other words, S. Kim's notion of K-pop's "*heung* as an affective mediator between the self and the other" is a perfect, local application of neoliberal service economy that conjures up consumers' emotional, affective, and physical involvement in the commodity consumption.²⁷ Thus, in order to correctly understand the historical and local factors of K-pop's success, I examine an institutional condition of K-pop production in the transnational capitalism.

In other words, though there is a scholarly attention to a subversive potential of fans' subcultural, participatory practices,²⁸ their investment or involvement in K-pop production is a glimpse of how neoliberal economy works. Despite K-pop fans' active role, it is tandem with the industry's business strategy to maximize the audience's affective attachment to the idols, and they are eventually consumers who do not retain a decision-making prerogative or earn profit by doing so. Rather, the more audience's cultural participation that entails various user-generated contents and other surplus values, the more the industry leaps profits from commercializing these free labors. In order not to fall into a common problem of

the fandom literature, which is “almost complicit with the culture industry and the ideology of consumerism,”²⁹ I critically investigate what the audience is given by the K-pop industry. To that end, as Robert Oppenheim and Heather Hindman state that there is a fetishizing tendency to *Hallyu*’s “imagined capacity for independent agency dependent on forgetting of aspects of social origins and articulations,”³⁰ I accentuate a broader political economic context of the culture industry, and thereby, recount its social implications in intensely neoliberalizing society.

A co-existence of contradictory femininities between a pure, innocent girl and a sexual provocateur is one of the idiosyncratic features of K-pop female idols. As a K-pop version of Mary the virgin whore, the industry worships a “bagel girl,” a term that combines English words of “*baby*” and “*glamorous*,” who boasts an un-realistic combination of a baby-like face and a sexualized, glamorous body. Retaining both pre- and post-pubescent characteristics, they are simultaneously infantilized and sexually provocative as a reified object that retains Korea’s traditional feminine decency along with Americanized hyper-sexualization. With help of the media-medical industry complex and as a sociocultural site of surveillance and control, the idols not only perpetuate phallogentric gender ideals, but more importantly interpellate female audiences to emulate them.³¹ More specifically, as an object of female cosmetic desire and male sexual fantasy,³² they have become a popular pedagogue that is “much more instructive than the official doctrines of the nation-state ... [by formulating] the lived experiences of ordinary people.”³³ My attempt to analyze what led to a proliferation of schizophrenic female subjectivity will better explicate complex social implications of K-pop female idols.

As a popular and lucrative site that commands the center of individuals’ attentions, neoliberal culture industry provides female audiences with an ostensibly progressive representation, which is however “tied to conditions of social conservatism, consumerism and hostility to feminism in any of its old or new forms.”³⁴ With this “double entanglement” of post-feminism that accentuates individual choice, freedom, glamour and success,³⁵ feminist ideas and projects have been coopted and effective in serving the establishment’s economic, ideological, and social interests. By her notion of instrumentality, Joan Scott indicates how post-feminist ideals confuse individuals through celebratory spectacles of female sexuality, social entitlement, and economic advancement.³⁶ Likewise, in their critical reading of leading K-pop female idols’ music videos, Stephen Epstein and James Turnbull comment that a growing number of K-pop’s female empowerment/independence themes do not bring “young women to a heightened sense of their own possibilities in the world ... but rather that Korea’s pop culture commodification of sexuality has reached the point that for middle-aged men to focus their gaze on underage performers becomes cause for

rejoicing rather than embarrassment.”³⁷ Declaring the issues of “sex and gender, dependence and independence, and dominance and subordination are largely irrelevant” to how she behaves,³⁸ the idols brush off structural barriers and problems as a neoliberal fantasy of a post-sexist capitalism.

While the meaning of cultural hybridity is always in flux with multiple interpretations, I consider cultural hybridity as a symbolic manifestation of local agency’s active, dialectic interaction with hegemonic power of transnational forces during complex cultural production procedures. Regarding local sensitivity and autonomy as the central, ethical tenet of cultural assemblage, I examine whether K-pop exercises a cultural command of locality in its “mutant result of fusion and intermixture,”³⁹ that is reflective of Korean people’s everyday lives. Furthermore, as a “meta-construction of social order” for a creative self-reflexivity,⁴⁰ hybridity is not just a cultural fusion of different artifacts, but more importantly a concrete result of a strategic, *political* action that emits a complex set of values, norms, and meanings. In other words, as a cultural reorganization of power, hybridity is a conscious embodiment of people’ self-conscious, continuous cultural rejuvenation. With an “*explanatory* power to the concept: studying processes of hybridization by locating these in structural relations of causality,”⁴¹ I discuss K-pop hybridity’s cultural, economic, political, and social implications and effects. Thus, understanding how K-pop female idols invite audiences to place themselves in “imaginative cultural narratives and, as such, they help both to construct and provide insights into that wider experience,”⁴² I re-contextualize the phenomenal success of female idols back into their actual role as a popular pedagogue of post-feminism, or the governmentality of neoliberal feminism in contemporary Korea.

To that end, I re-consider K-pop’s cultural mixing practices from Jean Baudrillard’s notion of hyper-reality. Except for Suan Lee’s work albeit major explanatory limitations,⁴³ there is no literature that analyzes the political economy of K-pop idols’ images from Baudrillard’s perspective of sign value. By extending Baudrillard’s political economy of the sign and a material power of simulacra, which both fulfill the industry’s control over signification and representation procedures, I propose how K-pop’s hybridity serves to re-produce and perpetuate the status quo through its cornucopia of opportunistic visuality. Indicating how image is created by a certain desire or fantasy and generates a variety of socio-cultural events based on simulation, I examine how the industry promotes a certain type of desirable femininities as a hybridity of images and signals. In turn, they simultaneously become an object and a subject of simulation for the split personality, which can “train the broadest mass of people in order to create a pattern of undreamed-of dimensions” in conformative social behaviors.⁴⁴ Thus, with this alternative approach, I not only re-assess the industry’s strategic

reappropriation of various cultural elements as a commercial venture but also argue its broader governmental practices that condition audiences' subjectivities by promoting an imagined gender ideal, or one more real than actual, that is, a hyper-real femininity.

Local Cultural Production: Between Hegemony and Reflexivity in K-pop

While Korea became a major non-Western country that commands exports of diverse cultural products since the 2000s,⁴⁵ whether or not K-pop showcases local sentiments and critical reflexivity is an important question that warrants critical examination. As Néstor García Canclini acutely argues that hybridity "can be helpful in the *discovery* stage [of a new culture], as a way of generating hypotheses or counterhypotheses that challenge established knowledges,"⁴⁶ with K-pop's ever-increasing global popularity, a mere existence of hybridity is no longer meaningful. Rather, K-pop must carry cultural self-reflexivity in its effort to express Korean people's experienced feelings and grounded knowledges, if the prefix "K" means anything.

I suggest that the recent development of K-pop is a result of hybridization with the experiences of the country's turbulent industrial capitalist nation-building. Korea's popular culture has evolved through an active adaptation or reapplication of popular cultural products from Japan and the U.S. as a "palimpsest of multiple layers of Japanese colonialism and neo-imperial domination, especially by U.S. hegemony."⁴⁷ Under the Japanese colonial occupation, Korea's modern popular music as mass entertainment was born with Lee Nan-young's "Tears of Mokpo" in 1935. Undergoing the Korean War, poverty, industrialization, and democratization, Korean people have admired the US as a mythical utopia that becomes part and parcel of their collective imagination and desire for a better world.⁴⁸ The post Korean War popular music in Korea was oriented to American GIs as the chief consumer who "avidly embraced formal and informal offerings of rest and relaxation, from sexual services to musical entertainment."⁴⁹ While local musicians/performers tried their best to live up to "American expectations," Korean popular music, no matter how much it is hybridized, retains a fundamental asymmetric reliance on the American reference. For example, Motown's girl groups, as a cultural icon of American affluence, were replicated like the Kim Sisters, and popular among American servicemen in Korea in the 50s and 60s. However, while they could be a local version of the Motown girl groups, one should carefully examine whether or not they professed local cultural reflexivity while maintaining cultural autonomy against the dominant cultural and economic hegemony.

Since U.S. popular culture has commanded global hegemony, emulating American pop values and systems provides a better chance of success with less market risk. Leaders in the K-pop industry can be regarded as an example of the “dominated group’s internalization” of transnational capitalism’s business mantra.⁵⁰ Practicing the hegemony of consumerism, commodification of culture, and sexualization of femininity,⁵¹ the K-pop industry complicates the evasive characteristic of cultural hybridization. This challenges the growing recognition of peripheral countries’ competence to produce and market their indigenous culture globally.⁵² Thus, K-pop delineates how hegemony employs an ideological double play in local culture production. Even if it allows “counter-hegemonic” practices on a local level, it establishes local culture industry as a cultural hegemon, while perpetuating predatory labor conditions and fetishizing local cultural production.

K-pop is an exemplar of the neoliberal service economy that reflects how business demands have shifted from sweatshop manual workforce to affective, immaterial labor. As gender/sexuality is always already imbricated in society’s political and economic conditions,⁵³ the female idols’ schizophrenic personality reflects the industry elite’s strategic appropriation and application of the neoliberal imperative. Just like how J-pop industry, a prototype of K-pop, constructs its idols by incorporating archetypical gender ideals and sexual fantasies of the contemporary Japanese audiences,⁵⁴ K-pop idols are conditioned through an extensive period of intensive training to resonate with what the audiences are willing to pay attention. Once they establish the stardom, they command a trend-setting power to the audience with how to behave, buy, and think. However, since idols are literally manufactured by the industry’s airtight regiment of various codes of conducts, it is actually the industry’s leaders who set what the audience is to receive. Like its predecessors that exploited under- or un-paid female workers decades ago, the K-pop industry takes advantage of a hegemonic model that produces quickly profitable, homogenized, disposable commodities from a highly concentrated, hierarchical production system. Rather than autonomous artists, K-pop idols are commercial products that a management company recruits, trains, promotes and markets based on a pre-determined concept or theme. For that reason, they lack of any creative autonomy or authenticity to the extent that they “execute what has been conceived for them; they wear what they are told to wear; they sing what they are told to sing; and they move and behave as they are told.”⁵⁵ To corroborate John Lie’s argument on a commodification of K-pop as an exportation item,⁵⁶ I substantiate his claim by analyzing how Kpop idols are marketed as immaterial commodities that human emotions and intimacies are their main currency.

In this regard, K-pop as Korea’s apex of neoliberal service economy has subsumed the cultural to the sum of the economic imperative of late capitalism,

by poaching any part of global popular culture as far as it assumes marketability. K-pop idols are designed as a “means of maximizing and ensuring consumption” to maintain consumerism as the lynchpin of the hegemonic economic system.⁵⁷ Then, since it does not prioritize reflexive creativity but gobbles up anything flashy and profitable, hybridity in K-pop has to be examined in its specific socio-cultural instrumentality, that is what it projects and promotes for whose interests.

Schizophrenic Personality of K-pop Female Idols: Between Innocence and Sexualization

I maintain female idols’ bodies are manufactured and enhanced by a hybridization between the neoliberal discourse of *homo economicus* and the postfeminist treatise on empowerment. Imbricated between patriarchal gender hierarchy and neoliberal commodification of female sexuality, K-pop female idols’ schizophrenic personality thus exhibits the social condition of female lives under the two distinct worldviews simultaneously: Being an innocent, cute, and submissive patriarchal woman, and an active, hyper-sexualized practitioner of neoliberalism. Since every representation is a re-construction of political fantasy that arises from actual and potential social relations,⁵⁸ and femininity is configured in the “deployment of standardized visual images,”⁵⁹ the idols’ split-personality can be understood as a symbolic manifestation of women’s location, meaning, and existential conditions in society. This marketing strategy for commodified differences further constrains the possibility for alternative female thoughts and behaviors. At one limit, failing to achieve individual development, a woman behaves obedient, submissive, and subjectless like a little girl, and on the other, she acts like a temptress and preaches neoliberal sexualization. This dual, contradictory demand has intensified patriarchy’s “totally other-oriented emotional economy” to satisfy male affective and sexual needs.⁶⁰ In its double, hybridized constraints, or “schizoid double-pull” of femininity,⁶¹ the women of K-pop are required to be traditionally Confucian and contemporarily neoliberal: virginal and sexual.

Suzy debuted as a member of the group MissA, marketed for aggressive sexuality, at the age of 15 in 2010. Conceptualized as an “alpha girl” who is financially independent and sexually confident, MissA exhibits an audiovisual rhetoric of post-feminism. By a “performance of confident sexual agency” as post-feminist ideal of desirable femininity,⁶² MissA collectively sexualizes their bodies, and embodies a K-pop version of the “male sexual fantasy of the dominatrix.”⁶³ Deviating from the traditional fragile, passive femininity, the group sports a marketing strategy of updating a patriarchal fantasy to exploit various female sexualities.

On top of Miss A's group identity, Suzy is famous for her wholesome image with an appealing appearance, and becomes the Queen of commercial film, active in endorsements for various commodities like cosmetics, clothes, and beverages. As opposed to Chuyun Oh's observation that K-pop female idols are torn between the industry's strategy of promoting female promiscuity or chastity,⁶⁴ she deftly combines them, and becomes K-pop's new ideal femininity. While the majority of Kpop female idols market a dual character with pure, innocent and cute femininity along with explicit sexuality, Suzy is the most successful presentation of this hybridized personality. Timothy Laurie indicates K-pop idols do not "pretend to express authentic social experiences, but they do provide special creative opening for fan communities."⁶⁵ However, I argue Suzy embodies the post-feminist world-view by offering a transgressive gender ideal that eventually circumscribes audience's transformative feminist take-on the gender status quo.

Donned in all black or black/white clothes with light makeup, emitting a sense of rebellion and nonconformity to an expectation of traditional femininity, MissA assumes aggressive attitude towards their male counterparts, dancing in a school setting in the 2010 debut music video "Bad Girl, Good Girl." The choice of color indicates their desire for feisty independence, power, authority, or dominance. While female affects used to be channeled to address male emotional demand, they do not show any facial expressions, showing an indifference to the male gaze. Rather, claiming how they look does not represent what they are, the idols declare their own (sexual) subjectivity. Dancing in a provocative manner in a ballet studio where "good girls" normally practice the feminine arabesque, MissA appropriates the conventionally womanly behaviors and proclaim they are "bad girls" who do not conform to gender norms. Making direct eye contact, they look stern and strong while emitting a sense of rebellion through sexualized, powerful dance routines.

However, a cautious multimodal discourse analysis reveals layers of different meanings behind their audiovisual seduction. They promote a *dubious* practice of female empowerment: they promote an unexplained aggression to a fellow male student, which falls back into a traditional notion of masculinity. The well-synchronized choreography in a line format indicates a patriarchal rationality of control and manipulation. While there are some individualized dance moves, all the group members eventually come to conform to a pre-determined, collective theme of corporeal arrangement and exhibition. When an individual member is spotlighted, she is highly sexualized with provocative outfits and explicit dance moves. While their abrupt, dramatized dance moves could symbolize their desire for liberation, these moves give way to sexually charged actions, such as groping their own bodies, dropping down, rolling on the floor, and thrusting and gyrating

their bottoms, and in turn perpetuating male-oriented female sexual conduct. Certain body parts, especially over-emphasis on their bottoms and bosoms that shake, swing and gyrate, are emphasized and fetishize the idols' sexualized physicality. In this respect, their unconventional choreography is not to liberate their sexuality, but updates and re-affirms the male-oriented female sexuality. Individually or collectively, they re-produce the patriarchal status quo through sexualization and group *conformity*.⁶⁶

In 2013 "Hush" music video, MissA stages much more carnal visual and lyrical messages, unapologetically manifesting that they are "bad girls." The song is all about a "secret party," filled with sexual activities. Opening with a flooded room insinuating that the idols are fully mature to the extent that they are "wet," the video visually lavishes sexual allusions and references. In risqué sartorial materials such as body chains, tight leather pants and high heels, they wear drastic make-up with an eye-catching, red lipstick on their game-faces. With many occasions of touching themselves, bouncing, pumping, and crouching in graphic poses, the choreography is filled with explicit sexual messages. The idols claim a direct, demanding sexuality: "Kiss kiss kiss baby. Hush hush hush baby. Hot hot make it hot, and melt me. Give it to me, give it to me oh." Their bodily and lyrical messages further complicate and perpetuate the hegemonic sexuality that reifies females as sex objects that can only be fulfilled by male sexual desire and initiatives: "Hurry hurry boy. I want you." The idols' aggressive sexuality feeds the male sexual ego, and the lyrics manifest the female passivity in a guise of aggressive sexuality: "I can't stand it, I can't take it, my heart palpitates, I can't keep straight." It is in this very ambiguity that the video further perpetuates hegemonic patriarchy while giving a false sense of female subjectivity and empowerment. While it is obvious that MissA presents a rather aggressive femininity in their lyrical, physical, and visual measures that challenge conventionally quiet, obedient, passive and chaste femininity, they are still within a safe boundary of the patriarchal discourse of femininity and sexuality. With a post-feminist audiovisual theme, that is "fulfilling men's sexual desires now [have] to be thought of as authentically self-chosen and, what's more as empowering,"⁶⁷ the music video sensually updates the traditional gender roles that ultimate initiative still belongs to male addressees. In turn, this highly sexualized, self-expressive female lifestyle is "naturally and economically compatible with a consumer society which offers a plethora of products" to constantly make over female bodies as a means of neoliberal self-development and realization.⁶⁸

In "Good Girl, Bad Girl," Suzy wears a tutu-like skirt, and seems to be less sexualized than other members. However, since she has elongated legs, the skirt does not cover her body well, but instead attracts more attention to her body

whenever it waves and exposes the thigh. Especially, when combined with her milky, porcelain skin, the black dress accentuates Suzy's physical attractiveness. This visual contradiction gets more salient when her ponytail hair with bangs is incorporated in the sexualized visuals, especially with explicit sexual moves, such as holding buttocks and swinging them sideways, and thrusting pelves on the floor. This is how her slippery image gets solidified when her wholesome physical attributes accentuate sexual connotations and attractions. Later, in a similar manner, Suzy harks back to a sense of purity and innocence in a hyper-sexualized theme of "Hush." Especially in the subway car scene of the video for "Hush," Suzy holds a giant lollipop candy in a white long-sleeve turtleneck sweater, which gives another layer of reified innocence and childhood purity, and this fetishism is revealing when Suzy sits upright and stiff with no facial expression like a china doll. As Aljosa Puzar claims female idols are dollified to satisfy and further elicit male sexual fantasy,⁶⁹ Suzy has been praised as a personification of a doll that embodies both child-like innocence and sexually provocation. While Suzy bites to break the candy tuned in a lyric, "I can't hold it in any more," she becomes fully sexualized, inviting the male sexual fantasy of violating virginity, maximizing "fantasy-fueling projections of both virginal demeanor and [male audience's] eager collective anticipation of defloration."⁷⁰ At this point, she admits her subjectivity is confined to the patriarchal sexual economy that her self-realization or satisfaction is still dependent on a validating male. In "Good Girl, Bad Girl," Suzy is the most sexualized in a sophisticated and teasing way; however, she is the most innocent and wholesome in "Hush" with the exact same reason that is her elusive sexuality. At any rate, Suzy is one of the K-pop industry's most successful spectacles, which hoards audience's attention, by eliciting both the male sexual fantasy and a female desire for empowerment.

Cultural Hybridity: Strategy of Transnational Capitalism

As opposed to Homi Bhabha's idyllic concept of hybridity that comes from the in-betweenness of elite emigrants' cultural identities,⁷¹ I maintain it has to be a cultural manifestation of the local agency's dialectic interaction with hegemonic power configurations. Cultural hybridity then can only be accomplished by "mitigating social tensions, expressing the polyvalence of human creativity, and providing a context of empowerment in individuals and communities are *agents in their own destiny*."⁷² In other words, since today's hybridity is rendered in the context of transnational popular culture with a help of digital media, one has to critically examine whether it reflects or diverts the dominant hegemony in a local environment of cultural production activities. Since cultural practices "develop

and emerge as types of implicit (i.e., nonpropositional or nonverbal) knowledge created in response to lived experiences in a particular social location,” not paying due attention to the institutional structures of cultural production results in “epistemic violence.”⁷³ Thus, contrary to the mere existence of hybridity, a manifestation of critical agency in hybridization is the most important qualification.⁷⁴

However, I indicate an embryo of theoretical complicity in consumerist capitalism from Bhabha’s hybridity that romanticizes the mere semiotic practice of cultural consumption. Like Janice Radway celebrates the symbolic pleasure of resistance from reading romance novels,⁷⁵ Bhabha exults in the subversive potential of the subaltern’s cultural practices against the imperial domination of cultural, economic, and political powers.⁷⁶ Later, Bhabha indicates hybridity is helpful to promote an “aesthetics of cultural difference and the politics of minorities,”⁷⁷ however, he is not able to acknowledge an asymmetric power relations shaped by an intricate, multiple layers of constraints during cultural production processes. Even though he acknowledges that cultural difference has been “reconfigured as spontaneous discrimination or systematic inequality,” Bhabha rejects an examination of cultural hybridity in its diagnostic relationship to the local context of cultural production, by saying that it is “neither historically synchronic nor ethically and politically equivalent.”⁷⁸

Facing various criticisms, Bhabha admits that hybridity has been coopted by transnational capitalism, which turned what he envisioned the subaltern’s subversive cultural politics into the dominant cultural hegemony.⁷⁹ As an epistemic improvement, he applies Gramsci’s dialectics of agency that is always already conjunctured by the social constraints and a subaltern aspiration of social change. In turn, he accentuates that empowerment is what cultural hybridity aims for by “achievement of agency and authority.”⁸⁰ However, rather than paying due attention to an objective, structural condition of cultural production, constrained by power relations, Bhabha once again returns to his myopic perspective that “hybridity derives its agency by activating liminal and ambivalent positions *in-between* forms of identification.”⁸¹ Even if Bhabha’s act of “enunciation [which] is *at the same time* an act of renunciation: a passionate ambivalence, a subaltern rejection of sovereignty” may be viable as an idyllic, bourgeois individual practice,⁸² it is impotent to achieve critical agency in the current, neoliberal society. What is worse, his perspective of achieving the “hybrid voice” as a concrete result of a subaltern’s enunciation and renunciation is rather detrimental to minorities since he believes hybridity “can only accrue authority by questioning its *a priori* security, its first-person privilege.”⁸³ A subaltern group that needs to claim cultural agency as a precondition of political agency does not have much privilege, if not at all. If this is the case in Bhabha’s argument, his hybridity

is a sure way for the hegemonic group to control the subaltern since the latter voluntarily gives any of its privilege or power to the former. This is exactly what has happened since cultural hybridity became in vogue in the early 80s as it was coopted to the service of hegemonic transnational capitalism.

Furthermore, as not every minority is progressive, hybridized local cultural text does not automatically represent critical reflexivity. When cultural alterity is a manifest result of cultural hybridization, it is structured by various degrees of dominant discourses in the local hierarchies of the global system where an asymmetric relation of power and resources cannot be overcome by mere cultural mix.⁸⁴ Thus, there must be something ethically and practically transformative that re-kindles socio-political imagination in one's everyday life for a more egalitarian, democratic society. However, decision-makers in the K-pop industry serve as a local hegemon who internalizes the industrial and managerial logics of neoliberal culture industry, and in turn asymmetric relations in the local culture production become increasingly complex and nuanced. The industry's exploitative treatment of the idols, especially with "slave contracts" is a case in point. Put differently, leaders in the K-pop industry should be considered as a re-territorialized, semi-global center of transnational cultural production, who strive to control local cultural capital that begets financial and social power by maximizing the benefits of making strategic alliances with metropolitan centers for cultural enterprises.

Devoid of attention to critical power configuration in local culture production, the current K-pop (more generally Korean popular culture) scholarship celebrates a mere existence of hybridized cultural texts as a successful commodity. Or, neglecting historical realities of inequalities in resources and development, hybridity in K-pop literature fetishizes a mere locality of cultural production. Claiming that there are multidirectional cultural productions from conventional peripheries, Woongjae Ryoo boldly maintains that the phenomenon is a "clear indication of new global, and regional, and transformation in the cultural arena" as a sign of overcoming the American cultural hegemony.⁸⁵ Furthermore, while neglecting the politico-economics of K-pop production that has been disproportionately conditioned by American cultural and technical criteria, Ryoo inadvertently attributes K-pop's success to the industry's implementation of American standard of media liberalization. In this respect, Ryoo's dramatization of local production should be regarded as what Arjun Appadurai criticizes as "production fetishism," an illusion of local cultural power in transnational capitalism, disguising the fundamental asymmetric global power structure.⁸⁶ For Doobo Shim, K-pop's hybridity was epitomized by the emergence of Seo Taiji and Boys, who mixed various Western music genres and invented a unique Korean flavor.⁸⁷

Appropriating American genre formulae, the band successfully exemplified how to exert local agency's active, creative capacity to express local sentiments, issues, and traditions and in turn engendered a broad practical transformation in Korea's soundscape. Despite his respect for Seo Taiji and Boys' artistic innovation, Shim finds industrial transformation most important. At this time period Korea's music market expanded in scale, boosting album sales, fortifying record company roles and heralding the birth of Korea's talent agencies and manufacturers of the current K-pop idols. Thus, K-pop is a new business model that procures a faster, higher profit margin than the traditional manufacturing industry as a "distinct spatiotemporal configuration" of Korea's neoliberal economy.⁸⁸

For Hee-Eun Lee, hybridity has played a key role in diversifying a spectrum of genres and conventions in Korean popular music since the 1990s.⁸⁹ In a dialectic appropriation of the dominant US hip-hop culture, she believes a local adaption of the music genre has contributed to not only strengthening the local values but also expanding categories of identities by pluralizing racial and ethnic differences in Korea. However, sticking to a vague notion of "Korean-ness," she makes a hasty generalization that an emergence of different racial icons and props in popular music videos indicates a transformative "process of pluralizing others within us," despite admitting it as a marketing strategy of consumerist capitalism.⁹⁰ Though pointing out music videos "have opened up greater opportunities for local expression in production and consumption," she does not substantiate how exactly K-pop music videos re-articulate local sentiments by appropriating "signs, images, texts, and sounds that bear exo-local aesthetics and significations."⁹¹ While trying a political economic analysis on the K-pop industry where local capitalists dominate the market, Lee does not examine how they actually design and produce K-pop songs and music videos, which are mostly outsourced to more advanced countries like, Japan, Denmark, Norway, and the US to stay competitive in the market. In this regard, Lee also falls under the fallacy of fetishizing locality in cultural production in K-pop.⁹²

For Néstor García Canclini, while a scope and a speed of cultural hybridization have accelerated in a globalized society, a local cultural production is increasingly "conditioned by a coercive *heteronomous hybridization*" that few numbers of people in the headquarters of neoliberal culture industry dominate initiatives, purposes, and applications of new symbolic and semantic creations.⁹³ In turn, though there are ostensibly different cultural artifacts by ceaseless intercultural bricolage, they become inevitably homogenized by a market imperative of profit-making, which does not provide local practitioners with an opportunity for self-expressive, self-regulated creative production. While the center appropriates various cultural elements of the peripheries without having to be a part

of them, peripheral nations such as Korea have to incorporate the hegemonic system of cultural, economic, and social production in “the global local articulations of the world system.”⁹⁴ For this reason, far from a creative embodiment of self-reflexivity, K-pop is an audio-visual commodity of consumerism, a hegemonic industry/economy system that a seductive visuality with an ephemeral innovation and obsolescence, which is a high competition for the survival of the most sexualized, overwhelms anything artistic or ideational. It is a K-pop version of an immediacy of frenzied consumption that dramatizes a fleeting nature of what one wants to buy, which is fabricated to increase sales and profit. In this commercial logic of K-pop industry, an ethical dimension and a political potential of cultural hybridity are subjugated to the neoliberal imperative of profit-making. Thus, according to Jan Nederveen Pieterse’s continuum of hybridities, K-pop retains an “assimilationist hybridity that leans over toward the centre, adopts the canon and mimics the hegemony,”⁹⁵ which its terms of cultural mixture is largely oriented to maximizing commercial profit rather than reconfiguring a traditional relationship of power and hegemony through cultural self-reflection.

As examined, the current K-pop scholarship is complicitous with the K-pop industry’s commercial implementation of hybridization, and exemplar of transnational capitalism’s strategic rhetoric to capitalize on cultural fusion.

Hyper-reality: Neoliberal Cultural Commodity and Its Post-feminist Ramifications

In this section, I propose a better heuristic tool to understand K-pop’s cultural hybridity in its relationship with neoliberal imperatives of consumerism. For an explanatory approach to cultural assemblage practices, I analyze its socio-cultural implications in Korea’s growing neoliberalization, characterized by an intensifying power of media spectacles, consumerism, and affective, service industries. Emulating the experiences and strategies of the J-pop industry, K-pop idols have been manufactured just as the Japanese counterparts are “produced and packaged to maximize consumption.”⁹⁶ In the face of intensifying competitions under neoliberal economy, a reification of young, female bodies has been particularly rampant. Since there is no longer a distinctive demarcation between economic production and the realms of the cultural and the ideological,⁹⁷ K-pop’s cultural hybridity has to be understood as a mode of signification as a practice of neoliberal governmentality. With a social hierarchy of objects, a consumption of sign values distinguishes one from another, which in turn positions an individual into a predetermined social position.

In late capitalist economy, images and spectacles as a reconfiguration of the object's social meanings seduce individuals to adopt manufactured needs, fantasies, and behaviors. For this reason, in idol-saturated contemporary Korean popular culture, the K-pop idol "as an object of desire is a fantasy or ideal construct, a 'mirror' reflection, which resonates with deep affection or emotional meaning."⁹⁸ As a fundamental source of expressive and interpretative communities,⁹⁹ media spectacles provide essential tools for social identification, outweighing traditional human bonds and experiences. For Jean Baudrillard, while representation works by the "equivalence of the sign and the real," simulation is the generation of the real based on models of the real, defying a referential function of a sign.¹⁰⁰ In turn, it ushers in a broader sociocultural transformation "from the society of the commodity to the society of the spectacle to the society of the simulacrum, paralleled by increasing commodification and massification" of the imagery.¹⁰¹ In this hyper-reality, the real is artificially re-produced as "real," by being retouched and refurbished in a "hallucinatory resemblance" of itself.¹⁰² While a model precedes the real, simulation conditions the real, and a boundary between hyper-reality and individuals' everyday lives disappear: "simulations come to constitute reality ... [and] the reality of simulation becomes the criterion of the real itself."¹⁰³ With this dramatic dominance of the visual, simulations structure individuals' emotion, experience, and value system, erasing a boundary between the imaginary and the real.

Pushing further this argument, signs and images become a powerful control mechanism of one's life. In this transformation of a strategic idea into reality by simulation, the social in hyper-reality, or "hyperreal sociality" aims to transform individuals in the image of the model so that they can be models themselves.¹⁰⁴ With the K-pop industry's increasing marketing ploys that encourage audiences to participate in various procedures of manufacturing idols, such as idols dance cover competition and audition programs, their "fantasy [of living like an idol] overlaps with reality" of pursuing the stardom, especially when one invests time and efforts in those chances.¹⁰⁵ By the "orbital recurrence of models" in hyper-reality,¹⁰⁶ there is "no more center or periphery [but] pure flexion or circular inflexion," to the extent that a seeming difference is an effect of simulation (29).¹⁰⁷ From this perspective, with a meticulous deployment of different signs and commodities, hyper-reality of K-pop female idols is their own simulacrum of an idealized, fantasized femininity that is deployed to maximize the industry's interest: the K-pop industry's promotion of various femininities is to test and find what the audience is willing to "identity their idols and—more importantly—identify *with* them."¹⁰⁸

As a caveat, while his deterministic view, like an implosion or an evaporation of the social, does not exactly operate in real world, Baudrillard's notion is helpful to understand how the idols, who embody an imagined fantasy of the audience,

are hyper-reality that is fabricated from their images and visuality that transform into reality without a real reference. Furthermore, as they become pervasive and influential, there is a continuous emergence of new realities that are initiated or motivated by the idols. In other words, while a simulation becomes real by various technological interventions such as plastic surgery, an imagined potential or a desired outcome becomes a new reality for a community of fans. As “laboring bodies who are not fully employed or compensated,” fans are both objects and subjects of idol fantasies, who are doing “what they love and labor for love.”¹⁰⁹ By seductive visuality and sexualized bodily movements as a conjunction of desire, value, capital, and power, K-pop idols, as an effective medium and a powerful message simultaneously, are the main premise of power that is effective in the audience’s mimetic desire, and in turn an active agent of governmentality that shapes individuals’ public and private lives. In turn, idols are deployed to mobilize audiences to become fans who are willing to support their idols with whatever disposable capital they have, which in turn they industry endeavors to channel and capitalize on their affective investments.¹¹⁰ In this regard, unless critically aware of political economy of K-pop, the audience may lose their cognitive capacity to distinguish what is real from what is imaginary,¹¹¹ and be turned into masses through the overwhelming power of the visual.¹¹²

As a fantasy simulated by mythical images of female empowerment, glamour, freedom, independence, rebellion, and success, consumption is a social dynamics to keep the post-feminist myths alive. The idols’ corporeal and emotional signs take on meanings, and cultivate audience with various desires for consumer products they are promoting. By the mere consumption of images, individuals are to “*conjure away the real with the signs of the real*” with a false sense of liberation that they do not have in the realm of the social and the political.¹¹³ Woven into a heteroglossia of commodities and services from fashion accessories to plastic surgery, the idols are simultaneously an image and a product that is, what they promote and the object they are promoting. In this respect, it is worth quoting Galbraith and Karlin on their political economic analysis of J-pop idol’s image, which rings truth in Korean situation:

[I]dols not only promote the sale of goods and services, but actually are produced by the goods and services that they sell. Rather than idols selling products, we have a system of commodities that is selling idols. By focusing on the idol alone, one loses sight of the network of relations that go into producing the idol ... The idol, then, is but a node in the network of the capitalist system of commodities that links producers to consumers.¹¹⁴

Like a process that hyper-reality becomes reality, while consuming a glossy heteroglossia of fantastic images, individuals become conformative since they

want to live up to an “abstract model, to a combinational pattern of fashion, and therefore relinquish any real difference.”¹¹⁵ By market fetishism of differentiation, the K-pop industry manufactures an array of different feminine concepts so that a wider range of audience can try and adopt a favorite personality and life-style through consumption. In this respect, K-pop female idols’ nonconformist images and styles are a marketing ploy that eventually perpetuates conformity in audience’s behavior by consumption.¹¹⁶

Conceiving the idols as an example of unconstrained possibility of empowerment, individuals try to emulate or live up to the simulated media figure whose mediated image is more real. Since “the consumer is positioned as a fan” and vice versa in neoliberal culture industry,¹¹⁷ K-pop idols are popular agents of post-feminism, who is an integral part of consumerism. The consumerism heralded by the idols strives to sell anything that serves the interests of the establishment, such as the audiences’ choices on dietary habits, fashion, life style, surgical enhancement of the bodies, work ethics, sexual behaviors to name a few.¹¹⁸ In this respect, fandom becomes a hyper-real condition of individuals’ desires and fantasies,¹¹⁹ which is fulfilled by the combination of commodities the idols promote: A “circulation, purchase, sale, appropriation of differentiated goods and signs/objects today constitute our language, our code, the code by which the entire society *communicates* and converses.”¹²⁰ Practically, the female idols are particularly effective in perpetuating neoliberal commercial culture since capitalism exploits an “*extension of the feminine model to the whole field of consumption*” and they are more susceptible to socio-cultural needs of conformity.¹²¹ As “girl power” has been an effective marketing and branding tool,¹²² without a self-reflective articulation, it is a mere hyper-real strategy in an “instrumentalization of feminism as a source of innovation and dynamism for consumer culture.”¹²³ Thus, K-pop idols as hyper-reality replace harsh reality with a superabundance of fantasy images that magically satisfy their desire for economic, political and social mobility, and in turn, hide everyday strife, prejudice, discrimination, exploitation and other problems through distraction.

Guy Debord’s society of spectacle captures how K-pop idols contribute to consumerism by becoming a hyper-reality of their images and spectacles.¹²⁴ They are cultural linchpins that teach individuals how to utilize commodities as a means of self-transformation into someone better like the idols, and mobilize them to be a steady force of consumption. The rise of consumerism, especially teenagers’ increased disposable income, has been an integral part of K-pop’s success, since the germination period of K-pop idols in the early 1990s. To be more specific, the idols’ performances are “like four-minutes catwalk skits that have a strong impact on notions of both male and female beauty and are foremost visual forms

of” consumption, leaving significant impacts on consumer economy.¹²⁵ Thus, hybridity in K-pop female idols stems from the industry’s simulation that intends to maximize commercial profit by assembling various commodities to offer the audience aspirational lives, experiences, and self-images for an imagined, transformative experience. An overwhelming visuality along with a positive emotionality helps audience become immersed in a simulated fantasy world of K-pop, and by the industries promotions, keep this imaginary experience maintained. An ever-changing visual and emotional theme of K-pop female idols, which allows them and the audiences to enjoy image-switching or personal transformation, is a powerful marketing tool to create an ever-increasing demand for insatiable consumers in the market that sells a plethora of commodities for different images, personalities, styles, and experiences. K-pop’s relentless fantasy enforces a feedback loop upon its audiences in the eternal return of always-wanting-more.

For example, as a simulacrum generated by the culture industry, there was a new term, “*Missy*,” that a commercial campaign of a department store invented to summon women as consuming subjects, and became a national sensation in the early 1990s. “*Missy*” means a young married woman who looks like an unmarried lady with conspicuous consumption that leads to confident behaviors. As an “illusory and pseudo reality” created by flash advertisements and other media campaigns,¹²⁶ the term was deployed to interpellate young women as an army of mass consumers who in turn kept Korea’s consumerist economy running. More recently, the media perpetuate a discourse of “gold miss” to indicate women who have a high-paying professional career with a constant attention to their self-improvement. In this post-feminist womanhood, they are self-reliant enough to develop and elaborate a posh life-style, which can only be accomplished by a conspicuous spending, leaving structural gender inequalities behind.¹²⁷

Thus, K-pop idols are a commodity to be consumed for marketing commodities, which, as hyper-reality, subsequently become reality in the fantasy world of K-pop and in an ever-intensifying consumerist society. In turn, with their simulation power, the idols legitimize commercial agendas of the neoliberal industry by establishing a new, fleeting set of fragmented, discontinuous trends, values, and norms in one’s everyday life: K-pop idols are “the enforcers of the regime of capitalism through their signification of the ideology of consumption. The mimetic desire to appropriate the image of the celebrity operates in the sphere of economic processes for the controlled insertion of bodies into the routinized repetition of the consumption of goods.”¹²⁸ Since female bodies and sexualities are commodified, young female audiences are targeted to assume a socio-cultural identity as consumers and commodities by various market entities.¹²⁹ Rather than liberation from century-long patriarchy, the idols’ sexualities become commodities and

control the transformative power of the eros, by being offered for mere fantasy and consumption. Therefore, since late capitalism runs on an economy of signs,¹³⁰ K-pop idols should be understood from the politics of hyper-real visuality that imbues audiences with a stylized fantasy, audio-visual illusion of the appealing, beautiful, and fashionable. Female rebellion is also promoted as a marketing purpose to diversify the industry's product inventory and expand a category of commodities the image can intrigue and captivate teenage audiences who are fed up with the normal lives. By doing so, the idols "embed in young girls' minds the notion that they, too, can be both the objects and subjects of the fantasy, regardless of whether that affords them any genuine empowerment."¹³¹ In other words, divorced from a real referent to society, they simulate woman-as-image for visual consumption of an imagined femininity as fantasy rather than image-of-woman. By an incessant practice of cultural hybridity, K-pop idols exert an influential role in maintaining and perpetuating gender-specific neoliberal conformative "behaviors, circuits of operationalization that frame thought and action globally."¹³²

Concluding Remarks: Hybridity in the Context of Neoliberalism

K-pop female idols are simultaneously empowered and disempowered. As much as they are enabled by their stardom, they are still subject to the gender ideals, updated and constrained by neoliberal imperatives. The schizophrenic personality is a salient example that materializes how their subjectivity is hybridized to satisfy the patriarchal gender values and expectations and to market an ephemeral taste of consumers in hyper-capitalism. By doing so, it perpetuates the patriarchal value system which demands women be kind, gentle, decent, and delicate as well as sexually available. With neoliberal market imperatives as a strange bed-fellow, the old patriarchal formula conspires to a marketization/commodification of femininity. As to the ethical dimension of cultural assemblage in the idols, far from disrupting or providing a moment of shock to change the dominant system of patriarchal capitalism, the schizophrenic female personality intensifies a scope and a degree of exploitation. "Hybridity and difference sell; the market remains intact."¹³³ As discussed in the case of Suzy's schizophrenic personality/sexuality, for its manufacturedness, updates a classic notion of Adorno's pseudo-individuality, rendered by consumer culture's allowance to freedom of expression, which ultimately helps maintain the status quo.

In this seemingly promising perspective on female success in the K-pop industry, women voluntarily contribute to renewing and perpetuating the centuries-long gender oppression, by abandoning any sense of unfairness or

oppression in social relations but equipping themselves with an extra amount of conformative agency and efforts. In this model of voluntary internalization of exploitative social relations, women, especially K-pop wannabes, trainees, and idols, become and exercise an ideal neoliberal subjectivity, *homo economicus*, who capitalizes on their efforts in already exploitative capitalist society. Differently put, with a powerful interplay of these two dominant ideologies, the idols' split-personality is K-pop industry's post-feminist exemplar who endorses "terms of their subordination and are willing, even enthusiastic, partners in that subordination."¹³⁴ As a concrete manifestation of different effects on bodies, behaviors, and social relations, they "enthusiastically perform patriarchal stereotypes of sexual servility on the name of [female] empowerment."¹³⁵

Thus, Suzy's schizophrenic personality is a post-feminist hyper-reality that aims to monetize an imaginary feeling of female empowerment, which updates a gender-based asymmetric development of capitalism. As much as female bodies and sexuality were mobilized to attract foreign capital for national development since the Korean War,¹³⁶ they are still being manipulated fashionably to legitimate masculinist, neoliberal development. The more the idols' cute and innocent behavior are highlighted, the more their commodified sexuality is salient: the further the female bodies are displayed as a neoliberal commodity, the further they need to validate the traditional gender norms and expectations to maintain the dominant social *status quo*. In sum, as Teresa de Lauretis indicates a female subject is formulated by a "multiplicity of discourses, positions and meanings which are often in conflict with one another,"¹³⁷ the split personality of K-pop female idols is a carnal imprint of a cacophonous hybridization between the traditional mode of gender oppression and the current neoliberal hegemony.

Notes

1. Gooyong Kim (Ph.D. UCLA, Cultural/Media Studies) is an Assistant Professor of Communication Arts at Cheyney University of Pennsylvania, USA, and serves one of Regional President positions in the U.S. for the World Association for Hallyu Studies.
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Koreans across the Sea: Migration of Laborers to the Metropole, 1910–1937

MIKWI CHO PhD Student, University of Cambridge

Abstract

This paper is concerned with Korean farmers who were transformed into laborers during the Korean colonial period and migrated to Japan to enhance their living conditions. The author's research adopts a regional scale to its investigation in which the emergence of Osaka as a global city attracted Koreans seeking economic betterment. The paper shows that, despite an initial claim to permit the free mobility of Koreans, the Japanese empire came to control this mobility depending on political, social, and economic circumstances of Japan and Korea. For Koreans, notwithstanding poverty being a primary trigger for the abandonment of their homes, the paper argues that their migration was facilitated by chain migration and they saw Japan as a resolution to their economic hardships in the process of capital accumulation by the empire.

Keywords: Chain migration, mobility, empire, metropole, labor, economic hardship, modernity, immigration regulation, commodification, capitalism, state-building

Introduction

Japanese and English language scholarship on the history of Korean migration during the colonial era often depict the remarkable size of the Korean population in Japan by stating that Koreans were, and continued to be in postwar Japan, the

largest foreign population. This phenomenon appeared for the first time in 1917 when Korean workers began to stream into Japan in conspicuously large numbers to aid the labor demand produced by the First World War. It was also then that they surpassed the total number of Chinese residents. Before this time, more than fifty percent of Japan's foreign population consisted of Chinese immigrants.¹ It would not be until 2007 that the population of Chinese residents recovered to become dominant at some 606,889, exceeding the number of Korean residents in Japan by 13,400.² These statistics do not include Koreans and their offspring who have been resident for several generations and have become naturalized. In other words, the population of Korean residents in Japan today mostly originates from the laboring class, which comprised the largest group of Koreans during the colonial period.

Before 1910, ordinances were introduced between 1874 and 1899 to regulate the immigration of foreign workers including Koreans. Imperial Ordinances 352 and 421 enacted in July 1899 by the Ministry of Home Affairs confined foreigners to general labor. The former ordinance was promulgated particularly to control the employment of unskilled Chinese laborers, as they were considered to be unhygienic, undisciplined, and opium addicts. Conflict between them and Japanese workers was also a common sight.³ As Korean laborers grew in number after the annexation of Korea, this image of Chinese laborers was soon projected onto Koreans. Not only was the presence of Korean laborers inconspicuous before this time, but there were a greater number of Koreans in education, diplomatic establishment, and politics, with students being the most noticeable.⁴ From August 29, 1910, Koreans were exempt from the law that restricted the entry of foreign laborers and permitted to travel between Korea and Japan through the Free Travel System (自由渡航制度 *jiyū tokō seido*).⁵ The imperial authorities welcomed Korean migrants and stated that it was their duty to protect and train Koreans.⁶ This was, however, soon counteracted by the rising tide of Korean laborers who migrated to Japan without securing employment in Japan. They did not initially travel to Japan of their own volition. However, as industries developed, they became the target of entrepreneurs for reasons that Korean laborers were acquiescent to low wages, longer working hours, and poor working environments. Additionally, a great number of Korean laborers steadily traveled to Japan through chain migration. This is known as migration through kinship connection where migrants typically relocate from the peripheries to urban centers. Their decision is consolidated by family members or acquaintances who have already settled in a new location. The group of migrants consequently reside in the same urban area.⁷ This concerned the imperial authorities whose intention in permitting free mobility was not the congregation and accumulation of what they considered people of low culture.⁸

From the perspective of Korean laborers, migration to Japan was an unavoidable consequence of the oppression of Japanese colonial rule. The majority of Koreans who crossed the straits to Japan were originally peasant-farmers who became laborers upon prematurely retiring from the agricultural industry in Korea. The cadastral land survey (土地調査事情 *tochi chōsa jijō*) conducted between 1910 and 1918 and the institution of the program to increase rice exports (産米増殖計画 *sammai zōshoku keikaku*) from 1920 were two prominent projects undertaken by the Japanese government to expand agriculture on the peninsula. However, Korean peasant-farmers argued that these projects led to the loss of their land and pushed them from their hometown to seek occupations elsewhere.⁹ For Koreans who decided to emigrate, Japan was neither the only destination nor the most popular destination. More prevalent destinations included China, Siberia, North America, Sakhalin, and the United Kingdom.¹⁰ In fact, Koreans continued to travel to Manchuria in greater numbers than they did to Japan up until the middle of the Second World War.¹¹

There were three key players in the migration of Korean laborers: the imperial authorities, capitalists, and Koreans themselves. Using Korean labor migration to Japan as one mechanism in the process of Japan's state-building, this paper showcases the interactions between the three key players in order to examine Korean labor migration from the standpoint of the Japanese empire and Koreans. The imperial authorities first claimed to form a deepening bond between Japanese and Korean people. However, as businesspeople and corporates accumulated capital and favored Korean labor, the authorities soon lamented that the free migration of Koreans to Japan allowed the presence of Korean laborers who generated social, economic, and political problems in Japan. Why did the imperial authorities then not prohibit the migration of Koreans in the laboring class altogether? For Korean laborers, if migration to Japan was an inevitable result of the colonial oppression, why did they choose Japan as a destination while a greater number of Koreans traveled elsewhere inside and outside of the peninsula? In order to answer these questions, this paper will cover 1910 to 1937, with the latter being the year that marked the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War and where immigration regulations morphed into ones that encouraged Korean migration more progressively.

In English language scholarship, Edward Wagner is the first to have explored the Korean minority in Japan from 1910 to 1950. Albeit revealing unprecedented research findings on social, economic, and political issues of Korean residents in Japan, it is not his interest to analyze the migration processes of Koreans where other scholars have examined push and pull factors that triggered the migration of Koreans to Japan. Michael Weiner is one of the first English language scholars

to have examined Korean migration to Japan from 1910 to the end of the Second World War. In addition to the main themes of his research centering around race and assimilation introduced by the Japanese empire as a colonial policy, he places emphasis on the pull factors of Koreans' migration to Japan and how Korean laborers were received by the host society and industry. While he provides an overview of the immigration systems implemented by the authorities, their effects on the mobility of Koreans between the straits and the circumstances in the two lands that elicited the authorities to issue such systems are unclear. Ken Kawashima also utilizes Korean laborers as a lens through which he scrutinizes the processes that ultimately trapped Koreans in a web of commodification of their labor power during capital accumulation. What separates his research from the earlier studies is that he not only views state power as a non-monolithic entity, but he also studies social and institutional practices that led to divisions among the Korean minority. Eliminating the assumption of racism and discrimination against Koreans, which is prominent in previous studies, certainly supports his argument involving class struggle of the proletariat. However, despite providing both push and pull factors of Koreans' migration to Japan, his research is not concerned with the immigration processes and policies that interfered with the decision of migration among Korean workers.

In Japanese language scholarship, one scholar who has had a thorough overview of the Korean community in Japan is Tonomura Masaru. Although the main focus of his research is not on Korean migration, his project to reconstruct the historiography of the Korean minority from a sociological approach enables him to make a statistical analysis of Korean mobility. Similar to Kawashima's research, Tonomura's research departs from the prevalent tendency of previous studies to conceptualize the Korean minority as a unified existence and to study them through colonial policies and resistance. This offers the re-examination of the Korean community with a bottom-up approach, allowing readers to comprehend the significance of the general public in the formation of the Korean minority. However, he takes a broad examination of the Korean community exploring every corner of the general public that it is not sufficient to understand the extent to which the regulation of Korean mobility interfered with the push and pull factors of their migration. In contrast, scholars such as Kim Ch'an-chŏng and Iwasa Kazuyuki take a narrow approach where they zoom into Osaka as the central place of their investigation. Primarily through interviews with first-generation *zainichi* Koreans, Kim's research provides an important insight into the economic circumstances Cheju residents were exposed to and their living conditions after settling in Osaka. The use of oral history undeniably offers a detailed look into the aspects of the lives of Korean laborers that textual sources alone cannot present. However,

unlike Iwasa's research which reveals the industrial development and the urbanization of Osaka as the main source of attraction for the greatest number of Korean migrants, Kim does not place the findings of his research in a broader context of the *zainichi* Korean historiography. Moreover, notwithstanding migration being a central issue in Iwasa's research, he is not concerned with the relation between the prosperity of Osaka and the immigration regulations proclaimed on Koreans.

This paper therefore will build on the previous studies to study the migration of Korean laborers by employing top-down and bottom-up approaches. The former allows scholars to study the Japanese empire through the state and policies while scholars using the latter examine it through the birth of Korean nationalism and resistance. Jun Uchida, who has conducted extensive research on Japanese settlers on the Korean peninsula, asserts that an area oscillating between these approaches has recently seized the attention of scholars where colonial Korea is not only defined by colonial policies and resistance but also by modernity.¹² This area becomes significant as my research endeavors to answer the two questions posed above. This study aims to demonstrate that the discussion of Korean migration to Japan expands beyond a one-dimensional analysis encompassing Japanese colonial oppression. The first half of this paper will discuss how the structural changes in economy that were caused by specific events between 1910 and 1937 prompted Korean laborers to abandon their homes for Japan. For the scope of this paper, I will explore the motives of Korean emigration to Japan by targeting Osaka regionally. The second half of this paper will examine the reaction of the Japanese empire to Korean migration by exploring the immigration policies promulgated by the imperial authorities to regulate Korean mobility according to economic, social, and political conditions of Korea and Japan.

Influx of Korean Laborers

At the beginning of the Free Travel System, Korean laborers were encouraged to migrate voluntarily, but only an insignificant number of Koreans traveled to Japan of their own volition. Notwithstanding the small influx of Korean laborers into Japan at this time, ferries between Pusan of South Kyōngsang Province and Shimonoseki of Yamaguchi Prefecture began operation in September 1905 by a private shipping line.¹³ The 壱岐丸 Iki-maru was the first ferry to specialize in transporting passengers with approximately eight hours of travel time. Besides this route, ferries between Cheju Island and Osaka, Yōsu and Shimonoseki, and Pusan and Hakata of Fukuoka Prefecture eventually began transporting passengers.¹⁴ Passengers who boarded the ferries were not only Koreans. Japanese entrepreneurs, encouraged by the state, began to recruit Korean laborers into Japanese industries

Table 1 Korean population in a few areas within the Japanese empire.

Year	Japan	Korea	Manchuria (excluding Kwantung Leased Territory)	Kwantung Leased Territory	Mainland China
1910	2,600	13,128,780	158,433	20	0
1911	5,728				
1912	7,796				
1913	10,394				
1914	12,961				
1915	15,106				
1916	17,972	16,309,179	328,207	67	244
1917	22,218				
1918	34,082				
1919	37,732				
1920	40,755				
1921	62,404				
1922	90,741	17,208,139	534,967	635	1,247
1923	136,557	17,446,913	527,416	611	1,100
1924	172,130				
1925	214,657				
1926	247,358	18,615,033	552,217	976	2,367
1927	308,685				
1928	358,121				

such as textiles, chemicals, and coal mining from 1911. In July of the same year, the Seoul Relief Society Employment Exchange Agency (京城救護會職業紹介所 *Keijō Kyūgokai Shokugyō Shōkaijo*) was set up to recruit Koreans more efficiently.

As shown in Table 1, the recruitments did not impel many Koreans to leave the peninsula at the beginning.¹⁵ One of the first push factors following annexation was the land survey (土地調査事情 *tochi chōsa jijō*) conducted by the Government-General of Korea between 1910 and 1918.¹⁶ The primary objective was to confirm ownership in order to conduct surveys to assess the quality and value of each parcel of land for taxation. This project was undertaken by the implementation

Year	Japan	Korea	Manchuria (excluding Kwantung Leased Territory)	Kwantung Leased Territory	Mainland China
1929	398,920				
1930	419,009				
1931	427,275	19,710,168	629,235	1,747	2,580
1932	433,692	20,037,273	654,023	2,002	3,582
1933	500,637	20,205,591	671,535	2,259	4,954
1934	559,080	20,513,804	758,885	2,708	6,214
1935	615,867	21,248,864	826,570	3,251	7,197
1936	657,497	21,373,572	895,000	4,025	11,353
1937	693,138	21,682,855	932,000	3,917	16,420
1938	796,927	21,950,616	1,056,308	4,496	21,816
1939	980,700	22,098,310	1,162,127	4,828	44,759
1940	1,241,315	22,954,563	1,450,384	5,710	77,667
1941	1,484,025	23,913,063	1,490,000	6,405	86,793
1942	1,778,480	24,105,906	1,562,000	7,279	86,153
1943	1,946,047	24,389,719	1,634,000	7,414	86,654
1944	2,139,143				
1945	2,206,541				

Source: Tonomura Masaru (外村大), *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai no Rekishigakuteki Kenkyū-Keisei, Kōzō, Henyō* (在日朝鮮人社会の歴史学的研究-形成・構造・変容) (Tokyo: Ryokuin Shobō, 2004), 42, 60–61.

of a modern registration system, 토지대장 *t'oji taejang* (*j*: 土地台帳 *tochi daichō*), which remained the primary register throughout the colonial period, and it is still used in South Korea today.¹⁷

Postcolonial discourses surrounding the land survey are controversial, as many scholars assert that it allowed the imperial government to institute private ownership rights for the first time in Korea. Moreover, they maintain that it was a strategy to fraudulently claim Korea's arable land and to expropriate landownership from illiterate and uneducated Korean peasants. Although the purpose of this paper is not to weight the degrees of immiseration Korean peasants experienced prior to

and after annexation, historians such as Gi-Wook Shin and Edwin Gragert argue that the nature of the survey was not to radically bring changes to Korean economy and society, and that it did not usurp landownership from Korean peasants. On the one hand, statistics show that a considerable number of Korean peasants undeniably lost their land title as a result of the survey, and this situation worsened as the program to increase rice production (産米増殖計画 *sammai zōshoku keikaku*) was instituted in 1920 to increase rice exports to Japan.¹⁸ A study by Lee Gwangchae shows that the semi-tenancy rate declined from 39.4 percent in 1918 to 37.4 percent in 1920, which continued to drop and reached 23.3 percent by 1940. On the contrary, the tenancy rate was 37.8 percent in 1918, but it rose to 39.8 percent in 1920 and spiked upwards to 53.1 percent by 1940.¹⁹ Once Korean peasants were reduced to tenants, not only did they contribute anywhere between forty and sixty percent of crop shares, but they were also burdened with high rents and land taxes.²⁰ On the other hand, Shin contends that the alleged intentions of the survey claimed by scholars are not only unsupported by many case studies, but they were prevalent prior to annexation. For instance, the early Chosŏn dynasty employed private ownership as the land tenure system.²¹ Landholdings were unequally distributed, and land tenure was characterized by high tenancy in the late Chosŏn dynasty, where the security of tenancy tenure was never promising.²² Tenant-landlord relations were explained by two types of rent payment systems: variable or fixed. The former was dominantly employed in the Chosŏn dynasty where tenants and landlords divided crops equally. The downside of this system, at least for tenants, was that absentee landlords requested fixed rent, which was fewer than half the crops in value but supplemented by high land taxes.²³ Much of tenant-landlord relations and the land tenure system continued unaltered under the Japanese agricultural policy, at least until the Great Depression.²⁴ Gragert also asserts that Korean land not only predominantly remained in the hands of Koreans during the colonial period, but most land transfers from Korean to Japanese owners were enabled by joint efforts between Yi dynasty elites and Japanese businessmen and corporations.²⁵ Shin and Gragert both charge that there are many parallels to be drawn between Korean landownership of the Chosŏn dynasty and that of the colonial period, and they encourage reassessment of the Japanese agricultural policy. The extent to which the Japanese agricultural programs intended to exploit its colony is still open to debate.

Migration Channel

The colonial agricultural programs most severely affected the following six southern provinces where the commercialization of land was most vigorous: North and South Chŏlla, North and South Kyŏngsang, and North and South

Ch'ungch'öng.²⁶ A great many Korean peasants from these provinces first migrated to urban areas in a hope to find employment outside of the agricultural sector. A first-generation *zainichi* Korean, Lee Sök-hyön, who traveled to urban areas on the peninsula at the age of fifteen before settling in Manchuria and ultimately in Japan, noted that people whom he encountered at a night school told him and other children countless stories about the urban cities, and the stories made him envious.²⁷ Although he earned just enough money to call his income 小遣い *kozukai* (pin money), he nevertheless found a job at a nightclub. However, urban centers themselves were already experiencing scarcity in employment opportunities, and a vast number of Korean farmers set their minds to emigrate to Japan.²⁸

A pull factor for destitute Korean farmers that coincided with the period of the cadastral land survey was Japan's participation in the First World War and a subsequent increase in labor demands.²⁹ Persuaded by company recruiters to work in Japanese industries, Koreans conspicuously appeared in Japan in the later years of the First World War as 'cheap, temporary, and non-unionized industrial workers' who were distributed to small and medium-sized factories.³⁰ Ken Kawashima adds that the recruitments of Korean laborers had the support of the Government-General to employ them as a means to hinder wage levels from rising and Japanese trade unionism from strengthening.³¹ This way, capitalists could maximize profits while maintaining production costs low. During the war boom, Korean laborers were primarily recruited into coal mines and cotton factories. The majority of them were men, though women were also present and most noticeable in cotton factories. Another industry in which Koreans were hired, albeit on a smaller scale, was public works.³² Indeed, the Korean population swelled drastically in 1917 and 1918 compared to previous years. In 1918 in particular, the number of Korean immigrants skyrocketed from 1917 by 11,864.³³

Contrary to this first influx of Koreans who chiefly embarked on their journey to Japan through recruitment, Korean emigrants began to enter Japan in a greater number through kinship connection from as early as 1919.³⁴ Figures for 1917 exhibit 37.3 percent of Koreans who emigrated to Japan through recruitment. However, only 10.8 percent of them emigrated through recruitment in 1919, and this drastically decreased to 5.7 percent by 1920 and continued to decline in the subsequent years.³⁵ The sudden drop in the number of Koreans who used recruiters as a channel of emigration can be attributed to two reasons: the end of the land survey and postwar recession. Once the survey was completed in 1918, a considerable number of Korean farmers, who were either landowners or tenants, lost title to their land and hoped to secure employment in Japan. This overlapped with a period of economic recession that gripped Japan in the aftermath of the First World War, which implied that there was not as much necessity as before for direct

recruitments of Korean laborers on the peninsula. The lack of labor shortages, which manifested itself after the end of the war, was accompanied by the 1920 economic crisis.³⁶ An immediate consequence was substantial dismissals of laborers who were predominantly Korean factory workers whose contracts were temporary. Korean labor subsequently became disposable in nature.³⁷ Meanwhile, Koreans continued to cross to Japan through kinship connection. A survey conducted in 1927 revealed that 36.9 percent of Korean emigrants to Japan were called upon by their relatives. This was followed by 20.5 percent of emigrants who were invited by friends. 14.6 percent answered that they sought acquaintances in Japan. In contrast, only 2.5 percent of travelers applied for emigration without relying on someone in Japan.³⁸

The gradual rise in the use of chain migration by Korean migrants also implies that they increasingly resided in Japan in family units. The number of women never surpassed that of men throughout the colonial period. However, the gender ratio exhibited steady changes. In the early stage of Korean migration, the Korean community mainly consisted of unmarried men whose age range was primarily between their mid-teens and early 30s. They traveled to Japan as sojourn (出稼ぎ *dekasegi*) laborers.³⁹ As elaborated below, the Free Travel System became restricted in April 1919. From then, dependents accompanied the head of the household by means of 妻子呼寄 *saishi yobiyose* (invitation of wife and children), which allowed the traveler to immigrate with his family. In the 1920s, Korean women only comprised 11.6 percent of the total Korean population with almost 6 percent of them occupying the age range between mid-teens and late-20s.⁴⁰ In 1927, 88.2 percent of men and 64.6 percent of women entering or departing Japan traveled alone without one's parent or spouse.⁴¹ This suggests that the majority of male and female travelers were unmarried or crossed to Japan as sojourn travelers no matter their purpose of immigration. In the 1930s, while men of the same age range still dominated the Korean community, their percentage dropped to just below 50 and instead, infants (age 0–4) occupied 12 percent (2.5 percent in the 1920s). The female percentage also rose to 29 percent and the greatest number of women were still in the age range between mid-teens and late-20s.⁴² In Osaka, infants comprised as high as 20 percent of the Korean population in 1932. It is evident from the population shift that the demographics of the Korean community altered from unmarried *dekasegi* male labors to immigrants in family units. The Osaka survey also supports this analysis by showing that the presence of married Korean women continuously became more conspicuous from the Meiji era to 1932.⁴³ What is more, increasingly more Koreans were residing in Japan with their family permanently.⁴⁴

In 1937, which marked the start of the Second Sino–Japanese War and the rebirth of labor demands, the imperial authorities even modified the existing immigration system to facilitate the migration of dependents to Japan.⁴⁵ The intention of the

government was to stabilize the Korean community, and this parallels the trend in contemporary Western European countries where they encourage family reunions but transform migrant laborers into a commodity.⁴⁶ As elaborated below, Korean migration soon came to be problematized by the authorities for matters including unemployment, disputes with the locals, and illegal entries.⁴⁷ While the encouragement of family reunions seems counterintuitive, having the presence of family most likely enhanced the wellbeing of Korean men and reduced the frequency of illegal entries. On the other hand, it also suggests the migration of Koreans who followed their family members without comprehensive knowledge of the economic conditions in Japan. For instance, in the Osaka survey mentioned above, almost 90 percent of married women were unemployed. Although it appears that men were the primary breadwinners within most Korean households, there are many first-generation *zainichi* women who stated that they had to work alongside their husband because his income alone was not sufficient to support the family.

Koreans, like any other migrant laborers, were pushed away from their homeland and pulled towards the metropole in the process of capital accumulation. On the one hand, it seems at a glance that family reunions were a benevolent act of the government to stabilize the community. On the other hand, it also allowed the government to justify the commodification and mobilization of laborers. Korean peasants migrated in the hope to enhance their lives, and their families accordingly followed suit. Encouraged by the state or not, the quantitative increase of Korean migrants in family groups also implies that family members accompanied the head of the household not to aid capitalist penetration into new areas of the empire but to establish a stable family not spatially separated by the straits.

Chain Migration

What further galvanized numerous destitute Korean peasants to leave their homeland from the late 1920s was the worldwide depression. The depression first hit the agricultural industry in Japan in 1925 when the price of rice declined drastically. In the last month of 1934, Japanese rice regained the predepression value.⁴⁸ On the Korean peninsula where the colonial agricultural policy was to render Korea a primary source of rice for Japan, the impact of the depression was even more substantial. Starting in 1929, Korean agriculture witnessed a severe drop in the value of rice and other agricultural products, spurred by painfully reduced exports to Japan. In Korea, too, it was not until 1934 that the price of rice returned to the level it was before 1929. Pressured by the economic crisis, many Korean owners underwent mortgage foreclosures or left with no choice but to sell their land at a low value in the 1930s. Landownership transfers were conducted

on a large scale, and it was then that Japanese businessmen and corporates seized land at an unprecedented level. A sharp rise in tenancy rates at this time was most evident in the vicinity of urban areas and ports, mercilessly affecting the southern provinces of the peninsula.⁴⁹ In 1910, Koreans who were engaged in agriculture, forestry or livestock farming occupied 84.1 percent of the total industries and occupations on the peninsula. This percent dropped by mere 0.73 percent by 1917 when the land survey had already been compiled. When these data were collected in 1926, just a few years before the impact of the worldwide depression became noticeable in the Korean agricultural industry, it continually displayed a slight decrease of 83.1 percent. However, in 1935, around the time this industry finally recuperated, the percentage had indeed decreased to 78.1 percent.⁵⁰ Table 2 indicates that in 1932, as many as 56 percent of Koreans took the decision to leave their hometown for Japan due to the depression in agriculture.

The uninterrupted stream of Koreans crossing to Japan typically through chain migration or recruitment suggests that they were receiving a considerable amount of information about living in Japan through relatives, friends, and recruiters. This parallels Lee Sök-hyŏn's story in which he moved to urban centers after listening to various tales of people who had traveled there. However, it also signifies that there was incomplete information circulating to the masses that lacked knowledge

Table 2 Reasons or purposes for which Koreans departed for Japan.

Reason/purpose for emigrating to Japan	Number of responses	Percentage of responses (%)
Depression in agriculture	6,587	55.66
Hardship of life	2,037	17.21
Moneymaking	1,745	14.74
Seeking employment	241	2.04
Depression in commerce	228	1.93
Recession	162	1.37
Labor	148	1.25
Wishing to improve life	140	1.18
Education	115	0.97
Business management	88	0.74
Total of all responses	11,835	100.00

Source: Ōsakafu Gakumubu Shakaika (大阪府学務部社会課), *Zaihan Chōsenjin no Seikatsu Jōtai* (在阪朝鮮人の生活状態), Osaka, 1932, 25–26.

Note: This table only lists the top ten answers.

of the conditions in Japan. As stated below, it was a common occurrence for Koreans to be approached by both Korean and Japanese brokers who persuaded them to work in Japan by presenting an array of statements illustrating Japan as the metropole of success and modernity. Just as soon as Koreans began to be recruited, they lamented that the contents of the employment contracts deviated from the actual working conditions. The complaints included conditions that were more arduous than what their Japanese counterparts were subjected to and the employment of underage persons and married women without a guardian consent. This occurred so frequently that the Government-General of Korea promulgated a regulation in as early as 1913 to control Korean recruitments.⁵¹ In its rectified regulation issued in 1918, it prohibited hyperbolic and false words to be used in the recruitment process.⁵²

The imperial authorities also articulated that Koreans entrusted Japan with a prospect of 一攫千金 *ikkaku senkin* (making a fortune at a stroke) and held 憧れ *akogare* (yearning) in going to Japan. Concerning Koreans who crossed to Japan by the Shimonoseki–Pusan ferry, the Fukuoka Regional Employment Exchange Office stated in 1929 as follows:

Osaka, Kyoto, and Hyogo have been absorbing a large number of laborers. As for the regions within the Fukuoka Regional Employment Exchange Office, Koreans are engaged in mining as miners or in general labor as navvies. Given its proximity compared to Osaka, Nagoya, and Tokyo, trips to Fukuoka are facilitated due to reduced travel costs and others. As for the regions within the Tokyo Regional Employment Exchange Office, for Tokyo is the imperial capital, they only envision Tokyo as the center of civilization and plan on sightseeing instead of seeking employment. It can be imagined that their fierce *akogare* is enhanced for Tokyo than it is for the other regions. If they lose employment or end up in poverty, it can be said that they selfishly misunderstand that they would not face a hardship if they return to such regions as Nagoya and Osaka. As for the regions within the Nagoya Regional Employment Exchange Office, various kinds of factories have rapidly developed over the last few years in and outside of Nagoya city, and it seems that the demand for Korean labor force has considerably expanded.⁵³

In spite of probable prejudice in this statement, it is likely that Koreans' decisions for emigration were facilitated by the spatial gap. A survey by the South Kyōngsang police department also concurs with this statement. Among 89 Koreans who were found to be repatriating to the peninsula due to poverty and hardship they experienced in Japan, 37 percent answered that they were unable to find employment while they traveled to Japan by seeking acquaintances, being invited by relatives, 漫然渡航 *manzen tokō* (rambling passage), or holding onto the hope they would find a job in Japan. The other reasons for returning home were sickness and

injury (39.3 percent), employment dismissals (19.1 percent), and a lack of language proficiency (4.5 percent).⁵⁴

Moreover, wages are one example that would seize people's attention. Although Koreans received smaller wages than their Japanese counterparts in Japan and Korea, their wages in Japan were nonetheless higher than they were in Korea. Employment introduction through kinship connection became most prevalent after the First World War labor demand diminished, and a study conducted in Osaka in 1934 revealed that nearly 52 percent of Korean migrants found their employment through introduction. Many of them also sought employment on their own (36 percent). This was followed by 14 percent of Koreans who made a living by self-employment. As demonstrated earlier, an insignificant number of Koreans found their job through employment exchange offices (8.6 percent).⁵⁵ Based on interviews with first-generation *zainichi* Koreans, Kim Ch'an-chōng explains that Koreans chiefly found a job through introduction by siblings, relatives, or parents. Labor bosses (親方 *oyakata*), whom Koreans met in worker dorms, were also in an intermediary position to introduce them.⁵⁶ The following anecdote by a first-generation *zainichi* Korean, Kim Han-pong, also confirms this:

When I came [to Japan] in about the second year of Showa (1927), there were neither many jobs nor places to work. It was difficult to get into the rubber industry, but I was able to through my relative's introduction. If one was not introduced, he/she hardly found a place to work.⁵⁷

The fact that a great many Koreans received employment through introduction implies that the information they were collecting from fellow Koreans also included the higher wages in Japan, and this wage difference functioned as an incentive for Koreans emigrants. For such industries as fishing, car manufacturing, and construction, they received at least one additional yen per day in Japan. Even for occupations with the minimum wage difference, the wages in Japan were at least 0.5 yen higher than those in Korea. While one of the salient issues raised by the imperial authorities was the high rate of unemployment, whether stemming from a dismissal from a job or an inability to find one, the daily wages for Koreans in Japan were on average 0.87 yen more than those in Korea (Table 3). This means that every month, Koreans were paid additional 26.1 yen on average in Japan. This survey also investigated monthly living expenses of Korean laborers in Korea and Japan, which further signifies the value of the wage difference. In Korea, Koreans spent on average 15 yen monthly on living. Because their average monthly wage was 37.5 yen, this left them with 22.5 yen. Their average monthly living expenses, after their settlement in Japan, were 19.5 yen.⁵⁸ They earned 63.6 yen monthly on average in Japan. Koreans residing in Japan were therefore left with 44.1 yen every month after deducting living expenses. This indicates that Korean laborers saved

Table 3 Comparison between daily wage rates of Korean laborers in Korea and Japan.

Occupation/industry	Wage (yen)		
	Korea	Japan	Difference relative to wage rates in Korea
Agriculture	0.92	1.64	+0.72
Fisherman	1.70	2.83	+1.13
Car manufacturing	1.97	3.51	+1.54
Construction	1.30	2.30	+1.00
Craftsman	1.10	1.80	+0.70
Miner	1.30	2.20	+0.90
Seaman	1.00	1.50	+0.50
General labor	0.70	1.20	+0.50
Average	1.25	2.12	+0.87

Source: Ōsakashi Shakaibu Chōsaka Hensan (大阪市社会部調査課編纂), *Chōsenjin Rōdōsha Mondai* (朝鮮人労働者問題), Osaka, 1924, 65–67.

Note: The data is based on the wages of male workers.

a sum of 21.6 additional yen by living in Japan. Koreans' accounts are divided, and while many were able to save some money during their residence in Japan, others were not. However, the spatial gap was most likely a contributing factor in the decision-making of Koreans to depart for Japan.

Alternative Destinations

For Koreans who embarked on their journey to a foreign country, Japan was not the most popular destination. They departed to settle in Manchuria from as early as the 1880s when Korean peasants migrated to fill the labor shortage of privately owned land or to access uncultivated land.⁵⁹ Hyun Ok Park explains that even before the establishment of Manchukuo, Korean peasants had been used as a lever by the Japanese empire to pacify Chinese resistance and to penetrate Manchuria in its hope to ultimately reach mainland China and the rest of Asia.⁶⁰ Korean peasants steadily migrated to Manchuria to escape poverty, much the same way they did to Japan, in a greater number until 1942 (Table 1). The sudden shift is explained by the government's labor mobilization scheme (計画渡航制度 *keikaku tokō seido*), promulgated in 1939, to gather Korean laborers for Japan's war effort.

The stable growth of the Korean population in Manchuria for thirty-two years during the period of annexation is contrary to the understanding that Korean

migration to Japan was due to economic hardships caused by Japanese colonial rule. In other words, if the colonial oppression prompted Koreans, the majority of whom derived from the agricultural industry, to inevitably leave home for an unfamiliar country like Japan, Koreans would have departed for Japan in a greater number than they did for Manchuria. “I was poor in my hometown, so I went to Japan” is a frequent phrase utilized in accounts of first-generation *zainichi* Koreans who continue to reside in Japan today. However, this is followed by “it was hard to make ends meet in Japan.” Countless scholarship discusses ethnic discrimination Koreans faced in their everyday lives in Japan, and a wage gap between Koreans and indigenous laborers has been one central topic. There is no doubt that they were marginalized and many migrants traveled to Japan through Korean and Japanese brokers only to discover discrepancies in the actual working conditions. However, they would not have departed for Japan in masses if there were no incentives or emigration to Japan did not yield the slightest improvement from their lives back in Korea. Korean residents in Tokyo were asked in 1929 if life was more difficult in Japan. The participants were classified according to their marital status and occupation. For married Koreans in 46 occupations including free labor, 74.5 percent answered that life was easier in Japan whereas 13.8 percent responded that it was more difficult in Japan. 9.3 percent also stated that it did not differ, and 2.5 percent of the responses were classified as “unknown.” Among unmarried Koreans in 72 occupations including free labor, 62.4 percent responded that life was easier in Japan while 13.8 percent stated that it was more difficult in Japan. The rest of the answers included “[life was] the same” (7.3 percent) and “unknown” (1.6 percent). For the participants who claimed that life was less difficult in Japan, the reasons included higher wages and a greater number of employment opportunities. On the contrary, food, the higher cost of living, and coldheartedness of the Japanese were the reasons for articulating that life was more difficult in Japan.⁶¹

The prevalent tendency of Koreans immigrating to Japan and Manchuria can also be traced back to geographic proximity. According to a study in 1923, 83.3 percent of Koreans who chose Japan as their destination had North Kyōngsang, South Kyōngsang, and South Chōlla as their birthplace. In contrast, among Koreans who emigrated to northern destinations including Manchuria, 75.5 percent came from South Hamgyōng, North Hamgyōng, and South P’yōng’an.⁶² This shows that Koreans whose birthplace was located in the southern provinces of the peninsula had a higher tendency to cross the straits to Japan whereas those from the northern provinces were more likely to migrate to the north which was geographically closer to them. For emigrants to Japan, ferries that connected the ports situated in the south of the peninsula with those in Japan further facilitated their decision to travel to Japan.

Korean laborers, the majority of whom were originally peasant-farmers, undoubtedly underwent financial hardship in the aftermath of the land survey and the program to increase rice production, accelerated by the depression years. The idea of immigration to Japan surfaced during this time in their hope to escape agricultural immiseration. Whereas the majority of Korean emigrants chose a destination other than Japan, the decision of those who selected Japan, until 1942, was affected by multiple factors such as the colonial agricultural interventions that most severely affected the southern areas of the peninsula, the high unemployment rate in urban centers of the peninsula, images of Japan that elicited emigration to Japan, and geographic proximity.

Osaka, the Metropole for Korean Laborers

For Koreans who arrived in Japan hoping for economic betterment, the majority headed for Osaka. The first ferry, which transported passengers between Pusan and Shimonoseki, began operation in 1905. In contrast, the route between Cheju Island and Osaka commenced in 1923. Needless to say, the ferry between Cheju Island and Osaka gained popularity and was quickly dominated by Cheju residents, as the fare was a third of that between Pusan and Shimonoseki. Cheju residents eventually comprised the largest Korean community in Osaka.⁶³ The high stream of Cheju residents to Osaka is evident from the statistics that indicate as high as sixty percent of Korean residents in Osaka came from Cheju in 1924.⁶⁴

It was neither only Cheju residents who favorably chose Osaka nor did they simply settle in Osaka as a destination determined by the ferry. The most progressive mobility of Koreans towards Japan proper was witnessed in the 1920s and the 1940s.⁶⁵ The latter was marked by the Labor Mobilization Scheme the Japanese government promulgated to mobilize Koreans to various areas of the Japanese imperial territories to assist the war effort from 1939. In contrast, the former was a result of labor demands generated by the First World War. Products such as cotton cloth, machinery, metal, and ceramics, along with the shipbuilding industry exhibited demands in the Asian market from 1916 as alternatives to European products. The industrial development in Osaka during the 1920s played a significant role in aiding these demands and was crucial for the rise of the Japanese economy. Notwithstanding Cheju residents dominating the Korean population in Osaka with the operation of ferries between Cheju and Osaka since 1923, Koreans from various areas of the peninsula left Pusan for Osaka upon landing in Shimonoseki. The route between Pusan and Shimonoseki was indeed the most prominent until 1923, and while Yamaguchi Prefecture, where the city of Shimonoseki was situated, was the second most frequent destination for Koreans

who landed in Shimonoseki, Koreans primarily resumed their journey to Osaka as the final destination.⁶⁶

In this wave of Korean migration in the 1920s, Osaka was seen as the most favorable destination by Korean laborers. Indeed, it became a metropolis in 1925 after merging forty-four neighboring cities and villages. It was then that Osaka came to be called the “Manchester of the Orient” (東洋のマンチェスター *tōyō no mannchestā*) by the Japanese.⁶⁷ The active participation of Osaka in Japan’s economy applied to the trading world as well. In 1925, the most essential trading partners for Japan were as follows: for exports, they were North and South America and Asia, with China being the top, and for imports, they were Asia, such as China and India, North and South America, and Europe such as Britain. For exports to Asia, 48.3 percent were shipped through Osaka. What is more, 61.8 percent of exports to China were via Osaka. Among exported products that left the port of Osaka, 70 percent was dominated by cotton threads and cloths in 1925. This naturally raised the number of factories in Osaka and Osaka became the base for the cotton spinning industry.⁶⁸ Table 4 shows the top five prefectures with the highest production output in Japan, and Osaka ranked first in all three categories with the highest number of factories and employees and the greatest amount of production. Factories in Osaka thus created job opportunities for Korean laborers. By 1925, Osaka was the most attractive destination in Japan for Koreans in the laboring class.⁶⁹

Table 4 Factories in the top five prefectures in 1925 according to the production quantity.

Prefectures	Number of factories	Ratio of factories (%)	Number of employees	Ratio of employees (%)	Amount of production (thousand yen)	Ratio of production (%)
Osaka	6,364	13.1	258,177	14.0	1,158,039	16.7
Tokyo	5,145	10.6	179,083	9.7	784,334	11.3
Hyogo	2,819	5.8	159,065	8.6	710,092	10.3
Aichi	5,065	10.4	166,631	9.0	569,321	8.2
Nagano	1,294	2.7	114,398	6.2	292,468	4.2
Total of all prefectures	48,514	100.0	1,841,311	100.0	6,924,911	100.0

Source: Iwasa Kazuyuki (岩佐和幸), “Sekai toshi Ōsaka no Rekishiteki keisei- Senkanki ni Okeru Chōsenjin imin no Ryūnyū katei wo Chūshin ni (世界都市大阪の歴史的形成-戦間期における朝鮮人移民の流入過程を中心に),” *Keizairongyō Bessatsu* (経済論叢別冊), no. 16 (October 1998): 95.

Note: The rest of the prefectures that made the top ten are as follows: Fukuoka, Kanagawa, Kyoto, Shizuoka, and Mie.

The industrial development of Osaka is not to suggest that Korean laborers, along with their Japanese counterparts, were presented a plethora of job opportunities during the chronic recession. The disposable and temporary nature of Korean labor manifested in the 1920s and 1930s. With the end of the First World War and postwar recession, Koreans were dismissed from factories and coal mines in masses.⁷⁰ While many repatriated to the peninsula, the outgoing number of Koreans never exceeded the incoming number. During the periods of recession and depression, what absorbed a surplus of unemployed laborers and migrants was the public works industry that developed after the First World War. Spurred by urban planning projects and the advancement of modern hygiene, the Ministry of Home Affairs founded the city planning section in 1918 and in the following year, the Urban Planning Law was enacted.⁷¹ While Koreans continued to be commodified as unskilled and cheap day laborers who were vulnerable to the insecurity of employment, they became a necessity in the public works and construction industries to contribute to these progressive projects in interwar Japan.⁷² With the uninterrupted influx of Koreans into Japan, they began to appear as free laborers, day laborers, or navvies primarily in public works. This meant that they were impelled to seek a job on a daily basis, mainly as unskilled and manual laborers, where the availability of jobs was contingent and precarious.⁷³

The only prefectures where the existence of Korean day laborers was not as conspicuous were Osaka and Kyoto. These prefectures exhibited 40 percent and 30 percent, respectively, of Korean day laborers while approximately 75 percent were day laborers in Tokyo.⁷⁴ In Osaka with the outstanding number of factories, the glass industry absorbed the highest number of Korean laborers where one out of four workers was Korean.⁷⁵ What is more, 98 percent of glass factories in Osaka relied on Korean labor force. The majority of Korean female laborers, too, remained in the cotton spinning industry in Osaka during the chronic recession.⁷⁶

The visible tendency of Korean laborers to be confined in the domain of unskilled labor created an ethnic division of labor where Korean wages were maintained at a lower rate than Japanese wages.⁷⁷ Among the ten occupations or types of industry shown in Table 5, Japanese laborers received anywhere between 0.3 and 1.1 yen more than their Korean counterparts. The authorities stated that because Korean laborers who traveled to Japan were originally farmers, they lacked training or knowledge in mechanized industry. They were thus regarded to be useless for skilled labor and assumed that their only asset was their physical strength. Yet, the authorities attributed such factors as a lack of ability, energy, and physical strength as well as illiteracy to the wage gap.⁷⁸ The Osaka Regional Employment Exchange Agency conducted a study in 1923 with a thousand Korean residents in

Table 5 Daily wage rates of Korean and Japanese laborers in Japan proper.

Occupation/ industry	Koreans			Japanese		
	Highest	Average	Lowest	Highest	Average	Lowest
Agriculture	1.70	1.60	1.20	2.20	2.00	2.00
Washerman	1.90	1.80	1.00	2.70	2.00	1.00
Dye-making	1.90	1.20	0.80	2.80	2.10	0.90
Knitting	1.90	1.30	1.00	3.00	2.20	1.50
Textiles	2.00	1.20	0.90	2.80	1.70	1.00
Glass-making	3.00	1.20	0.90	3.50	1.60	1.10
Stevedore	2.50	2.00	1.70	3.00	2.50	2.00
Navy	1.70	1.70	1.00	2.00	1.90	1.80
Construction	2.50	2.00	1.70	2.80	2.50	2.00
Miner	2.30	2.10	1.60	3.00	2.50	1.80

Source: Ōsakashi Shakaibu Chōsaka Hensan (大阪市社会部調査課編纂). *Chōsenjin Rōdōsha Mondai* (朝鮮人労働者問題), Osaka, 1924, 78.

Note: The original data made a distinction between the wage rates of men and women. These data only display those of men.

Osaka and demonstrated that 776 laborers were previously engaged in agriculture in Korea, and merely 10 laborers had experience in factory labor.⁷⁹ Additionally, the greatest number (366 Koreans) resided in Osaka for less than one year before returning to the homeland. This was followed by 311 Koreans having resided in Osaka for fewer than six months. Among one thousand participants, 391 laborers understood Japanese while 550 of them did not, and 59 participants were perfectly literate.⁸⁰ These data suggest that most Korean laborers indeed lacked skills and experiences necessary to perform skilled labor. However, while a great many did not reside in Japan for over a year, almost half the laborers in the study understood Japanese. Their skills and language proficiency also most likely improved with time. This means that they were subjected to the wage gap unexplainable by the factors mentioned by the authorities. One, if not the most, salient cause of the wage gap was a high turnover rate. The majority of Korean laborers were employed as unskilled workers during the First World War, but this status became even more crucial to capitalists during the interwar period where Koreans were most needed in public works and construction sites. As discussed above, the status of Korean laborers as unskilled laborers insinuated that their employment was not secured beyond one day. This in turn meant that they were more prone to injuries and sickness at work. Because of their status, they were not given enough training or enough time

to be equipped with the skills necessary to perform their tasks.⁸¹ The survey by the South Kyōngsang police department mentioned above also had sickness and injury at work as the primary reason for returning to Korea.⁸² While one cannot contend that the temporary nature of their labor status was the sole reason for injuries and sickness, unskilled laborers executed more dangerous and arduous tasks than skilled laborers. Most importantly, their labor status ensured that their wages would not exceed those of their Japanese counterparts.

Koreans were not entirely unaware of this situation in Japan. When Koreans, who traveled to Osaka, were asked in 1932 what occupation or industry they would like to engage in upon arriving in Japan, 78.6 percent answered “labor” (Table 6). While most Koreans were initially peasants, the top desired occupations were outside of the agricultural sector. Their response to this survey was most likely dependent on the mode of finding employment and labor demands. As specified above, Koreans were already acquainted with the working conditions in Japan through anecdotes, and most Koreans found a job, typically in labor, by being introduced. It is probable

Table 6 Desired occupation or industry for Koreans to engage in Japan.

Desired occupation/industry	Number of responses	Ratio of responses (%)
Labor	9,303	78.6
Commerce	408	3.45
Craftsman	149	1.26
Second-class drug seller	49	0.41
Student	40	0.34
Smith	40	0.34
Car driver	25	0.21
Lodging business	23	0.19
Sewing	23	0.19
Shoemaking	18	0.15
Undecided	70	0.59
None	1,381	11.67
Total of all desired occupations	11,835	100.00

Source: Ōsakafu Gakumubu Shakaika (大阪府学務部社会課), *Zaihan Chōsenjin no Seikatsu Jōtai* (在阪朝鮮人の生活状態), Osaka, 1932, 46.

Note: These are top ten desired occupations aside from “undecided.”

that destitute Korean peasants desired the quickest solution to impoverishment, and their answers were thus pragmatic rather than idealistic.

The remarkable industrial development in Osaka functioned as a powerful pull factor for Korean farmers who were seeking an opportunity to enhance their living situation. What is more, it was the beginning of a cascading problem to control the entry of nascent Korean laborers who became stranded in Japan. In spite of the remarkable increase in the number of factories in Osaka, Korean migrants continued to work predominantly as unskilled day laborers who were regarded by capitalists as the source of cheap and disposable labor.⁸³

This interplay between the empire, employers, and Korean laborers was the main factor which led Japan to begin regulating the mobility of Koreans. Discourse on Korean migration within the state, however, was shaped by a range of opinions on both ends of the spectrum. The government institutions were not a monolithic existence. One side argued in support of Korean migration and the other, not. For instance, the Osaka City Social Affairs Survey Division claimed that unlike “immigrants with color in white people’s nations,” Koreans did not differ from the Japanese in that they were all 臣民 *shinmin* (imperial subjects). It stated that they were entitled to reside and work anywhere they desired and moreover, there was no difference between the migration of Koreans and country folks of low life and culture mobilizing to the metropole to seek employment. Limitations on migration, the department argued, had to be deliberated cautiously and it was essential to protect their benefits during the term of employment in Japan.⁸⁴ The Ministry of Home Affairs, on the other hand, was often assertive about regulating Korean migration given its concern with *manzen tokō* (rambling passage), radical political activities, and therefore threats to national security. As discussed below, talks between the Government-General of Korea and the Ministry of Home Affairs were not always in harmony, and the former often argued in favor of Koreans in regard to immigration regulations and articulated that there should soon come a day where they were free to once again cross the straits between Korea and Japan without having to comply with restrictions.⁸⁵

Immigration Regulations

The first event that galvanized the Japanese government to modify the Free Travel System was not due to an economic or social situation involving Korean laborers. The March First Independence Movement took place on 1 March 1919, and in its aftermath, the Government-General enacted the Travel Certificate System (旅行証明書制度 *ryokō shōmeisho seido*) in April of the same year to restrict the mobility of Koreans by issuing travel certificates. As opposed to most of the subsequent

systems promulgated in the 1920s and onwards to regulate the entry of Koreans according to economic and social circumstances, this system was implemented to cope with the security threat posed by the independence movement. It monitored the mobility of ordinary Koreans both within and outside the peninsula. Those willing to travel outside the peninsula were required to receive a travel certificate either from their local police station or police substation by stating the purpose of travel and the destination, and present it to the coastal police officers at the final point of departure in Korea. Koreans with an intention to travel within the peninsula, on the other hand, had the choice of either obtaining the same certificate or a permit from the Imperial Diplomatic Establishments Abroad. They were asked to submit it to the first arrival point in Korea. This system was abolished three years later, in December 1922, against the wish of the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Government-General of Korea was mindful of 内鮮融和 *naisen yūwa* (harmony between Japanese and Koreans) and contended that Koreans were to be permitted to freely travel once again just as Japanese travelers were.⁸⁶

While the Government-General nevertheless ordered to detain or fine anyone who did not abide by the regulation, the system exhibited some degree of flexibility.⁸⁷ When examining the incoming number of Koreans between 1918 and 1922, data indicate that in 1919 (20,968 incoming Koreans), the year in which the Travel Certificate System was implemented, the incoming number of Koreans exceeded that of the previous year by almost 7,000 (14,012 incoming Koreans in 1918). The same applied to 1920 when the incoming number exponentially swelled. From 1921 to the end of 1922, the greatest number of Koreans among the entire duration of the system flowed into Japan (38,118 in 1921 and 70,462 in 1922).⁸⁸ What is more, if a traveler did not possess a certificate or a travel ticket, he was able to state the purpose of travel and the travel destination to the police station or substation at the final departure point or the first arrival point in Korea. The Government-General further asserted that if a police officer determined that such a regulation was not necessary, he would be allowed to pardon the traveler from such requirements.

Once the Travel Certificate System was abandoned in December 1922, Koreans once again increasingly streamed into Japan. The influx of Koreans overlapped temporally with the ongoing postwar economic recession, which effected a decline in labor demands and rendered many, both Japanese and Korean workers, jobless in Japan in the 1920s. However, Koreans continued to enter the labor market and travel to Japan through chain migration, even without the help of recruiters. The multitude of circumstances yielded a surplus of Korean laborers. Furthermore, xenophobia began to form among some Japanese who lost their occupation due to the economic depression and attributed the lack of labor demands to Koreans dominating the job market. By this time, conflict between Japanese and Korean

laborers was a common sight.⁸⁹ This gravely troubled the authorities, but their anxiety also originated from Koreans who were not simply entering Japan for moneymaking. There was a growing number of students and laborers who supported socialism and anarchism, and not only were they entering Japan, but they were also forming political organizations and activities.⁹⁰ A dialectical resolution by the Home Ministry Police Affairs Bureau and the Government-General was to monitor the migration of Koreans, and they issued a statement to regional governors in May 1923 to regulate free migration and group recruitments.⁹¹ The severity of this claim is once again questionable as they permitted individual evaluations for a small group of Korean laborers or for those who were believed to be politically harmless.⁹²

Great Kantō Earthquake

Within a year after the abolition of the Travel Certificate System, a catastrophic event struck Japan: The Great Kantō Earthquake of September 1923. An estimated 100,000 to 140,000 people died as a result of the tremors or fires that engulfed the cities. In the state where media was terminated, rumors circulated. Koreans were believed to have committed misconduct where they set fires with bombs and threw poison in well water. Further rumors subsumed riots and assaults by Koreans. These rumors caused groups of vigilantes to form and led to a gruesome massacre, which putatively killed approximately 6,000 Koreans solely in Tokyo and Kanagawa within a few days immediately following the earthquake.⁹³ The news about the horror of the massacre during the confusion of the earthquake also reached the ears of people in Korea within a week after the disaster. First and foremost, the delivery of the news was an inconvenience for Japanese settlers who were consolidating the reforms of cultural rule, albeit slowly. What is more, they feared that agitated Koreans would initiate anti-Japanese activities and consequently organized flocks of vigilantes.⁹⁴

In the Japanese Archipelago on the other hand, the earthquake prompted the Ministry of Home Affairs to regulate Korean migration immediately. There was no mention of the massacre, however. It claimed that Koreans' immigration to Japan proper must be absolutely banned to 'protect' Korean laborers against the emotional turbulence they underwent from the impact of the earthquake, and that the ban was to be lifted once peace and order had been restored.⁹⁵ Interestingly, a greater number of Koreans entered Japan this year than 1922. Furthermore, the outgoing number of Koreans was remarkable. Whereas 46,326 Koreans repatriated to the peninsula in 1922, as many as 89,745 Koreans left for the peninsula, permanently or temporarily, in 1923.⁹⁶ This reflects the devastation

of the earthquake and the fear of the masses as a considerable number of Koreans left Japan in the year of the earthquake. Despite the notable number of returnees in 1923, data published by the Tokyo Regional Employment Exchange Office indicate that the remaining Koreans were eager to seek labor in the aftermath of the earthquake. Between September and December of 1923 alone, 1,800 Koreans sought employment in the areas damaged by the earthquake, and 1,169 of them were successful in securing employment.⁹⁷ Although data from the previous and following years are not available, only 283 Koreans sought labor in areas untouched by the earthquake.⁹⁸ The number of repatriates and laborers seeking employment not only demonstrates the fear of Koreans but also their desperation in finding a new job in post-earthquake Tokyo and the other affected regions.

As the chaos of the earthquake receded, the cities became lively with reconstruction projects from 1923 to 1927.⁹⁹ The restriction on Korean migration was accordingly abolished in May 1924. Needless to say, large groups of Korean laborers once again migrated to Japan whether they intended to aid the reconstruction projects or not.¹⁰⁰ The same month in which the restriction was lifted, 朝鮮日報 *Chōsen Nippō* reported that hotels in Pusan were overcrowded with hundreds to thousands of impoverished Koreans who wandered around with the intention of traveling to Japan even though they had no monetary means to make this possible or even to return to their hometown.¹⁰¹ Regardless of whether the statement is legitimate or not, it became publicly known that unemployment prevailed among Koreans willing to travel to Japan. As we shall see below, a means by which the imperial authorities used to control the mobility of Korean laborers they regarded to be *manzen* (rambling) travelers was to prevent the migration of those who could be a financial burden to Japan.

Prevention of *Manzen* Travelers

Regulation of Korean immigration, particularly directed towards laborers, began to get into full swing from 1925. A uniform immigration regulation took effect from October and onwards that applied throughout the peninsula for Korean emigrants in the laboring class. At this time, the need of capitalists, which was to collect cheap and disposable labor, was in conflict with the purport of the imperial authorities to only permit immigrants who would not become destitute. This exacerbated the existing issue of surplus Korean labor and the unemployment issue most vividly in the latter half of the 1920s.¹⁰² The Osaka City Social Affairs Survey Division asserted in 1924 that the labor market had begun to shift into a realm where laborers who were tolerant of low standards of living, lower wages, longer working hours, and more strenuous work would survive and be welcomed

by capitalists. The agony of Koreans, however, did not cease by traveling to Japan as many were nonetheless troubled by unemployment and poverty.¹⁰³ The Government-General stated that *manzen* (rambling) Korean laborers traveled to Japan through kinship connection after their conversations with repatriates or Korean residents in Japan about the bright financial possibilities Japan could offer. Because Japan presently held no capacity to accommodate such Koreans, it claimed that “prevention by compassionate persuasion” (懇諭阻止 *konyu soshi*) was to be introduced to protect Koreans from falling into financial difficulties.¹⁰⁴

Its method of protecting Koreans was to regulate their migration to Japan by introducing a set of categories for them to fulfill before departing the peninsula. In October 1925, it issued the Travel Prevention System (渡航阻止制度 *tokō soshi seido*) in South Kyōngsang Province towards individual immigration. The following criteria were finally imposed to prohibit the emigration of Korean laborers at the Port of Pusan:

1. Who responded to a recruitment that had no permit.
2. Who did not yet have secure employment in Japan.
3. Who did not comprehend the Japanese language.
4. Who did not possess ten yen remaining after deducting travel expenses.
5. Who were morphine addicts.¹⁰⁵

This system indeed thwarted travelers the authorities deemed to be *manzen* travelers. Provided that the system was introduced in the end of 1925, the total percentage of the travelers who were denied emigration in 1926 is higher than that of 1925, as it exhibited 19 percent of the total applicants (Table 7). However, it appears that this regulation, too, was not under strict enforcement in practice. In 1927, for instance, 37.1 percent of Korean laborers, who were permitted entry, did not have a secure job. 88.0 percent had less than ten yen in their pocket. Additionally, 38.8 percent of the permitted travelers did not possess any level of Japanese proficiency.¹⁰⁶

The Travel Prevention System exhibited other flaws. This regulation of so-called “prevention by compassionate persuasion” (*konyu soshi*) was only practiced in Pusan where travelers were refunded the fare of the ferry and made to return to their hometown. This was not sufficient to halt the incoming stream of Koreans into Pusan from their hometowns and they continued to gather there awaiting emigration.¹⁰⁷ The new regulation also only aggravated occurrences of illegal entry (密航 *mikkō*) which surfaced immediately following the installation of the Travel Certificate System in 1919. It began with a fabrication of travel certificates, and every time changes were made to the immigration system, novel methods of illegal entry emerged to bypass the official procedure of emigration and entry into Japan.¹⁰⁸ A wide range of attempts at illegal entries can be divided into two

Table 7 Koreans who were allowed emigration vis-à-vis Koreans who were denied emigration to Japan proper from 1925 to 1937.

Year	Denied emigration to Japan	Permitted emigration to Japan	Total percentage of travelers who were denied emigration to Japan (%)
1925	3,774	131,273	2.77
1926	21,407	91,092	19.03
1927	58,296	138,016	29.70
1928	47,297	166,286	22.14
1929	9,405	153,570	5.77
1930	2,566	95,491	2.62
1931	3,995	102,164	3.76
1932	2,980	113,615	2.56
1933	3,396	153,299	2.17
1934	4,317	159,176	2.64
1935	3,227	108,639	2.88
1936	1,610	113,714	1.40
1937	1,491	121,882	1.21

Source: Chōsen Sōtokufu (朝鮮総督府), *Saikin ni Okeru Chōsen Chian Jōkyō* (最近に於ける朝鮮治安状況) (Tokyo: Gennando Shoten, 1933), 190; Chōsen Sōtokufu (朝鮮総督府), *Saikin ni Okeru Chōsen Chian Jōkyō* (最近に於ける朝鮮治安状況) (Tokyo: Gennando Shoten, 1938), 318; Tonomura Masaru (外村大), *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai no Rekishigakuteki Kenkyū-Keisei, Kōzō, Henyō* (在日朝鮮人社会の歴史学的研究-形成・構造・変容) (Tokyo: Ryokuin Shobō, 2004), 46.

Note: The numbers were collected at the Port of Pusan until 1930. From 1931, they were based on censuses conducted at the port of Pusan, Yōsu (South Chōlla Province), Mokp'o (South Chōlla Province), and Ch'ŏngjin (North Hamgyōng Province).

categories where travelers did not undergo official entry and where they entered legally but forged required documents. Within each category, methods of entry can further be divided into cases where individuals: boarded unauthorized ships or ships that acquired permission to sail by unofficial approval; boarded authorized ships including small fishing vessels; and boarded authorized ships as a crew member but never returned to the ships for the inbound trip. In situations where travelers forged documents, they employed one of the following ways: fabrication of permit; use of permit issued to someone else; and disguise as someone else.¹⁰⁹ A study by the South Kyōngsang police department, which was undertaken over a period of one month in September 1927, showed that among 1,534 Koreans they interviewed, only 3.2 percent of them were *mikkō* migrants. In spite of the effort of the police department to collect such data, the categorization used in its analysis

was rather narrow. That is, it determined that 96.8 percent were legal migrants based on its knowledge that they either boarded the Shimonoseki–Pusan ferry or any authorized company ship.¹¹⁰ As specified above, although numbers are unaccountable, many entered Japan by authorized transport while they presented fabricated permits or permits that did not belong to them.

Koreans who were denied emigration in Pusan were often approached by both Japanese and Korean brokers in various areas of the city where they offered illegal aid in a number of ways to smuggle them into Japan. For every traveler, brokers collected anywhere between five and twelve yen depending on the type of assistance they provided.¹¹¹ When arrested, however, travelers were charged about fifty yen whereas brokers were charged eighty to two-hundred yen.¹¹² Considering how minimal the wages of Korean laborers were, this was a significant amount of money to invest. While this suggests their carelessness, it also exposes their desperation for survival and the hope they had for economic betterment in Japan.

In order to cease the ongoing issue of illegal entries and the congregation of Korean travelers in Pusan, the Government-General determined that travelers needed to be supervised in their hometowns before arriving at Pusan. In July 1928, this decision was followed by the modification of the Travel Prevention System (*tokō soshi seido*) to the Local Prevention System (地元諭旨制度 *jimoto yushi seido*). This new system monitored the mobility of Korean emigrants at the local level.¹¹³ While keeping most of the categories of the preceding regulation, a Letter of Introduction (紹介状 *shōkaijō*) was added. The Government-General required every traveler to obtain it from the local police department in his hometown or village, which was to be presented to the officials at the Pusan Coastal Office before departure.¹¹⁴ It proclaimed that only applicants meeting the following categories were permitted to enter Japan:

1. Those who had secure employment.
2. Those who possessed more than sixty yen besides ferry tickets and other necessary travel expenses.
3. Those who were not morphine addicts.
4. Those who were not traveling through brokers.¹¹⁵

While additional layers of restriction were added to eliminate as many *manzen* travelers as possible, the fourth requirement signified the gravity of the prevailing issues caused by brokers. As discussed previously, the authorities issued an edict in as early as 1913 to control the recruitment activities of brokers. The implementation of this requirement thus demonstrates the ongoing contingency of Korean labor. Moreover, although Koreans crossed to Japan most prevalently through chain migration by this time, it shows the continuous attempts by brokers to

recruit Koreans into the Japanese labor market as well as the thickening web that caught Koreans in the commodification of their labor force.

Table 7 displays a considerable decrease in the number of travelers who were denied emigration from 1929 and onwards. While this seems that the Local Prevention System was loose in regulating Korean migration, the numbers were collected at the port every year. The notable difference in the numbers from 1929 to 1937 indicates that the Local Prevention System indeed impeded the departure of Korean laborers from their hometowns before arriving at the port in Pusan.¹¹⁶ The Local Prevention System remained in effect until 1937, the year in which Korean laborers were once again in need to fill labor shortages, this time produced by the Second Sino–Japanese War.

Koreans who were prevented from emigrating to Japan included those who were approached by agents from the employment exchange offices. In an attempt to eradicate *manzen* travelers, the Home Affairs Bureau Social Affairs Division executed a plan to institute agencies for employment placements and labor adjustments. This was to recruit laborers within the peninsula starting in November 1926.¹¹⁷ Korean migration to Japan around this time came to be known as the 内地渡航問題 *naichi tokō mondai* (problem of immigration to Japan proper) surrounding the issues of unemployment, employment dismissals, social instability, crimes, disputes with the Japanese, rapid population increase, and illegal entries.¹¹⁸ The imperial authorities proclaimed that, from 1927, they would facilitate the mobility of Korean laborers within the peninsula by subsidizing travel fares and employing more officials in the Home Affairs Bureau Social Affairs Division to mediate employment placements more progressively in needed regions. Accordingly, the Government-General and the townships installed government-operated agencies in the major cities of the peninsula in 1928.¹¹⁹

The Ministry of Home Affairs also released an ordinance in May 1929 to limit the recruitments of Koreans only to cases where employers were unable to gather the desired number of employees in Japan.¹²⁰ Because Pusan was one prominent emigration point to Japan, two officials from the Home Affairs Bureau Social Affairs Division were dispatched to Pusan to introduce occupations within Korea to *manzen* travelers. Between September 1927 and September 1929, they consulted 15,600 Koreans in pursuit of employment and successfully aided 2,522 people in finding employment in factories in Korea.¹²¹ Between 1925 and 1937 when the prevention of rambling passage (*manzen tokō*) was in effect, 1927 exhibited the highest number of Korean travelers who were stopped from departing for Japan. This indicates that the immigration regulations promulgated from 1925 and onwards and the installation of the employment exchange agencies functioned as a double layer of emigration prevention to discourage Korean laborers from immigrating to Japan.

Additionally, certificates of temporary return (一時帰鮮証明 *ichiji kisen shōmei*) were implemented in August 1929 to avoid the inconvenience of processing new applications for Korean laborers who had temporarily repatriated to the peninsula. Those in possession of this certificate were able to bypass the requirement of obtaining a Letter of Introduction from the local police department.¹²² For those already residing in the peripheral regions of Japan, the government announced that it would give them training to enhance their labor performance.¹²³ This illustrates the government's effort to keep the maximum number of Koreans on the peninsula by impeding new laborers from being recruited and facilitating the mobility of Koreans already in employment on the two adjacent lands. Furthermore, the years in which these changes were introduced overlapped with the onset of the worldwide depression, which reflects the economic crisis Japan was tackling and its incapability to absorb impoverished Korean emigrants into the labor market where there was already a surplus of laborers.

Examining the immigration regulations that were thus far enforced on Koreans, it was only in 1919 that the restriction on immigration was placed for the general population. In other words, the regulations from 1923 specifically targeted Korean laborers to eradicate those the authorities considered to be *manzen* travelers. In comparison, the mobility of students, activists, and the like, whom some possessed thoughts against Japanese rule, was only regulated when there were serious threats, injuries, or in some cases deaths within the authority. Though the regulations towards Korean laborers exhibited some degree of flexibility, they were never to once again freely travel to Japan. The attempt of the Japanese empire to control and maneuver the mobility of laborers progressively manifested once it penetrated into Manchuria in 1931.

Encouragement of Migration to Manchuria

As it is evident from Table 1, the ceaseless reforms and reinforcement of the immigration systems did not diminish the rising tide of Koreans into Japan. Needless to say, this population included *manzen* travelers the imperial authorities attempted so diligently to get rid of. Following the Mukden Incident in 1931 and the establishment of Manchuria as a puppet state in the subsequent year, the Government-General and the Ministry of Home Affairs began to consider subsidizing Koreans' travels to Manchuria for its agricultural development. This was to solve the following two obstacles: (1) unemployment and the economic hardships of Korean farmers on the peninsula which incited their mobility to urban centers and (2) unemployment and the scarcity of employment opportunities among Japanese and Korean workers in Japan, which were allegedly

caused by the uncontrollable influx of Koreans from the southern peripheries of the peninsula to Japan.¹²⁴ Having seized Manchuria, another motive by the authorities was to propel the migration of both Korean and Japanese farmers to Manchuria to protect the territory by tending arable land, much of which was still uncultivated.¹²⁵

In October 1934, the government introduced the Korean Immigration Measure (朝鮮人移住対策 *chōsenjin ijū taisaku*) in spite of the dispute with the Kwantung Army in Manchuria.¹²⁶ As opposed to the Government-General, which was a proponent of this measure, the Kwantung Army responded that Korean migrants in Manchuria might languish the security by joining the anti-Japanese sentiment.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, this measure aimed to encourage as many Korean laborers as possible to remain in Korea and to distribute them to areas for agricultural development. Koreans in the overcrowded peripheries of the peninsula were also encouraged to emigrate to Manchuria.¹²⁸ In Pusan, for instance, Korean laborers who were planning emigration to Japan were stopped by the officials and asked to remain in Korea if no engagement had been made.¹²⁹ As it is evident in Figure 1, applications for emigration declined remarkably from 1935. The number of applications steadily declined until 1937, which marked the outbreak of the Second Sino–Japanese War. In this same year, changes were introduced to the immigration regulation that undoubtedly facilitated the migration of Korean laborers to Japan. In contrast to the preceding regulations that aimed to alleviate the *naichi tokō mondai*, Koreans witnessed a rise in labor demands and their needed presence to assist Japan’s war effort.

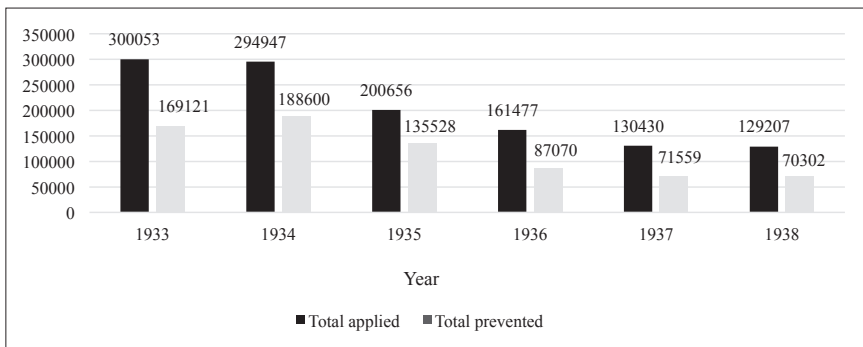


Figure 1 Emigration applications by Korean laborers vis-à-vis denied applications in all thirteen provinces of the Korean Peninsula.

Source: Chōsen Sōtokufu (朝鮮総督府), *Saikin ni Okeru Chōsen Chian Jōkyō* (最近に於ける朝鮮治安状況) (Tokyo: Gennando Shoten, 1938), 320.

During Japan's sovereignty over Korea, Korean migration continued to be employed as a mechanism to build the empire. Korean laborers, the majority of whom were originally peasants, became the primary target of commodification in this process. On the one hand, the imperial authorities emphasized the importance of *naisen yūwa* and insisted that Koreans should be allowed to freely travel within the Japanese imperial territories. On the other hand, the Free Travel System was revoked from as early as 1919 and although it was reintroduced in 1922, the immigration of laborers soon came to be limited to those who fulfilled a number of requirements to ensure there would not be Koreans the authorities regarded as *manzen* travelers. In the midst of capital accumulation, the authorities were never successful in fully eradicating these *manzen* travelers who would be a burden to the empire. However, the immigration regulations and measure were undeniably executed to seize the control of Korean mobility according to the economic, social, and political needs of the empire.

Conclusion

The key players in the mobility of Korean laborers across the sea were the following: different institutions of the imperial government, capitalists, and Korean laborers themselves. The annexation of Korea was followed by the promulgation of the Free Travel System that permitted Koreans to freely migrate within the Japanese imperial territories. Koreans did not initially immigrate to Japan of their own volition, but as the labor demands of the First World War surfaced and the need of capitalists to collect disposable labor spiked upwards, Korean labor force became increasingly commodified and Koreans were pulled ever more rigidly towards Japan. When Korean labor was most desired in the later years of the First World War, the land survey had also been completed on the peninsula. It was followed by the program to increase rice exports to Japan and the Great Depression in the 1920s and the 1930s. These factors pushed more Korean farmers away from their hometowns and the peninsula. Many of them first relocated to urban centers, but these areas were already burdened with a surplus of laborers. This condition on the peninsula functioned as another push factor for Koreans to depart for Japan. As the Korean population expanded in Japan and even surpassed the size of the Chinese population, both of which primarily consisted of workers, a Korean resident community began to form in Japan. They not only invited their family, relatives, and friends to Japan, but they also increasingly resided in Japan permanently in family units. Moreover, they brought home with them tales that galvanized the emigration of others to Japan and instilled prosperous images of Japan that did not necessarily represent the

economic state of the country correctly. What further contributed to the formation of these images were recruiters and brokers who approached Korean laborers to recruit them into Japanese industries. Interestingly, contrary to the statements of Korean laborers who lamented that the immigration to Japan was an unavoidable result brought by Japanese colonial oppression, considerably more impoverished Koreans immigrated to Manchuria than to Japan until 1942. In addition to the factors mentioned above, this was also attributed to cultural affinity and cheaper cost of travel which were enabled by geographic advantage. Indeed, the majority of Koreans who traveled to Japan originated from the southern provinces of Korea, albeit these provinces being most susceptible to the commercialization of land.

As opposed to Koreans who progressively used kinship connection as a channel of migration after the end of the First World War, those who crossed to Japan in the earlier stage of annexation were employed by Japanese entrepreneurs and their recruiters from 1911. However, labor contracts soon gained complaints from Korean laborers who claimed that they experienced working conditions that were more strenuous than what were stated in the contracts. Recruiters also transported Koreans in a manner that conflicted with the intent of the imperial authorities. As the war boom diminished and Japan faced a postwar recession, Koreans were more vigorously absorbed into day and seasonal labor. As Korean laborers were commodified as a disposable resource, a by-product of this process were flocks of Koreans who became stranded in Japan. In order to resolve this, the imperial authorities soon began to regulate the migration of Koreans with immigration systems. The first time the authorities restricted the mobility of Koreans was not due to conflict with capitalists or Korean laborers. Around the end of the First World War when the rising tide of Koreans subsided temporarily, the empire was shaken by the March First Independence Movement. This incited the empire to abolish Koreans' eligibility to freely travel to Japan. This conveniently coincided with the postwar economic recession, which meant that Japan no longer required Korean laborers to the same degree as the later stage of the First World War. In spite of the fewer attempts by recruiters to encourage Koreans for labor imports, Koreans nonetheless continued to enter Japan through chain migration. They were also steadily pulled towards Osaka where it developed as a global city that created job opportunities for Koreans primarily in factories. As Japan and Korea entered the worldwide depression in the late 1920s, Koreans were crossing the straits from Korea to Japan in remarkable numbers and increasingly becoming the target of disposable and cheap labor.

In order to cease the entry of *manzen* travelers or in other words Korean laborers who had a potential to become stranded in Japan, the imperial authorities introduced a system in 1925 to prohibit the emigration of such travelers. However, a considerable number of Koreans who were regarded as *manzen*

travelers continued to find a way into Japan legally or illegally. This, coupled with the capitalists' tendency to employ Koreans for arduous and unstable jobs, rendered many Koreans destitute in Japan without employment and with no financial capability to return to the peninsula. The 1934 immigration measure to discourage Koreans from emigrating to Japan and instead to impel their immigration to Manchuria illustrates the concern of the empire with Koreans' unemployment, accompanied by other issues including social instability and illegal entries. While it also demonstrates the empire's attempt to keep unwanted Koreans at bay, it is important not to interpret the government institutions as a monolithic existence. As opposed to the Ministry of Home Affairs who often provided a lukewarm response to the idea of free migration of Koreans, the Government-General of Korea emphasized the importance of *naisen yūwa* and attempted to solve the problem of Korean migration to Japan (*naichi tokō mondai*).

The regulations issued by the authorities towards Korean migration imply that on the one hand, the Japanese empire was willing to permit the mobility of Koreans freely within the Japanese imperial territories. On the other hand, the political, social, and economic situations and intentions of the empire led it to defeat its initial claim and to place surveillance on the mobility of Koreans. What reinforced it was capitalist penetration and the commodification of Korean labor force in the process of state-building. Another contributor was Koreans themselves who were also caught in a dichotomy. On the one hand, immigration to Japan was not an immediate decision they made as a benefit presented by the annexation. On the other hand, the visibly worsening economic situation on the peninsula pushed Koreans, the majority of whom were in the agricultural sector, outside their hometowns, and Japan appealed to destitute Koreans as an ideal destination in vicinity that exhibited potentials of economic success.

Notes

1. Michael Weiner. *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan* (London: Routledge, 1994), 53.
2. Erin Chung. *Immigration and Citizenship in Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5.
3. Weiner. *Race and Migration*, 53; Gracia Liu-Farrer. *Labour Migration from China to Japan: International students, transnational migrants* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 19.
4. Weiner. *Race and Migration*, 53; Edward W. Wagner. *The Korean Minority in Japan: 1904–1950* (New York, NY: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1951), 9.
5. This law was named 外国人労働者入国制限 *gaikokujin rōdōsha nyūkoku seigen*. See, Kōsei Rōdōshō (厚生労働省), “Zainichi Chōsenjin ni Taisuru Dōka Seisaku no Kyōwa Jijō (在日朝鮮人に対する同化政策の共和事情),” in *Zainichi Chōsenjinshi Shiryōshū 2* (在日朝鮮人史資料集2), ed. Zainichi Chōsenjin Undōshi Kenkyūkai (在日朝鮮人運動史研究会) (Tokyo: Rokuin Shobō, 2011), 469.

6. Ōsakashi Shakaibu Chōsaka Hensan (大阪市社会部調査課編纂). *Chōsenjin Rōdōsha Mondai* (朝鮮人労働者問題), Osaka, 1924, 4.
7. Alisdair Rogers, Noel Castree and Rob Kitchin. “Chain Migration,” in *Oxford Dictionary of Human Geography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199599868.001.0001/acref-9780199599868-e-196>.
8. Hirose Takamichi (広瀬孝道). “Senjin Mondai (鮮人問題),” in *Zainichi Chōsenjinshi Shiryōshū 1* (在日朝鮮人史資料集1), ed. Zainichi Chōsenjin Undōshi Kenkyūkai (在日朝鮮人運動史研究会) (Tokyo: Rokuin Shobō, 2011), 58.
9. Lee Hiroshi (金広志) and Kim Kyosun (李教舜). “Zainichi chōsenjin no shokugyō to shōkōgyō no jittai I (在日朝鮮人の職業と商工業の実態 [I]),” *Chōsen Geppō* (朝鮮月報) 2, no. 3 (March 1957): 3; Paek Chong-wŏn (白宗元). “E. W. Wagner, Zainichi Chōsenjin no Rekishi 1904–1950 (E. W. Wagner, 在日朝鮮人の歴史 1904–1950),” *Chōsen Geppō* (朝鮮月報), no. 1 (December 1956): 12.
10. Kang Chae-ŏn (姜在彦). “Tokō no Enkaku (渡航の沿革),” *Chōsen Geppō* (朝鮮月報), no. 1 (March 1967): 64.
11. Pyong Gap Min. “A Comparison of the Korean Minorities in China and Japan,” *Sage Publications*, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 5.
12. Jun Uchida. *Brokers of Empire: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea, 1876–1945* (Cambridge, MASS and London: Harvard University Press, 2011), 15.
13. This was named the 山陽汽船 Sanyō Kisen.
14. Fukuoka Chihō Shokugyō Shōkai Jimukyoku (福岡地方職業紹介事務局). *Rōdō Chōsa 8. Kannai Zaijū Chōsenjin Rōdō Jijō* (労働調査 八.管内在日朝鮮人労働事情), Fukuoka, 1929, 9.
15. Weiner. *Race and Migration*, 54; Fukui Yuzuru (福井譲). “‘Fusei Tokō’ to Tokō Kanri Seisaku-1920 nendai no Pusan wo Chūshin ni (不正渡航と渡航管理政策-1920年代の釜山を中心に),” *Zainichi Chōsenjinshi Kenkyū* (在日朝鮮人史研究), no. 46 (October 2016): 9.
16. Lee and Kim. “Zainichi chōsenjin,” 3.
17. Edwin H. Gragert. *Landownership under Colonial Rule: Korea’s Japanese Experience, 1900–1935* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 71; Gi-Wook Shin. *Peasant Protest & Social Change in Colonial Korea* (Seattle, WA and London: University of Washington Press, 1996), 42.
18. Kim Yong-gwon (金容權). *Chōsen Kankoku Kingendaishi Jiten 1860–2012 3rd edn* (朝鮮韓国近現代史事典) (Tokyo: Nihon Hyōronsha, 2012), 187.
19. Lee Gwangchae (李光宰). “Keizaishiteki ni Mita Chōsenjin no Tokō ni tsuite- Naze Chōsenjin wa Rainichi Shitanoka? (経済史的にみた朝鮮人の渡航について-なぜ朝鮮人は来日したのか?-),” *Zainichi Chōsenjinshi Kenkyū & Zainichi Chōsenjin Undōshi Kenkyūkai* (在日朝鮮人史研究&在日朝鮮人運動史研究会), no. 44 (October 2014): 52.
20. Kang. “Tokō no Enkaku,” 7; Weiner, *Race and Migration*, 41; Chōsen Sōtokufu (朝鮮総督府). *Saikin ni Okeru Chōsen Chian Jōkyō* (最近に於ける朝鮮治安状況) (Tokyo: Gennando Shoten, 1938), 95.
21. Shin. *Peasant Protest*, 22.
22. *Ibid.*, 35, 37.
23. *Ibid.*, 36.
24. *Ibid.*, 51, 60.
25. Gragert. *Landownership under Colonial Rule*, 109, 159–160.
26. Shin. *Peasant Protest*, 56–57.
27. Lee Sōk-hyōn (李錫玄). “Naniga nanndemo Jibun no Kuni ga Ichiban Utsukushiyo (何かなんでも自分の国が一番美しいよ),” in *Zainichi Issei no Kioku* (在日一世の記憶), ed. by Oguma Eiji (小熊英二) and Kang Sang-chung (姜尚中) (Tokyo: Shueisha shinsho, 2008), 49.
28. Lee. “Kiezaishiteki ni mita,” 53.
29. Kang. “Tokō no Enkaku,” 11.

30. Ken C. Kawashima. *The Proletarian Gamble: Korean Workers in Interwar Japan* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2009), 28.
31. *Ibid.*, 43–44.
32. *Ibid.*, 34, 29.
33. Tonomura Masaru (外村大). *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai no Rekishigakuteki Kenkyū-Keisei, Kōzō, Henyō* (在日朝鮮人社会の歴史学的研究-形成・構造・変容) (Tokyo: Ryokuin Shobō, 2004), 42.
34. *Ibid.*, 29.
35. *Ibid.*, 26, 28.
36. Kawashima. *Proletarian Gamble*, 29.
37. *Ibid.*, 35.
38. Keishōnandō Keisatsubu (慶尚南道警察部). “Naichi Dekasegi Senjin Rōdōsha Jōtai Chōsa (内地出稼朝鮮人労働者状態調査),” in *Zainichi Chōsenjin Kankei Shiryō Shūsei Vol. 1* (在日朝鮮人関係資料集成 1), ed. Pak Kyōng-sik (朴慶植) (Tokyo: Sannichi Shobō, 1975), 569.
39. Tonomura. *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai*, 91; George De Vos and Changsoo Lee. “The Colonial Experience, 1910–1945,” in *Koreans in Japan: Ethnic Conflict and Accommodation*, ed. Changsoo Lee and George De Vos (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981), 38.
40. Tonomura. *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai*, 90.
41. Keishōnandō Keisatsubu. “Naichi Dekasegi Senjin Rōdōsha Jōtai Chōsa,” 570.
42. Tonomura. *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai*, 90.
43. Ōsakafu Gakumubu Shakaika (大阪府学務部社会課). *Zaihan Chōsenjin no Seikatsu Jōtai* (在阪朝鮮人の生活状態), Osaka, 1932, 10, 85.
44. Tonomura. *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai*. 93–94; Richard Mitchell, *The Korean Minority in Japan* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1967), 76.
45. Kōsei Rōdōshō. “Zainichi Chōsenjin ni Taisuru,” 472.
46. Mitchell. *The Korean Minority in Japan*, 76; Saskin Sassen. *The Mobility of Labor and Capital: A Study in International Investment and Labor Flow* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 50–51.
47. Kōsei Rōdōshō. “Zainichi Chōsenjin ni Taisuru,” 471.
48. Gragert. *Landownership under Colonial Rule*, 138.
49. *Ibid.*, 140–141, 160.
50. Weiner. *Race and Migration*, 44; Lee. “Keizaishiteki ni mita,” 55.
51. Fukui. “Fusei Tokō,” 9.
52. Pak Kyōng-sik. *Zainichi Chōsenjin Kankei Shiryō Shūsei, Vol. 1* (在日朝鮮人関係資料集成 1) (Tokyo: Sannichi Shobō, 1975), 31.
53. Fukuoka Chihō Shokugyō Shōkai Jimukyoku. *Rōdō Chōsa*, 15–16.
54. Keishōnandō Keisatsubu. “Naichi Dekasegi Senjin Rōdōsha Jōtai Chōsa,” 576.
55. Ōsakafu Gakumubu Shakaika. *Zaihan Chōsenjin no Seikatsu Jōtai*, 54.
56. Kim Ch’an-chōng (金贊汀). *Ihōjin wa Kimigayomaru ni Notte* (異邦人は君々代丸に乗って) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2013), 54; Kawashima. *The Proletarian Gamble*, 77.
57. Kim. *Ihōjin wa Kimigayomaru ni Notte*, 173.
58. Ōsakashi Shakaibu Chōsaka Hensan. *Chōsenjin Rōdōsha Mondai*, 67.
59. Hyun Ok Park. *Two Dreams in One Bed: Empire, Social Life, and the Origins of the North Korean Revolution in Manchuria*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2005, 17.
60. *Ibid.*, 43, 46.
61. Tokyō Shakaika (東京社会課). “Zaikyō Chōsenjin Rōdōsha no Gengyō (在京朝鮮人労働者の現状),” in *Zainichi Chōsenjin Kankei Shiryō Shūsei Vol. 2* (在日朝鮮人関係資料集成2) ed. Pak Kyōng-sik (朴慶植) (Tokyo: Sannichi Shobō, 1975), 1000–1003.
62. Kang. “Tokō no Enkaku,” 64.
63. Iwasa Kazuyuki (岩佐和幸). “Sekai toshi Ōsaka no rekishiteki keisei- senkanki ni okeru chōsenjin imin no ryūnyū katei wo chūshin ni (世界都市大阪の歴史的形成-戦間期にお

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64. Kim. *Ihōjin wa Kimigayomaru*, 94.
 65. Iwasa. “Sekai toshi Ōsaka no,” 92.
 66. Fukuoka Chihō Shokugyō Shōkai Jimukyoku. *Rōdō Chōsa*, 16–20.
 67. Iwasa. “Sekai toshi Ōsaka no,” 95.
 68. *Ibid.*, 96, 94.
 69. *Ibid.*, 102.
 70. Kawashima. *Proletarian Gamble*, 54–55.
 71. *Ibid.*, 61, 68.
 72. *Ibid.*, 73.
 73. *Ibid.*, 56–57.
 74. *Ibid.*, 59.
 75. Iwasa. “Sekai toshi Ōsaka no,” 112.
 76. *Ibid.*, 113–114.
 77. Kawashima. *Proletarian Gamble*, 74.
 78. Ōsakashi Shakaibu Chōsaka Hensan. *Chōsenjin Rōdōsha Mondai*, 21, 80.
 79. Ōsaka Shokugyō Hodōkai. “Ōsakafu Zaijū Chōsenjin Seikatsu Chōsa (大坂府在住朝鮮人生活調査),” in *Zainichi Chōsenjinshi Shiryōshū 1* (在日朝鮮人史資料集1), ed. Zainichi Chōsenjin Undōshi Kenkyūkai (在日朝鮮人運動史研究会) (Tokyo: Rokuin Shobō, 2011), 36.
 80. *Ibid.*, 32, 35.
 81. Kawashima. *Proletarian Gamble*, 71–72.
 82. Keishōnandō Keisatsubu. “Naichi Dekasegi Senjin Rōdōsha Jōtai Chōsa,” 576.
 83. Weiner. *Race and Migration*, 114.
 84. Ōsakashi Shakaibu Chōsaka Hensan. *Chōsenjin Rōdōsha Mondai*, 5.
 85. Chōng Chinsōng (정진성) and Kichi Hitonari (吉仁成). “Ilbonū iminjōngch’aegwa chosōninū ilbon imin: 1910–1939 (일본의 이민정책과 조선인의 일본 이민: 1910–1939),” *Kyōngjesahak* no. 25 (1998): 201–202.
 86. Kōsei Rōdōshō. “Zainichi Chōsenjin ni Taisuru,” 469–470.
 87. Pak. *Zainichi Chōsenjin*, 36.
 88. Chōsen Sōtokufu. *Saikin ni Okeru* (1933), 189–190.
 89. Pak. *Zainichi Chōsenjin*, 36; Tonomura. *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai*, 28–29.
 90. Kawashima. *The Proletarian Gamble*, 40.
 91. Kōsei Rōdōshō. “Zainichi Chōsenjin ni Taisuru,” 470; the statement was called 朝鮮人労働者募集に関する件 (*Chōsenjin Rōdōsha Boshū ni Kansuru Ken*).
 92. Pak. *Zainichi Chōsenjin* 39.
 93. Sonia Ryang. “The Great Kanto Earthquake and the Massacre of Koreans in 1923: Notes on Japan’s Modern National Sovereignty,” *Anthropological Quarterly*, no. 4 (Autumn, 2004): 732–733.
 94. Uchida. *Brokers of Empire*, 164–165.
 95. Kōsei Rōdōshō. “Zainichi chōsenjin ni taisuru,” 470; Fukuoka Chihō Shokugyō Shōkai Jimukyoku. *Rōdō Chōsa*, 23.
 96. Chōsen Sōtokufu. *Saikin ni Okeru* (1933), 189–190.
 97. The affected areas by the Great Kantō Earthquake in this study were: Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba, Saitama, Gunma, Tochigi, and Ibaraki.
 98. Tōkyō Chihō Shokugyō Shōkai Jimukyoku (東京地方職業紹介事務局). “Shokugyō Shōkaijo to Chōsenjin Rōdōsha (職業紹介所と朝鮮人労働者),” in *Zainichi Chōsenjinshi Shiryōshū 1* (在日朝鮮人史資料集1), ed. Zainichi Chōsenjin Undōshi Kenkyūkai (在日朝鮮人運動史研究会) (Tokyo: Rokuin Shobō, 2011), 40; the unaffected areas by the Great Kantō Earthquake in this study were: Hokkaido, Shizuoka, Yamanashi, Nagano, Miyagi, Yamagata, and Iwate.
 99. Kawashima. *The Proletarian Gamble*, 70.

100. Kōsei Rōdōshō. “Zainichi Chōsenjin ni Taisuru,” 470.
101. Tonomura. *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai*, 30.
102. *Ibid.*, 35.
103. Ōsakashi Shakaibu Chōsaka Hensan. *Chōsenjin Rōdōsha Mondai*, 4–5.
104. Chōsen Sōtokufu. *Saikin ni Okeru* (1933), 178.
105. *Ibid.*, 183–184.
106. Tonomura. *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai*, 33; Yamaguchi-ken Keisatsubu Tokubetsu Kōtōka (山口県警察部特別高等課), “Raijū Chōsenjin Tokubetsu Chōsa Jijō (来住朝鮮人特別調査事情),” in *Zainichi Chōsenjin Kankei Shiryō Shūsei Vol. 1* (在日朝鮮人関係資料集成1) ed. Pak Kyōng-sik (朴慶植) (Tokyo: Sannichi Shobō, 1975), 558–562.
107. Chōsen Sōtokufu. *Saikin ni Okeru* (1933), 179.
108. Fukui. “Fusei Tokō,” 6; Chōsen Sōtokufu. *Saikin ni Okeru* (1933), 181.
109. *Ibid.*, 8.
110. Keishōnandō Keisatsubu. “Naichi Dekasegi Senjin Rōdōsha,” 568.
111. Fukui. “Fusei Tokō,” 18–19; Tonomura Masaru (外村大). “Nihon Teikoku no Tokō Kanri to Chōsenjin no Mikkō (日本帝国の渡航管理と朝鮮人の密航),” in *Nihon Teikoku wo Meguru Jinkō Idō no Kokusai Shakaigaku* (日本帝国をめぐる人口移動の国際社会学), ed. Araragi Shinzo (蘭信三) (Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan, 2008), 41.
112. Fukui. “Fusei Tokō,” 29; Tonomura. “Nihon Teikoku no Tokō Kanri,” 42.
113. Fukui Yuzuru. “Tokō soshi seido kara Jimoto yushi seido e-1920 nendai kōhan no Tokō kanri seisaku (渡航阻止制度から地元諭旨制度へ-1920年代後半の渡航管理政策),” *Zainichi Chōsen-jinshi Kenkyū* (在日朝鮮人史研究), no. 45 (October 2015): 27, 39.
114. Chōsen Sōtokufu. *Saikin ni Okeru* (1933), 179.
115. Kōsei Rōdōshō. “Zainichi Chōsenjin ni Taisuru,” 470.
116. Tonomura. *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai*, 51.
117. Fukui. “Tokō soshi seido,” 56.
118. Kōsei Rōdōshō. “Zainichi Chōsenjin ni Taisuru,” 471.
119. Chōsen Sōtokufu. *Saikin ni Okeru* (1933), 186; Employment exchange agencies by the Government-General of Korea were established in Sōul, Inch’ōn, Pusan, Taegu, P’yōngyang, Sinūiju, and Ch’ōngjin. Those by the townships were set up in Sōnch’ōn and Hamhūng.
120. Tonomura. *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai*, 32.
121. Chōsen Sōtokufu. *Saikin ni Okeru* (1933), 186–187.
122. *Ibid.*, 179; Tonomura. *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai*, 32.
123. Kōsei Rōdōshō. “Zainichi Chōsenjin ni Taisuru,” 471.
124. *Ibid.*; Tonomura. *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai*, 35, 36.
125. Park. *Two Dreams in One Bed*, 140–141.
126. Tonomura. *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai*, 36.
127. Park. *Two Dreams in One Bed*, 143.
128. Tonomura. *Zainichi Chōsenjin Shakai*, 36.
129. Mitchell. *The Korean Minority in Japan*, 79.

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The Japanese Military ‘Comfort Women’ Issue and the 1965 System: *Comfort Women of the Empire* and Two-fold Historical Revisionism¹

CHONG YOUNG-HWAN Associate Professor, Meiji Gakuin University

Abstract

Since its publication in 2013, Park Yuha’s book *Comfort Women of the Empire* (*Cheguk ūi wianbu*) has become a major point of contention for those concerned with the “comfort women” issue. However, while this book has been frequently cited amidst the recent maelstrom of Japan–Korea relations, the actual content of the book has received insufficient scrutiny. The aim of this article is to concretely examine the content and problematic aspects of Park’s book, building on research that has been carried out since the 1990s into the ‘comfort women’ issue and the question of post-war reparations.

Based on the assumption that the Japanese government does not have any legal responsibilities, Park’s book claims that: 1) the “comfort women” victims do not have any right to claim compensation for damages from the Japanese government; 2) even if they did have such a right, the government of the Republic of Korea gave up all rights of claim at the Japan–Korea negotiations that concluded with the Treaty of 1965; and 3) the “economic cooperation” funds that the ROK received as a result of this Treaty were in fact a form of post-war reparations related to the Sino–Japanese War. However, Park has been unable to provide satisfactory grounds for these claims, due to the fact that her book *Comfort Women of the Empire* does not have an accurate understanding of the preceding research it uses. I argue that Park’s work contains serious methodological flaws, including a failure

to define core concepts, such as reparations; the existence of mutually contradictory passages; the arbitrary selection of evidence to support her arguments; and the misuse of previous research. As a result, the book has critical flaws from the standpoint of its fundamental stated aim of promoting historical reconciliation.

Keywords: Comfort women; Japanese colonialism; Korea–Japan relations; historical revisionism; postcolonial justice

Introduction

On August 30th, 2011, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Korea issued a significant ruling on the right of “comfort women” victims to claim damages. There had been a dispute between the governments of Korea and Japan in July 2006 over whether 64 victims of the Imperial Japanese Army’s “comfort women” system had the right to bring a claim for damages against the Japanese government. An appeal to the Constitutional Court was then lodged, claiming that the failure of the Korean government to take action to resolve the interpretive dispute had infringed the basic rights of the victims and was therefore unconstitutional. The court subsequently ruled in favour of the victims’ claims and concluded that the lack of effort by the ROK minister of foreign affairs and trade to resolve the dispute over interpretation with the Japanese government was unconstitutional.² This decision led the ROK government to initiate negotiations with the Japanese government in order to find a diplomatic solution to the “comfort women” issue and was well received by the Korean public, winning first place in a public survey of constitutional court judgements held to mark the 30th anniversary of the court’s establishment.³

However, in the Korean edition of her book *Comfort Women of the Empire*, published in 2013, Professor Park Yuha made the following stringent criticism of this legal decision.

Since the majority of comfort women were certainly forced into severe circumstances where their human rights were suppressed, it is only right for them to receive an apology and compensation from people of later generations. However, the decision made by the Constitutional Court of Korea does not seem to have recognized a number of facts: firstly, it was the Korean government, not the Japanese government that deprived individual victims of their chance to receive compensation, and secondly, the Japanese government indeed issued compensation in the 1990s, which a significant number of comfort women accepted.⁴

Professor Park, a scholar of modern Japanese literature, makes a particularly noteworthy claim in her book: that it was the Korean government that renounced

the individual right of claim of the so-called “comfort women” at the Japan–Republic of Korea normalisation talks in the 1960s.

The main body of this paper will be dedicated to an examination of the validity of the claims made by Park Yuha. However, before that it is necessary to examine the actual claims made by Park in her book and the various responses to the book in Japan and Korea. Park’s book is certainly one of the most talked about books to have been published in recent times on the subject of the ‘comfort women’ and it would be no exaggeration to say that the response to the book from within Japanese intellectual circles was something of a phenomenon.

Park Yuha is a professor in International Studies at Sejong University in South Korea. She was born in Seoul in 1957 and after graduating with a degree in literature from Keio University in Tokyo she completed her doctoral degree, also in literary studies, at Waseda University. She has published a number of award-winning books in Japanese, including *Beyond Anti-Japanese Nationalism* (反日ナショナリズムを超えて *Han'nichi nashonarizumu o koete*) which received the Japan–Korea Cultural Exchange Fund Prize (*Irhan munhwa kyoryu kigūm sang*) and *For Reconciliation: textbooks, comfort women, Yasukuni, Tokto* (和解のために—教科書・慰安婦・靖国・独島 *Wakai no tame ni—kyōkasho, ianfu, Yasukuni, Dokuto*), which won the Osaragi Jiro Prize for Commentary.⁵

After publishing a series of works on historical issues between Japan and Korea, Park then began a full-scale examination of the ‘comfort women’ issue in her *Comfort Women of the Empire*. The book was published first in South Korea in 2013 and then in a Japanese edition the following year. Although the overall structure and fundamental purpose of the Japanese edition remained unchanged, it did contain some substantial revisions and modifications from the original Korean text and in fact it would be correct to say that it was actually a new edition of the book.

Comfort Women of the Empire interprets the conflict over the historical views between Japan and Korea as a divide between discourses surrounding “comfort women”: that is, between those who view them as “sex-slaves” and those view them as “prostitutes.” The author attempts to reconcile this conflict by proposing her own perspective, considering them as “comfort women of the empire.” According *Comfort Women of the Empire*, Korean “comfort women” were distinguished from “women from the areas under occupation or in the combat zones, such as China and Indonesia” and they were engaged in “supporting the war effort of the Japanese military.”⁶ They were “patriotic” supporters who helped Japan’s war effort and developed a “sense of comradeship.” Park continues that “love and peace could even exist,” albeit partially, within the military brothels and this was because “Korean comfort women and Japanese army basically shared common goals.” Hence the title of the book, *Comfort Women of the Empire*, can be

interpreted as meaning “Comfort women of the Japanese Empire” or “Comfort women as subjects of the empire.” In this article I will refer to Park’s claims about Japan’s “comfort women” as her “comfort women of empire theory.”

On June 16, 2014, nine former “comfort women” under the Imperial Japanese Army, who were now based at a nursing home in South Korea called the House of Sharing, brought a case against Park due to the claims made in the book.⁷ They filed a criminal suit for defamation of character as well as a civil suit requesting compensation for damages they suffered, as well as a publication ban and a restraining order. The group of victims took legal action against a key claim of the “comfort women of the empire theory” which described comfort women as “comrades” to Japanese soldiers and “supporters” of the war effort.

On February 17, 2015, Seoul Eastern District Court acceded to the demands of the plaintiffs and issued a provisional injunction on publication, unless revisions were made on 34 sections of concern. This led to the publication of the second edition of the book in South Korea in June 2015, with 34 sections removed.⁸ Also, on November 18, 2015, the Seoul Eastern District Public Prosecutors’ Office, Criminal Division, First Section issued an indictment without detention to Park Yu-ha for defamation of character. On January 13, 2016, Seoul Eastern District Court ordered Park to pay compensation of 10 million won to each plaintiff.⁹

The lawsuit attracted public attention to Park’s publication both in Japan and Korea, which also triggered a heated controversy over the book’s content. On November 26, 2015 54 intellectuals, including Nobel Prize-winning Japanese novelist Oe Kenzaburo, published a statement protesting the charges against Park Yuha.¹⁰ Many Japanese intellectuals also praised Park’s book. This was particularly true of self-described liberals, who were enthusiastic in their opinions of *Comfort Women of the Empire*. The writer Takahashi Kenichiro (高橋源一郎), for example, acclaimed the book saying, “From now on, [Park’s book] will be the unshakeable axis in all depictions of the ‘comfort women’, whether they agree with her or not.”¹¹ Meanwhile, the political scientist Sukita Atsushi (杉田敦) praised the book in the *Asahi Shimbun* saying, “[her] effort to deal with a complex issue with the utmost impartiality is remarkable.”¹² We can tell that Sukita’s assessment of the book was conscious of the judgement made by the South Korean court from his comparison of Park Yuha with Hannah Arendt, noting that Arendt was “isolated from Jewish society” because “she raised the issue of a section of Jews who cooperated with the Nazis.”¹³

Park’s book also won a number of celebrated academic prizes in Japan. In October 2015 the book was awarded the 27th Asia-Pacific Award Special Prize, which is run by the *Mainichi Shimbun*’s Asia Research Committee. According to a member of the selection committee and scholar of international politics, Tanaka

Akihiko (田中明彦), “[In terms of its] comprehensive, empirical and rational [approach]... there is no other book that has examined this issue in such a rational way from every possible angle.”¹⁴ In December of 2015 the book also won a prize in the cultural contribution section of the Ishibashi Tanzan Memorial Journalism Award, awarded by Waseda University. Kamada Satoshi (鎌田慧), who was a member of the selection committee for the prize, commented that the book was a “historic work” which “had gone deeply into the issue of what happened to human psychology within the framework of ‘imperialism’ rather than focusing on relations between ‘comfort women’ and the army.” He also noted that the selection committee had decided unanimously to award the prize to Park.¹⁵ As I will explain later, when you consider the fact that both the conservative press and Japanese intellectuals have heaped praise on the book, we can see this as an indication that the whole of Japan’s intellectual circles have given the book a positive reception.

In South Korea responses were divided between those who were for and those against Park’s book. On the one hand, in December 2015 191 Korean scholars signed a statement opposing the indictment against Park Yuha.¹⁶ Meanwhile, a group of scholars and activists connected with the “comfort women” issue released a statement on December 9, 2015 under the title “Our position on the *Comfort Women of the Empire* situation.”¹⁷ In the statement they argued that while it was necessary in principle to exercise caution with the application of libel law, this case should not be approached solely from the viewpoint of “freedom of academic expression.” They argued instead that it was necessary to focus on the fact that “the book had caused pain to the victims by offering a narrative that had insufficient scholarly evidence to support it.”

I myself examined Park’s claim in my 2016 publication, “*Reconciliation for Forgetting: Comfort Woman of the Empire and the Responsibility of Japan*,”¹⁸ pointing out that Park’s book does not convey a full understanding of previous studies on Japan’s “comfort women” system and that it uses the victims’ testimony in an arbitrary manner to fit her own claims.

This paper particularly focuses on the compensation issue surrounding the “comfort women” of the Imperial Japanese Army. It will also discuss the lack of historical understanding demonstrated by Park’s book, and explore why—given these deficiencies—it was welcomed with such high praise by the Japanese press. As the quotation above indicates, Park claims that “it was not the Japanese government but the Korean government that deprived individual victims of their chance to receive compensation.” Such claims by Park regarding the Japan–ROK negotiation of post-war reparations are the key to understanding why this book was received with such approval in Japan.

The 1965 System

The judgment by the Constitutional Court of Korea which Park criticizes was made on August 30, 2011. As discussed above, one of the points of dispute in the appeal lodged with the Constitutional Court was whether the “comfort women” victims had the right to make a claim for compensation against the Japanese government or whether article 2 of the “Agreement on the Settlement of Problems Concerning Property and Claims and on Economic Cooperation between Japan and the Republic of Korea” concluded by the Japanese and ROK governments in 1965 (at the same time as the Treaty on Basic Relations which normalised diplomatic relations between the two countries) had in fact negated such a right to claims for compensation. The Constitutional Court indicated in its ruling that the individual right of claim of former “comfort women” may still be valid. In response to this judgment, the then President of the Republic of Korea, Lee Myung-bak, proposed to the then Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda at talks in December 2011 that they work to resolve the “comfort women” issue, which reintroduced the matter as an important subject for discussion. Park criticizes the decision by the Constitutional Court and claims that the Korean government had already renounced the “comfort women’s” individual right to compensation claims during the Japan–ROK Talks. Moreover, Park maintains that the Japanese government issued “compensation” or “reparations” to the Korean government, based on the agreement between the two countries. If this claim is true, the commonly understood history of the Japan–South Korea relationship has to be significantly amended. What are the grounds behind such a claim? Before examining the author’s understanding of “compensation” and “reparations” in *Comfort Women of the Empire*, let us revisit recent developments in “the 1965 system.”

In 1965 Japan and the Republic of Korea signed the Treaty on Basic Relations along with four other related agreements. Among these, the “comfort women” issue is linked to the “Agreement on the Settlement of Problems Concerning Property and Claims and on Economic Co-operation between Japan and the Republic of Korea” (henceforth referred to as the Agreement on the Settlement). Article II, Section 1 of the Agreement on the Settlement reads, “[t]he Contracting Parties confirm that [the] problems concerning property, rights and interests of the two Contracting Parties and their nationals (including juridical persons) and concerning claims between the Contracting Parties and their nationals, including those provided for in Article IV, paragraph (a) of the Treaty of Peace with Japan signed at the city of San Francisco on September 8, 1951, are settled completely and finally.” Japan and Korea have long developed their bilateral relationship based on this agreement which states the problem “is settled completely and

finally.” The Japan–ROK relationship with the Agreement on the Settlement as its foundation is referred to as “the 1965 system.”

“The 1965 system” has been an insurmountable obstacle for post-war compensation lawsuits since the 1990s, including those related to the “comfort women” issue. Although Japan’s judicial system turned down the demands for reparation for a variety of reasons, such as the absence of state liability, the statute of limitations, and expiry of rights, the Agreement on the Settlement functioned as the ultimate justification since it declared that the issue “is settled completely and finally.”

The legal question here is whether or not through inter-state treaties a state can renounce the right of claim of individuals. The position of the Japanese government was that it was not able to extinguish the individual right of claim. Thus, on August 27, 1991, at the budget committee of the House of Councillors, the director of the treaty department at the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Yanai Shunji, stated the position that while an agreement on claims did entail the mutual relinquishment of each state’s right to diplomatic protection it did not mean the extinction of the individual’s right to claim under domestic law.¹⁹

Behind the Japanese government’s adoption of this interpretation lay the claims for compensation lodged by Japanese citizens.²⁰ Article 19(a) of the Treaty of San Francisco, concluded on September 9, 1951, had stated that “Japan waives all claims of Japan and its nationals against the Allied Powers and their nationals arising out of the war or out of actions taken because of the existence of a state of war.”²¹ As a result of this Japanese citizens who had suffered damages due to Allied actions such as the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki or the incarceration of Japanese soldiers in Siberia lodged claims for compensation against the Japanese government under article 29 of the Japanese constitution which stipulates that “The right to own or to hold property is inviolable.”²² In response to these lawsuits the Japanese government claimed that in the Treaty of San Francisco it had only relinquished the right of diplomatic protection while the individual right of claim had not been extinguished and thus, it insisted, those who had suffered damages were able to address their claims for compensation directly to the governments in question. So in fact this interpretation of the treaty was originally a position intended to evade compensation claims against the Japanese government. As a result the Japanese government had no option but to recognise that the legal rights to claim compensation of the Korean and Chinese victims had not been extinguished.²³

During the 1990s Korean victims made claims against the Japanese government and Japanese corporations by lodging their lawsuits in the Japanese courts. These courts were unable to deny the individual right to claim itself but, as mentioned

above, in these lawsuits it was the Agreement on the Settlement that became the final line of defence put up to block the victims' compensation claims.

For this reason, victims who sought post-war compensation requested the disclosure of documents from the Japan–ROK Talks in order to uncover the actual content of the discussions. In October 2002, a hundred Korean victims of forced overseas mobilization brought a lawsuit, demanding the disclosure of the documents from the Japan–ROK Talks and the court ordered that a part of the requested documents must be disclosed (this disclosure took place in January 2005).²⁴ The Roh Moo-hyun administration decided to fully disclose the documents related to Japan–ROK Talks, publishing, in August 2005, the 36,000 pages of documents in the possession of the Korean government. Meanwhile, “the Citizen’s Group for Full Disclosure of Japan–ROK Normalization Documents” was formed in Japan in December 2005. This group filed a lawsuit against the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, requesting the disclosure of the documents. Prompted by the decision by Tokyo District Court in October 2012 regarding the disclosure of the said documents, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan started to gradually disclose the documents on the Japan–Korea Talks and on the right of property and claims.²⁵ Thanks to this disclosure, research into the Japan–ROK Talks and post-war reparation lawsuits entered a new phase, where it became clear that the “comfort women” issue had hardly been discussed in the Japan–ROK Talks.

These developments in the study of Japan–ROK Talks are one of the factors behind the Korean judicial system giving a series of decisions in the 2010s suggesting the desirability of rectifying the “1965 system.” The Constitutional Court of Korea, on August 30, 2011, upheld the existence of “a dispute over interpretation” between Japan and Korea regarding whether the former “comfort women’s” right of legal claim had “expired or not,” and decided that “the negligence on the part of defendant who failed to resolve the matter according to Article III of the Agreement is unconstitutional.”²⁶ In response to this, South Korea proposed to Japan that they hold a conference with the aim of resolving the “comfort women” issue. Also, on May 24, 2012, the Constitutional Court of Korea found that the individual right of claim against inhumane and illegal acts by the state of Japan is not included in the issues that are defined as “settled completely and finally” (Article II, Section 1) in the Agreement on the Settlement of 1965, thus re-evaluating Japan’s colonial rule as “illegal and forced occupation.” These shifts in Korean judicial decisions called for a fundamental review of the “1965 system,” or at least in the accepted Korean interpretation of the Japan–ROK Agreement.²⁷

Nevertheless, Park Yu-ha gives a rather negative assessment of such shifts in *Comfort Women of the Empire*. Park is especially negative about the ROK Constitutional Court’s decision since “the subsequent attempts to resolve the

matter diplomatically only caused Japan–Korea relations to deteriorate.”²⁸ This attitude can also be observed in another publication of hers, *For Reconciliation: Textbooks, Comfort Women, Yasukuni Shrine and Liancourt Rock*, where she takes a dissenting view against the desirability of renegotiating the Japan–ROK Agreement, stating “it would not only be a one-sided argument to demand a renegotiation of the Agreement or a reparation on the grounds of the insincerity of Japan–ROK Agreements, but also be a sign of irresponsibility to oneself.”²⁹

The “1965 system” did silence many of the victims of Japan’s colonial occupation and war of aggression through the “agreements” between the Japanese and Korean governments. If, as Nakazawa claims, Park’s work conveys “a sharp observation that grasps the issues from a wider scope, taking colonialism and imperialism into account,” then the author would be in favour of the renegotiation of the 1965 system. Instead, Park only argues against the Constitutional Court’s decision and claims it was the Korean government that willingly renounced the right of claim of former “comfort women” at the Japan–ROK Talks. Park’s work, therefore, can be understood as a counter-reaction against new developments in the “1965 system.” Let us begin by examining Park’s criticism of the judgment by the Constitutional Court of Korea.

The Problematic Understanding of Post-War Reparation in *Comfort Women of the Empire*

Misinterpretation of the Constitutional Suits and Aitani’s Paper

In Chapter 4 of *Comfort Women of the Empire*, “Reading the decision of the Constitutional Court of Korea,” the author entirely dismisses the decision of the Constitutional Court (henceforth referred to as “the decision”). Park’s argument is summarized in the section from the book quoted below.

The basis for this lawsuit [the constitutional appeal made by former ‘comfort women’], as suggested at the beginning, lay in Japan’s violation of ‘the International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children’. [...] However, it was individual entrepreneurs that were responsible for the human trafficking. If Japan as a state had any responsibility at all, it is in the fact that Japan practically [...] tolerated the trafficking [...] while publicly prohibiting it. Also, it was the Korean government that nullified ‘the right’ [the right of claim for compensation against Japan], as I will discuss later.

In fact, on nullification, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Korea strongly asserted that it was not a responsibility of the state to ensure that compensation was issued by Japan; therefore, the government was not in breach of the Constitution.³⁰

Park maintains that the trafficking was practised by “individual entrepreneurs” or “brokers,” and that Japan does not assume its legal liability, based on which she criticizes “the decision” as above. Park writes: “Japan is only liable for creating the demand for (and occasionally tolerating) trafficking, which means that the compensation request assuming the state’s legal liability is all but impossible.”³¹

As we have seen, Park’s criticism of “the decision” is characterized by her denial of Japan’s liability, even at the level of basic facts, for Japan’s “comfort women” system. This claim, I argue, is based on an erroneous interpretation of the constitutional appeal in discussion.

To begin with, the constitutional appeal did not aim at assessing Japan’s liability for the “comfort women” system, but at deliberating “the negligence” of the Korean government in not undertaking measures toward resolution as prescribed in Article III of the Agreement on the Settlement. Park, however, denies Japan’s liability altogether by blaming the brokers as the main culprits. As we have already seen, Park takes a stance that Japan is merely liable for “creating the demand” for trafficking and “tolerating” it, and that it is impossible to hold the state legally responsible for these actions. This means that the author refuses to recognize the claimants’ right of claim for reparation.

This argument is Park’s own, not even aligned with that of the Korean government as the claimee. Park states “at the end of a five-year-lawsuit, the court ended up siding with the claimants, agreeing with the idea that Japan is solely liable in this matter,”³² contending as if the opinion of the Korean government was in accordance with hers, while Korea in fact did not make such a claim. The government merely stated that the diplomatic relations of the Korea did not interfere with the claimants’ fundamental human rights. The quote above from Park’s work gives the impression that the statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade supported her argument; yet the discussions in these two paragraphs are not related at all.

As “the decision” made clear, Korea took the view that the Agreement on the Settlement had not yet resolved the “inhumane and illegal acts” conducted by the state, including those by the Japanese government and that “Japan is liable for the matter” (statement by “the Joint Government-Public Commission” on August 26, 2005). Park quotes the judge’s statement discussing the minority opinion on “the decision” as supporting evidence for her argument that the claimants do not have the right of claim for reparation;³³ however, the judge did not deny the claimants’ right of claim but merely discussed the obligation of the Korean government.

Furthermore, Park cites Kunio Aitani’s paper³⁴ in an attempt to refute the right of claim for reparation, saying: “even if the trafficking had been a state-led project

operated by Japan, it would have been impossible to demand compensation for damage from Japan” and “there is no evidence after all to support the reparation suit by the Korean Council.”³⁵ This claim by Park, however, does not address the point of Aitani’s paper. According to Aitani, the claimants of “comfort women” lawsuits argued for the illegality of the system on the grounds of the “International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children,” on the basis of which “it was incontestable that the ‘comfort women’ system violated international law.” He continues that while the International Convention supports the illegality of the system, “it is also true that this Convention cannot provide the grounds for the right of claim for compensation.”³⁶ It is this last part of Aitani’s argument that Park quoted as a supporting her contention that “it is impossible to request compensation for damage.”

Park therefore referred to Aitani’s paper to support her contradictory argument, disregarding the actual conclusion of that paper. Aitani says that the grounds for the compensation demand must be sought in other laws because the International Convention only provides the evidence for the illegality of the “comfort women” system. In fact, he discusses in the paper that although international law previously did not support the individual right of claim, it is now common practice to grant international legal subjectivity to individuals, “hanks to the recent developments in human rights treaties.”³⁷ Japan has rejected requests for reparations that are based on the Hague Convention and the ILO Convention, arguing that individuals are not given legal subjectivity under international law. Aitani criticized this reasoning as a deviation from the recent advancement of international law.

In response to the criticisms of her misrepresentation of Aitani’s paper, Park replied that she quoted Aitani because she agreed with his point that the request for reparations cannot be fulfilled because the International Convention “cannot be the grounds for the illegality of ‘comfort women’ system.” She also says that she never intended to use his paper as supporting evidence for the absence of liability in the state.³⁸ This justification only reveals that Park does not fully comprehend the point of my criticism. Aitani mentioned the precedents of reparation suits based on the Hague Convention and the ILO Convention, because the International Convention can only be the grounds for the illegality, not for compensation requests. Aitani did not argue that the International Convention “cannot be the grounds for the illegality of ‘comfort women’ system” as Park claims.

Did the Korean Government “Renounce” the Right of Claim of “Comfort Women” Victims?

As already discussed, Park maintains that it was the Korean government that renounced the right of claim of former “comfort women.” She claims that Korea abandoned their right of claim at the Japan–ROK Talks.

Is it truly the case that Korean government “deprived the individual [former ‘comfort women’] victims of their chance to receive compensation?” If it is, without any doubt it is a discovery of outstanding importance in research on the Japan–ROK Talks. This is because it has not yet been revealed whether the issue of former “comfort women” was discussed in the Talks, while the definition of “property, rights and interests [...] and concerning claims between the Contracting Parties and their nationals” has constituted an important topic in this area of research. The recently disclosed documents regarding the Japan–ROK Talks did reveal that a Korean committee member in the 1953 Talks mentioned “some Korean women were sent to the southern countries occupied by Japan’s Navy, such as Singapore, and returned home, leaving their money and property behind” in the context of the discussion on Korean returnees’ “deposits;” however, the details are yet to be known.³⁹

The evidence Park relied on in her work is a paper by Kim Chang-rok, “The Korea–Japan Treaty of 1965 and the rights of Korean individuals” (henceforth referred to as “Kim’s paper”).⁴⁰ Kim’s paper explores “how the rights of Korean individuals were handled” in the 1965 Korea–Japan Treaty and other agreements,⁴¹ and also “what was ‘agreed’”⁴² between the two countries, with the documents disclosed by Korea as the main source of information.

According to Kim, none of the documents disclosed by Korea directly clarify these questions, but some of them provide “a key” to further our understanding,⁴³ one of which is the conversation in the preliminary discussion and the Sixth Session in 1961 over the treatment of Korean “forced labourers.” Prior to the preliminary discussion, the Korean side presented “the Outline for the Claims of the Republic of Korea against Japan” in which they proposed five items as “the compensation claims for settlement.” In regard to the “accrued wage of Korean forced labourers,” the Japanese government proposed that it be (1) “resolved case by case,” (2) after the normalization of bilateral diplomatic relations, and (3) within the limits of Japanese laws (including the National Requisition Ordinance, the Factory Act, and the Relief Act). Meanwhile, the Korean side demanded (1) the payment to be made to Korean government in its entirety, (2) before the normalization of bilateral diplomatic relations, and (3) based on “a new foundation” rather than on Japanese laws.⁴⁴

It was this discussion that Park adopted as the basis of her argument that it was “Korean government that deprived individual [former ‘comfort women’] victims of their chance to receive compensation.” She claims that “if the Korean

government had accepted Japan's proposal and secured the individual right of claim for compensation, then other victims could have also benefited from 'legitimate' compensation for damage. Yet, the Korean government did not, and that is the very reason why former 'comfort women' and other victims have lost in most of the reparation lawsuits up to the present day."⁴⁵

What made such an interpretation possible? The subject matter discussed in Kim's paper is the "accrued wage of Korean forced labourers," not the former "comfort women" issues. Above all, as Kim suggests, the intention of Japan's proposal in this negotiation was to keep the compensation "within the limits of Japanese law" and to nullify "the compensation for the mental and physical suffering of Korean forced labourers" which Japanese laws did not assume.⁴⁶ Kim analyses that "this argument was an attempt to render the compensation issues practically non-existent, given that many of the relevant documents had been lost and that Koreans would face difficulty in undertaking legal procedures in Japan to receive payment."⁴⁷

Recent research based on the documents disclosed by Japan also found that, in regard to both victims of forced overseas mobilization and military and civilian personnel, the Japanese side rejected the reparation demand by Korea, based on the lack of "legal grounds." limiting the payment and investigation to "accrued wages" and "pensions" for military and civilian personnel.⁴⁸ Considering that former "comfort women" were not defined as military or civilian personnel according to Japanese law, they would not have been able to receive compensation, thus contradicting Park's supposition.

Rather, Kim's paper discusses an occasion where the Korean side strived to secure the right of claim regarding the issues that were not discussed in the Talks. The Korean side proposed in the Sixth Session, in relation to the Outline, that the right of claim for the issues that are not included in the five items of the Outline can be exercised after the Talks are concluded. In which case, the statute of limitation must be suspended until diplomatic relations are normalized." The reasoning behind this proposal was that "it would be problematic for the right of claim of individuals to be negated, when the issues are not given consideration at the Talks. Therefore, individual claims and legal actions must be allowed for those cases, regardless of the outcome of the Talks."⁴⁹ The Japanese side, however, firmly maintained that the right of claim issues must be fully settled within the framework of the Talks.

Despite the comment on the proposal by the Korean side to secure the right of claim for the undiscussed issues, Kim's paper was utilized by Park to reinforce her contradictory claim: that the Korean government willingly renounced the right of claim of "comfort women." Park responded to this criticism, saying:⁵⁰

As Kim commented, it was the ‘accrued wages of Korean forced labourers’ that was discussed then; and ‘accrued wages’ were only a concern in the discussion over comfort women at that time, as pointed out by Chong Young-hwan. Nevertheless, now that the documents that describe comfort women as ‘civilian personnel’ have been discovered, the Japanese government may recognize comfort women as ‘civilian personnel’, following my line of argument. While there was a ‘law’ that granted compensation to Korean members of the Japanese Army, there was no equivalent ‘legal protection’ for comfort women. My argumentation was that such recognition could justify the comfort women’s claim for ‘reparation’.

Park seems to contend that ‘comfort women’ can be discussed under the issue of the “accrued wages of Korean forced labourers” because they were in fact civilian personnel; however, there are three flaws in her argument.

Firstly, I did not comment that the “‘accrued wages’ were only a concern in the discussion over comfort women;” rather, I argued that the accrued wages of Korean forced labourers was discussed in the Talks, while the issue of “comfort women” was not.

Secondly, the Japanese government has not yet recognized “comfort women” as civilian personnel as of today at least, nor did they in Japan–ROK Talks. There is no evidence that suggests comfort women be included as a part of the issue of “accrued wages of Korean forced labourers.” Park herself must not have considered “comfort women” as civilian personnel in the first place, since she contends the “comfort women” system was state-regulated wartime prostitution operated by private brokers at request of the army. If so, the status of “comfort women” is clearly not that of civilian personnel. This counterargument only adds further confusion to her point.

Finally, it is unclear what Park means by the compensation granted to Korean military and civilian personnel in the Japanese army. It is widely known that the Pension Act and the Act on Relief of War Victims and Survivors both have the Nationality Clause and the Family Register Clause, which define as ineligible those who are originally from former Japanese colonies and lost their Japanese nationality upon effectuation of San Francisco Peace Treaty on April 28, 1952. In 2001, the Law for the Relief Payment to the Surviving Family of the War Victims in Former Colonies was enacted for the former military and civilian personnel from former Japanese colonies and their surviving families who are permanent residents in Japan. However, the payment made according to this law was not reparation but condolence money from a humanitarian point of view. Again, this does not successfully corroborate Park’s claim that “it was not Japanese government but Korean government that deprived individual victims of their chance to receive compensation.”

Was “Economic Cooperation” a Form of “Post-War Reparation?”

More erroneous interpretations can be found in Park’s discussion of the Japan–ROK Talks and agreements. The Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea and the related agreements do not contain any acknowledgement of guilt or words of apology on Japan’s colonial rule, nor any mention of “damages” “caused by colonial occupation.” Park comments on the background which gave rise to such a “limitation in Japan–ROK agreements” as follows:

Curiously enough, the demands [by the Korean government] regarding human damage were made only for forced labour and requisition during the Sino–Japanese War starting in 1937, mainly on monetary issues, such as uncollected payment obligations due to the abrupt termination of the war. That is, the demands were made regarding the forced overseas mobilization after 1937, not for the human, psychological, and physical damages caused by 36 years of Japan’s colonial occupation since 1910 (although Japan effectively ‘ruled’ Korea since 1905 when they commenced ‘the protection’). [...] [This is because] the San Francisco Peace Treaty on which the Japan–ROK Talks were based was intended literally for ‘post-war process’, that is, to clean up the residual problems derived from the war. [...] The reparation was paid to the Korean government who distributed the grants according to individual requests.⁵¹

This section of Park’s work shows that the author recognizes “economic cooperation” as a form of “reparation.” According to the first clause of the first article of the Agreement on the Settlement, Japan would provide the Republic of Korea with Japanese goods and services worth US\$300 million for free while a further US\$200 million would be provided in the form of long-term low interest loans. The clause also stipulated that “The aforesaid supply and loans must serve the economic development of the Republic of Korea.”⁵² Whether or not this ‘economic cooperation’ constituted a form of ‘compensation’ has been one of the key points of contention in the subsequent interpretations of the Agreement on the Settlement. However, Park Yuha also claims that “despite the large amount of compensation paid by the Japanese government, the Treaty on Basic Relations does not mention ‘colonial occupation,’ ‘apology,’ or ‘compensation.’ While the money effectively functioned as compensation, it was practically paid under the rubric of other purposes.”⁵³ This confirms that Park considers this “economic cooperation” as equivalent to “reparation” or “compensation.”

In fact, the then-Korean government in 1965 adopted the idea that “economic cooperation” was “effectively a form of compensation.”⁵⁴ According to Kim’s paper quoted earlier, the interpretation by the Korean government of “economic cooperation” as “compensation” is related to their understanding of Article II of the Basic Treaty. Article II reads “[i]t is confirmed that all treaties or agreements concluded

between the Empire of Japan and the Empire of Korea on or before August 22, 1910 are already null and void,” and based on which the Korean government considered the Japan–Korea Annexation Treaty also null and void (although the Japanese government had deemed it valid). This “economic cooperation,” which was made with annexation nullified, can be understood as a form of reparation, according to the Korean government. Meanwhile, the Japanese government maintains that the Annexation Treaty was concluded legally; hence the “economic cooperation” cannot be seen as “reparation” by any means. Considering that Park’s work likewise takes the stance that “the Japan–Korea Annexation Treaty” was legally agreed upon, it would create a conflict if the author adopts the same interpretation as that of the Korean government.

What makes it possible for Park to argue that “economic cooperation” was a form of “reparation?” For Park, there was no word of “apology” in the Basic Treaty or the Agreement on the Settlement because “the Basic Treaty was ‘post-war’ reparation, not part of ‘post-colonial’ reparation, at least in terms of human damages.”⁵⁵ And by “‘post-war’ reparation.” Park means “reparation made for the war damage” after 1937.

However, “economic cooperation” based on the Agreement on the Settlement is, in fact, not “‘post-war’ reparation.” As has been often discussed, the Japan–ROK Talks were held outside the compensation negotiation over the war between Japan and the Allies. Indeed, the Japan–ROK Talks are highly relevant to San Francisco Peace Treaty. Article IV, paragraph (a) noted that the disposition of “the claims” between Japan and its nationals, and the authorities and the nationals of “the areas referred to in Article II” (the areas to which Japan renounced any right or title, such as Korea, Formosa, and Sakhalin) “shall be the subject of special arrangements” between Japan and such authorities. Nevertheless, this negotiation over “the claim” in Article IV, paragraph (a) was not equal to the negotiation over the damages in “the war.” This is because, as Osamu Ota suggests, Article IV merely stipulates that “the claims must be dealt with by Japan and Korea outside the context of the Allies, and moreover, it did not prescribe the settlement of the damages and suffering caused by the colonial occupation and the war.”⁵⁶

On the basis of what evidence did Park state that “the reparation” demand was made “regarding the forced overseas mobilization after 1937?” Park relies almost entirely on the work by Chang Pak-chin for the discussion in the said section.⁵⁷ Chang’s work is voluminous, extending across 548 pages, and explores the reason why the settlement issues had to “dissolved” through the Japan–ROK Talks, mainly critically analysing the negotiation strategy of Korea and its international relations. Park’s argument relies on Chapter 6, Section One, where Korea’s concept of settlement of the past prior to the Talks is scrutinized.

In this section, Chang analyses *The Protocol for the Claim against Japan* (henceforth referred to as *The Protocol*) drawn up by the Rhee Syngman administration in September 1949. *The Protocol* found the justification for the claim in that “this occupation of Korea by Japan from 1910 to August 15, 1945 was single-handedly enforced by Japan against the free will of the Korean people;” therefore, previous studies considered that *The Protocol* asked for compensation, questioning the colonial occupation as a whole (unlike the stance taken by Korea thereafter).

However, despite such explanations of the basic protocol, Chang calls attention to the fact that *The Protocol* actually limited the claims to “human and physical damages as a result of combat during the Sino–Japanese War and the Pacific War.” According to Chang, the Korean government limited the claims because reparation in the Peace Treaty was expected to be dealt with as a matter of post-war process between Japan and the Allies. Chang continues that “this fact signifies that the Korean government did not intend to comprehensively question Japan’s responsibility in its colonial occupation from the start of negotiations.”⁵⁸

This is the summary of the analysis on which Park’s argument regarding “the forced overseas mobilization after 1937” is based. Clearly, Chang discusses the negotiation protocol of the Korean government in 1949, not the “economic cooperation” bilaterally agreed between Japan and Korea in 1965. Rather, as Chang mentions with frustration in his discussion, once the Japan–ROK Talks began, the Korean government did not fully claim even for the war damage caused since the beginning of the Sino–Japanese War. Chang surely does not contend that the “economic cooperation” in the Agreement on the Settlement was equivalent to “the reparation” for “the forced overseas mobilization after 1937.”

In fact, Chang strongly criticizes the interpretation by the then-Korean government that the “economic cooperation” was “effectively a form of compensation,” saying that Korea never expressed such an opinion in the negotiations. Chang contends that the discussion in the Japan–ROK negotiation itself proves the explanation provided by the Korean government was untruthful and that “the Korean side also accepted the inconsistent logic that the grant provided by Japan would settle the claim issues, when the payment was not in reality made on the basis of such claims.”⁵⁹ He concludes: “there was no room for the interpretation that the [economic cooperation] grant was offered in response to Korea’s claim against Japan and therefore settled the issue’ and that ‘the issue of the right of claim was merely ‘dissolved’.”⁶⁰

In short, Park’s argument—that the “economic cooperation” offered by Japan based on the Agreement on the Settlement was “the reparation” in response to “he claims” related to “the forced overseas mobilization after 1937”—is a fallacy derived from her lack of understanding of the sources. Moreover, Park arbitrarily

combined her misinterpretation with the actual points made in the source materials (the concept that the grant effectively functioned as reparation). The frequent occurrence of eccentric “new theories” in Park’s work is derived from this academically unethical methodology that she employs.

Now let us turn to Park’s responses to the criticism detailed above. Park disapproves of the “misunderstanding” of her work on my part. Firstly, Park denies having written that the economic cooperation based on Japan–ROK Agreements was “post-war reparation.” Even so, Park’s work clearly says “the Basic Treaty was ‘post-war’ reparation, not part of ‘post-colonial’ reparation, at least in terms of human damages”⁶¹ As I have repeatedly pointed out, Park introduces such key concepts for the argument without providing basic definitions, even frequently using pretentious quotation marks, which is nothing but confusing for the reader. If “‘post-war’ reparation” happens to mean something other than “post-war “in a usual sense, then the distinction should be explained by her in her book. It is highly problematic to juxtapose such concepts as “‘post-war’ reparation,” “post-war reparation,” and “reparation according to the post-war process” without any explanation, and claim that they respectively signify separate notions.

Secondly, Park also claims that she never described the grants offered by the Agreement on the Settlement as “reparation for the war damages.” Her book, however, reads “[i]t is because ‘the claims’ by Korea are limited to forced overseas mobilization after 1937. The reparation was paid to Korean government who distributed the grants according to individual requests.”⁶² The Korean edition also contains a comment noting that, “it was not for the human, psychological, and physical damages caused by 36 years of Japan’s ‘colonial occupation’ since 1910 that the reparation was paid in the end, [...] but for the forced mobilization after the start of the Sino–Japanese War.”⁶³ From these passages, it is evident that Park does call the economic cooperation based on the Japan–ROK Agreement “reparation” or “compensation.”

In any case, Park fails to respond to the point of my criticism. When Chang states that the Korean government only claimed reparation for damages in forced overseas mobilization after 1937, he refers to the compensation claim protocol of the Korean government of 1949, not the economic cooperation in 1965. This is the reason why I argue Park’s interpretation of the Japan–ROK Agreement is completely erroneous, an argument which Park has not responded to at all.

Two-fold Historical Revisionism

Let us summarize the discussion thus far. Starting from the premise that the former Japanese army had no legal liability, Park makes three arguments in

Comfort Women of the Empire. Firstly, she claims former “comfort women” did not have the right of claim for damages against the Japanese army in the first place. Secondly, she argues that even when they had the right of claim, their individual right of claim was renounced by the Korean government at the Japan–ROK Talks. And finally, she maintains the “economic cooperation” money which the Korean government received instead from Japan was in fact “reparation” for damage caused by the war after the start of the Sino–Japanese War. These three arguments, however, are poorly supported, and it is evident that Park used other studies which express contradictory opinions as her “evidence.” Park’s demonstration of the arguments is already clearly fallacious even before undertaking an examination of the validity of the arguments themselves. Why then was such a faulty piece of work welcomed with applause in the Japanese press?

For one thing, “comfort women of the empire” discourse had an affinity with the conservative historical views already prevalent in Japanese society. Katsuhiko Kuroda, who long served as the Seoul bureau chief of Sankei Shimbun, points to the fact that in Korea, “Korean ‘comfort women’ and Japanese army (officers) are portrayed as completely hostile and all incidents are described as ‘forced.’” Kuroda continues that “it was seen as ‘cooperation’ from the viewpoint of the ‘history of Japanese people,’ and therefore, as I discussed earlier, ‘gratitude and comfort’ come into the discourse.”⁶⁴ The image of former “comfort women” as “patriotic” comrades to the Japanese army depicted by *Comfort Women of the Empire* overlaps with the “comfort women” as envisaged by the Japanese conservatives.

Yet, this alone does not explain why Park’s work was also welcomed by liberals in Japan. Another reason for the book’s popularity can be found in the affirmative acknowledgment of Japan’s post-war history in this work.

According to Park’s reading of Japan’s “post-war history,” the Japanese government made reparations for the damage in the Japan–ROK Agreement, although within the framework of “post-war reparations.” Japan also responded to “the issue of colonial occupation” with the Kono Statement in the 1990s, and issued an apology and compensation to “comfort women” through the Asian Women’s Fund. Therefore, Park describes Japan’s “post-war history” as a process through which the country sincerely faced up to its responsibility for the wars and colonial occupation of the past.

Therefore, Park appeals to Japan as follows:

Emperors and prime ministers of Japan have made apologies for the colonial occupation, although they might have sounded ambiguous. As for the comfort women issue, Japan issued compensation as well as an apology—it can be said that among all the former colonial powers ‘the apology for the colonial occupation’ made by Japan was the most concrete.

However, as I have discussed earlier, the process itself was considered to be a 'post-war process' (even an unnecessary one), which made 'apology and reparation' over the comfort women issues disconnected from the 'post-colonial occupation process'. The relevance was not established nor recognized.

Also, the apology was both ambiguously and informally made, partly because there was no official platform for such an apology. Due to its unofficial nature, there was no chance for this apology for the past to be remembered by the Korean people.⁶⁵

Thus, a revision is made to the "post-war history" of Japan by Park: post-war Japan, which actually lacked an anti-colonial stance, is rewritten as a country which took the lead internationally in postcolonial issues by issuing an "apology for colonial occupation." Park tells her Japanese readers that the ongoing "comfort women" issue is not the result of a fatal flaw in Japan's "post-war democracy," which has never managed to overcome the continuity with its former empire, and failed to embrace anti-colonialism. Rather, it is because Korea misunderstands both the progress "post-war Japan" has made in reflecting upon colonial occupation and the true intention of the Asian Women's Fund. Japan must take action for the Korean Council and the victims who concealed their memory of being "comfort women of the empire" and are obsessed with "anti-Japan nationalism" due to their traumatic past.

This is precisely the reason why Park objects to the idea of renegotiating the Japan-ROK Agreement and repeatedly questions the decision of the Constitutional Court of Korea. In response to arguments in favour of renegotiating the Japan-ROK Agreement, Park expresses opposition: "Re-negotiating the Japan-ROK Agreement as some scholars suggest would overcomplicate the matter. Such negotiations would inevitably consist of nothing but academic, legal, and political discussion, which would fundamentally change the current bilateral relationship and be likely to result in the further deterioration of that relationship. Adhering to the existing agreement has more importance than the matter of formality between the countries."⁶⁶ In the Korean edition of her book, Park argues that "[with re-negotiation] the trustworthiness of the states would collapse. As discussed before, the Annexation Treaty of 1910 promised to incorporate Korean nationals as Japanese nationals, which would then make it impossible to discuss forced mobilization of 'comfort women' as a 'legally' problematic matter."⁶⁷ The author articulates in the Korean edition her opinion against the desirability of re-negotiating the Japan-ROK Agreement, referring to the illegitimacy of the Annexation Treaty, since it would damage Japan's "trustworthiness as a state."

The weakness in Park's argument is revealed when it is juxtaposed with "the decision" of the Constitutional Court of Korea as quoted below.

The Korean government might not have directly violated the fundamental human rights of comfort women victims under the Imperial Japanese Army. However, the current difficulties they are facing in settling their claims against Japan and in recovering their dignity and worth as human beings partly derived from the fact that the Korean government signed the Agreement, which contained a general concept of “any claims” without scrutinizing the right of claim. Considering this responsibility of the government, it is undeniable that the claimee [the Korean government] has a concrete obligation to take action to resolve the difficulties.

“The decision” by the Constitutional Court of Korea held the Korean government responsible for the current situation, and therefore, the government also has a “concrete obligation” to protect the fundamental human rights of those excluded from the Agreement. Of course, while holding the Korean government responsible, the Constitutional Court did not state that the Agreement on the Settlement renounced the right of claim of the claimants. Rather, it admitted some issues were hardly discussed in the Japan–ROK negotiations and acknowledged the existence of those who still maintain that they had the right of claim. The Constitutional Court recognized there is sufficient evidence regarding these matters, and thus, held the Korean government liable for resolving the issues arising from the Agreement. While Park maintains it would be irresponsible to criticize the Agreement which the Korean government had signed, the Constitutional Court of Korea holds the government responsible for “resolving the difficulties” that derive from problematic agreements they signed up for. Without any doubt the latter position represents a more “responsible” judgement.

Therefore, the reason why Park's *Comfort Women of the Empire* was received positively in the Japanese media is two-fold. Not only does it have a clear affinity with the historical revisionist interpretation of the “comfort women” system supported by Japanese conservatives (i.e. historical revisionism on the pre-war history of Japan), it also has much in common with the trend of historical revisionism on the post-war history of Japan, which depicts the Japan's post-war years as a period of critical introspection.

So Kyong-sik once condemned Park's previous work, *For Reconciliation*, writing that: “author argues as if the main obstacle to reconciliation were the demands of the victims,” which is “a form of violence under the name of reconciliation,” “requiring the victims to compromise and surrender,”⁶⁸ He also wrote that Park's work was well received in Japan “because it aligns with the hidden desire of Japanese liberals” “who would like to retain both their pride as a rational democrat and their privilege as a national of a former colonial power.”⁶⁹ The infrastructure for the distribution and consumption of Park's book is therefore also inseparable from “the hidden desire of Japanese liberals” according to So.

This book indeed satisfies “the desire” to reject criticism of colonial occupation, while retaining “pride” as a “democrat.”

The recent developments in legal judgments, urging a re-consideration of the 1965 system are, as Abe Koki has suggested, in a similar vein to the judgments in Italy and Greece regarding illegal acts committed by Nazi Germany during World War II. During the 2000s domestic courts in Greece and Italy recognized the illegality of Germany’s actions in relation to Nazi forced mobilization, forced labor and massacres during World War II and ordered that compensation be provided to the victims.⁷⁰ The decision of the ROK constitutional court therefore reflects the global trend towards placing greater emphasis on the rights and humanity of individuals than on the traditional interests of the sovereign nation. It is also, as Abe Koki suggests, a manifestation of “the trend to summon the past,” which understands that “the twenty-first century can only be built upon reflecting on the legacies of colonialism ... in order that the twenty-first century does not regress into ‘another nineteenth century’ but rather becomes a new century that truly deserves to follow the twentieth century.”⁷¹ While *Comfort Women of the Empire*, at first glance, seems to take the stance that Japan must pursue its responsibility for colonial occupation and associated crimes, it actually attempts to prevent any disturbance to the 1965 system and to prevent it from being affected by the global trend to re-examine the painful legacies of colonialism. Park bemoans the diplomatic relationship between Japan and Korea since the constitutional court’s decision, saying that it “only caused a deterioration in Japan–Korea relations.”⁷² Yet, I argue that it is the author herself who has caused a deterioration of these issues, denying the right of claim of the victims by misrepresentation, producing additional confusion with logical flaws in her arguments, and making clear factual errors in her work.

Notes

1. This paper “The Japanese Military “Comfort Women” Issue and the 1965 System: *Comfort Women of the Empire* and Two-fold Historical Revisionism” has been published previously in Japanese as 歪められた植民地支配責任論—朴裕河『帝国の慰安婦批判 (*Distorted Theory of Colonial Responsibilities: Park Yuha “Criticism of Imperial Comfort Women*), 季刊戦争責任研究 (War Responsibility Studies Quarterly) (84), 60–70, 2015/06 and in Korean as 일본 군’위안부’문제와 1965년 체제의 재심판—박유하제국의 위안부, 비판 (*The Issue of the ‘Comfort Women’ of the Japanese Military and the Re-examination of the 1965 Regime: Park Yuha’s “Comfort Women’s Criticism*), 역사비평 (Historical Criticism) (111), 471–495, 2015/06. The paper was translated from the Japanese by Moe Shoji of the University of Sheffield and we are grateful for her help which was facilitated by funding from the Academy of Korean Studies and grateful for our introduction to her by Dr Jamie Coates of the University of Sheffield. Further translation and editing work on this article was undertaken by Professor Vladimir Tikhonov of the University of Oslo and the Editor of the Special Section from Vol 18.2 of the European Journal of Korean Studies, which this paper once was a part of, Dr Owen Miller of SOAS, University of London.

2. "Confirmation of the unconstitutional character of omissions in Article III of the ROK-Japan Agreement on resolving problems of property and rights of claim and economic cooperation" "대한민국과 일본국 간의 재산 및 청구권에 관한 문제의 해결과 경제협력에 관한 협정 제3조 부작위 위헌확인", Constitutional Court Hearing 2006hönma788, 30/8/2011 전원재판부 2006헌마788, 2011. 8. 30, Kukka pömyöng chöngbo sent'ö. 국가법령정보센터. [http://www.law.go.kr/%ED%97%8C%EC%9E%AC%EA%B2%B0%EC%A0%95%EB%A1%80/\(2006%ED%97%8C%EB%A7%88788\)](http://www.law.go.kr/%ED%97%8C%EC%9E%AC%EA%B2%B0%EC%A0%95%EB%A1%80/(2006%ED%97%8C%EB%A7%88788)) (last accessed 17/2/2019).
3. "Hönjae kyöljöng 1 wi nün 'wianbu son noün chöngbu nün wihöñ' kyöljöng" "현재 결정 1 위는 '위안부 손 놓은 정부는 위헌' 결정", *Hankyoreh Newspaper* 26/8/2018 http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/859225.html#csidx69906651b331b5f9a023f89e82393e9 (last accessed 17/2/2019).
4. Park Yuha. 帝国の慰安婦 植民地支配と記憶の闘い (*Comfort Women of the Empire: the Battle over Colonial Rule and Memory*) (Japanese version). 朝日新聞出版 (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun Publications Inc, 2014), 193.
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6. The quotations from *Comfort Women of the Empire* are mainly taken from the Japanese edition of the book and the page number is indicated in the body of text. The quotations from the Korean edition of the book are noted as (Korean, p.***) to distinguish them from the Japanese edition.
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8. The second edition included 'Appendix 1: The reason why the comfort women issue needs reconsidering' (A provocation delivered at the symposium, 'The Third Perspective on the Comfort Women Issue', on April 29, 2014), and 'Appendix 2: Statement in support of Japanese historians' (in English, Japanese and Korean).
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29. Park Yuha, 『和解のために 教科書・慰安婦・靖国・独島』(*wakai no tame ni kyōkasho ianfu yasukuni dokushima*) *For Reconciliation: Textbooks, Comfort Women, Yasukuni Shrine and Liancourt Rock* (Tokyo: Heibon-sha, 2006), 226.

30. Park Yuha. 帝国の慰安婦 植民地支配と記憶の闘い (*Comfort Women of the Empire: the Battle over Colonial Rule and Memory*) (Japanese version). 朝日新聞出版 (Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun Publications Inc, 2014), 180.
31. *Ibid.*, 191.
32. *Ibid.*, 180.
33. *Ibid.*, 195–196.
34. Kunio Aitani 藍谷 邦雄『慰安婦』裁判の経過と結果およびその後の動向』*Ianfu saiban no keika to kekka oyobi sonogo no dōkō* ‘Commentary: The developments, results, and the climate of “comfort women” lawsuits’, *The Journal of Historical Studies*, Vol. 849 (January 2009).
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36. Kunio Aitani 藍谷 邦雄『慰安婦』裁判の経過と結果およびその後の動向』*Ianfu saiban no keika to kekka oyobi sonogo no dōkō* ‘Commentary: The developments, results, and the climate of “comfort women” lawsuits’, *The Journal of Historical Studies*, Vol. 849 (January 2009). 36.
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42. *Ibid.*, 230.
43. *Ibid.*, 258.
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49. Kim Ch'ang-nok, '1965 nyōn hanil choyak kwa han'gugin kaein ūi kwōlli', 251.
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EXTENDED RESEARCH NOTE

Divergent Memories of Tumen *Shan-shui*

XIAOXUAN LU Assistant Professor, The University of Hong Kong¹

Abstract

Focusing on the interplay between memory and place, this article examines the rationale behind the use of axonometric drawings (axons) in a geographical research study of the Tumen/Tuman River region encompassing the borders shared by China, Russia and North Korea. The concepts of “memory of place” and “place of memory” guide the structure of this project and the flow of this article. “Memory of place” emphasises the lived experience of our physical senses, and helps determine the great potential of visual methodologies in the fields of geographical and landscape research and study. Drawn up using the graphic production techniques of abstracting, foregrounding, highlighting and juxtaposing, axons avail themselves of and inform both realist and idealist states of mind. In contrast, “place of memory” references a particular type of materiality and helps us understand Tumen *Shan-shui* as a library of memories that reveals a profusion of contested aesthetic, cultural and political meanings. Axons serve to tell narratives revealing desires, actions and undertakings that have shaped and continue to shape the substance of the memory sites in question including infrastructure, architecture and signage. Initially adopted by the author as a medium for recording and communicating due to security restrictions imposed in the border areas in question, the creation of axons generated new insights on methods of documentation in landscape research, and the places and landscapes themselves.

Keywords: Tumen/Tuman River, memory of place, place of memory, landscape, documentation

Introduction

The Tumen/Tuman River (圖們江/두만강) rises on the slopes of Changbai/Baekdu Mountain (長白山/백두산) and emerges into the Sea of Japan/East Sea (日本海/동해). Along most of its length it forms the boundary between China and North Korea, with a relatively short section near the mouth of the river forming the boundary between Russia and North Korea. Ever since the Peking Treaty of 1860 when the Russian Empire acquired territory adjacent to the Tumen/Tuman River estuary, the surroundings have been a seismic hotspot in the arena of international power struggles. Violent conflict has erupted repeatedly most notably during the Russo-Japanese War from 1904 to 1905, the establishment of Manchukuo in 1932, the partition of the Korean peninsula in 1945, and the beginning of the Cold War in East Asia since the mid-1950s. Although the development potential of the Tumen/Tuman River region has long been recognised, especially since the trilateral border finally opened to the outside world in the early 1990s, visible change has only become obvious in the past few years. Chinese funded infrastructure designed to facilitate access between her landlocked northeast provinces and seaports in the Russian Far East and North Korea has led this recent building boom.

As part of my research on the ongoing transformation of the Tumen/Tuman River region, I travelled for three weeks along the length of the river in June 2018. In spatial terms my journey was structured not only by the hydrological landscape of the Tumen/Tuman River but also its geopolitical landscape, in particular the reality that China lost 18 kilometres of the lowest reaches of the river and consequently direct access to the Sea of Japan/East Sea in the late 19th century. My journey took me from the river's source at Changbai/Paektu Mountain to the riverside town of Fangchuan where China, North Korea and Russia meet, just 18 kilometres upstream of the mouth of the river. I made side trips towards the two major seaports in the Sea of Japan, Rason in North Korea and Vladivostok in Russia. In terms of time, my journey coincided with two highly significant events, one natural and one political. The annual natural phenomenon of the ice-melt on Heaven Lake atop Changbai/Paektu Mountain occurred on 7 June 2018 and is celebrated by Chinese and Koreans as a symbol of national renewal and vitality. Then the first-ever meeting between the leaders of North Korea and the United States took place at the North Korea–United States Singapore Summit on 12 June 2018 signalling a potential new era of geopolitics in the Korean peninsula and East Asia.

Memory and Place

My research focuses particularly on the idiosyncratic interrelationship between memory and place, within the context of the rapid transformation of cultural and physical landscapes in the transnational regional confluence defined by the Tumen/Tuman River. The critical importance and role of memory as a key to understanding personal, social and cultural identity has been studied by scholars from a wide range of perspectives and disciplines from philosophy, sociology, and anthropology, to those disciplines focused on the built environment such as geography, landscape architecture, urban design, architecture, and interdisciplinary “place studies”. An impressive bibliography of scholarly works already exists.² Here we find the two terms “memory” and “place” are predominantly combined to describe two different trajectories of thought, namely “memory of place” and “place of memory.”

The “memory of place” can be understood as a particular modality of remembering that derives from one’s physical bodily experience and relates to the way the material environment we inhabit and pass through is interwoven with our memories. Although this way of understanding accepts that places and material environments play a pivotal role in shaping, defining, and constituting our sense of self and our perception of the world around us, it admits that places also come to be defined by their connections with the people who inhabit and experience them. In contrast, the “place of memory” or “memory site” can be understood as a physical reality less related to the texture of lived experience, and more to a materiality and a locality where “memory crystallizes and secretes itself” and “the exhausted capital of collective memory condenses and is expressed.”³ Resulting from the interplay of memory and history, the place of memory marks an event that has already occurred in the past, which exists beyond the boundaries of any individual person. This dichotomy between “memory of place” and “place of memory” serves as a springboard for the exploration of the relationship between memory and materiality that follows.

The adoption of the binary guiding structure of “memory of place” and “place of memory” as an approach for this project is reflected in the use of axonometric drawings (hereinafter referred to as axons) to visually communicate its findings. In architectural circles axonometric drawing has long been a powerful, universally understood method of visualising complex spatial conditions, but it has seldom been applied in the fields of geography or landscape research. This project initially adopted drawing as a medium for recording and communicating due to security restrictions imposed in the border areas in question. Axons were made to document site observations in militarily sensitive locations along the

Tumen/Tuman River and other high security special development zones, where the use of cameras or drones were somewhat if not completely prohibited. Experimental drawings originally produced at the beginning of the project to overcome restrictions on the use of technology for record taking, provided novel insights on both the methodology of landscape research documentation, and the place and landscape being documented by a method more widely known as a technique for architectural representation. These reflections led the author to adopt the use of axons systematically throughout the project.

Logic of Reproducibility: Memory of Place

New insights inspired by the use of axons as a means of landscape research documentation are closely related to the idea of “memory of place”. In line with existing scholarship on “memory of place,” this project focuses on the lived experience of the physical body and its role in shaping the content of remembering. However, this project examines “memory of place” under the banner of “visual methodologies” and from the perspective of the person who produced the visual documentation of the places in question (hereinafter referred to as the investigator). This differs from the mainstream framing of “memory of place”, which refers to the way a particular individual’s personal identity is formed or influenced by one’s memories of any given place. Each axon produced in the project emerges from and reflects the investigator’s “memory of place”; an axon is a refabricated “collage” of reality composed partly of the investigator’s own “snapshot” observations memorised on site and partly of other information she heard of or read about off-site from third parties.

While paying tribute to the rich repository of “visual methodologies” in the fields of geography, landscape and architecture, axons represent a novel form of visuality that translates site reading into visual representation. My exploration using axons aims to expand scholarly interest beyond visual media analysis to include visual media production, and widen the range of techniques employed to document and structure research in the field of geography and landscape to include more than conventional “glass geography.” Further, the use of axons in this project demonstrates how the use of digital drawings in the fields of landscape and architecture can be extended to include the documentation and analysis of past and present social and cultural conditions, beyond visualizing design proposals related to future physical spaces as has typically been the case hitherto.

From Media Analysis to Media Production

Geographers have demonstrated the critical role of representations of landscape to our understanding of social geographies. Important work on landscape imagery has highlighted the importance of representations as a way of interpreting and communicating the ideologies of past and present societies. These writers focus on the social production of an image to facilitate critical readings of cultural landscapes. Geographers such as David Harvey⁴ argue that the economic processes embedded in cultural production shape our understanding of visual imagery, despite this position being criticised as economic determinism.⁵ Likewise, geographers such as David Morley and Kevin Robins recognise the importance of both economic and cultural influences but without giving either precedence over the other.⁶ They carry out detailed analyses of particular industries responsible for visual imagery, along with the political and the economic contexts in which those industries operate. There are also geographers who emphasise the social and/or political identities that are mobilised in the making as well as the perception and interpretation of an image. Focusing specifically on street photography, Colin Westerbeck and Joel Meyerowitz portray photography as a truthful instrument for the straightforward act of observing that permits viewers to peer at subjects from the same hidden vantage point as the photographer.⁷

Ironically, these authors who write about landscape imagery seldom create their own representations themselves. Consequently most recent research on visual matters pays little attention to the one element active at the site of production, namely the author or creator of the image. The idea of the author's insignificance in relation to the effects of an image reached its zenith with Roland Barthes' declaration of "the death of the author."⁸ Barthes and others argue that other aspects of an image's production process account for its effects, leaving the author's intentions practically redundant. These other aspects include visual technology "designed either to be looked at or to enhance natural vision,"⁹ formal production strategies related to content, colour and spatial organization, and "the range of economic, social and political relations, institutions and practices that surround an image and through which it is seen and used."¹⁰ In other words, the wider visual context is much more significant to the meaning of an image than anything the authors thought they were doing.

However, this argument falls when we discuss image production as a research method, in this case the production of axons to document landscape as experienced by the investigator. Here the researcher takes on the role of a media maker focused on media production, rather than that of a media observer focused purely on media analysis of images produced by others. In his 2013 article "Worlds Through Glass: Photography and Video as Geographic method,"

Bradley Garrett argues that the title implies that “mediation takes place when we see worlds through glass” and “filtered through the lens,” and that “the process of making photos and videos is just as important as what we do with them.”¹¹ Scholars such as Bauch Nicholas identifies the huge potential for employing visual methodologies, pointing out that visual media are “socially ubiquitous yet almost awkwardly absent” from geography.¹² In an era when life is becoming “a complicated meld of human and machine, culture and biology, analogue and digital”¹³ and when technological devices such as phone cameras are part of our daily existence, engaging with the media critically could offer new ways of representing and even establishing realities.¹⁴

When discussing “the site of production,” Gillian Rose pointed out “all visual representations are made in one way or another and the circumstances of their production may contribute towards the effect they have ... the technologies used in the making of an image determine its form, meaning and effect.”¹⁵ “Glass geography” normally refers to the use of videos and photographs as ways to document and structure research, and the production of axons could be categorised under the same umbrella. However, the way axons are utilized and conceptualized as research tools differs from video and photography. This difference is further complicated by the ongoing debate about the “apparent truthfulness” of visual representation. From the early days of photography, and later videography, most practitioners understood them as technologies that simply record reality, hence the now old adage “the camera cannot lie.” Concurrently an opposing opinion has coexisted which views these technologies as strange and magical, and critics have questioned the “truthfulness” of videographic and photographic representation and have asserted that their production processes are far from straightforwardly technological.¹⁶

As mentioned previously, the creation of axons for this project was initially a response to overcome the reality that cameras were banned in militarily sensitive areas. While the objective is to use axons to record the investigator’s site observations “truthfully,” the very process of axon production makes the representation more subjective than objective, so it balances precariously on the ambiguous boundary between truthfulness and fabrication. Unlike the production of photographs and videos, the production of axons cannot happen on the same spot and at the same moment as the observation. Rather than simply documenting what is seen in front of the camera lens, the production of axons is a process of translating the investigator’s sensory experience on site. The axons are essentially collages synthesizing various types of memory, some intangible and some tangible and retrievable such as “illegal” mobile phone snapshots, quick sketches, short written notes, or audio recordings of conversations on site. In addition to its reliance on

heterogeneous forms of memory, axons are not recorded simultaneously with the immediate experience of the investigator like photos or videos. The fact that they are produced days or weeks after the site visit, makes it inevitable that memories are contaminated by information seen or heard by the investigator during the time lag between site experience and axon production.

Although the site-remote and unspontaneous process of axon production cannot guarantee its truthfulness, it opens up new ways of visual representation and facilitates the creation of a visual reality not achievable with other media. The axons exist as hybrid offspring of the all-pervasive modern glass geography techniques of photography and videography, and the pre-industrial landscape paintings and sketches and logs used by travelers since times immemorial. The digital 3D CAD modeling software such as Rhinoceros compels us to see through “glass,” in this case a computer screen, while the process of exporting the drawings to graphics editors such as Adobe Illustrator and printing onto paper echoes the quality of a landscape sketch or painting. Together they distil and reconstruct a reality scalable in space and time. From the point of view of media production for the purposes of documenting and structuring research, the axons present us with unique memories of place that draw on and speak to both realist and idealist states of mind.

From Spatial Production to Spatial Analysis

Axons not only expand the range of “glass geography” media beyond photographs and videos to computer aided drawings, they broaden the use of (digital) drawings from spatial design to spatial research, and redefine the role of drawing in terms of framing the ways we perceive the world around us. Drawings and paintings have traditionally defined the conventions of how we see and appreciate our surroundings, and are closely interwoven with the concept of landscape. The very idea of landscape in the sense of surveying or even arranging distant vistas is reflected in English language dictionary definitions of landscape as “an expanse of the earth’s surface that can be seen from a single viewpoint.” In other words, landscape is not considered to exist independently in its own right, rather it is only extant by virtue of being mediated through the eye of the beholder. William Gilpin (1724–1804) described this actuality to a tee when he defined the picturesque as “that kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture” in his 1768 art treatise *Essay on Prints*.¹⁷ The picturesque is seen not so much as a naturally occurring phenomenon as it is a created brainchild, either of connoisseurs who can “create” the picturesque in their mind’s eye when they view a landscape, or by painters who are capable of creating a landscape as if framed and reflected in

a Claude Lorraine glass. Later this picturesque tradition rooted in the canons and techniques of painting was unquestioningly transferred to the realm of photography and adopted as a natural mode of depiction for the new technology.¹⁸

Geographers and architects universally employed analogue hand drawn plans and illustrations before the now ubiquitous adoption of digital technologies. Drawing is an important technique in the repertoire of communication methods available to observational disciplines such as geography, which facilitate our understanding and picturing of the world around us, and our interactions with it.¹⁹ Drawing is a critical tool used by architects and landscape architects to not only articulate future designs and visualise spatial arrangements, but also to facilitate critique and speculation in theoretical practice.²⁰ However, the advancement of digital technologies in the past fifty years has led to a divergence in the way drawings are used in the geographical and architectural disciplines. In the case of geography, while photographs and videos have increasingly supplanted hand-drawings, geographical documentation has only made relatively limited use of digital drawings. In the realm of architecture, while digital tools such as computer-aided design (CAD) and computer-aided manufacturing (CAM) have advanced the standardization and accuracy of architectural drawings for spatial production, the role of drawings for spatial analysis and theoretical enquiry has lapsed considerably.

The use of axons in this project aims to demonstrate the feasibility of applying digital drawing in an innovative way that helps frame new ways of looking at the environment. A diverse range of experimental initiatives using digital drawings to analyse and document landscapes and architectural elements inspires this approach. Work by James Corner,²¹ Anuradha Mathur and Dilip da Cunha,²² and Yoshiharu Tsukamoto and Momoyo Kaijima of Atelier Bow-Wow are pertinent.²³ More specifically, this approach resonates with “architectural ethnography,” a method defined by Atelier Bow-Wow as “a new approach in drawing—of, for, among, around—society.”²⁴ By repurposing architectural representation techniques as narrative tools, these drawings offer a novel way of observing and recording the human environment, reflecting both the physical reality of the built environment, and the way it responds to the activities and aspirations of the inhabitants.

Experimenting with digital axons also aims to explore ways of introducing new media technologies and communication paradigms drawn from landscape and architecture into the field of geography. These new media technologies bring with them innovative ways of identifying, tracking, and representing a sense of place including built form and landscape, cultural and social relationships and local heritage, that are too complex and dynamic to be represented by traditional

landscape paintings and surveyors' maps, or even by more advanced media such as photography and videography. The scale and complexity of this research project demand a visual medium that is scalable in time and space, and is capable of synthesizing heterogeneous information types. The Tumen/Tuman River extends over 521 kilometers so the associated region is far greater than the eye can survey at a glance. Being a contested, multicultural region at the intersection of three national boundaries, it is also interlaced with a dizzying array of contemporary cultural and political paradoxes and historical legacies. Digital axons as deployed in this project are reminiscent of zoom lenses, which provide flexible viewing angles and frames allowing seamless shifts between the scales necessary to understand architecture, landscape and geography. They also provide a wide enough range of depth of field that the viewer can focus on specific elements of a narrative in a variety of settings while superfluous information remains out of focus.

Before moving on to elaborate how "place of memory" in the Tumen/Tuman River region is represented in axons in this project, it might be useful to explain the process of generating the axons. In general, axons are perceived somewhere between plan and elevation, with a viewpoint that permits highly descriptive drawings representing three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional plane. These drawings are compelling as they hover between reality and impossibility. On the one hand, axons are similar to landscape and architectural technical drawings in that they are perfectly dimensioned and proportioned, accurately describing the spatial relationships between different elements. On the other hand, axonometric projections (or parallel perspectives) unlike linear perspectives based on Euclidean optics similar to our vision, are non-photorealistic but highly legible.

All the axons in this project share a similar appearance in terms of their perspective and composition, as they were produced under the same modelling and drafting software settings. Referencing the investigator's fieldwork notes as well as satellite images, "memory of place" is first translated into the digital software platform Rhinoceros 3D. 3D digital model are then translated into 2D through axonometric projection. These drawings have no vanishing points, meaning that lines that are parallel in 3-dimensional space remain parallel on the 2-dimensional drawings, and distant elements are drawn to the same scale as nearby objects. Being scale drawings, the width, height, length and depth of any given element within the frame can be measured accurately from the 2D drawing. This project utilizes 45° axonometric projections, known as "military" projections due to the origin of this drawing technique. The military projection depicts the angles of the x- and z-axes at 45°. Since the angle between the x-axis

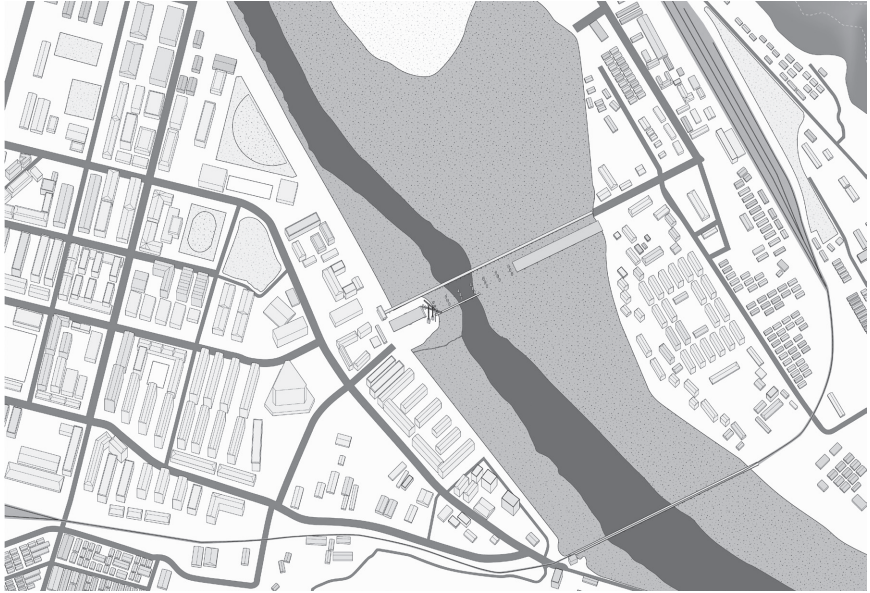


Figure 1a

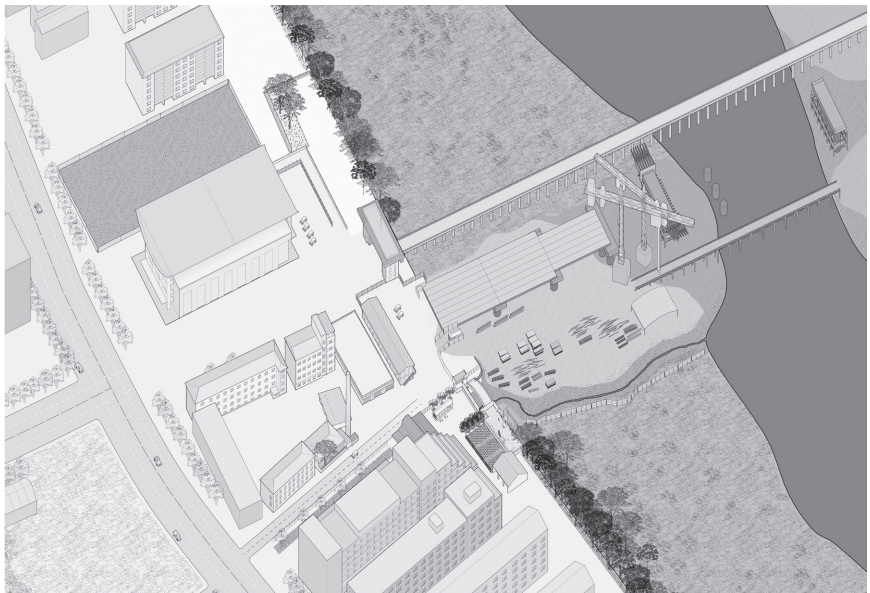


Figure 1b

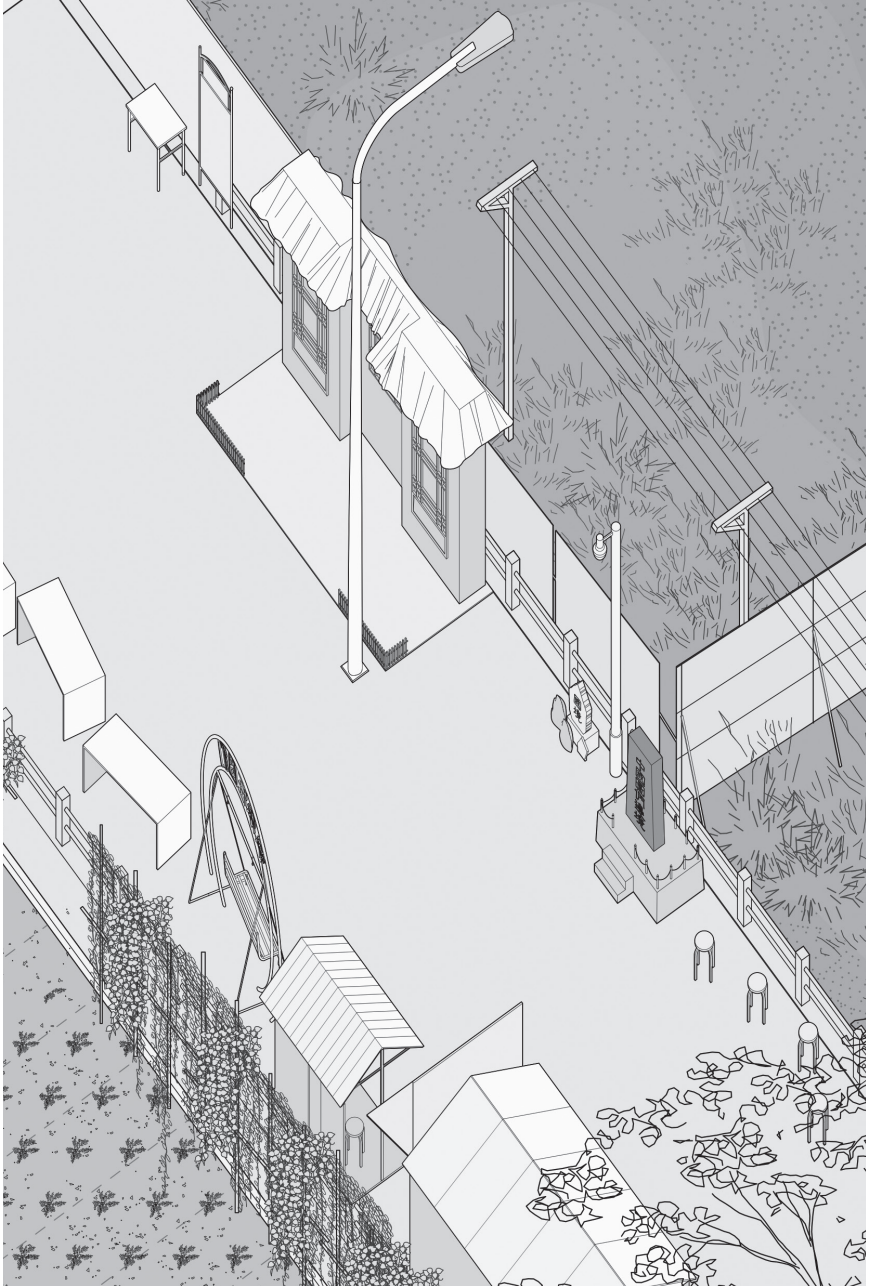


Figure 1c

and the z-axis is 90°, the x–z plane is a true representation of the plan of the site in question, rotated 45° from the horizontal and vertical.

Precise, accurate and unambiguous, the axons produced in this project bear a close resemblance to technical drawings that do not require freehand artistic skills. However the scale, level of detail and allocation of focus of each axon is unique, resulting from the diverse range of graphic record-taking techniques employed in their production. Such graphic production decisions are made based on the narrative that the investigator wants to represent in a particular drawing. Four graphic production techniques are commonly used in this project, namely abstracting, foregrounding, highlighting, and juxtaposing. These are described below and may be applied individually or in combination in any given axon.

First, abstracting. This technique has been employed by artists since the early days of art history to draw out the aesthetics of the subject. Abstraction is deliberately used in this project as a selection process identifying the essential details of the reality that is to be transferred to digital media. The two main criteria applied to this process are the scale of the drawing and the relevance of any particular detail to the overall narrative. For example, very different levels of detail are depicted in a set of three drawings of Tumen City, at scales 1:20000, 1:5000 and 1:100 on A4 size images. The 1:20000 scale drawing depicts the geospatial relationship between Tumen and Namyang, two border cities separated by the Tumen/Tuman River, and the old and new Tumen Border Bridges, the former built in 1941 by the Japanese, and the latter currently under construction since 2016. Showing the disposition of building blocks, road and railway networks, the two bridges and the Tumen/Tuman River is the key function of this drawing, so unnecessary detail is excluded. Zooming in to 1:5000 scale, the second drawing depicts infrastructure in much more detail, focusing on the construction site of the new cross-border bridge. Particular details are selected to better depict the relationships between the old and new bridges, other infrastructure, the rivers, and the surrounding urban context on the China side of the river, so the viewer can better appreciate the process and scale of the ongoing construction activity. The 1:100 scale drawing reveals the human-scale experience on site, within a larger narrative of the local government's efforts to promote the local tourism industry. This drawing allows the viewer to see the Korean-style building facade, the two stone steles engraved with the Chinese characters *guojing* 國境 (national border) and *bianjing* 邊境 (borderland), a street lamp, a CCTV pole, some public seating and a vegetable garden. In this way, we can appreciate the small-scale details of this Instagram-popular spot in Tumen City, right outside the hoarding fence of the bridge construction site (see Figures 1a–c).

Second, foregrounding. Some of the axons feature cutaway graphics (also known as sectional perspectives) in order to foreground information that would otherwise be invisible to the viewer. Cutaway graphics can be used at multiple scales to reveal narratives embedded in architecture, infrastructure and landscape, to facilitate a better understanding of spatial organisation. For example, this technique is applied at the architectural scale, in a detailed drawing of an observation tower in Fangchuan 防川. At the furthest extremity of Chinese territory along the Tumen/Tuman River at the convergence of Russian, Chinese, and North Korean territories, stands the *Long hu ge* 龍虎閣 (Dragon and Tiger Pagodas), a 65 meter tall eight sided concrete tower decked out like a traditional Chinese pagoda. A cutaway axon of the tower's top floor reveals how both the exterior architectural form and the interior viewing equipment represent two different styles of perception and observation. In addition to a 360-degree view of the landscape where three countries meet, visitors can peer through paid binoculars to where the Tumen/Tuman River enters the Sea of Japan 18 kilometers away (see Figures 2a–b). Cutaway graphics are also used in this project at the landscape scale, particularly for depicting the border roads that follow the banks of the Tumen/Tuman River. These landscape cutaways delineate the relationship between the infrastructure, the Tumen/Tuman River and the surrounding topography. For example, the axon drawing of Provincial Road 201 in Jingxin Town 敬信鎮 reveals how a recently built riverside berm was deliberately constructed to block views of North Korean territory on the other side of the Tumen/Tuman River. Another axon drawing of Provincial Road 201 near the China–Russia border in Fuangchuan village shows the slope regrading underway in order to widen the road from two lanes to four, allowing the viewer a glimpse of China's recent expansion and reinforcement of border road infrastructure as part of the Belt and Road project (see Figures 3a–b).

Third, highlighting. A common technique used in comics, annotated close ups are added within the axon to highlight particularly important signage that better explains the narrative in view. The structure of power does not only reveal itself through the physical form of buildings and infrastructure, but also through numerous bilingual and sometimes trilingual signs in Chinese, Korean and Russian, which are displayed at prominent locations and emphasize the local “sense of place.” Close-ups can be inserted within an axon in various ways. For example, two enlargements of roadside signs are inserted in callout bubbles overlaid on the axon of Provincial Road 201 near the China–Russia border to highlight the geographical and geopolitical context of this particular section of the road. The sign to the left displays text in Chinese and Korean declaring, “It is our common responsibility to protect border facilities” (保護邊防設施是你我共同的責任),

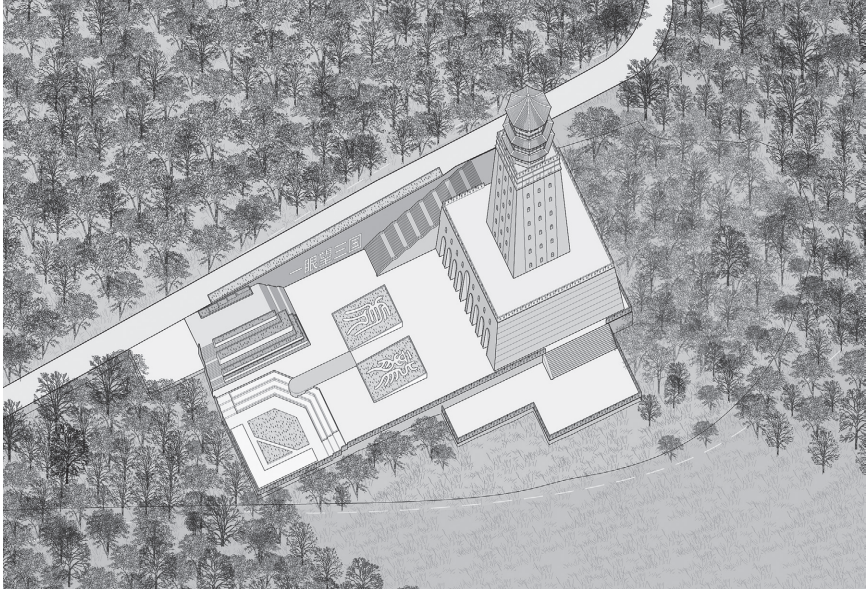


Figure 2a

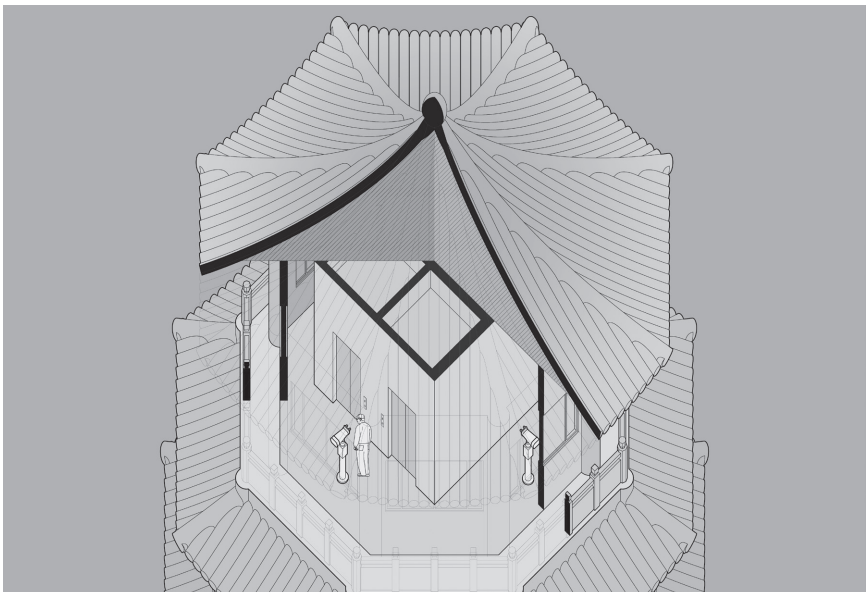


Figure 2b

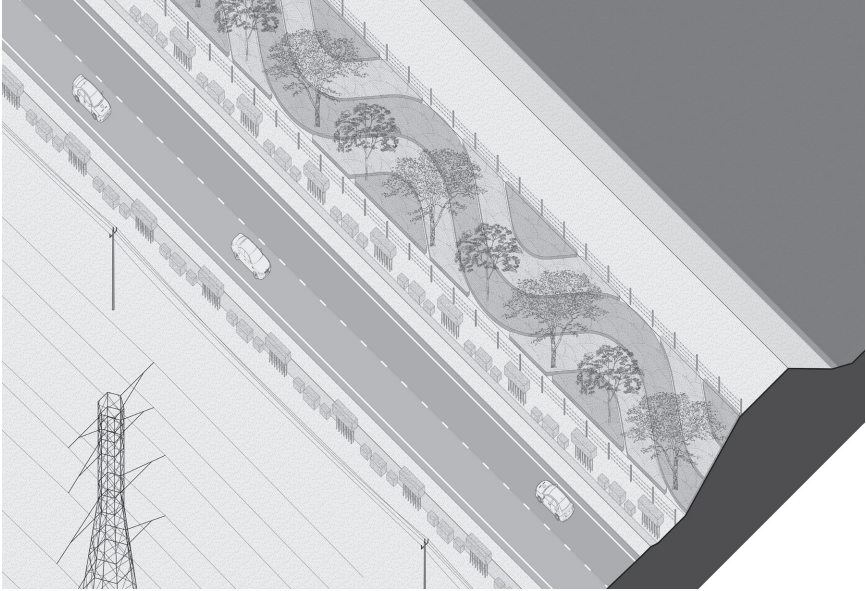


Figure 3a

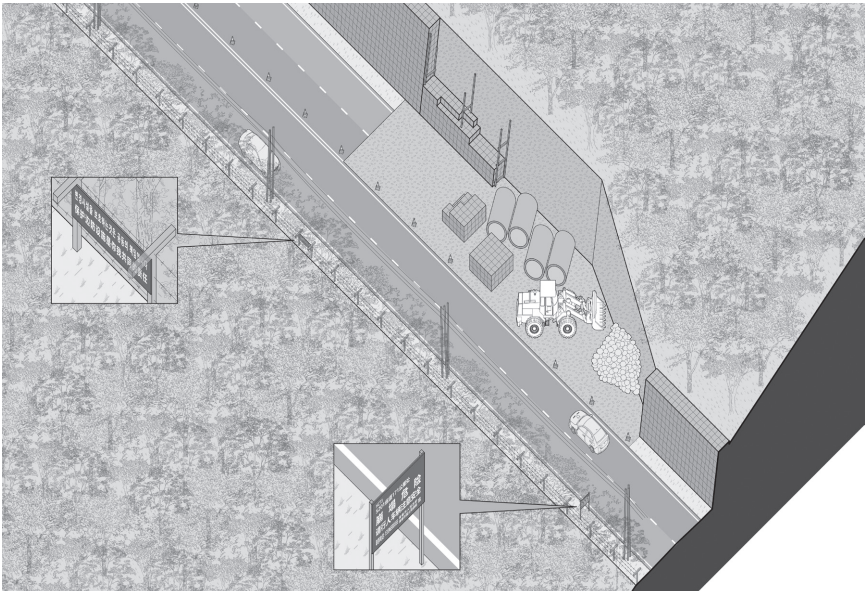


Figure 3b

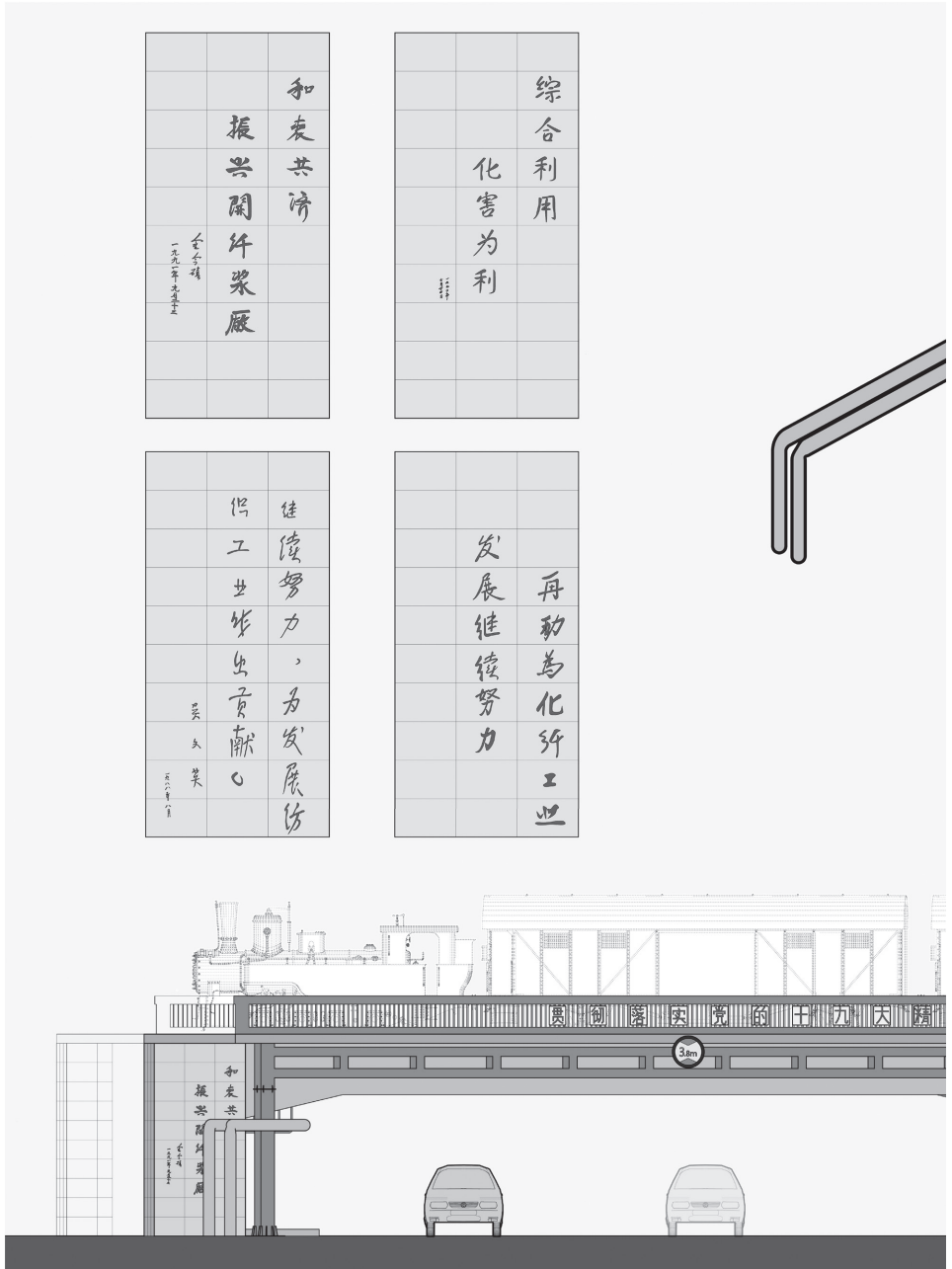
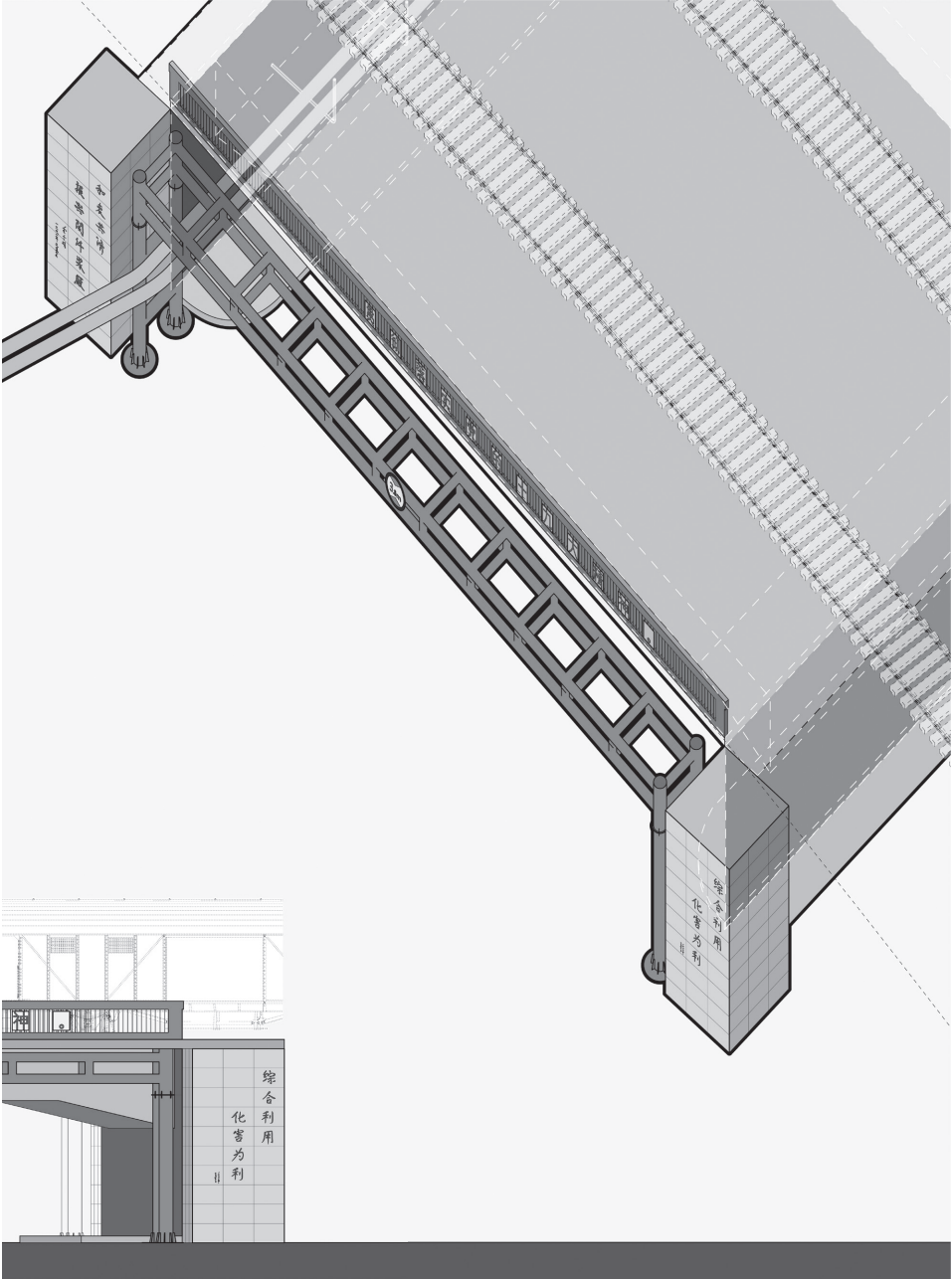


Figure 4



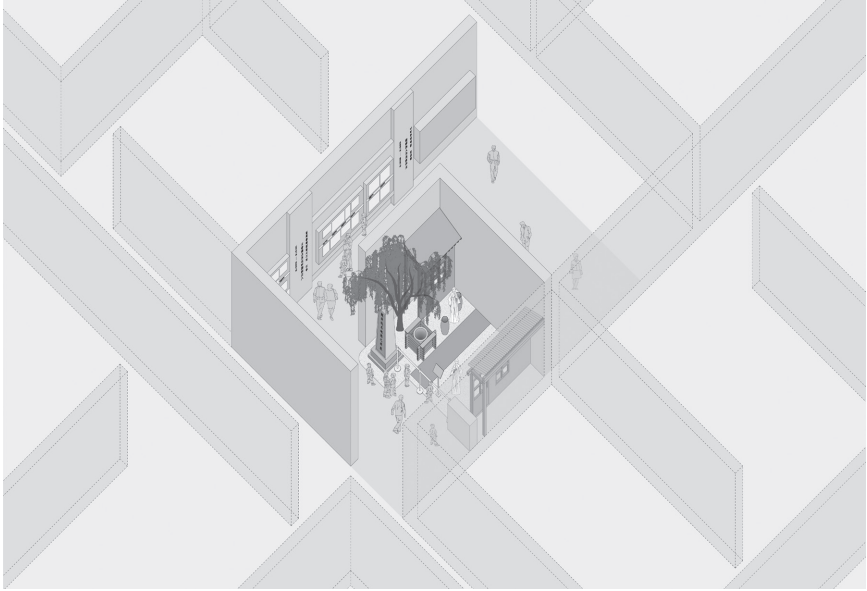


Figure 5a

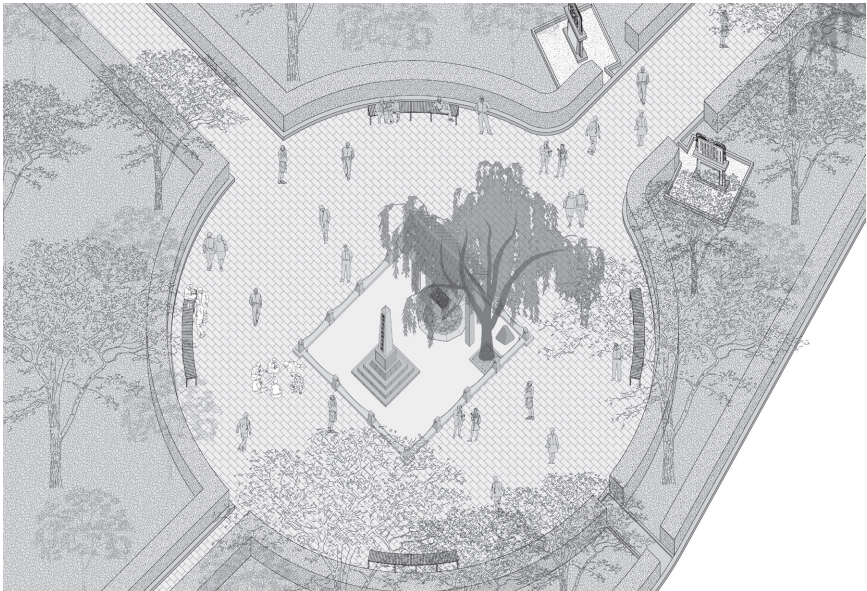


Figure 5b

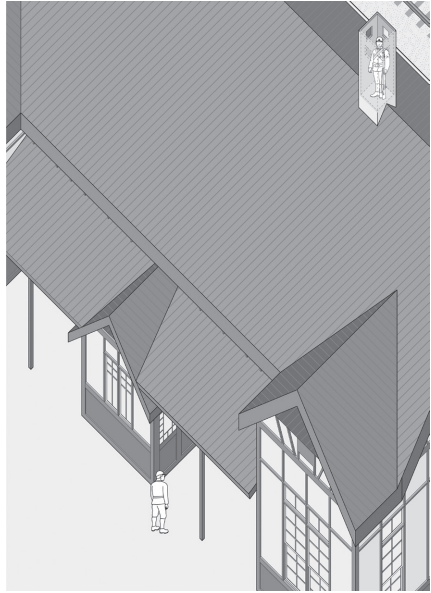
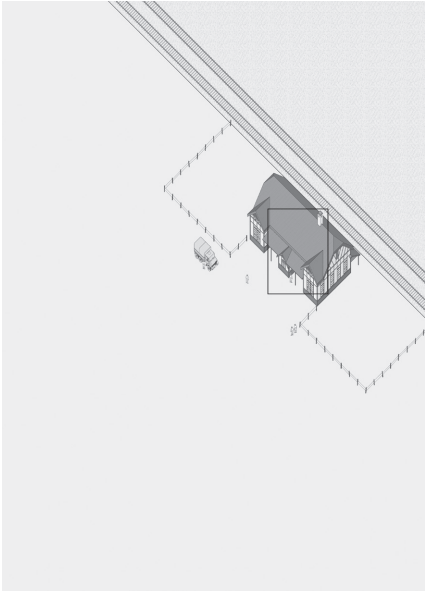


Figure 6a

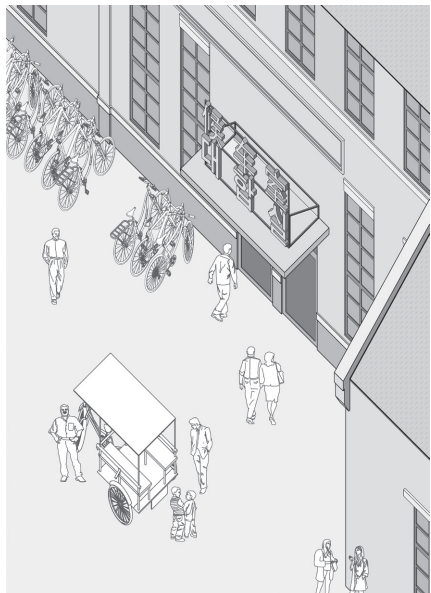
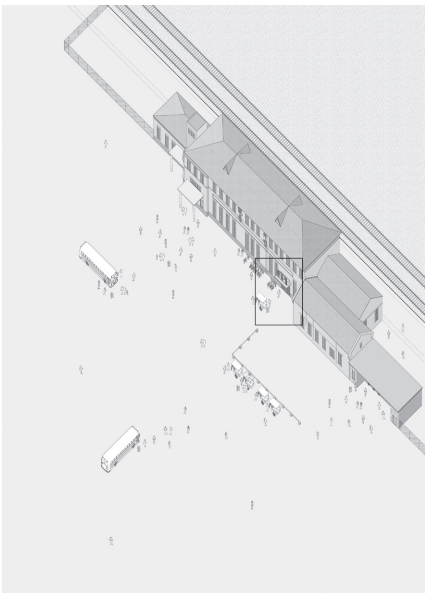


Figure 6b

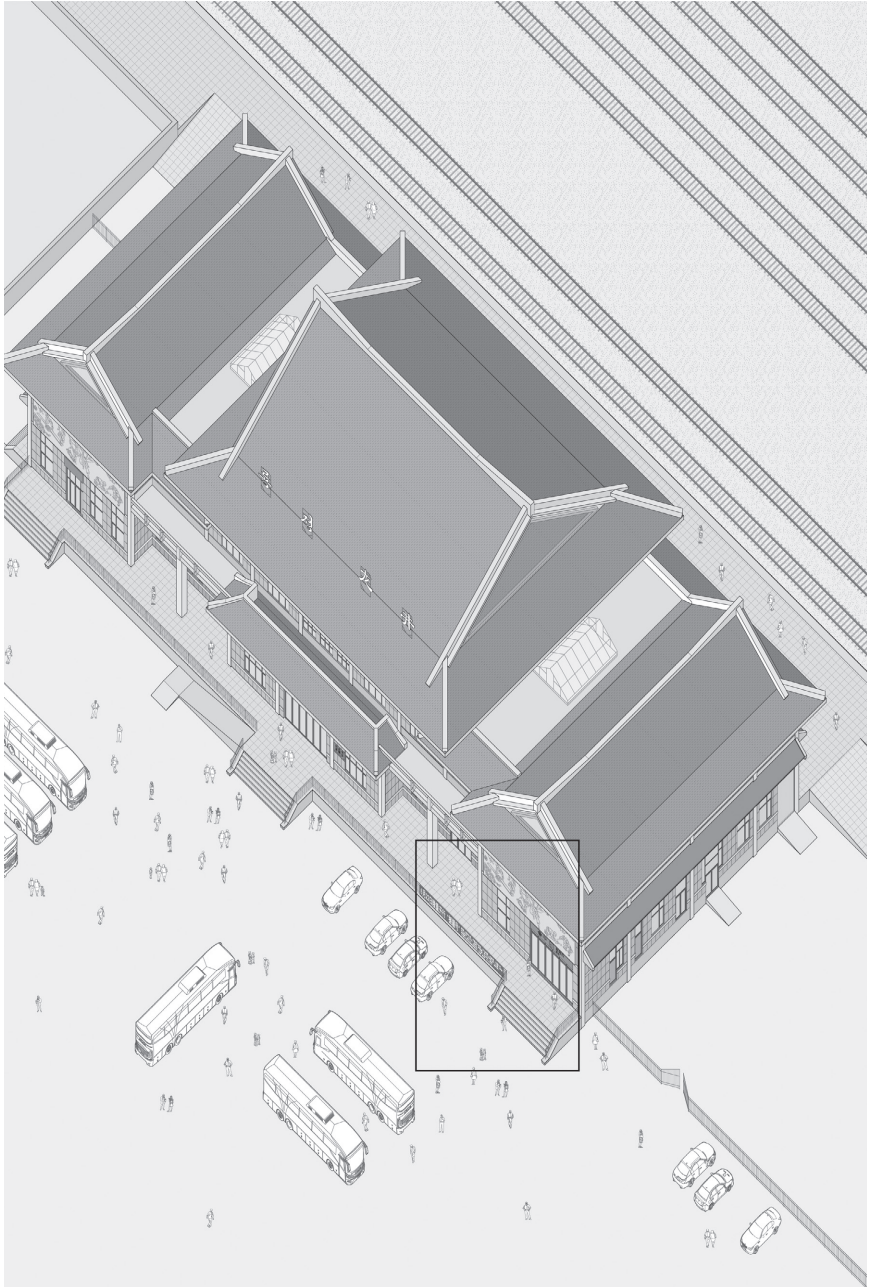


Figure 6c



thus affirming the status of this border road. The sign to the right reads, “Watch for falling rocks. Pedestrians and cars should be careful when passing through road upgrading zone!” (崩塌危險。請行人車輛注意安全!). This sign acknowledges a sense of caution in relation to the construction site and betrays the challenges of road construction in such hilly terrain (see Figure 3b). Some axons utilize more flexible and innovative ways of displaying details of relevant text in the picture. For example, a composite drawing showing an axon, an elevation and details of signs inscribed and hung on an element of infrastructure, depicts a railway bridge in Kaishantun 開山屯. 1980s propaganda proclaiming “Join the fight to revitalize Kaishantun Chemical Fibre Pulp Mill” (振興開纖漿場) inscribed on the bridge pillars coexists with hanging signage panels installed in 2017 declaring “We should fully implement the spirit of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China” (貫徹落實黨的十九大精神). The juxtaposition of these signs belies a sense of uncertainty for the future of a derelict industrial town on the Tumen/Tuman River (see Figure 4).

Fourth, juxtaposing. Each axon is intended to contain its own self-sufficient narrative, but the technique of judiciously positioning different axons together generates new permutations of their combined narratives. This technique is particularly useful to help visualize the duration of a timeline or the interrelationship between elements that are physically far apart. Juxtaposing allows a set of axons to show the transformation of a particular place or piece of infrastructure over time, or show how points of interest in different locations collectively reveal a coherent narrative. For example, visualizations of replicas of *long jing* 龍井 (dragon well) are juxtaposed to form a coherent narrative about the role of this type of monument in everyday life. Replicas of the dragon well and stone steles engraved with its name could be found in a number of locations in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, being monuments of particular importance to the irrigation and agricultural practices of early Korean immigrants to China. One replica in the Yanji Museum is woven into a chronological narrative describing how the ethnic Koreans and Han Chinese fought together against the Japanese and then transformed barren wastelands into productive farmland. Another is situated in Dragon Park 巨龍公園 surrounded by large shade trees and presides over local leisure pursuits such as picnicking and playing poker (see Figures 5a–b). Another example depicts three drawings of Longjing Railway Station from the 1930s, 1970s and 2010s juxtaposed to reveal how the form, scale, and meaning of this critical infrastructure has been transformed over the course of eight decades. Situated at the junction of the Chaikai railway 朝開鐵路 and the Helong railway 和龍鐵路, this station was originally built and rebuilt by the Japanese in the style of *nihon kenchiku* 日本建築 (Japanese architecture) in the 1930s. A major

renovation carried out in the 1970s saw the station expand in area to 1012 sqm. The station was then rebuilt in 2013 in the style of *joseonjok geonchook* 朝鮮族建築 (Korean architecture), and tripled in size to 3030 sqm to accommodate increasing passenger demand (see Figures 6a–c).

Forms of Living History: Place of Memory

These early experiments with axons also provided new insights on the place and landscape being documented which are closely related to the idea of “place of memory”. “Place of memory” is less about the texture of lived experiences than “memory of place”, and more about the type of materiality and formation of memory within a social context. The term *lieux de mémoire* (“place of memory” or “memory site”), first coined between 1984 and 1992 by French historian Pierre Nora, stems from two traditions. First, the concept is rooted in French philosopher Maurice Halbwachs’ research about the social frameworks of collective memories.²⁵ Halbwachs’ research posited that the specific shapes and social, cultural and political functions of the remembered past are dependent on the nature and organisation of social groups, institutions and government authorities. Second, the concept embraces Frances Yates’ research on mnemonics employed by ancient and medieval rhetoricians who regarded places as custodians capable of producing appropriate “deposits” or images.²⁶ This tradition posits that the selection of particular memory sites and deposits (images) located within them, can be understood as a technique to augment the process of remembering.

Although the notion of *lieux de mémoire* was never precisely defined, Nora’s intent was to call attention to the diverse forms of depositories in which the past can be accumulated and from which it can be reanimated in the present. Nora sees memory sites as unwitting keepers of a literal and metaphorical living history where one can continuously and unendingly unearth diverse values “revealing new, overlooked or underappreciated aspects of the past.”²⁷ The concept of place of memory was originally conceived in the context of French cultural memories but has since been widely adopted as a tool to analyse artefacts and depositories far beyond French historiographical consciousness. The critical adaptation of the idea of “place of memory” has led to a number of narratives. Here I will focus on three dialectics closely related to this project.

Three Dialectics

The first dialectic is the tension between linear and nonlinear time. The place of memory is inherently spatial but it is also temporal. The last two or three decades

have seen a rapid rise in interest in conceptions of time and the nature of memory sites. These discussions challenge the traditionally dominant linear understanding of time where the past, present and future are linked in a chronological chain of causation. This construct of linear time is inextricably tied up with the idea of modernity, where the distinction between past and present ages is unquestioned. Modernity, understanding time in terms of the two contrasting experiences of acceleration and loss, provokes the capitalistic use of time as a tool for controlling and imposing routines on human behaviour.²⁸ In the West this linear conception of time has been and is still widely understood to be fundamental to personal and group integrity and coherence, and the purpose of cultural memory is understood to be the facilitation of past examples to inform the present through a process of rational analysis.²⁹

In contrast to the linear “historical” chronological understanding associated with modernity, postmodern culture embraces a more fluid conception of time and attempts to reconstruct the relationships between the past, present and future. In response to the lack of continuity in the contemporary world, cultural geographers have pointed out the difficulty of describing the temporality of place in linear time “as the whole disperses into a series of ephemeral, randomly appearing and shifting islands.”³⁰ Concepts such as the “extended present”, the “global present” and the “dominance of presentism” are indicative of the ambiguous place occupied by the present in our contemporary world. Unlike linear time where the past is clearly separated from the present by the immutable passage of time, the postmodern nonlinear conception of time sees past and present merge into one illimitable “now”. Nonlinear time is anathema to static memories that emphasise particular historical events and public figures. Instead, it recognises a continual state of social transformation where social constructs are discontinuous, and the groups, communities, identity forming processes and senses of belonging that people experience are characterised by temporariness, impermanence and randomness.³¹ This state envisages the cohabitation of divergent permutations of experiences and memories and the existence of a multilinear and multidirectional history containing different times at the same time.

The second dialectic is the tension between memory and counter-memory. If the nonlinear conception of time redefines the temporality of history, then the idea of counter-memory critically reappraises the relationship between history and identity. Understanding the concept of nationhood as a cultural artefact, scholars have long recognised the significance of memories in the manufacture of national identities, where selective recollections of past events form the invented traditions that serve to invoke the unity of the modern nation.³² As mentioned previously, Nora’s early discussion of “place of memory” was drawn from his analysis of

the French context: “I had thought that the rapid disappearance of our national memory required an inventory of the places where it had effectively been played out.”³³ Although he was criticised for nostalgically yearning for a (French) past that might never have existed, and for putting “place of memory” in the service of the nation, he in fact argues in favour of a shift from the glorification of the memory-nation towards an era of commemoration in the final section of his three-volume collection *Les Lieux de Mémoire*.

In the era of commemoration, people question whose memory is being appropriated to form the identity of a collective group. It challenges the absoluteness of the nation and how memories and monuments are unquestioningly put at its disposal. Concepts such as “counter-memory” and “counter-monument” are proposed as alternatives to memory and memory sites allowing for the retrospection of long repressed memories and depositories that evoke “otherness and divergent memories of the past” hitherto excluded from public debates.³⁴ The concept of the counter-monument invites both a response to the dominant cultural memory and criticism of the monument as an art form. By suggesting ambivalence rather than closure, counter-monuments such as the disappearing counter-monument in Harburg, Germany, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., United States, invite viewers to critically reflect on their own links to past history and future ventures.³⁵ James Young’s study of Holocaust memorials in Germany, Austria, Poland and the United States,³⁶ Andrew Herscher’s reflection on the state-sponsored efforts to curate a multi-ethnic heritage in post-war Kosovo³⁷ and Andrea Carlà and Johanna Mitterhofer’s study of the Bolzano Victory Monument in South Tyrol, part of Europe characterised by shifting borders and complex language politics,³⁸ all critically examined places of memory and counter-memories in regions that are rich in legacies of historical conflicts, particularly those multi-ethnic societies.

The third dialectic is the tension between monumental and ordinary artefacts. If the nonlinear conception of time and the concept of counter-memory challenge the dominant narrative that history unfolds along an unequivocal timeline in service of the nation, then the celebration of ordinary artefacts broadens the range of forms of memory sites and permits memory to have dominion over history. Until recently the prioritisation of history over memory has led to memory sites being understood almost exclusively as history sites. This has been epitomised by the rich literature on “place of memory” focusing on monuments, memorials and museums, where national history is imposed and famous personalities are amplified. These monumental sites are frequently associated with warfare,³⁹ violence, tragedy⁴⁰ and idealised visions of the unification of different regions and ethnic groups.⁴¹ The idea of a “monument” as an enduring physical construct

is so strong it persists even in those writings that focus on counter-memory and counter-monument.

Despite the dominance of the history-centric idea of monuments, there are notable exceptions that focus on ordinary artefacts and everyday culture. For example, John Gillis argued in favour of the rise of private memory in a global economy where “everyone is his or her own historian”⁴² and suggested embracing multiple identities as a survival strategy in an age of continuous change and uncertainty.⁴³ Another case in point is Divya Tolia-Kelly’s work on “re-memory”, a conceptualisation of encounters with memories stimulated by ordinary everyday objects⁴⁴ and the “everyday modes of memory work” of the multiplicity of diasporic identities and spaces.⁴⁵ These writings reemphasise the essence of personal “memory” which privileges private, emotional, subjective and bodily recollections and differentiates memory from history. In contrast to the history beloved of officialdom, memory embodies local, ordinary and everyday life experiences and events. Memory nurtures pluralism in defiance of history’s totalitarianism. This interpretation of memory broadens the meaning of “place of memory” from the monumental to the ordinary and invites a re-evaluation of “artefacts of no importance” such as sections of wall, cobblestones, street signs and household items as depositories of the past with important cultural and social significance. In contrast to monumental artefacts that epitomise centralisation and permanence, ordinary artefacts personify decentralisation, ephemerality and flexibility. The humdrum and unnoteworthy facilitate critical dialogues about time, decay and degradation while evading politicisation by the state.

Divergent Memories of Tumen Shan-shui

All the dialectics above can be applied to the case of Tumen *Shan-shui*, shifting between linear and nonlinear time, between dominant and overlooked narratives and between monumental and mundane artefacts. The term *Shan-shui* 山水, literally mountain water, is used in this project to refer to the landscapes in question. *Shan-shui* is a genre of Chinese art that rose to prominence in the Tang dynasty (618–906) and had a powerful influence on landscape painting across East Asia especially Japan and Korea. It seeks to express the inner essence or spirit of the subject matter at hand rather than just its exterior form. In this sense, *Shan-shui* resonates with the term *genius loci* from Roman mythology which literally means the “spirit of a place.” Although it is typically used in an aesthetic context, here the term *Shan-shui* is used interchangeably with the word “landscape” to set the scene for the examination of memory sites subject to a plurality of contested meanings including aesthetic, cultural and political aspects.

Tumen *Shan-shui*, at once natural and artificial, is experienced at a purely physical level yet is also “susceptible to the most abstract elaboration.”⁴⁶

The long history of Tumen *Shan-shui*, characterised by its unique cocktail of multi-national and multi-ethnic migration, conflicts and ever shifting borders, is steeped in a multitude of divergent memories deposited in its various memory sites. The Tumen/Tuman River region reveals itself as a “trans-systematic society”, a concept coined by the Chinese scholar Wang Hui, which refers to “an interrelated social and cultural pattern, formed through the interactions, communications and coexistence of different cultures, ethnic groups and regions.”⁴⁷ For the Koreans, this place inspires a progressive narrative of past and present, with the Changbai or Paektu Mountain being understood as the cradle of both ancient Korean civilisation and the modern Korean states. For Japan, this area connected Korea and Manchuria, the two most important colonies of the Japanese Empire, and was a testing ground for the Japanese dream of building a pan-Asian empire in the first half of the 20th century. For Russia, the region was the frontier of her “power expansion” in the Asia-Pacific region and still forms a major component of Russia’s “Pivot to the East”. For China, the meaning of this place was and is dominated by the process of “interiorization” as it was and remains an ethnic frontier, first Manchu, now Korean.

My present day experience travelling along the river opens doors to “past desires and future imaginaries.”⁴⁸ Japanese infrastructure built to export natural resources from China through Korea to Imperial Japan was re-appropriated by Chinese state owned industries as post-1949 China developed its north-eastern frontier. The free-trade zone selling Russian goods is next to a museum displaying panels and videos showing how North-eastern China lost its access to the Sea of Japan after Russia’s annexation of Outer Manchuria from 1858 to 1860. Signs declaring the importance of enhancing border security co-exist with billboards emblazoned with idealistic visions of the transformation of the military outpost and economic backwater into an economic powerhouse, “the Rotterdam of North-eastern China.” Focusing on the physical infrastructure and artefacts that people produce, interact with and consume, the axons presented here aim to synthesise contemporary phenomena, the historical background and ever-changing cultural conceptualisation of the Tumen *Shan-shui*. The materiality of each location is elevated to an event, attesting to the peculiar power of place to freeze a given moment in time. In the following paragraphs I present examples of the three major forms of materiality examined in this project, namely infrastructure, architecture and signage.

First, infrastructure. Infrastructure such as railways, roads and bridges, are commonly recognised for their permanence and for facilitating mobility. In the

Tumen/Tuman River region however, infrastructure is frequently ephemeral and particular elements are appropriated for different roles contingent on the ever-changing geopolitical situation. Bridges, for example, are typically associated with connections, but here this connotation is challenged by often-abrupt construction and demolition events and the sudden acceleration and obstruction of traffic flows. An often cited case that illustrates the geopolitical tensions within the Tumen/Tuman River region is the Korea–Russia Friendship Bridge, the only bridge across the 18 km long border between North Korea and Russia. The Soviet Union built a bridge 500 meters downstream from the China–Korea–Russia tripoint in order to transport military supplies to support the Korean People’s Army during the Korean War (1950–1953). The bridge was further upgraded in 1959. Although China claims navigation rights along the final stretch of the Tumen in accordance with the 1886 Sino–Russian Border Treaty, the 11-meter clearance of the Friendship Bridge effectively blocks any shipping access (see Figures 7a–b). Another case concerns the shifting fortunes of a timber bridge across the Tumen/Tuman River at the border town of Chongshan 崇善 reflecting the changing relationships between China and the two Koreas. Constructed from North Korean timber and Chinese nails, built jointly by soldiers from both sides, the bridge was completed in the 1970s as a symbol of Chinese and North Korean alliance and friendship. But in 1992 the middle section of the bridge was demolished by North Korean soldiers in response to the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and South Korea (see Figures 8a–b). The quandary of connection is also revealed in a more recent incident that took place at the bridge across the Tumen/Tuman River linking Quanhe in China and Wonjong in North Korea. As one of the key regional infrastructure links promulgated by the Belt and Road Initiative, the new Quanhe–Wonjong bridge was completed in late 2016 to improve trade between the two countries. On August 15, 2017, China started imposing import bans on North Korean iron, coal and seafood in accordance with UN sanctions against North Korea. As Quanhe customs officers began refusing customs clearance for seafood on that day, 27 Chinese trucks loaded with North Korean seafood were halted on the bridge for three days. Huge loads of frozen seafood melt with an estimated total loss of 200–300 million yuan (see Figures 9a–b).

Second, architecture. Beyond its functional requirements, architecture is often loaded with political symbolism. Although the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture region increasingly takes on the generic appearance of other rapidly urbanised Chinese cities, examples of new buildings can be found in Korean, Chinese and Russian traditional styles. Korean-style architecture is preferred for cultural and transport facilities in the major towns because it symbolizes peaceful ethnic coexistence, as the Korean Chinese have long been praised by the central



Figure 7a

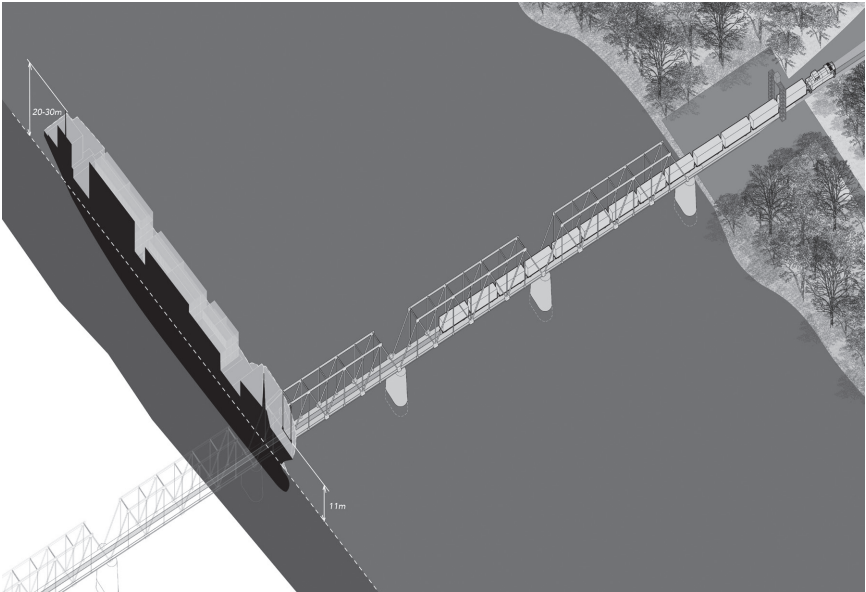


Figure 7b

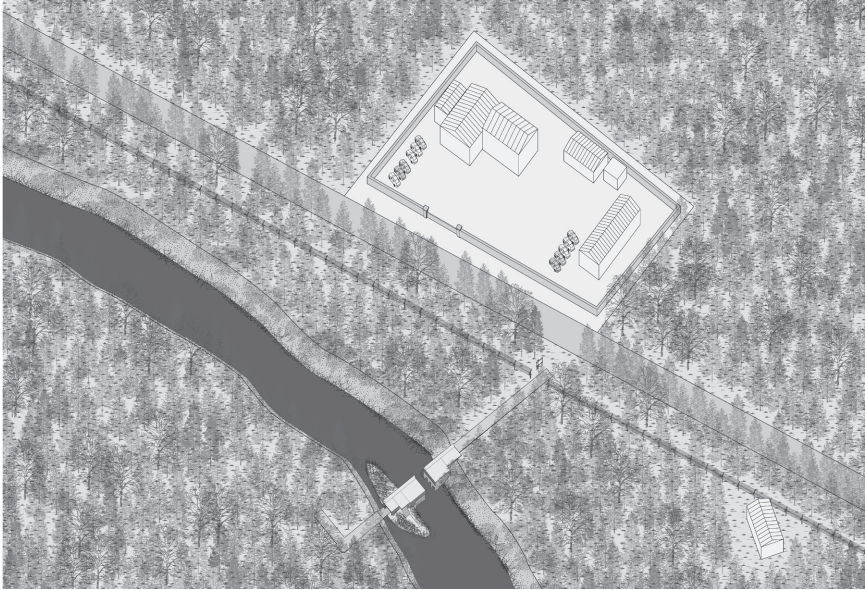


Figure 8a

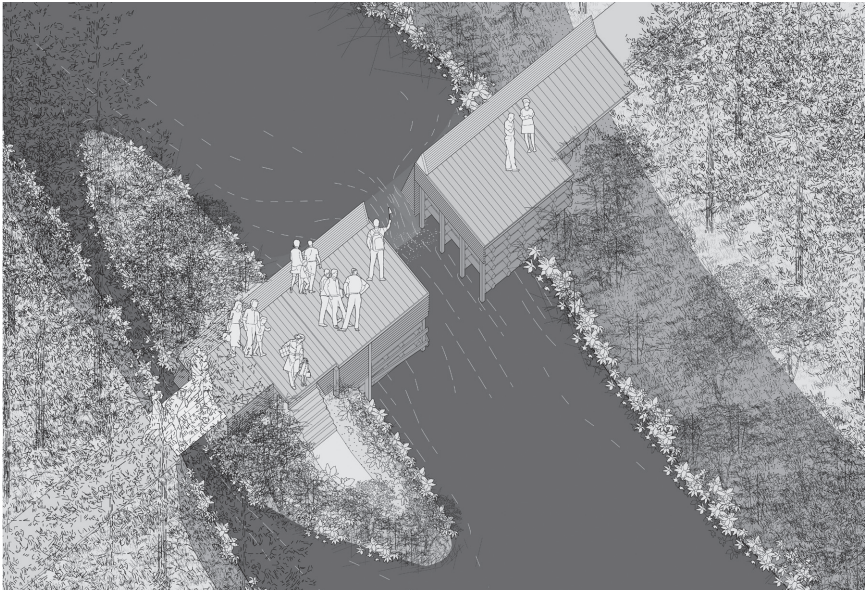


Figure 8b



Figure 9a

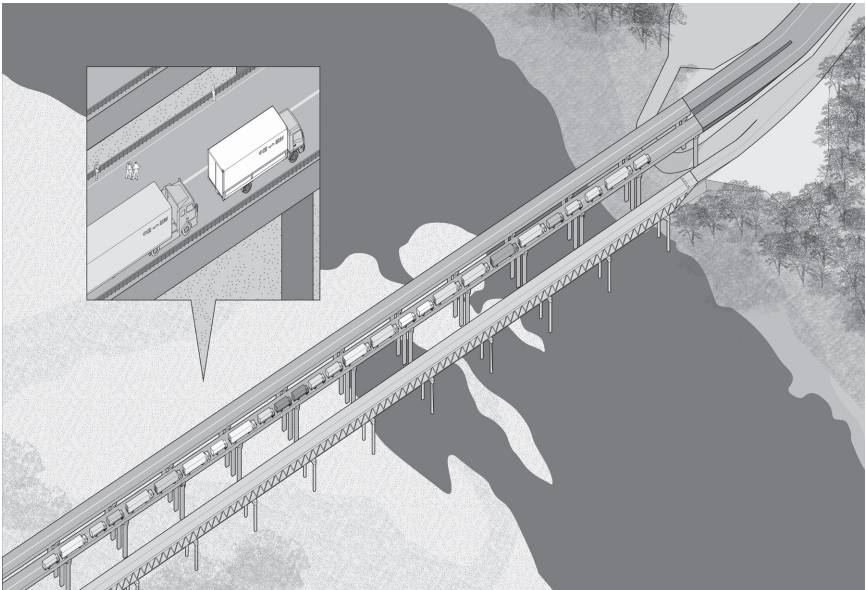


Figure 9b

government as “a model minority” in a *tongyide duominzu guojia* 統一的多民族國家 (united multi-ethnic state). The newly completed Longjing New Railway Station designed by the Department of Architecture at Yanbian University, stands on the site of an older station built by the Japanese more than eight decades ago. Its Korean-style pitched roof is hard to differentiate from Chinese-style, but reference to Korean culture is plain to see in the engraved murals on the front façade which feature traditional Korean games (see Figure 6c). Examples of Chinese-style architecture are more commonly found along China’s borders with North Korea and Russia, as statements of Chinese nationalism and sovereignty. For example, there are two newly constructed Chinese pavilions located at the two ends of a 600-meter riverside walk in Guchengli 古城里, a small Chinese village along the Tumen/Tuman River. The five-sided pavilion located at the east end of the river walk stands right next to the No. 70 border stele erected in 2009, together with two other stone steles, one erected in 1952 engraved with the text *dukou* 渡口 9 river crossing, and one erected in 1994 engraved with the text *guojingqiao* 國境橋 (border crossing bridge). The other pavilion located at the west end of the river walk is eight-sided and stands right next to the border fence which is festooned with a banner reading “Only when everyone participates in strengthening the border security can everyone be able to enjoy a beautiful homeland” (人人參與治安防範 個個擁有美好家園) (see Figures 10a–b). Russian-style architecture has been adopted for the increasing number of Russian-product markets, notably at Hunchun 琿春, a major gateway connecting Yanbian in China and Primorsky Krai in Russia. The establishment of the special zones for processing and trading, the extension of the high-speed railway to Hunchun, and the anticipated extension of the railway into Russia manifest the Chinese central government’s plan to transform a once heavily militarised border into an open trading interface. Further, the Russian-style architecture aims to smooth over any references to China’s territorial loss to Russia in the late 19th century, in favour of the mutual economic benefits for both countries in the 21st century. For example, a border trade complex completed in 2017 next to the Hunchun port is built in the Russian architectural style. The gold stainless steel bilingual China–Russia Border Trade Zone sign and the Chinese and Russian flags prominently guarding both sides of the entrance, further extoll the message of transnational economic partnership (see Figure 11).

Third, signage. Old and new signs prominently displayed on infrastructure elements or building facades afford an additional layer to the divergent narratives of the region. In addition to the figurative and textual content of any given sign, its location and relationships with other signs are important and revealing aspects that deserve attention when examining memory sites. For example,

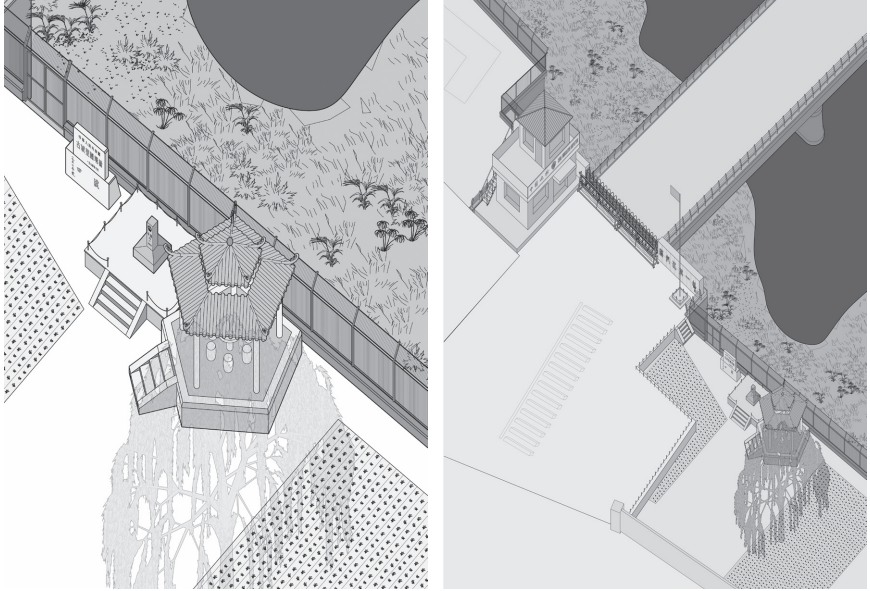


Figure 10a

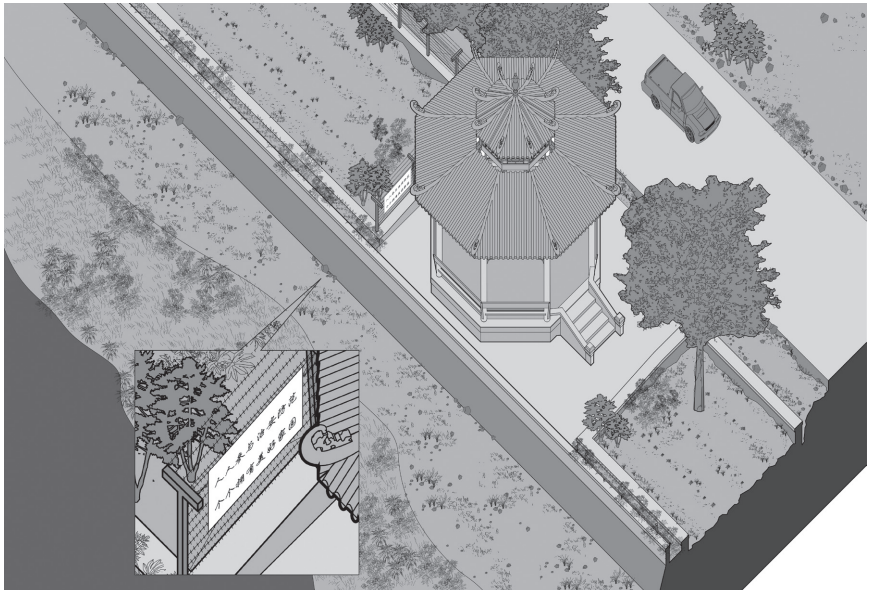


Figure 10b

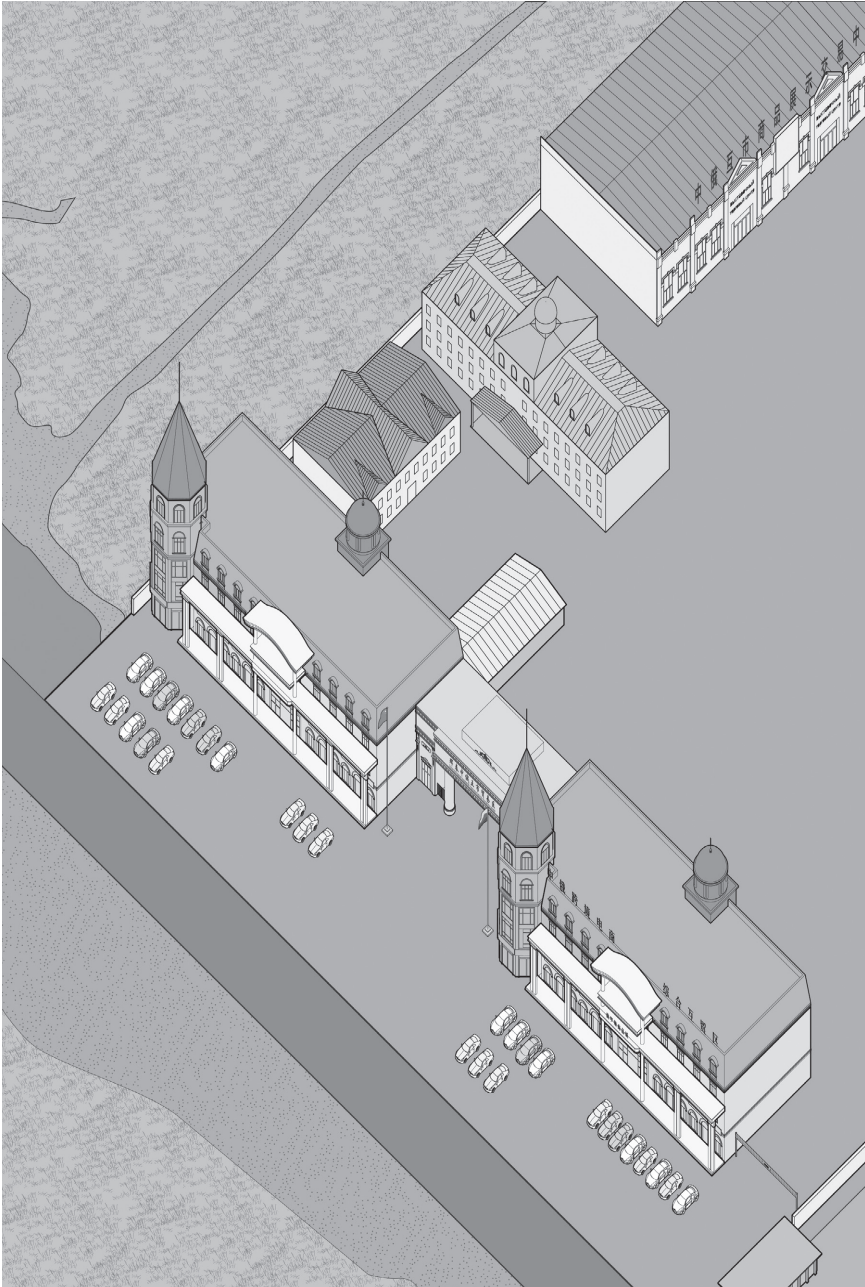
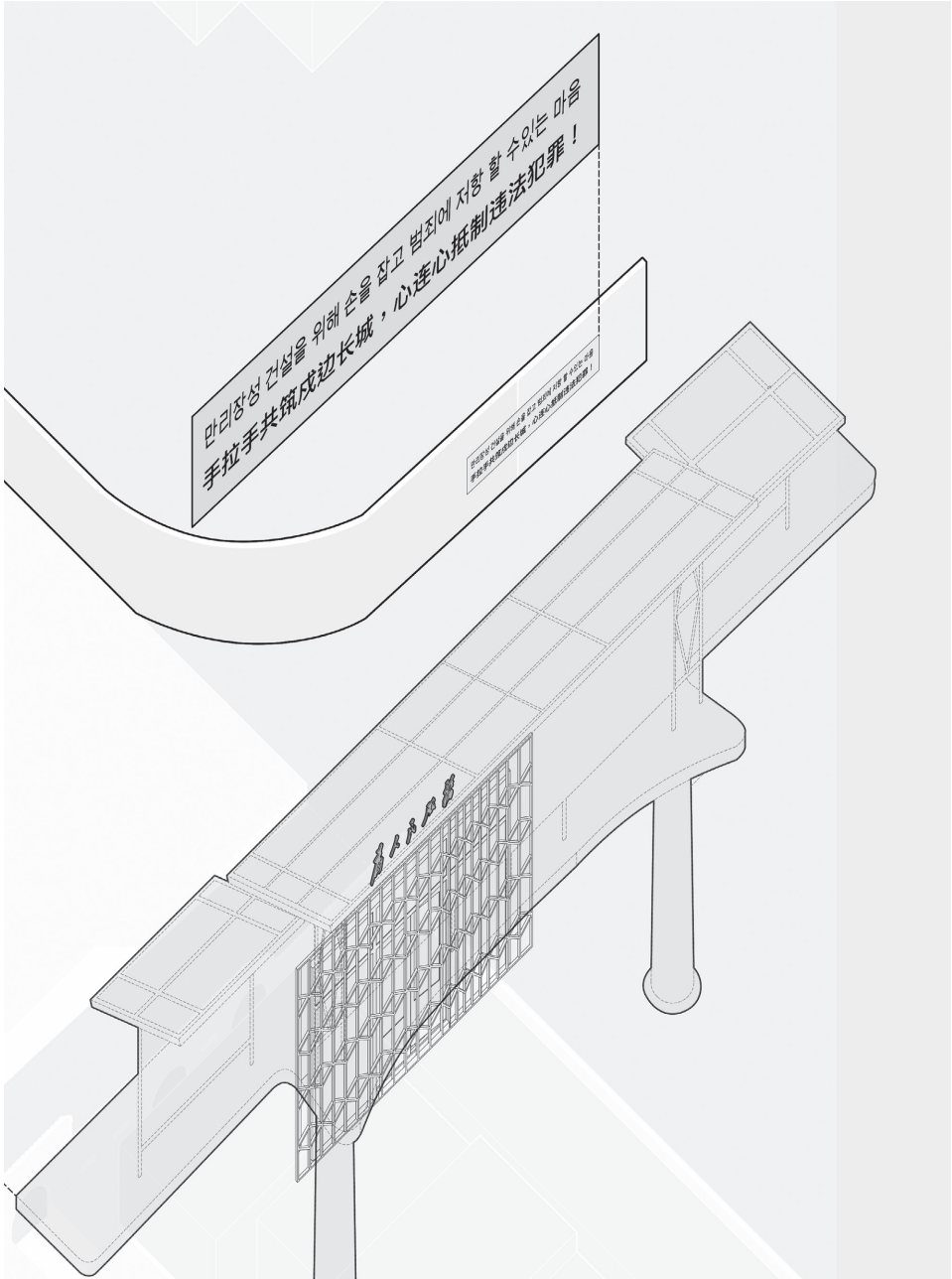


Figure 11

signs displayed in the square in the town centre of Kaishantun 開山屯 visually tell the transformative story of this border town. Kaishantun endowed with rich forest and water resources, was well known for its paper mill. The industry was originally developed by the Japanese in the 1930s then nationalised as a Chinese state-owned factory in the 1950s. After the industry came to an end following the implementation of the Water Pollution Control Ordinance along the Tumen/Tuman River in the 1990s, Kaishantun was left to its post-industrial fate of virtual dereliction and mass unemployment. A roadside banner reading “Hand in hand to build the Great Wall for borderland security; heart to heart to put a stop to all illegal activities” (手拉手共築成邊長城, 心連心抵制違法犯罪) is prominently displayed at the entrance to the square. Texts left over from the 1970s reading “Sailing seas depends on the helmsman; making revolution depends on Mao Zedong’s thought” (大海航行靠舵手, 幹革命靠毛澤東思想) are engraved on top of the three-story workers’ hall. Numerous posters stuck on the building facades with brash headlines such as 出國 (going abroad) advertise job opportunities in far-flung countries including Spain in Europe and Angola in Africa, testifying to the dramatic outflow of labour from this post-industrial border town (see Figure 12). In another case, signs displayed at the entrances and exits of an expressway tunnel near Fangchuan reveal the ambiguities between the region’s current obsession with infrastructure expansion and the country’s mourning over the loss of coastal territory and access to the ocean in the late 19th century. The Chinese central government and the Yanbian prefecture have recently pursued a strategy called *jiegang chuhai* 借港出海 (literally to borrow a foreign port and gain access to the sea) in the unlikely hope of gaining navigation rights to the last 18 km of the Tumen/Tuman River in the foreseeable future. China’s promise of expanding and upgrading railways and roads is considered to be conditional on allowing better connections between land-locked Yanbian to Zarubino port in Russia and Rason port in North Korea. An enormous billboard is mounted above the tunnel entrance sporting Chinese characters reading “Constructing sea-access corridor, promoting development and opening-up” (打通出海通道 推動開發開放) on top of a computer-rendered collage with one tree in the foreground, one road leading to the ocean and a cargo vessel flying a Chinese flag. In addition, bilingual signs reading “Prosperity of the region depends on the protection of its road” (想致富 愛護路) and “A smooth road connection leads to a thriving revolutionary frontier” (道路暢 老區旺) are painted on all four tunnel entrance and exit retaining walls. All these signs emphasise the critical role roads are understood to play in boosting the economic vitality of the borderland (see Figure 13).



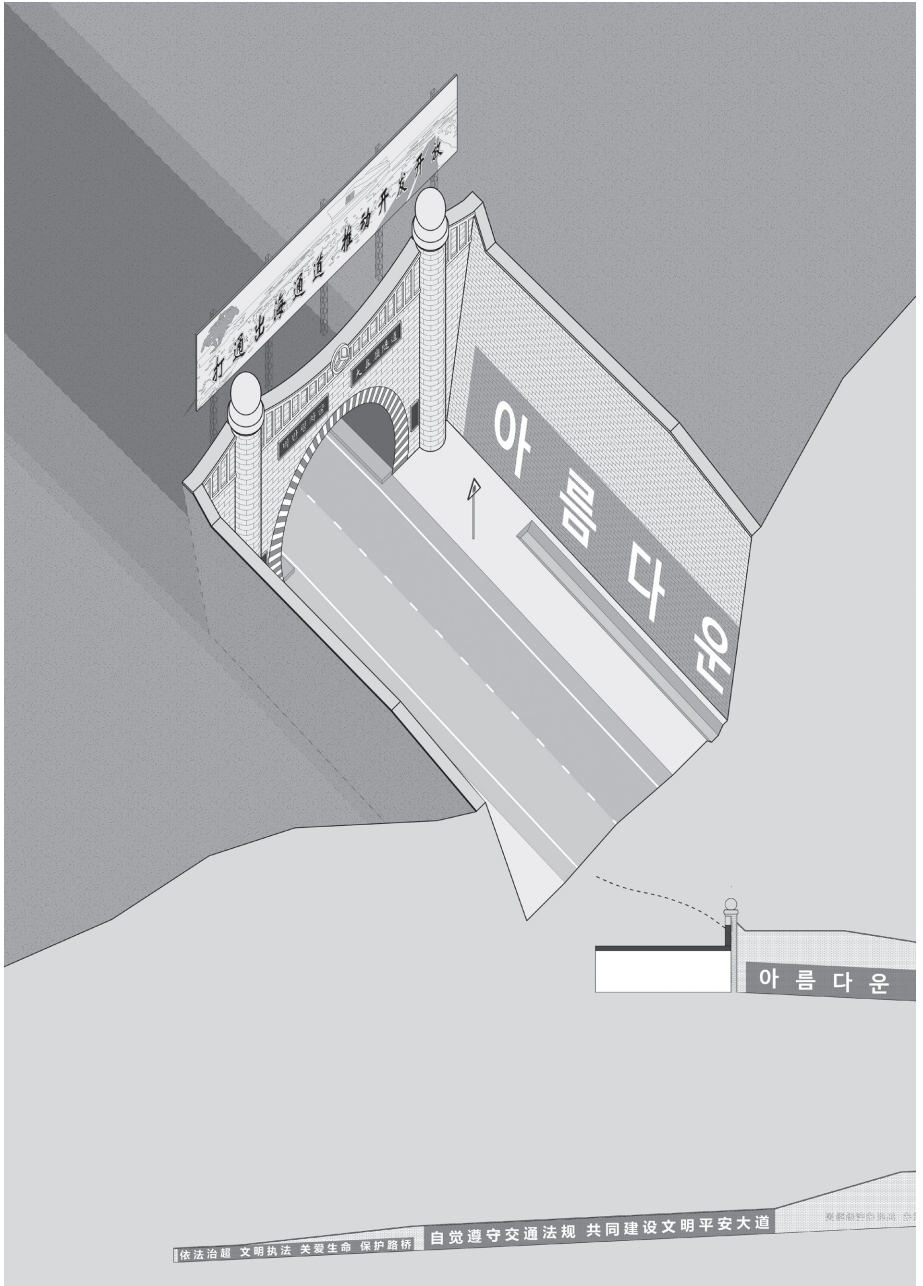
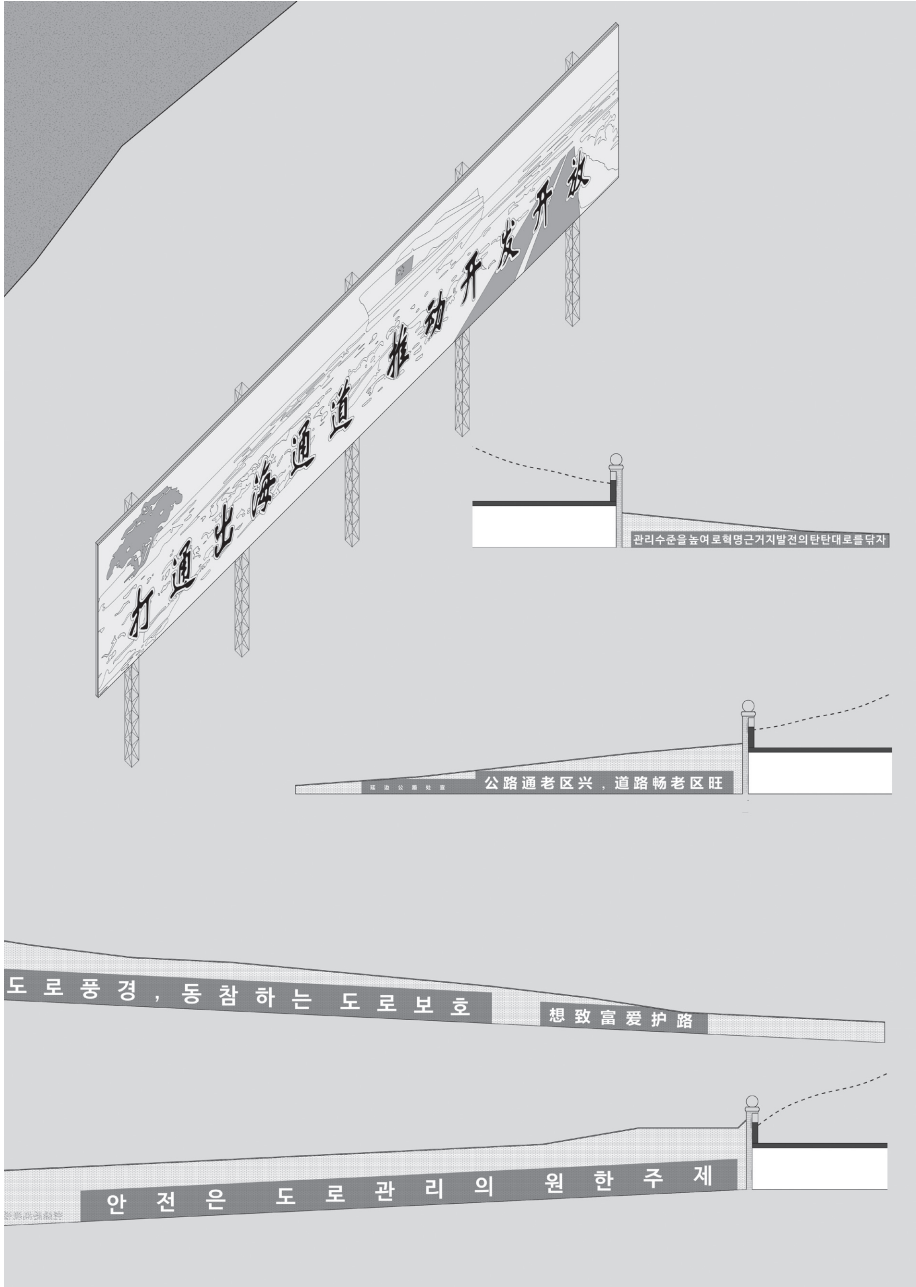


Figure 13



Conclusion

Focusing on the interplay between memory and place, this article examines the rationale behind the use of axonometric drawings (axons) in a geographical research study of the Tumen/Tuman River region encompassing the borders shared by China, Russia and North Korea. The use of axons was initially in response to the reality that cameras are banned in these militarily sensitive areas. This experimental approach to record taking generated new insights on methods of documentation in landscape research, and the places and landscapes themselves. Consequently, this led to the systematic use of axons throughout the project.

The concepts of “memory of place” and “place of memory” guide the structure of this project and the flow of this article. “Memory of place” emphasises the lived experience of our physical senses, and helps determine the great potential of visual methodologies in the fields of geographical and landscape research and study. I focus on the practice of creating representations rather than the analysis of visual media that currently dominates these fields of study, thereby positioning computer-aided drawings as a medium closely related to photography and landscape painting. The production of axons is discussed as a new way of looking at the environment. They are scalable in time and space and capable of accommodating and synthesising heterogeneous types of information. They allow researchers to visually present their site records in a way that makes information more accessible than is the case with traditional landscape paintings, surveyors’ maps or more advanced media such as photographs and videos.

The “place of memory” or “memory site” references a particular type of materiality and helps us understand Tumen *Shan-shui* as a library of memories that reveals a profusion of contested aesthetic, cultural and political meanings. I focus on the ambiguities that exist between linear and nonlinear time, dominant and mundane narratives, monumental and ordinary artefacts, and position the material culture that people ordinarily produce, interact with and consume at the centre of this investigation. Tumen *Shan-shui* is characterised by its unique multi-national and multi-ethnic circumstances and its long history of migration, shifting borders and political and military conflicts. The axons allow us to visualise multiple storylines and narratives while synthesising contemporary phenomena, the historical background and the ever-changing, interwoven conceptions of the Tumen *Shan-shui*.

More than a hundred axons have been produced for this study since the end of my trip in June 2018. Drawn up using the graphic production techniques of abstracting, foregrounding, highlighting and juxtaposing, these axons avail themselves of and inform both realist and idealist states of mind. They serve to tell narratives revealing desires, actions and undertakings that have shaped and

continue to shape the substance of the memory sites in question including infrastructure, architecture and signage. They assemble a variety of ways of examining a territory that allows us to comprehend a range of visual information far greater than the eye can decipher at a glance, and that enables us to grasp the interweaving significances of old and new events too complicated to interpret on a conventional chronological timeline. They physically and historically contextualise the divergent memories of Tumen *Shan-shui*, permitting us to simultaneously visualise and appreciate the ecological, cultural and political *genii locorum*.

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RESEARCH NOTE

Between Natural and Appropriate Burden Sharing in Defense: Revisiting Carter Administration's Troop Withdrawal Plans from the Korean Peninsula

YUJIN LIM Graduate Student, University of Leeds

Introduction

The history of U.S. troop withdrawal plans from South Korea has been in flux for almost as long as the history of the presence of the U.S. troops on the Peninsula. Since the beginning of its presence from 1945, the U.S. troops have been serving the deterring role against North Korea's conventional forces, and they have also been functioning as a power balancer in the region. With this in mind, Washington considered the troops as a strategic political tool for its foreign policy. The question of troop deployment in Korea was interrelated with larger structural changes in the region in this period, namely U.S. relations with China and North Korea, respectively. The troop withdrawal idea emerged during Nixon's presidency when the relations between China and the U.S. improved. Troop withdrawal from Korea surfaced as a sensational issue during Carter presidency, a period when the U.S. and China were normalizing relations and perceptions of a North Korean threat had diminished. The heated topic of the time, however, settled without bringing any changes.

Returning to the debates of the Carter era has some unexpected benefits, given that current U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly expressed a desire to pull

U.S. forces out of Korea, and national security scholars and ex-officials have nearly universally condemned his view as an aberrant one. Cost-cutting impulses clash with alliance structure, resulting in an intense public debate.¹ This research note ultimately can be a useful source for those who desire to understand what factors played out for this complex decision-making process. Moreover, there will be similar archive of the Trump Administration's Presidential Review Memorandum (PRMs) on cost borne and withdrawal of U.S. troops. Considering that they will be available in the future, this topic is well worthy of a research note. The reflections on the current times in the end of this note lays out the impact of U.S. troops presence—which includes empowering the decision-making power of the U.S. and economic benefit South Korea gained by hosting the troops—and concludes how variety factors affect the decision of troop withdrawal.

This research note primarily focuses on the troop withdrawal policies of the Carter Administration through the PRM released from 1999. It revisits the history alongside President Richard Nixon's ideas for withdrawal seeking to provide a clearer view on the bigger story of U.S. troop withdrawal plans in South Korea. The research note also engages with documents from Jimmy Carter Library. This note has its value in reflecting the past and focusing on how this issue is keep coming back over the history. Charles Kraus's article released earlier this year visits this issue with a focus on international pursuit of dialogues.² He thoroughly captures the dialogues between 1977 and 1979 providing helpful sources to those who are interested inter-Korean engagement and international dialogues. More materials on the broader topic of U.S.–South Korea alliance can be useful to view this issue with more interesting angles, such as the work of Victor Cha who examines the durability of U.S.–South Korea alliance with the angle of realism and liberalism,³ and Keyu Gong who explores the alliance from the Chinese perspective.⁴ Furthermore, readings on U.S.–Japan alliance work by Thomas J. Christensen that considers security of East Asia as a whole⁵ and G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi's edition on U.S.–Japan partnership⁶ provided a more holistic picture of U.S. alliances in East Asia, and have helped to set the framework for this more focused study.

Mirroring the Past

The sharing of military costs between the United States and South Korea is a long-standing issue. President Trump has often brought up the issue of the cost borne by the U.S. for its troops and facilities on the Peninsula, insisting South Korea should bare a larger share of the defense costs. The increased in focus on the topic prompted fears of a U.S. troop withdrawal from South Korea when the U.S.

and South Korea failed to reach an agreement on a new cost sharing deal before the five-year contract ended on 31 December 2018. For that reason, U.S. troop withdrawal became a big topic for discussion at the beginning of 2019.⁷ Although the U.S. and South Korea signed a new deal in February 2019, this short one-year deal will very likely trigger another discussion on the same topic if the two nations do not sign a new longer term deal before the current contract ends.⁸ This research note attempts to put such discussions and issues into a longer historical context, reminding the reader of the reality of the policy problem's long standing nature. The note does so by revisiting the Carter administration's withdrawal plans with President Nixon's ideas for withdrawal from the Korean Peninsula. This research note finally hopes to provide a clearer view of the history of U.S. troop withdrawal plans in South Korea.

Many analysts have pointed out the similarities between President Nixon and President Trump since the presidential campaign of 2016. In particular these similarities focus on both Presidents' tendency to criticize the media, their strong feelings about certain ethnic groups, and distrust of the FBI.⁹ President Nixon had compiled a public record of U.S. nuclear threats against communist adversaries during the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁰ Kimball quotes Richard J. Whalen, a member of the Nixon's speechwriter team, who remembers Nixon saying "Well, if I were in there [Vietnam] I would use nuclear weapons."¹¹ Both Nixon and Trump's audacious public statements highlight their similarities as Presidents. The journalist Kruse reports what Roger Stone, the former Nixon campaign adviser who has known Trump since 1979, said about Trump; "Nixon was smarter but Trump is tougher."¹²

Trump and Nixon both showed interest in bringing U.S. troops back home from Asia. In the press conference after his meeting with Kim Jong Un in Hanoi in February 28, 2019, Trump expressed his discontent about costs borne by the U.S. for troops in South Korea and said it was "unfair."¹³ These comments added to his expression at Singapore in 12 June 2018 that he hoped he can "bring our [U.S.] soldiers back home" and that "We [U.S.] will be stopping the war games, which will save us [U.S.] a tremendous amount of money."¹⁴ Trump's approach to China has been more overtly adversarial than Nixon's in terms of trade tensions and naval issues. Both of their approach to Korea goes beyond what the men are better known for their personal vendettas. Nixon also made efforts toward normalizing relations with China and designed the plan to withdraw the U.S. forces from South Korea. However, the plan did not rise to the surface due to concerns about the regional balance following the Vietnam War and President Nixon's resignation after the Watergate scandal.

The withdrawal plan ultimately became a topic of discussion during Carter's administration. Carter's idea of troop withdrawal was partially drawn from the

lesson taught by the Vietnam War during Nixon administration.¹⁵ A CIA document supports that Carter's promise on the withdrawal of troops is an extension of the "logic and the so-called Nixon Doctrine of letting Asians defend themselves."¹⁶ Some in U.S. politics, however, were not fully comfortable with such a step. There was a fear of Asia going 'red' if the U.S. withdrew from South Vietnam that could then lead to a shift in the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific¹⁷ Some took a step further from the simplistic notion of fighting against the "reds." These two voices showed the domestic struggle within the U.S. on engagement in Asia and international conflicts. The contrast demonstrated by these views was not only about political reasoning but also economic rationale. The nationwide anti-war sentiment after the losses in Vietnam highlighted excessive economic and military support for the U.S. allies.¹⁸

South Korea was well aware of the mixed views and emotions of the U.S. toward Asia and conflict. The lack of trust in the U.S. troops' commitment in South Korea was the reason why South Korea went through a period of time attempting to build its own nuclear power. When North Korea was showing its nuclear ambitions, South Korea also had to stand against this. U.S. tactical nuclear weapons stationed in South Korea since the late 1950s, but Seoul attempted to develop its own nuclear weapons in the early 1970s, a project known as *Project 890*. Jang argues that South Korea's uncertainty about the U.S. security commitment in the 1960s triggered President Park to develop nuclear weapons in the early 1970s.¹⁹ Park Chung Hee took the announcement of U.S. troop reduction as a "sign of U.S. disengagement from the Korean Peninsula, and thus embarked on nuclear weapons research to strengthen its self-defense capability."²⁰ Nixon's foreign policy of disengaging the U.S. from the Vietnam War and normalizing relations with China to avoid the U.S. being entangled with Asian Wars decreased the confidence of South Korea in its alliance with the U.S. In 1972, the Nixon administration revoked its decision on withdrawal of troops, yet, it did not stop President Park's efforts to develop nuclear weapons.

Project 890 was discovered by the Americans during the Gerald Ford administration and the world began to worry about the potential risk of nuclear proliferation in developing countries following India's nuclear test in 1974. South Korea was among these countries which worried global actors, and since then the U.S. put pressure on South Korea to stop the efforts. One of the efforts was sending Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State, to President Park to threaten that the U.S. would withdraw its security ties if South Korea did not stop its nuclear development.²¹ As a result, Project 890 was officially suspended. Three years later, Jimmy Carter became president.

Carter's Withdrawal Plan

There are two main stated rationales behind the troop withdrawal plans of the Carter administration.²² Carter, firstly, thought that there was a satisfactory military balance between the North and the South. It seemed to him that the South could defend itself against an attack without the help of U.S. ground forces. Secondly, Carter thought that Beijing and Moscow shared an interest with Washington DC in preserving the stability of the region, which was linked to the restraint of North Korea.

The policy of withdrawing U.S. troops from South Korea was not just part of President Carter's early foreign policy—it was one of Carter's campaign objectives. He had pledged to withdraw all U.S. ground forces within four years and he demonstrated his commitment to meet this promise within his first year of presidency. It was part of Carter's bigger policy orientation centered around human rights. As can be found in Brzezinski's memorandum, the key decisions Carter made during his presidency are “nuclear non-proliferation, human rights, arms transfer and Korea, especially troop withdrawals.”²³ Carter wanted the U.S. allies to share its democratic values. South Korea, however, under Park Chung Hee's leadership was not in line with such values given how Park limited South Korean democratic rights and maintained his long-term rule. For these reasons, South Korea became the target of Carter's policy and triggered the President to speak out about his withdrawal plan.²⁴

President Carter told a meeting of The Washington Post's editorial page board that he favored taking U.S. troops out of South Korea and he is prepared to do it as soon as he became President.²⁵ Carter even mentioned withdrawing 5,000 troops as a start.²⁶ One of the main purposes behind the withdrawal was to save money. Oberdorfer also quotes Barry M. Blechman, a senior fellow of the Brookings institute, who said: “I told Carter we should take out the nukes right off and phase out the ground troops over four or five years. I said the most important reason was avoid getting the U.S. involved with ground forces almost automatically in a new war which is, of course, why the South Koreans want them there.”²⁷

The Presidential Review Memorandums (PRM) released in 1999 by the National Security Council in 1999 provide in-depth reason behind Carter's decision and his policy orientation. The PRMs provide a rather holistic view on the decision-making process and the role of departments of the U.S. government such as the National Security Council (NSC). It is especially significant in this period of time when Nixon sought to centralize decision-making, diplomacy, and intelligence. PRM-10, The Comprehensive Net Assessment and Military Force Posture Review, states that withdrawal of the U.S. military presence in Asia would provide the

flexibility to determine whether the United States should or should not engage in a local war. PRM-13, *Korea*, is the administration's basic policy document on the withdrawal plan that shows the administration's interest in the troop withdrawal. President Carter directed the Policy Review Committee to examine the possible courses of action for a reduction in U.S. conventional force levels on the Peninsula, southward deployment of the U.S. troops, future U.S. military assistance levels for South Korea, and South Korea's intentions and efforts towards the development of missile technology. In PRM-43, *United States' Global Military Presence*, President Carter demanded an examination of the "U.S. military presence abroad from the standpoint of maintaining and enhancing our [U.S.] political and military position vis-a-vis the Soviets and of providing reassurance and confidence to key countries of concern to us."²⁸ Carter, in PRM-45 *U.S. Policy Toward Korea*, also asserted the need to "conduct a comprehensive review of the US objectives and policies toward Korea in light of the recent developments affecting the Korean peninsula," "assess the effect of recent developments on the military balance on the Korean peninsula" and "examine diplomatic options for reducing tensions on the peninsula."²⁹ This series of queries show the President's interest in finding a solution to the Korean Peninsula issue in the least expensive and most peaceful means. In his memoir, Carter says that he and Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's National Security Advisor, spent "a lot of time" discussing the U.S. future relationship with China and how it might affect its allies in East Asia.³⁰ Brzezinski actively engaged in initiating dialogue with China. At his first stop in Beijing during his Asia tour in May 1978, he expressed the interest of the U.S. in inter-Korea talks to the Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua.³¹ Although this effort did not come to any immediate fruition, U.S. continuously maintained this position with Brzezinski's push.

While President Carter asserted the logic of his withdrawal plan by emphasizing the roles of naval and air forces. U.S. Army officials believed that the withdrawal would diminish the economic and political influence of the U.S.³² General John Singlaub, who was then Chief of Staff of U.S. forces in Korea, was one of the Army officials who stood against Carter's policy decision on troop withdrawal plan. He, Singlaub, spoke out with his own ideas to the press and Congress despite his position of having to obey the military chain of command. He testified in front of the Congress and assessed that North Korea's readiness for war was much higher than the assessment made by the administration.³³ What triggered him to be vocal about this issue can be traced back to the luncheon he attended where General Bernard Rogers, the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, and Singlaub had the conversation on the troop withdrawal plan. Singlaub commented on the actions that could be taken "since the decision had not yet been made" but Rogers answered with his opinion that the decision had already been made.³⁴

Singlaub asked Rogers whether the rationale for withdrawal had been given and Rogers replied that he had given none. This made Singlaub assume that the administration had taken insufficient professional advice. After a series of events, which includes his outspokenness during his interview with the *Washington Post* from Seoul about his own opinion of how the administration's policy could lead to war, he was dismissed and eventually retired.³⁵

The mail summary generated by the White House presents many people's concern for the possible consequences of troop withdrawal from South Korea. Letters related to Singlaub's reassignment contained 'ominous forecasts' of war and people's fear over the issue.³⁶ The struggle was won by Carter, and the Joint Chiefs fell into line. On 10 June 1977, General George Brown, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of State, and Phil Habib, a representative of the State Department, testified before a House of Representatives subcommittee that "American ground troops could be withdrawn from Korea without leading to an invasion from the North."³⁷ Public debate on troop withdrawal went viral.

In the next year, 1978, President Carter stepped back to give some time to Congress to deal with the withdrawal policy. Carter, in April of 1978, decided to defer a significant portion of the first phase of U.S. troop withdrawals until the next year. In the letter Carter sent to Senator Robert Byrd, the President explained that 'the withdrawal policy should be seen in the context of the international environment in Northeast Asia and the rapidly growing economic strength of the Republic of Korea. It is natural and appropriate that South Korea assume a greater share of the burden of its own defense. However, that burden must be assumed "prudently and carefully."³⁸ In the same letter, President Carter expressed his view on the withdrawal plan that it should be flexible to accommodate developments on the Peninsula for the next four to five years and the plan be carried out under the condition of aiming to preserve the military balance of the region.³⁹ President Carter assured his intention to maintain the military balance in Northeast Asia and emphasized this point in the identical letter he sent to Speaker Tip O'Neill on the same day, 20 July 1978. President Carter said the concern surrounding the troop withdrawal was a result of "incorrect impression that withdrawal will follow a rigid timetable not subject to modification in the light of changing circumstances."⁴⁰

Carter was consistent in pursuing dialogues during 1977–1979 to solve the Korean Peninsula issue in a peaceful, non-military way. His central idea about dialogue initiative was bringing the two Koreas to the table. In order to do so China's help was very much needed. Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, reemphasized that U.S. foreign policy sought to encourage dialogue when he met with Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua on August 24 1977: "we hope that you will use your

influence [over North Korea] to see that peace is maintained.”⁴¹ However, China was not responsive to Carter’s initiative. The breakdown of the China backchannel led Carter to directly approach the South Korean government. Ambassador William H. Gleysteen was the bridge of the two governments. He, soon, realized how difficult it was to persuade the President of South Korea: “I think we will have an uphill battle in trying to convince the ROKG [South Korean Government] of the utility of a dramatic proposal and to dampen suspicion that our policy toward Pyongyang is on the eve of changes.”⁴² South Korea was skeptical about the dialogue initiative since the inter-Korean talks broke down in 1974.

Since the U.S. did not have full control of the diplomacy, it thus faced a dead end in its diplomatic strategy; President Carter thus was only left with finding a solution through military means. It was, then, either to increase the compensatory measures or withdraw the withdrawal plan. Only Brzezinski, among the president’s senior advisers, continued to favor withdrawal, even after two years of fruitless outcome of dialogue initiative. The reaction to the withdrawal policy was not warm at home and abroad. The idea of withdrawing U.S. troops from South Korea officially ended with the new intelligence estimate of the North’s military capabilities. In January 1979, intelligence estimated between 600,000 and 700,000 of North Korean ground forces, which is was an increase of a third from the previous estimation,⁴³ and the number of tank and artillery were found to be one third more than before.⁴⁴ A CIA document titled *Persuading a President* says, “Armstrong reported these were only the troops they definitely could identify; more were likely present in the North’s forces” and the number of ground division doubled and the forces near the DMZ appeared to be developed.⁴⁵ The Senators’ view of security in East Asia is expressed and summarized in the White House document that records Brzezinski’s meeting with Senators Sam Nunn and John Glenn on 23 January 1979. They had a brief fifteen-minute long meeting for Brzezinski to hear the Senators’ views on security in East Asia in which Nunn and Glenn clearly delivered their views that troop withdrawal from South Korea and termination of the Mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan would make U.S. look weak in Asia.⁴⁶ It was curtains for the grand foreign policy of President Carter in 1979.

Reflections on Contemporary Times

The role of the U.S. military on the Korean Peninsula and in East Asia has gained stronger justification since 1979. Reagan’s address at the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations on “Peace and Security in 1980s” in March 17, 1980 shows how opposite the situation became compared to that of 1977–1979: “I have long felt that our foreign policy must be changed, and I have consistently stressed the urgency

of strengthening our defense against Russia's growing military might. I have made a strenuous effort to alert my fellow Americans that the policy of detent is, to a large extent, an illusion and not a reality of East-West relations."⁴⁷ Although the role of U.S. troops was solidified, the effect of deterrence and fairness of cost borne often emerged as big topics of discussion.

Studies that show deployments lead to reductions in defense spending assume situations in which the host state does not offer any sort of reciprocal payment.⁴⁸ Although this is not the case of South Korea as it pays reciprocal payment, it is rather a cost-effective option than defending with its own effort that measures up to the nuclear power of North Korea. The studies also assume that non-NATO allies and non-allies are weaker than the U.S. and that this imbalance of power leads to the host-state's decrease in defense spending because the hosting state can allocate the spending saved from by the presence of U.S. troops on other areas it needs.⁴⁹ This is linked to the decision-making power of the U.S. The U.S. has been making hierarchical relations throughout the Cold War era to negotiate having more power in different regions in order to expand its authority in foreign policies.⁵⁰ It allowed the U.S. to gain foreign policy decision making influence in exchange for providing security.⁵¹ Once a state concedes on its principles of decision making and hosts U.S. troops, it can use the resources saved from defense spending for other benefits.

Countries with a U.S. troop presence generally experienced faster increases in life expectancy, decrease in child mortality rates, and faster development of telephone lines per capita.⁵² The South Korean economy has certainly benefited from hosting U.S. troops—the rapid economic growth in the 1970s was made possible by the security guaranteed by the U.S. Judging from the long history of the alliance between the two countries and the benefit gained from hosting U.S. troops on South Korean soil, South Korea is clearly not interested in letting U.S. troops leave its soil. Also, it does not have the full capacity for deterring the North on its own. On the other hand, for the U.S., South Korea is a big buyer for its arms exports and it enables the U.S. to keep its prestige and influence in Asia-Pacific. The Nixon administration's withdrawal plan was frustrated because of the concern of balance of power and the Carter administration's withdrawal plan was frustrated due to the imbalance of military capabilities between North and South Korea. Although the current Trump administration is concerned about the costs borne by the U.S. for protecting South Korea, the withdrawal issue is much more complicated than the cost itself so it cannot be the only reason that drive U.S. troops from South Korea. As long as the relationship between the two states evolves around the concept of power and the use of nuclear capability as a leverage, the tug of war power game will be unlikely to come to an end.

The ripple effects of U.S. troops presence on an allied country include the increase of defense spending in neighboring countries surrounded by these troops.⁵³ The increase of defense spending of China and North Korea supports this analysis. The host state that reduces its own troop levels is likely to initiate militarized interstate disputes while less becoming likely to be the target of interstate disputes.⁵⁴ Although the intention of U.S. troop deployment is the contrary as it emphasizes the regional stability, the deployment results in an unintended effect. Due to these effects, the host state increases its probability of being the target of a militarized interstate dispute despite the deterrent effect of having U.S. troops present.⁵⁵ Moreover, a study designed to see whether U.S. troop withdrawals caused instability of the host state showed that withdrawal of U.S. troops ‘resulted in no change and in some cases a decrease in the observed level of instability.’⁵⁶ The U.S. did not engage in a preemptive attack against North Korea and chose deterrence because North Korea has a credible deterrence capability with nuclear options. Unless the U.S. and South Korea find a more effective way to bring stability in the region, the allies will likely to always find a way to negotiate to maintain the current alliance system with the U.S. troops residing in South Korea no matter how uncomfortable one side feels.

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Book Reviews

Monica Kim, *The Interrogation Rooms of the Korean War: The Untold History*

2019, Princeton University Press, 452 pages, ISBN: 9780691166223

Sandra Fahy, Associate Professor, Sophia University

Geopolitics in the Person: Specialists in the study of war have attended to the role of the battlefield, to napalm and ammunition, to tanks and submarines. But the *story* of war lies not in the epic, Monica Kim maintains, but in the *small*: in the personal. Kim's book opens the door on private battles that make war an intimate encounter. She shows us a new terrain that speaks to the deeply private aspects of war manifested in "paper bureaucracy" written in blood and tattooed on the bodies of soldiers in interrogation rooms and POW camps throughout the Korean peninsula during the Korean War. The door is opened on various interrogation rooms where we hear various interrogators trying to make the interior exterior: this is the terrain of modern war.

On the scale of the epic, at distance, war delineates into relatively clear lines. And the interrogation room was assumed by many states to offer a place for dealing with the human impulses of fear, violence and power. It was assumed that such impulses would clearly delineate. But interrogation rooms are theatres where Monica Kim uncovers the intimacy of war, and intimacy is complex. The story of war is in these details. It is messy and imperfect and Kim masterfully demonstrates that these moments are inflected with countless individual pasts that knot together in ways that are not stoic or objective, but heavy with geopolitics personally lived.

Monica Kim takes us to moments of war where no gun is fired yet a battle of recognition between states rages nonetheless. We go behind closed doors where war sits between ordinary men who embody the history of states that accept and refuse them simultaneously. This is the battlefield. One that takes place repeatedly between the "distilled essence" of state and subject where the soldier is at once citizen and weapon. Through her tireless research Monica Kim shows that the interrogation room was essential terrain where a soldier's personal

choice of repatriation or defection was claimed by states as points in a score-card of legitimacy. One of many aspects of the personal made political still present on the peninsula to this day.

Who populates the space of these interrogation rooms? Young Japanese men from America's Japanese internment camps. They work as translators or interrogators of Korean prisoners of war from both sides of the 38th parallel in the wake of Japan's defeat and decolonization. The US military assumed that second-generation Japanese Americans would be useful if drafted as POW interrogators. Korea having been a colony of Japan, Japanese could be used to communicate with the Koreans, it was assumed (though many Koreans refused to use Japanese). "The Japanese American had been the object of bureaucratic rule and surveillance during World War II, but in the Korean War, the Japanese American interrogator became the small military bureaucrat in the role of the POW interrogator, responsible for assessing the 'reliability' of the Korean POW" (124) and the US military had about 4,000 of these individuals serving. Monica Kim reminds us many of these men would have spent their adolescence behind concertina wire in American internment camps. To the trained eye, such a geopolitical mash up might seem callus at best, but Kim gives us the US military's perspective: they "assumed that the demonstration of the inclusion of Japanese American into the national project of US warfare would serve as persuasive evidence to the "Oriental" prisoners of war that they should embrace the benevolence of the United States" (128).

There was the option to choose a neutral nation for POWs. The Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC) at the 38th parallel was Indian-led. They set up "explanation rooms" which provided a space where state representatives could "attempt to persuade prisoners to repatriate" (25). The Custodian Force of India, who set up the "third choice" on the peninsula, had fought for Britain as colonial military during the second world war. Some of these men had worked with the national Indian Forces to violently Partition India and Pakistan. They populated the "Hind Nagar" camp where neutrality of choice existed: where several POWs made the decision to leave Korea altogether. Such individuals ended up in Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, and India.

Meanwhile, the US POWs had grown up during the Great Depression, raised under Jim Crow. In North Korean and Chinese-run camps American POWs created a diasporic Ku Klux Klan, or splinter groups based on the same racist ideology. American POWs who didn't cleave to anti-communist thinking and who were black, Filipino, Puerto Rican and or working class, were beaten by American POWs in these camps. "The struggles over people's interiors—the desires, hopes,

politics—were embedded in practices and ideologies about race, whether about racial nationalism, imperialism, or militarism” (25).

The Chinese and North Korean run POW camps were infused with the postcolonial world of Korean Communist revolution aimed at decolonizing and liberating Asia. Twenty-one American POWs chose to stay in China and this choice compelled the US military to shape an interpretation of this choice: they hadn’t made the choice soberly, but rather under duress of brainwashing (306). Among the many intriguing aspects of this is how these men were tasked with transforming Korea through US interventionism and imperial warfare, but instead the men had been transformed and affected by the landscape (309). They were not really American any more, but a suspicious threat to America.

Given these range of individuals working in the interrogation rooms Kim asks, “how did one configure a person for state-building, revolution, or imperial warfare?” (2). How was the interrogator made? She tells us: “the interrogation training and manuals for the soon-to-be interrogators did not so much theorize the mind of the interrogated as much as it presented a certain subjectivity for the interrogator to inhabit. ... the interrogation training was not so concerned with the “oriental” as it was with controlling and shaping the agency and subjectivity of the US military interrogator” (154). As such the interrogated was a “receptacle of information.” In a lecture given to trainees by a Lieutenant Commander and US Naval Reserve interpreter, the interrogation process was likened to extracting milk from a coconut: get a coconut, make sure it has milk, open it, empty it of milk, taste the milk for “potability,” give the milk to the thirsty (ibid). Chillingly, this complex process was presented replete with diagrams of the coconut milk extraction process (155). Meanwhile, North of the 38th parallel, in Chinese and North Korean run POW camps, North Korean interrogators were fluent in English, “a number of them having attended college in the United States, and they were eager to talk with POWs from working-class and racial minority backgrounds” (307). These men spoke to the POWs about DuBois and Robeson, “a North Korean vision of Third World internationalism began to take shape between the interrogator and the interrogated” (307). Here Monica Kim acknowledges the opacity of this archive. Within the archive of the Counterintelligence Corps (CIC) she found over one thousand US POW repatriates experiences with the Chinese and North Korean interrogators but, she clarifies, there are layers of complexity in the telling. “To read the archive ... is to read about the US POW’s negotiations with the ‘oriental’ interrogator, his own strategies in how to portray this encounter to the CIC agent, and how the CIC agent tried to evaluate the coherency not only of the story provided but also of the US POW sitting in front of him ... we can trace the patterns and contours of Chinese and North Korean practices of interrogation,

albeit with deep limitations” (308). At this point in the text, and possibly earlier in the introduction of the book, it would have been useful for Kim to elaborate on the limitations still existent on archives related to the Korean War, particularly any held by North Korea and China. It is my sense that this book, beautifully written and expertly researched as it is will reach a wide readership, many of whom may only have a passing knowledge of Korean history and contemporary politics in the region. As such it is necessary to signal to this audience the very real geopolitical limitations on archival access in North Korea and China for scholars, and why these limitations exist.

There exists in the interrogation room a “decisive pause” between the person committing violence, or mercy to the other, the “moment of recognition” (3) which international organization and nation state representatives sought to make into a formal process of determining who was deserving to live. In this book, Monica Kim examines the role of the state in war, and the role of the state in human survival or ruination. Kim reminds us, “Western colonial power and thus its global reach: its prerogative to deny recognition, whether in terms of humanity or the waging of violence. War, we must remember, was a privilege accorded only to recognized states” (4). As such the situation on the Korean peninsula was not a war, but in the words of President Harry Truman, “a police action under the United Nations” (*ibid*). However, what constituted “war” was changing. Western states were faced with a contradiction of their own logic: waging war meant recognition of that state as sovereign, as a legitimate political entity. Amidst anticolonial movements, this had to be delayed. As such, Kim writes, ‘It was no longer sufficient to declare war in the patent interests of the state. Now, war would have to be conducted in the name of “humanity,” framed in terms of a universal conflict rather than a state-specific necessity” (2019, 4–5). Thus, this book captures that script-changing moment mid-century in a “war that was not a war—the Korean War” (*ibid*). What was at stake? Not only territory, and national statehood, but political recognition. This critical feature: whether or not a state would be recognized as a legitimate political sovereign signaled the basis of struggle for recognition of nation-states in our post-1945 world.

Mark Caprio, Professor, Rikkyo University

The Korean War is informally referred to as the “forgotten war” in American military history, a consequence of it ending in neither victory nor defeat. However, the war’s historiography suggests that it is a much more remembered war than others across America’s rich twentieth century war experience. The questions

regarding the war, however, have changed. Up through the latter decades of this century the primary Korean War questions addressed in English language literature focused on when to date the war, which fed into the question of whether it was an international or civil war. More recent research has branched to include peripheral topics. For example, a recent volume edited by Tessa Morris-Suzuki considers the influences that the war had on other states of the region such as Japan, Taiwan, and Mongolia, among others.¹ A special edition of the *Journal of American East Asian Relations* focused on the war's contribution to the "re-making of Korea in the 1950s" by addressing such issues as postwar Pusan, Syngman Rhee's decision to release North Korean POWs, and the effect of the war on Korea's religious and education institutions.²

Monica Kim's *The Interrogation Rooms of the Korean War* furthers efforts to relocate discussion from the battlefield by zooming in on the space occupied by prisoners of war (POWs), a people generally ignored in military historiography. While there has been discussion on the negotiations that culminated in the ceasefire Armistice in July 1953,³ her efforts represent the first lengthy study on the objects of these talks. Kim offers broad images of the "integration room." Her treatment of this space shatters the room's enclosures to incorporate the surrounding compounds that confined the POWs. Their main purpose was not to obtain information from or to inflict torture upon the inmates, but to influence their choice of allegiance to either the capitalist or communist camp, as determined by their choice of re-location after the war's end. In this sense the interrogation room writ large became an extension of the battlefield primarily in terms of ideology, differences of which would occasionally provoked violent confrontation. As in the war itself, people in the camps also suffered injury and even died.

Kim's primary actors are the people in the camp, the POWs, with their interrogators playing supporting roles. Her primary stage is the biggest POW camp built by UN forces during the war: Koje-do, just outside of Pusan. She quotes one journalist's description of the POW camp as an island that could be seen from "miles out." He continued: "Koje island compounds are heavily barbed wired with two high wire fences surrounding each plot. ... In the corners of the compounds are three story high guard houses where machine guns are mounted" (172). She assembles an interesting array of characters among the people who inhabited this "'Alcatraz' for the Korean War." Meet Oh Se-hŭi whom she introduces at the very beginning of her work. Oh used MacArthur's In'chŏn landing as opportunity to desert his Korean People's Army unit in the north and cross over to the south. He prepared well for his capture, arming himself with four papers that identified him in four different ways: as a surrendering enemy combatant, a

middle school teacher, a Seoul University student, and as a patriot of the South. His multiple identities, all legitimate, only confused his capturers, who in the end simply arrested him and threw him into the Koje-do POW camp as a civilian internee (1–2, 94–95). Then there was Lee Hak Ku, a Korean from the north who confessed becoming disillusioned with the Communist doctrine and system. Lee went through the trouble of “gently” awakening American soldiers to ensure his capture so that he could safely retire from the war (199). Lee was instrumental as a negotiator in the Brigadier General Francis Dodd case. Oh and Kim hardly fit the conventional image of brave soldiers fighting to their last breath to stave off capture. Then again, with soldiers forcibly “recruited” into opposing armies as the war aggressively swung up and down the peninsula over an extremely short period of time such unconventional occurrences approach the norm.

Though the conventional definition of a POW was a soldier who had quit the war, in Korea the war did not necessarily quit the POWs after they had been captured and settled into their compound. Within its confines they formed divisions based on decisions that the inmates made regarding their postwar fates. They were given three choices: return to their homeland, remain in the country of their incarceration, or relocate to a third, neutral, country. Whether to allow POWs this choice, and if so determining that the prisoners made their decisions freely, became the key issues that delayed the conclusion of the cease fire Armistice. The decisions made by the POWs often caused dissention within the camps as prisoners harassed those who had made the “incorrect” choice. Kim tells of a “ROK [Republic of Korea, or South Korea] nation-state” forming within the “enemy” (i.e. North Korean, communist) compound as prisoners established separate interrogation rooms and torture chambers. Choi Hyun Hyo was greeted into his new compound with inquiries into his religious affiliation. His revelation that he was not Christian earned him a beating of one-hundred blows with a pick handle, a punishment inflicted as much, if not more, for his having killed an anti-communist inmate in his former compound (111). ROK guards, who occasionally supported anti-communist activities arranged by the POWs, no doubt abetted this punishment by informing Cho’s new inmates on his previous actions. Guard cooperation no doubt also a part of the March 13, 1952 “parade” arranged by conservative POWs, where they marched outside the compound gates while carrying the flags of the ROK and United Nations (110).

Kim’s information on communist POWs is far richer than that of UN/ROK POWs. She does, however, offer a few interesting stories. Among them was her portrayal of the African-American POW, Charles Adams, who hailed from Memphis, Tennessee. U.S. officials negotiating in Panmunjon for voluntary POW repatriation most likely did not consider that one of their own in his right mind would

prefer to remain in a communist society rather than return to the “freedom” of the United States. Yet, for Adams who faced Jim Crow laws directly in his hometown and indirectly in the military, remaining in China made more sense. He had also developed a serious interest in communist thinking, thus making the decision to join twenty other American soldiers in opting to remain in China rather easy. The U.S. attributed the cases of these “traitors” as examples of Chinese brainwashing (343).⁴ Adams, however, was unique in his resourcefulness during his years of captivity. He established a prison library that boasted a diverse collection of over a thousand volumes, many of which he read numerous times. He also organized classes to help those with limited schooling gain literary skills. His “progressive” ideological perspective, however, was not appreciated among his fellow POWs, some of whom introduced a Jim Crow-like society into the compound. These POWs monitored the political leanings of fellow prisoners and even murdered one white communist sympathizer in his sleep. Their threat caused Adams to sleep during the day in his library and remain awake at night out of fear that they might just carry out their promise of not allowing him to return alive to the United States (343). Adams remained in China until 1966 when he was forced to flee with his wife through Hong Kong to escape the emerging Cultural Revolution. Back in Memphis the two opened a chain of chop suey Chinese restaurants (342–353).⁵

A second most unconventional POW was the American Brigadier General Francis Dodd, who presents a case that those who forged the Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War could hardly anticipate. In May 1952 Dodd became a prisoner in the camp he was assigned to administer when inmates pulled him over to their side of the fence after he agreed to meet personally with the POWs to hear their complaints. The nature of these complaints, the POWs reasoned, was better negotiated without a fence separating them. Despite attempts to paint the prisoners as violent Dodd himself confirmed that besides a few facial scratches and a broken fountain pen he survived the ordeal unharmed (176). His capturers sought justice on a number of issues, most critical being the voluntary repatriation interrogations that the U.S. had begun even as procedures for carrying out the interrogations were still being negotiated in Panmunjom (177).

Kim’s rich coverage of this incident suggests that the conventional POWs offered their unexpected fellow POW care far beyond they could even imagine receiving. They attended to his medical needs and even assigned three prisoners to wash him during his baths (185). The U.S. authorities, however, saw their illegal action as verification of the communist POWs’ image as “fanatical,” despite their demands that precipitated their actions being quite reasonable. They charged the POWs with “mutiny” for refusing to release, and then for “unlawfully striking,” Dodd. (After release Dodd was also relieved of his duties.) The incident reached

closure after the U.S. flexed its military muscles and stormed the compound with “tanks, tear gas grenades, and flamethrowers,” an operation that claimed the lives of thirty-four prisoners and one U.S. soldier. They then adopted “uncontested control” as the official policy for future camp administrations (176).

The differences that Kim finds in the approaches of negotiators from the communist and United Nations camps begs the question of what the former might have done if faced with a Dodd-like situation. Her descriptions of the guards in the POW camps north of the 38th parallel as quite different in mannerism and approach than their counterparts to the south. They were much better prepared to their assignments—many had honed their language skills while students in U.S. universities—and thus had a much better understanding of their prisoners than the United Nations interrogators had of communist prisoners. To the American POWs their approach was “irrational” in that they played on their feelings. This they described as “a lesson in the anatomy of seduction and subversion” (138). Inmates in Camp #5 along the Yalu River were subjected to lectures on American issues from the Chinese perspective: American trade controlled foreign countries; the Marshall Plan fostered dependency; American business chose American political candidates; the Japan–U.S. “peace treaty” was in fact a “war treaty” (321–322). They required the POWs to pen life their stories. The books supplied to the POWs in the camp library addressed the negative side of American society, such as its class and race struggle issues, in addition to those arguing the advantages of communist society (325–326).⁶ This behavior of the communist interrogators often countered the stereotypes that the UN forces had developed of the enemy, a point revealed in confessions evident in post-liberation questioning that took place on the ships that returned the POWs to the United States after their release (324).

The Korean War presented the Geneva Conventions on the Treatment of Prisoners of War, signed just one year prior to its outbreak, with its most complicated Cold War test case. Monica Kim reveals this complexity as extending far beyond the POW’s transformation from battlefield to prisoner compound. Both guards and prisoners carried the physical and mental struggles of war into the compound. “Volunteer” POWs like Oh Se-hŭi and Lee Hak Ku discovered that retiring from the official war did not necessarily relieve them of the strains of the battlefield. This may be typical of most other wars, but even more so for a civil war where the divide is ideological rather than racial or ethnic. The Cold War competition to demonstrate one system’s attractiveness over the other—and the use of voluntary repatriation as a means of determination—turned the compound into a secondary battleground, the POWs as pseudo-belligerents and victims. The extensiveness of her coverage places *The Interrogation Room* in must-read category for Korean War historiography; its uniqueness provides a model for

similar investigation into other wars, both civil and international. The tragedy and complications that the goal of voluntary repatriation caused in unnecessarily prolonging the war serves as a guide for officials on how *not* to negotiate terms of cease fire or peace in future wars if indeed the goal is to end the fighting and save human lives and prevent further destruction.

Adam Cathcart, Lecturer, University of Leeds

Monica Kim has written an exceptionally vast and detailed new transnational history of the Korean War, as seen through the prism of interrogation rooms. The core of the text is built out from the evidentiary heart of Kim's analysis of three hundred investigation files from the US/UN compound for North Korean and Chinese prisoners on Koje Island, as well as US counterintelligence interrogation files of over one thousand Americans who returned from captivity in North Korea or China. As Kim writes, "this story of the war is much more interested in the military man as bureaucrat, the interrogator as bureaucrat, and interrogation as a template of bureaucracy" (20).

Had that been the primary target of the text, a more traditional way to categorize this study would have been to put it in the category of psychological warfare (psywar) or information operations during the Korean War. Allied themes or discussions might include scholarly interest of "brainwashing," the Bacteriological Warfare propaganda campaign from the communist side of 1952–1953, the use of confessions and POW propaganda on frontline soldiers on the opposing side, leaflet drops within the history of Cold War battles for "hearts and minds", and the use of nuclear threats or saturation-bombing realities on the UN side. Because the more dynamic or kinetic phase of the Korean War came to an end in April and May of 1951, historians need to look for unifying themes to understand the conflict after it stabilised, but had not yet concluded. In this sense, Kim's book can fit in well with a number of texts that cover the latter period of the conflict with an emphasis on the psychological and propaganda terrain, and those such as Sheila Miyoshi Jager's that take the Armistice of July 1953 less as a conclusion than a point of departure.

However, Kim's book is more ambitious than such categorization implies. It digs in and seeks some very hard edges of the history of US counterintelligence work on the Korean Peninsula, with particular emphasis on cooperation with right-wing paramilitary anti-communist groups in early South Korea. In this sense, it is a good companion to books by Bruce Cumings and Kim Dong-choon and a challenge to work by Allen R. Millett, particularly with reference to the career

and influence of James Hausman (for whom “governance through force was the point, not an accident”, writes Kim on p. 229) and John Hodge in the South. Monica Kim certainly operates on a basis of understanding American power in Korea that is far more akin to Cumings than Millett, but her theoretical interests and concerns are different from either of these senior scholars. At times this can be illuminating—a direct quote from Hausman makes the military advisor sound almost like Michel Foucault (232). At other times the prose has the feeling of a hymn sheet meant to repudiate every few paragraphs such things as “the United States’ claims to a universal moralism” (117), or veers off into meditations on “performance of one’s subjecthood” (257). Stacked end-to-end, such motivic observations in the book might fill up a quarter of a chapter. Nevertheless, the very wide network of informants which the United States cultivated in South Korea from 1945–1948 was then reconstituted after the war broke out, indicating why the author has taken such pains to depict the background in the first place.

The book’s lengthy linkages of Japanese-Americans to the Korean War redeem the reader’s effort, and place the volume in relation with more recent work on Japan–Korean War interactions by Tessa Morris Suzuki and Wada Haruki, among others. This book extends further into the transpacific history by exploring the role played by Japanese-American interrogators in Korea. “Approximately four thousand Japanese Americans were in the Korean War serving in some linguistic capacity in the US military,” she writes (p. 124). While Kim uses the files from these interrogations to align the reader into the intimate world of the prisoner and his or her interrogator, there are other reasons to use this book to think further about Japanese Americans in the Korean War. In my own work on Korean War crimes in Hwanghae province, I came across Robert Isami Muramoto, a fighting member of the Seventh Infantry who had been born in Hawaii in 1917, gone to Kobe to meet his bride a few short years before the US-Japan war broke out, returned to Hawai’i, and likely joined the US Army while in captivity. He was part of the UN invasion of North Korea and was ultimately wounded and evacuated from a major battle near the Chosin Reservoir in November 1950. Monica Kim’s book makes a strong contribution to the broader narrative of Japanese-Americans in both World War II and the Korean War, and links the two conflicts adroitly.

Further echoes of the Pacific War in the Korean War are seen in the language of a briefing for interrogators by Samuel C. Bartlett Jr, who had been present at the victory at Iwo Jima and whose briefing on how to interrogate “Orientals” had been copied with his notes intact as well as rendered into a training pamphlet, as discovered, illustrated and discussed ably by Monica Kim (pp. 153–158). In the autumn of 1950, as Chinese POWs began to be taken, Japanese-American

interrogators had to look for multilingual locals in order to have some vestige of contact with the Chinese language (p. 167). The Chinese experiences of captivity are a huge point of interest between Taiwan and the mainland today, as David Cheng Chang's new book (*The Hijacked War: The Story of Chinese POWs in the Korean War*, forthcoming with Stanford University Press in December, 2019) will surely indicate.

In a text of such length and scope, it seems parsimonious to complain about omissions, yet: The experiences of Chinese prisoners of war are relatively peripheral to this book, and the usages to which rival Chinese governments put them are not really covered. It was curious that Pingchao Zhu's book-length discussion of the POW issue within the armistice negotiations was not cited, but perhaps its attempt to fuse together the camps with the negotiating table was deemed to be too China-oriented or conventional diplomatic history. However, another omission was more evident in this deep dive on the Kojé POW camp: the book makes no mention of what we would today call reporters "embedded" with communist press agencies, namely Alan Winnington or Wilfred Burchett, and their coverage of the Kojé camp violence. It is as if the pamphlet *Kojé Unscreened* were never produced (neither Winnington nor Burchett are mentioned in the text) and, in contrast to the craven efforts of the South Korean army to leverage Anti-Communist Youth League inside the Kojé compound (214), there were no effort at all by the communist side to leverage the unrest in the camps for propaganda material within the bloc and focus further pressure on US/UN negotiators.

As with Suzy Kim's equally outstanding—but markedly briefer—text drawing from the US National Archive's Record Group 242, this book does etch some memorable portraits of individual North Koreans. Yet there is a generally monolithic interpretation of North Korean actions which prevails, one which regularly reminds the reader that North Koreans were engaged at every waking moment in a project of decolonization against American power: "Spitting for the Korean Communist POW was not simply an act of refusing the authority of the US military; it was also a refusal of the United States' own insistence that the project of decolonization was complete on the Korean peninsula with the regime it had installed in the south" (128).

The discussion of India's role in repatriating POWs after the conflict's end pointed toward a more truly international history of Korean War, namely that such writing still needs to be done, and lines of thought and interaction extended. My own students at Leeds have already started following some of the ideas presented by Monica Kim. (One will be writing a masters' thesis in Hong Kong—speaking of cauldrons and de/re/colonization—on Korean POWs who chose to repatriate to Brazil.) This book is absolutely loaded with good empirical research, ideas

worth debating, and a scope of analysis reminiscent of Hajimu Masuda or Lisa Yoneyama's work which suggests that scholars are smashing at the ramparts of more traditional Cold War history in search of new configurations and alignments.

Notes

1. Tessa Morris-Suzuki, ed. *The Korean War in Asia: A Hidden History* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2018). Of the states addressed in this volume Japan has received more attention than others as seen in Ōnuma Hisao 大沼久夫, *Chōsen sensō to Nihon* 朝鮮戦争と日本 (Tokyo: Shinkansha 新幹社, 2006).
2. See special issue on "Warfare and the Re-Making of Korea in the 1950s," *Journal of American East Asian Relations* 24 (September 2017). In 1993 this same journal ran another Korean War special edition titled "The Korean War in the Domestic Context," *Journal of American East Asian Relations* 2 (Spring 1993).
3. See, for example, Rosemary Foot, *A Substitute for Victory: The Politics of Peacemaking of the Korean Armistice Talks* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).
4. Brainwashing by communists in POW camps became one of the few lasting images of the Korean War thanks in part to arguably the most famous film to come out of this era, *The Manchurian Candidate*.
5. See his autobiography, *An American Dream: The Life of an African American Soldier and POW who Spent Twelve Years in Communist China* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007).
6. These included *Grapes of Wrath*, *The Negro in America*, *Freedom Road*, *Tom Sawyer* as well as writings by Paul Robeson and W. G. Dubois, among others.

Eugene Park, *A Genealogy of Dissent: The Progeny of Fallen Royals in Chosŏn Korea*

2018, Stanford University Press, 270 pages, ISBN: 9781503602083

James Lewis, Professor, University of Oxford, Wolfson College

A Genealogy of Dissent confirms Eugene Park as a master of the methods of tracing people. In juxtaposing micro and macro histories, *Dissent* follows in the vein of his previous studies but to greater effect. In five chapters, including a Prologue and an Epilogue, Park follows the fate of the Koryŏ Wang lineages from the 1380s to the early 2000s. Park offers us a political history and occasionally a social history of the Chosŏn kingdom as scenic backdrop to left and right and then isolates the Wangs in the foreground on the stage apron. The fate of the Wangs is his thread across time, but as we see, their fate touches on many points of deep concern for the Chosŏn dynasty: political security, political legitimacy, the shift in gender relations under the influence of Confucian moral rhetoric, and the maelstrom of modernity. His final chapter (Epilogue) charmingly brings the story through the colonial period and into the early 2000s. While the book is well written, with introductions and

summaries for each chapter, well-rounded in its tale, and meticulously researched, the presentation of months as solar months, rather than as lunar months, is puzzling. The book should appeal to historians, both professional and budding.

Security dominates the first decades of Chosŏn. Male Wangs were persecuted and executed, including King Kongyang, from 1394 to 1413, under Chosŏn T'aejo, while female Wangs were tolerated and remained aristocrats. The systematic elimination of the previous ruling group was probably a political necessity for T'aejo, who still lacked absolute power even into the early 1400s. T'aejo himself argued that he reluctantly accepted the advice of his counsellors and ordered the execution of at least 135 Wang males over the course of five days in 1394, while many more died at other times. Although Yi Pangwŏn (King T'aejong) also left a swath of carnage in eliminating possible rivals, the Wangs were tolerated under T'aejong from 1413, and it was under T'aejong in 1416 that Kongyang was proclaimed the last legitimate king of Koryŏ and the only legitimate heir to Kongming, thus declaring U and Ch'ang, rulers between Kongming and Kongyang, to have been the illegitimate sons of Sin Ton. The demands of the Mandate of Heaven pushed T'aejo to usurp U and Ch'ang as illegitimate rulers, and Kongyang passed the kingdom to him. U and Ch'ang's dubious parentage and T'aejo's re-establishment of order became the standard historiographical interpretation of Chosŏn's usurpation of Koryŏ. Eventually, allegations about U and Ch'ang's parentage came under doubt and began to unravel at both the elite and popular levels, hence the "dissent" in the title.

Legitimacy was far more significant, and Chosŏn kings pursued their legitimacy in relation to the Wangs until the end. T'aejo ordered Buddhist rites for the deceased as early as 1394–1395, and in 1397, the Koryŏ ancestral shrine (Sungŭijŏn) was first established to house the spirit tablet of Koryŏ T'aejo. Thereafter, surviving lines of Wang descendants, none of whom were direct (most being illegitimate) were recruited to act as ritualists for the Sungŭijŏn, which was located in Majŏn, on the Imjin River, northeast of Kaesŏng. In 1451, Munjong ordered a search for a Wang descendant to conduct ancestral rites at the Sungŭijŏn, which had been discontinued from 1398, and a descendant of the eleventh-century Koryŏ king Hyŏnjong was produced. Later named Wang Sullye, he was given office in 1452. Sejo, was sympathetic and treated Wang Sullye as a "guest", rather than a subject, which was a Sinitic appellation used to refer to rulers of previous dynasties. Sullye was succeeded by his illegitimate son in 1485, even in the midst of a societal shift towards primogeniture, the designation of only one wife, and the exclusion of the sons of concubines from qualifying to sit the civil examinations. Another line of heirs was located in 1540, but lengthy court debates circled around the problem of only finding illegitimate Wang descent lines. Thusly, the Majŏn Wang lineages appeared. From the 1570s, tomb caretakers were appointed from a Wang

line that established itself in Kaesŏng, and from the seventeenth century, the Kaesŏng Wangs became the most prominent descent line. The Kaesŏng Wangs produced their first genealogy in 1798, an updated version in 1850, and then further editions in 1881, 1918, and 2004. Sponsoring rituals and appointing tomb keepers presented the Chosŏn kings as morally upright successors and responsible keepers of the past. The rites at the Sungŭijŏn became a model for rites at the Sunginjŏn (Kija), the Sungdŏkchŏn (Pak Hyŏkkŏse), and the Sungnyŏngjŏn (Tan'gun). These shrines were administered with others: Sungnyŏlchŏn (Paekche's Onjo), Sungsŏnjŏn (Kaya's Kim Suro), Kyŏnggijŏn (Chosŏn's T'aejo), Sunghyejŏn (Silla's King Kyŏngsun), and Sungsinjŏn (Silla's Sŏk T'arhae), which together came to be known as the "Eight Shrines" for the founders of Korean states. In short, the Chosŏn state presented itself as the protector of all Korean tradition.

Loyalty shown by Koryŏ officials who refused service in Chosŏn also appealed to various Chosŏn kings. Loyal exemplars were used by Chosŏn kings to counter their own officials. Yŏngjo, in particular, was obsessed with the 72 Koryŏ loyalists of Tumun-dong, who retired from service to avoid serving Chosŏn and perished by flame. Yŏngjo visited Kaesŏng to see the bridge where Chŏng Mongju was assassinated (and probably the bamboo that sprouted from his blood) and held examinations at Manwŏltae. He sought to promote Kaesŏng Wangs but was stymied by the abundance of merchants and lack of scholars. He sponsored non-elite Wangs, low-born Wangs, and even enslaved Wangs. Such attention was not to appear again until Kojong visited Kaesŏng in 1872. Kojong also toured local sites, personally conducted rites at the Koryŏ royal tombs, held examinations at Manwŏltae, and restored one line of Wangs as shrine superintendents at the expense of another.

The academic value of *Dissent* is its methodological model, also on display in Park's previous book, *A Family of No Prominence*. Park offers us a highly original method that puts human beings into the broad-brush canvas of history. "Lineage", patrilineality, and agnatic relations are bloodless abstractions unless the names come alive with character, motivations, successes, and failures. *Dissent* teams with real people in the swirl of real situations. Moreover, the case of the Wangs is very well chosen, because the fate of fallen royal lines not only appeals to our voyeuristic urge to peer into the lives of the great and the good (just how were the Romanovs killed?), but the case of the Wangs, with their tombs and shrines containing the memory of the previous, long-lived dynasty, takes us directly to the inner quandaries of Chosŏn kings trying to place themselves in long arcs of time. Their daily existence was saturated with wondering who they were, what responsibilities they had, how they can justify their place at the top, and how long they have. The Wangs were the *auriga* slave whispering into the ear of the triumphant Chosŏn generals—"memento mori" (remember that you are but mortal).

A Place to Live: A New Translation of Yi Chung-hwan's T'aengniji, the Korean Classic for Choosing Settlements (translated, annotated and with an introduction by Inshil Choe Yoon)

2019, University of Hawaii Press, 231 pages, ISBN: 9780824877606

Robert Winstanley-Chesters, University of Leeds

"*T'aengniji*" or the "Book for Choosing Settlements" is a work which has proven highly influential to this reviewer over recent years. Often referred to as the first work of Human Geography in the Korean language, it has been hard to capture in English and experienced so far by non-Korean speakers in paraphrasing, partial quotations and references in other scholarly texts. This brand-new version from the University of Hawaii Press builds on the work of the same translator a decade or so ago when Wild Peony Press in Australia published Inshil Choe Yoon's first translation of the book into English, which was missing a number of the chapters. This new translation is a revelation in part because it not only includes the entire text and all the chapters, but also because the author includes a fascinating introduction with a contextual and life history of *T'aengniji*'s author, Yi Chung-hwan, which this reviewer had not really had a sense of before, but which brings this astonishing book to life even more vividly.

Perhaps it is worth saying that any translation of Yi Chung-hwan's *T'aengniji* is in part a co-production between translator and the original author (this is probably true of all works in translation), but in this book's case that is by no means a problem nor something new. In the period after Yi Chung-hwan wrote the original manuscript in 1751 (a date which Yoon settles on after some very careful literary archaeology), the work took on multiple forms and was adapted and abridged in a number of different ways. It became part of a compilation known as *Wayurok* (Records for Scenic Travel), put together and hand copied by Nam Ha-haeng in 1766, and there are copies known as *Tongguk p'aryōkchi* from 1792 (owned now by Yonsei University), *Tongguk chirihae* (from the end of the 18th century) and a 1796 version with the original name (now owned by Dongguk University) as well as many others. The ebb and flow of its text, foreword and epilogue is positively biblical in nature and there are pieces and stories common to all and shared between the various versions, as well as more esoteric elements which only appear in one or two. *T'aengniji* was translated again by scholars following the pressures of modernisation on Korea at the end of the Yi dynasty, as well as during the Japanese colonial period. There is even a version with a Korean nationalist spin on it from Cho'e Nam-sōn. In more recent years there have been

multiple revised versions in both North and South Korea and Yoon recounts how the word *T'aengniji* “started to be used as a common noun meaning ‘regional geography’ or ‘travelogue’.” *T'aengniji* has even started to become used in the titles of other unrelated books and in the names of academic and other projects, there is even a graphic/cartoon version as well as versions in Japanese and a version in Russian in process.

T'aengniji in its many forms seems naturally inclined to become a co-production of sorts, it is very much of its time and of all time. This reviewer certainly understood how it was for all time, and partly understood how it was very much of its own time, but Inshil Choe Yoon's new version really drives home how deeply a product of the mid-18th century and Yi Chung-hwan's own life and the lives of others like him *T'aengniji* is. Yi Chung-hwan was a Yangban scholar from a family of some standing. He was of the Yöju Yi clan, his father was governor of Ch'ungch'öng and Hamgyöng provinces and eventually Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Rites. His great-uncle was the Sirhak (Practical Learning) scholar Yi Ik and other members of his family were county magistrates, inspector generals and even a Minister in the Ministry of Punishments. He was related to the famous Koryö writer Yi Kyu-bo and Yi Önjök a Neo-Confucian writer of the early Chosön dynasty. Yi Chung-hwan is recounted as being “a diligent and intelligent boy who excelled in writing” by Yi Ik, and married the daughter of a Grand Auditor, managed to pass the Civil Service Examination aged only 23 before ascending the ranks of the Chosön bureaucracy so that by 1723 he was senior secretary of the Ministry of Military Affairs. However, Chosön, its politics and bureaucracy were beset by a factional strife which had only grown since it had first emerged many years earlier. By the early 1720s the Southerner faction fought with the Young Doctrine Faction and the Old Doctrine Faction for favour and influence on the crown. In 1722 there was a particularly large purge demanded by King Kyöngjong which resulted in mass executions of Old Doctrine Faction members including four ministers who had already been banished. In 1723 unfortunately for Yi Chung-hwan it came to light that while he had been serving as Director of a Horse Station in Kimchön he had lent a horse to a Mok Ho-ryong, a geomancer and a relative, but who had instigated the mass killings in 1722 by informing the King of a factional plot against him. Yi has reported this horse had been lost, but it had been later discovered at the house of a Yi Ch'ön-gi—an official named by Mok to the King to be a plotter and traitor.

Yi was dismissed, arrested and interrogated. Interrogations during this period in Chosön being accompanied by bouts of flogging—Yi was beaten and flogged many times, after his seventeenth flogging his beatings were halted because he was having problems breathing and had seriously physically declined. It was

unclear whether in fact Yi Chung-hwan had ever done anything wrong or been involved in any plots or subterfuge—regardless he was banished in 1726 to a distant island, and only spared death because of the intervention of King Yǒngjo, an intervention that was repeatedly challenged by his officials. Yi was not fully rehabilitated until 1753 when he received Royal Edicts and was appointed to the third rank, but in the intervening decades his life and position had been shattered and precarious.

The exile and precarity experience by Yi Chung-hwan was in fact shared by many young scholars from good families and fine clan traditions due to the chaos of the factional conflict, the many purges and the repeated exiles. Thus historically even among those Yangban scholars of fairly low rank and perhaps varied intelligence and aptitude, many had some stability in life and no need to think about a need to resettle. But by the time of *T'aengniji*'s writing there were quite some number of aristocratic gentlemen exiled, down on their luck and on the wrong side of politics and the court needing to find a new home in which they might maintain some of their dignity and maintain a scholarly focus in case times and their circumstances changed. *T'aengniji* is no work of hypothesis or concept therefore, it is a real work from a scholar who is himself attempting to find a place to settle, a small piece of calm ground in his homeland, and is written for an unfortunately large audience given the times.

T'aengniji itself as translated by Inshil Choe Yoon comprises of four key parts. "The Four Classes of People," "Discourses on the Eight Provinces," "Discourse on the Selection of Habitable Places," and a "Conclusion." In the first section Yi Chung-hwan describes the social organisation of Chosŏn, in terms that were provocative at the time because they suggested that this social organisation had changed and was still subject to change, with particular focus on the development of the Yangban class, as Yoon puts it, strongly emphasizing "the dignity and prerogatives of the class." Yangban scholar gentry first and foremost for Yi required the maintenance of their dignity, so they must be able to obtain wealth and goods, but not by enterprise. This prerequisite then governs the sensibility of the preceding sections, including the largest, the fascinating "Discourse on the Eight Provinces," which is a review of the geography of the Korean peninsula, organised clockwise from the northern districts and ending with the central Kyǒnggi District—Yoon points out that this is revolutionary when compared to conventional books of geography from the period which were arranged from the center to the periphery.

Yi's approach to geography is to report on the various topographic elements, especially mountains and auspicious or geomantically important mountains, describe the other ecological or natural elements and scatter historical and literary anecdotes throughout. Yoon's translation is sprightly and energetic and really

supports Yi's narrative drive throughout. There are extraordinary stories which are brought out in this new translation, particularly those of Mukedeng, the Qing surveyor familiar from the recent work of Nianshen Song (2018), who discovers something shocking in the hills outside the later birthplace of Kim Chŏng-suk, Hoeryong and is forced to very quickly retreat. The juxtapositions from what is in the text and what we now know exists on the peninsula, also adds further intriguing flavour: "It is only in the two big cities of P'yŏngyang and Anju that goods from China are abundant in the streets. Every time merchants follow envoys to China they make a profit and there are therefore many wealthy people." (43).

Following the "Discourse on the Eight Provinces," Yi details the important factors in the selection of a settlement place given his previous laying out of the geomantic and geographic ground of the peninsula. This particularly focuses on traditional notions of geomancy and in fact he goes through six categories of auspiciousness that must be present for a place to be potentially suitable, but Yoon's careful language really unpicks the economic aspects of such suitability and in particular the complicated dialectics and dualisms at play between the need to obtain value and resource, and the dignity and status of the Yangban. Towards the end of *T'aengniji*, in the concluding section, Yi returns to his view of the challenges scholar gentry and those wishing to follow this life in this geography, presented by the pressures of factionalism and the political and social collapse that is occurring in his present. While *T'aengniji* is often referred to as the first work of modern Human Geography written in Korean, it is both very much of its time and very much of Yi's life and it is also astonishingly post-modern, which is not often picked up on in past translations or in past writing on Yi's work. Yi Chung-hwan is writing a detailed guide for an essentially displaced and traumatised band of aristocratic and scholarly exiles, and one which seeks to use empirical evidence to pin point the perfect spot for an auspicious life, but which concludes by essentially declaring in the style of Thomas More, that such a utopic place doesn't actually exist ... there is no perfect place for settlement: "I [have written that I] wish to find a habitable place to life but, much to my regret, an [ideal] abode does not exist. An intelligent reader will seek meanings beyond the words. In practical terms, this book is about tolls, taxes and revenues. Meanwhile, it also deals with the hidden meanings behind practical concerns, just as [something as big as] Mount Sumeru can be contained within an [infinitesimally small] mustard seed." (163)

I very much recommend Inshil Choe Yoon's new translation into English of the profound work of Yi Chung-hwan. It is a delight to have the journeys and visions of *T'aengniji* at last in such vibrant and accessible English, but more than that it is a revelation to encounter Yi Chung-hwan's own life story and the painful struggles and travails that provide what seems like the impetus behind the writing and

publication of the work. Inshil Choe Yoon and the University of Hawaii Press have provided what feels like the definitive version of this hugely important classic of the Korean language.

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David P. Fields, *Foreign Friends: Syngman Rhee, American Exceptionalism, and the Division of Korea*

2019, University Press of Kentucky, 254 pages, ISBN 9780813177199

Natalia Kim, Associate Professor, National Research University Higher School of Economics (Moscow)

Syngman Rhee (Ri Sŭngman 이승만) is one of the key political figures of 20th century Korean history. As a leader of the national liberation movement among Koreans in the United States and as a founder of the Republic of Korea his name is inscribed in both in national and world history. However, assessing Syngman Rhee's political heritage is not an easy task for a researcher today because of the highly negative attitude to him as a policymaker and as President of the Republic of Korea in the declining years of his political career. Rhee was forced to resign from the presidency under popular pressure during the April Revolution 1960. Despite being accused of corruption, electoral fraud and personal involvement in incidents that caused deaths of thousands of civilians during the Korean War (1950–1953), the first president of the Republic of Korea managed to evade legal punishment in his motherland. Syngman Rhee spent the last days of his life in Hawai'i, his second homeland, where he died in 1965. In his book, David P. Fields considers the political heritage of Syngman Rhee, analysing it through the lens of the foreign policy of the United States of America and the Korean national liberation movement. By limiting the scope of his research within the pre-liberation period of Korean history, the author avoids politically inconvenient questions that potentially could be addressed to him regarding Syngman Rhee's heritage. Fields left beyond the scope of the book's research Syngman Rhee's policy platform and strategy following the liberation of Korea from Japanese colonisation, in particular, when Rhee became one of the eccentric authoritarian leaders of East Asia.

Fields' book contains five chapters in which he consecutively develops his ideas of Syngman Rhee's contribution to the national division and the role of an American mission in the formatting of the contemporary history of Korea. The American mission is a set of ideas which bestow a moral responsibility and moral obligations on the United States for the welfare of the smaller nations or, generally, the whole world. The author explains that the goals of an American mission have been changing throughout history since the American sense of mission is "so imprecise and constantly changing" (106). "For one generation of Americans it might be to Christianize the world in a generation. For another it might be a self-determination or universal human rights. It is not limited to any particular geographic space. In theory it can apply everywhere. In any situation where a wrong has clearly been committed, the American's mission demands that the United States be on the side of justice" (106). Despite the vagueness of the scope of America's mission, it obviously implies the exceptionalism of Americans as global defenders of justice. The author assumes that Syngman Rhee could skillfully utilize the idea of this American mission in order to draw the attention of the United States government to the Korean problem. Syngman Rhee synthesized the idea of an American mission and American sympathy for and interest in Korea and finally was able to build coalitions of his supporters inside the United States. Together Rhee and his supporters convinced American policymakers that the United States had a moral responsibility toward Korea. Fields believes that the division of Korea along the 38th parallel "was not a hasty decision made in less than thirty minutes by two military officers." This decision was in a certain extent a result of the American exceptionalism, which in that situation implied "the desire to right a historical wrong, State Department fears of being accused of further appeasement, and the hope that a more just postwar order would also be a more stable one" (172).

In the first chapter, the author analyses Rhee's involvement in the activities of the Christian Mission in Korea and his first steps as a politician. The detailed analyses of Rhee's studies at Pai Chai Mission School and his participation in the Independence Club explains the role of American (Korean) Christians in Rhee's education. Fields noted that more than anyone else Philip Jaisohn (Seo Jae-pil/Sŏ Chaep'il) shaped Rhee's education. "Jaisohn's experiences convinced Rhee that Korea needed to look west to secure its future" (23). Since the Americans at Pai Chai taught according to Western standards of education their students could develop debating skills, reasoning, and public activism. The close ties with American missionaries enabled Rhee to avoid the fate of many young reformists in Korea. In 1904 he was released after five years in prison following his implication in a plot to overthrow Emperor Kojong and went to the United States where he

received MA and Ph.D. degrees at the best American universities. His education uniquely positioned him among Koreans in the United States. As Fields noted, this made him “the premier representative of Korea in the United States” (43). This chapter clarifies how Rhee came to the idea which later caused many debates over his personality among Korean nationalists, that is the idea of the Korean liberation movement’s dependence on outside help. Fields believes that Rhee was not the only one who thought that “the only hope was to call for outside help.” I agree with this, but the author’s thesis that “for nearly two decades the Korean court had believed that the 1882 Korean-American Treaty—its first with a Western power—could be used as a last resort to defend Korea’s independence” seems much less credible. The author neglected the fact of Kojong’s escape to the Russian Mission where he stayed almost for a year hoping for the help of Russians after the shocking murder of his wife, the queen Min, by the Japanese in 1895. The contacts between the Korean court and Russia are extensively described in Russian scholarly literature [Park Boris, 2004; Park Bella, 2004, 2013], which evidences that the United States was not the “last resort to defend Korea’s independence.”

In the second and third chapters Fields analysed Rhee’s attempts to build coalitions of supporters of Korea in the United States. Through the League of Friends of Korea which united influential ministers from the Methodist and Presbyterian churches, prominent American businessmen and ordinary American protestants, Syngman Rhee and his mentor Philip Jaisohn raised awareness about Korea in the United States. The Korean Commission established in 1919 was focused on gaining recognition for the Korean Provisional Government. In all these lobbyist organizations American advisers played a crucial role. They wrote letters, public speeches for Rhee and his colleagues when it was necessary. The Korean Commission was able to achieve discussions on the Korean issue during debates on the Versailles Treaty in the Senate and further at the Washington Naval Conference. Fields noted that “the Senate’s treatment of Korea showed the power of the Koreans’ appeal—a power largely derived from its invocations of the American mission” (97). Thus, the author consistently develops his thesis that the public activities of Rhee and Korean lobbyist organizations were closely linked with the American mission. However, finally it becomes unclear who believed more in a special mission of the United States—Americans or Koreans.

In the fourth and fifth chapters Fields writes about the complicated relationships between Syngman Rhee and other members of the Korean liberation movement, his diplomatic efforts to draw attention to the issue of Korea during the World War II, in particular, the Pacific War. In these chapters, Fields analysis of interactions between Syngman Rhee and the United States’ State Department and the Office of Strategic Service seems to be of great interest. Fields shows how

Rhee brilliantly utilized the anti-Japanese sentiments of Americans to make them believe that “the United States had a special mission in world affairs” but did little to fulfill it (157). When Rhee knew that the State Department had decided not to permit the seating of a Korean delegation at the San Francisco Conference, he called a press conference in which denounced the US in betraying Korea for a second time in forty years (165). Obviously, Rhee’s ambitions, stubbornness and arrogance brought him fame in the United States while his well-considered flattery towards the American government made him one of the credible leaders of Korean liberation movement by 1945.

The weakest point of the book is the author’s attempt to explain the division of Korea in the frame of an American mission. First, the vagueness of the American mission’s scope towards Korea in the middle of the 20th century makes a reader doubt the author’s approach to the Korean issue. What precisely was an American mission in Korea in the 1940s? I do not exclude that there were Americans who were sincerely interested in Korea and sympathized with Koreans during the Japanese colonial period (Fields’s book largely evidences this). However, if we follow the author’s logic and interpret the American mission in terms of moral responsibility it becomes evident that many Korean nationalists, including communists, opposed American exceptionalism and the so called American mission as Americans understood it. Koreans did not wish Korea to be divided along the 38 parallel. They did not wish the regime of trusteeship to be imposed on Korea (it is worth recalling the severe anti-trusteeship sentiments that rose among Korean nationalists, including Syngman Rhee, when the results of the Moscow conference in December 1945 became known). These Korean nationalists did not even support the Cairo Declaration which stated that “in due course” Korea would be independent. They wished an immediate restoration of Korean sovereignty soon after the Japanese surrender. Trying to keep itself on the “right side” of history through the American mission, however, the United States could not meet the wishes of Koreans who desired to restore state sovereignty immediately. Does this not mean that finally the American mission failed in Korea since it could not properly rectify the historical injustice done to it by Japan? The fact that Korean sovereignty was restored in 1948 with the assistance of Americans does not put the United States on the “right side” of history because it occurred under the conditions of Korea’s division into two parts.

Second, the author seems to excessively moralize the foreign policy of the United States towards Korea. Fields correctly noted that “while Rhee consistently emphasized a strategy that would relocate Korea in Americans’ moral geography, he certainly was willing to make geopolitical arguments whenever he thought they might be effective” (176). This was not the American policy makers’ strategy

but Rhee's. Rhee was an outstanding manipulator and a politician who skilfully utilized whatever he could in order to achieve his goals. Initially, he played on the sentiments of American Christians who sincerely sympathized with Koreans suffering under Japanese colonisation. Rhee tried to convince them through public talks and publications on Korea in which he brilliantly articulated Americans' moral responsibility for Koreans since the United States had signed the treaty with Korea in 1882. When the US declared war against Japan in 1941, Rhee found himself in a fortunate position since it became much easier to convince Americans of the aggressiveness and hypocrisy of the Japanese about which he had repeatedly warned them before. When Japan surrendered and the war concluded, unlike the Roosevelt administration, President Truman held a cautious attitude towards the collaboration with the Soviet Union. He did not wish to appease the Soviets and, as a consequence, was the most persistent in his efforts to prevent the expansion of the Soviet influence in East Asia. The anti-communism of Truman's administration coincided with Rhee's political strategy in South Korea, in particular, his unwillingness to cooperate with Korean communists within the Soviet-American commission (1946–1947). In this regard, Syngman Rhee was a very pragmatic person so that he hardly believed in American exceptionalism (as a matter of fact, Fields recognizes in his book that Rhee's political strategy was pragmatic). Rather he was deeply convinced in the superiority of the Americans over the Soviets and in the effectiveness of the American model of national development over the Soviet one. He cooperated with the American Military Government (AMG, 1945–1948) when he found it necessary and opposed it when he considered such behaviour more politically effective at the time. His personal relationships with the AMG leadership were not truly friendly, but there was nobody among Korean nationalists whom they could rely on. The AMG was practically forced to cooperate with Rhee while he gradually moved to his main political goal—the establishment of a South Korean state under his presidency. In other words, what the author calls an American mission seems ultimately to be based on the firm pragmatism of both the Americans and Syngman Rhee.

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The Tale of Cho Ung: A Classic of Vengeance, Loyalty, and Romance (translated by Sookja Cho)

2018, Columbia University Press, 200 pages, ISBN: 9780231186100 (hardback), 9780231186117 (paperback).

Grace Koh, Lecturer, SOAS, University of London

The Tale of Cho Ung is a most welcome addition to the growing body of classical Korean fiction in English translation and to the field of premodern Korean and East Asian literary studies. The book includes a critical introduction by the translator, the translated tale in three sections (Books), extensive annotations and a list of references. As a specialist of premodern Korean and Chinese literature, Sookja Cho (Associate Professor of Korean at the Arizona State University) offers a lucid and engaging annotated translation of the *Cho Ung chŏn* (도웅전 or 趙雄傳) which was among the most popularly read and circulated fiction during the late Chosŏn period. According to her notes, Cho's translation was primarily based on the *wanp'an* edition (oldest extant woodblock print from Wansan, the first of which dates from 1857) and also drew upon various modern and commercial editions. As with many Chosŏn period fiction the original production date and authorship remain unknown, but the story and text likely emerged during the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century when similar heroic tales and *p'ansori*-based fiction were thriving. Cho confirms that the surviving editions are composed either entirely in vernacular Korean or in mixed script (Korean with occasional Sino-Korean characters).

The *Tale of Cho Ung* is a compelling and entertaining hero-narrative that celebrates the virtues of courage, loyalty, filial bond and piety. Similar to chivalric romance traditions, the tale has elements that strongly resonate with orally transmitted folktales and narrated stories. Indeed, the translator opens her critical introduction with an anecdote from Yi Tŏngmu's (1741–93) *Ajŏng yugo* that highlights public storytelling practices and aural audiences who contributed to the development of fictional narratives in late Chosŏn. The *Tale of Cho Ung* consists of three Books that follow the story of its eponymous hero and his journey of trials and tribulations following a corrupt prime minister's usurpation of the throne. Set in the Song (Liu) dynasty (420–479 CE), Book 1 unravels a situation of conflict, injustice and hardship that befall eight-year-old Ung and his mother (Lady Wang) that force their escape to remote lands, and his development, training, and encounters with masters and his future wife, Maiden Chang. Book 2 follows Cho Ung's rise and accomplishments as he helps the king of Wi defend his state, rescues the exiled crown prince of Song, and plots to avenge the late Emperor and his

father by deposing Yi Tubyŏng, the corrupt minister who fashioned himself the new emperor. Book 3 culminates in exhilarating battle scenes against Yi and his men, where Cho Ung's military prowess and strength are at the fore of ensuing conquest, retribution and resolution. The tale combines diverse themes and stylistic features of different genres, including heroic fiction, military narrative, dream record, tales of filial piety and romance. Cho Ung's strong sense of will is in line with heavenly will that guides the protagonists through divine intervention and spirits. The quest or journey motif is prevalent, and the stories and role of Lady Wang, Maiden Chang and other female characters also serve as defining elements to the tale. Interspersed with poetry and emotive rhetoric to deliver heartfelt lamentations, grievances and expressions of indebtedness along with filial affirmations and romantic declarations, the tale presents its protagonist as a warrior hero and loyal subject, who is also a respectful pupil, dutiful son, passionate lover and devoted husband.

Sookcha Cho is commended for presenting a comprehensive English translation that is enjoyable to read, accompanied by extensive annotations, which will introduce the tale and its literary significance to a wider global readership. Her critical introduction (pp. xi–xxix) provides some key points pertaining to textual history, with further information and references provided in the notes section. It also offers concise yet illuminating discussions on some thematic topics including space (imaginary Chinese landscape), genre (military or heroic tale), agency (hero's will), retribution, justice and historical relevance. The *Tale of Cho Ung* is introduced as a Chosŏn best seller based on records of its circulation through lending libraries. Approximately 450 surviving copies of different editions in woodblock and moveable type print exist, which is more than any other extant editions of Chosŏn fiction. While it enjoyed popular production and circulation up to the twentieth century, since then interest waned among the general readership and academic circles as attested by a relative lack of scholarship on the work compared to other classical fiction (e.g., *Ch'unhyang chŏn*, *Hong Kiltong chŏn*, *Sim Ch'ŏng chŏn*) and fewer modern Korean translations and no English translation until now. Cho draws attention to how, like other works of premodern Korean fiction, there was no singular version but a multitude of different (re)tellings of a story that would have evolved and survived through different editions. She highlights the “heterogeneous authorship” of the text and rightly maintains that extant editions are essentially “works of collaboration between authors and readers over time, rather than illustrative of the original author's qualifications” (xvi) which should be understood in a “pluralistic way.” In line with this view, she consulted different versions and editions that may provide insight into multiple authors and pluralistic readings of the story for a more

comprehensive translation, which she has competently rendered. On a number of occasions though, Cho refers to flaws and errors in surviving editions, which assumes the existence of an original “correct” version against which they can be evaluated as such. Whether she means textual inconsistencies within one edition or between different ones, or whether she considers the *wanp’an* edition as an original version (as the oldest extant one) remains unclear in context. Also, her discussion on the role of female chastity and polygamy (xxv–xxvi) could have been expanded upon, particularly as regards how “literary representations of these archetypes can also serve as a space in which to experiment with the patriarchal reality” (xxvi) in relation to the *Tale of Cho Ung*.

In the “Note on Translation” that follows the introduction, Cho clarifies her source text versions, strategy, choices and aim to produce an approachable translation with detailed annotations for both the scholar and general reader. I believe she has achieved her aim, and would happily recommend the book to academic colleagues, students and anyone with an interest in traditional Korean literary culture as well as East Asian and comparative literature.

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The *European Journal of Korean Studies* is a fully peer-reviewed, on-line journal that has been published since 1991 (formerly the *Papers of the British Association of Korean Studies*). Volumes 1–18 are available free for BAKS members from www.ejks.org.uk or by emailing Robert Winstanley-Chesters (treasurer@baks.org.uk).

The journal accepts manuscripts for articles within any area of the arts, humanities and social sciences that examine Korea in either contemporary or historical times. Submissions that include a comparative discussion of issues in other East Asian nations are welcome.

Persons submitting articles for consideration should note the following requirements:

1. Articles should be submitted only in English, using American spelling conventions.
2. The body of the manuscript should normally be around 5,000 words in length. Endnotes, bibliography, and other additional material are excluded from this word count.
3. The manuscript should use endnotes and follow the ‘Chicago style’ for references.
4. Romanization of East Asian names, place names and terms should follow the McCune-Reischauer system for Korean, Hepburn for Japanese, and pinyin for Chinese.
5. Where appropriate, the use of Chinese characters and indigenous scripts following the initial occurrence of a term is encouraged. Use Batang font whenever possible.
6. The manuscript should be submitted as a Microsoft Word file attachment and should be written in double-spaced Times Roman 12 point font. This rule applies to both the text of the article and its section headings. All endnotes should be in Times Roman 10 point font. All inserted East Asian characters should be in 11 point font in the text and all East Asian characters in the notes should be in 9 point font.
7. The page format should be set for A4 size with **left-hand justification only**.
8. The manuscript should have a separate cover page that gives the full name of the author, academic affiliation, and full postal and email contact details. The cover page should also have a one-paragraph summary of the contents of the article, and five (5) key words.

9. The first page of the text of the manuscript should have only the title of the article at top. The name of the author(s) should NOT be included.
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11. The Editorial Board intends that an author should know within two months of the submission of an article about the success of his or her submission.

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