



# **Kyōngbok palace: the construction of a national icon.**

Nationalism in cultural and heritage politics

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## Introduction

The story of the past through monuments, objects, heritage, is most often a story that has been carefully crafted and designed. This is also true for the Kyōngbok palace in Seoul, South Korea. The image of the palace today, a national icon that served for centuries as the dynasty's main seat of power, is a product of nationalism, history (re)writing, and cultural and heritage policies. The image of the palace as a national icon since its construction is however not completely correct, as we will see later in the introduction; the palace was not continuously used by the Chosŏn rulers. During the Yi dynasty, the Kyōngbok palace was not really an icon of the nation, or even of the Yi dynasty. Later, during the Japanese colonization the image of the palace as something for Koreans to identify with was even further destroyed. It was not until after 1945 that the palace transformed into a national icon through nationalism, history (re)writing, and cultural and heritage policies. This is a continues process which has been mostly influenced by nationalism, and the effect nationalism has had on cultural and heritage policies.

My research question is: how has nationalism influenced the development of heritage politics in South Korea during the presidency of Park Chŏng Hŭi, Kim Yŏng Sam, and Lee Myŭng Bak, and how nationalism in heritage politics has affected the Kyōngbok palace? This thesis is focused on three South Korean presidents' reign. These three presidents were chosen because I think that they represent three different moments in time where we can expect to see changes in the nationalistic discourse. Further, in the restoration history of the Kyōngbok there are periods, related to the terms of the chosen presidents, wherein some striking renovations took place. The first president I chose is Park Chŏng Hŭi. He was president from 1962 to 1979. His policy is worth examining because he is regarded as the person who uplifted South Korea out of a difficult period after the Korean War, but he is also seen as a dictator. I think that in his presidential term nationalism and the creation of a South Korean identity became an important aspect of lifting South Korea up from the ashes of the war. Although his term focused on economic growth, it helped him to establish the creation of a South Korean identity.

Kim Yŏng Sam was president from 1993 until 1998. He was a political opponent of President Park, so I would assume that there were some changes in policies since in the years between Park and Kim other presidents mostly seem to have followed Parks cultural policies.

Kim Yŏng Sam is also interesting because he saw the beginnings of the globalization and the Asian economic crisis of 1997, which could both have influenced heritage policies. When one looks at the history of renovation of the Kyŏngbok palace one can see that in this period there was a lot of activity in the form of restoration. It would be interesting to see why there was a surge in activity and how it relates to heritage policies in general.

The last president to be examined is Lee Myŏng Bak, who was president between 2008 and 2013. He was the last president before the current president Park Gŭn Hye. We can have a close look at more recent ideas on heritage in South Korea. His policies are set in a time where Korean cultural products have been moving across national borders and a time where it seems to become important to attract tourists and to create a positive image of South Korea. The reason for choosing Kyŏngbok palace is because it is one of the five palaces in Seoul and is one of the images that has been familiarized by Korea's nation brand. It is a palace with an history where I think we can see an example of how nationalism, history (re-) writing, and cultural and heritage politics have impacted the heritage site.

### *Methodology*

To analyze how nationalism has influenced South Korean heritage policies I will be using a combination of content and discourse analysis. The content analysis will show what kind of work was done to the heritage sites and could give a good idea what the heritage policy is trying to accomplish and what kind of nationalistic values are connected to heritage. While discourse analysis will be used to answer questions to why these heritage sites were chosen, promoted or reconstructed. Discourse analysis also helps to understand how nationalism is expressed by the different presidents by looking at what is included or excluded from the Korean identity and culture. Discourse analysis could also answer the questions why certain views come up in heritage policies, and maybe it can also be used to analyze why changes in policy happened at a certain time, since this method is also concerned with the context of texts. It could also help me with the question why changes in policies are legitimized.

The sources I used for my theoretical framework are primary sources of critical thinkers within the heritage discourse. For the chapters on nationalism in South Korea and the chapters on the presidents roles in heritage politics I used the inaugural speeches of the three presidents, heritage laws, and secondary sources on the cultural politics in South Korea, and

tourist guides, as well as my own knowledge of the palace from my visit to Korea in the summer of 2014. Regarding the secondary sources on the presidents and Korean nationalism, I use mostly these sources as I do not have the proficiency of the Korean language that is needed to understand original Korean texts.

This thesis will start with a theoretical framework in which the history of heritage is briefly explained. This chapter will also cover a few theories on the discrepancies within the heritage discourse which I think are helpful in this research. The second chapter focuses on how nationalism and heritage politics developed in South Korea. The next chapter examines Park Chŏng Hŭi's nationalistic influence in cultural and heritage policies and how this has affected the Kyŏngbok palace. Chapters four and five will do the same for respectively the terms of Kim Yŏng Sam and Lee Myŏng Bak. The last chapter is an analysis of the three presidents term and how their nationalistic views have shaped the Kyŏngbok palace to what is today.

### *Brief history*

To get a better understanding of some of the decisions made by the presidents, this section will give a brief history of the palace from the construction until the end of the Japanese colonization.

The Kyŏngbok palace has not been continually used since its construction ended in 1395. At the time, the move of King T'aejo was a clear break with the past, as it marked the dynastic change from the Koryŏ Kingdom to the Yi dynasty.<sup>1</sup> Moving the capital to Seoul and his court into a new palace was a way for King T'aejo to distance himself and his new rule from the assumptions and principles that the new ruling elite thought unsuitable. The new rulers, Neo-Confucian, were in opposition to the former rulers of Koryŏ who were actively supporting Buddhism.<sup>2</sup> T'aejo's successor left Seoul. The next king returned to Seoul, but was not charmed by Kyŏngbok palace and built an additional palace, named Ch'angdok, for his court. Here we see that from early on Kyŏngbok palace was not favored by all Yi dynasty kings. It was not until King Sejong (1418-1452) that Kyŏngbok palace would finally fully

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<sup>1</sup> De Ceuster, 2000, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Lee, de Bary. p. 216-230.

serve its role as a royal palace.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, disastrous events followed. A fire destroyed major sections of the palace in 1553. While the palace was initially rebuilt, the Hideyoshi invasion had left most of the buildings in ruins after its thorough plundering in 1592. The palace was not rebuilt until the 1860's. The arrival of western imperialism and a sense of an approaching crisis initiated palace reconstructions in 1865. The palace was ready for use after two and a half years of construction, although at the time the reconstruction was not yet complete.<sup>4</sup> After a fire of 1873, the palace was once again reconstructed. But when the palace once again burned in 1876, it could no longer serve as the residence of the royal family and the seat of dynastic power.<sup>5</sup> King Kojong moved to Ch'angdok palace. This palace remained the main palace until the end of the dynasty.

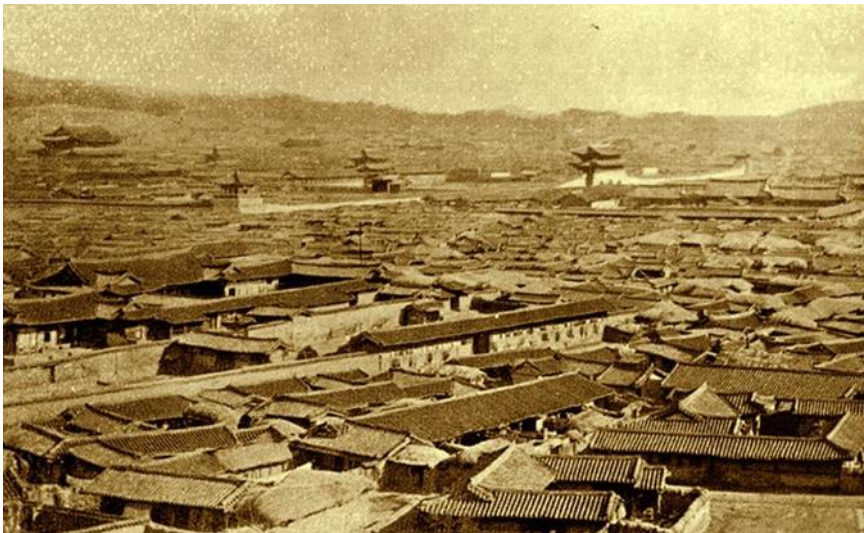


Figure 1. Kyōngbok palace from a distance, 1895. (sources of the used images can be found at the end of the thesis)

The reimaging of the Kyōngbok palace by the Japanese colonizers was part of a larger operation. In order to desacralize the Seoul and to subordinate the Korean people, the Government-General started with the symbolic and strategic reconstruction of the royal palaces. The palaces became public spaces such as museum grounds, zoos, and botanical gardens. Kyōngbok palace became contact zone between Japanese officials and Seoul citizens

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<sup>3</sup> De Ceuster, 2000, p. 78.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 80.

<sup>5</sup> Kim, 2010, p. 80.

after the colonialization in 1910.<sup>6</sup> The palace grounds became symbolic stages for their assimilation projects, and showcased both the political and material superiority of the Japanese. By demystifying and desacralizing the palace grounds, the Japanese also wanted to diminish the loyalty to the former Yi dynasty. In 1913 a ceremonial space was constructed in front of the central hall of the palace to celebrate the birthday of the recently deceased Meiji emperor. With this event the Japanese both symbolically opened the palace grounds to the public, making it a contact zone between Japanese officials and Korean subjects, and forcing Koreans to see themselves as colonized people.<sup>7</sup> The palace's role as a contact and assimilation zone became clearer from 1915 onwards. The palace grounds were used as exhibition grounds (in 1915, 1926), and the place where the Chōsen Sōtokufu museum (or Chosŏn Government-General museum) was built (1915). Through the exhibitions and museum Japanese assimilation efforts were tested.

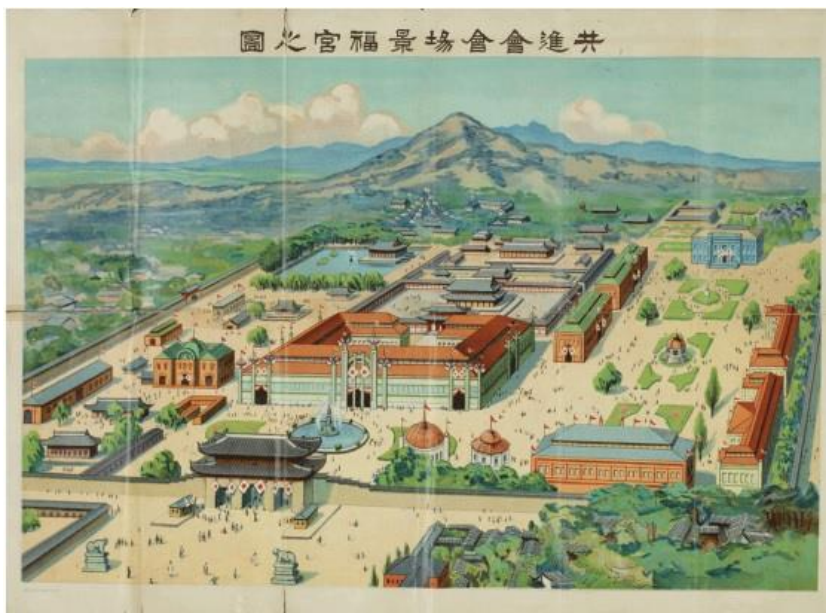


figure 2. Postcard of the 1915 industrial exhibition

Demystifying and desacralizing the palace grounds went further than using the space differently. In the initial years after colonialization, until 1913, the Kyōngbok palace grounds were in disuse. During this period buildings began disappearing, they were sold to individuals,

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<sup>6</sup> Neighborhoods were strategically linked to administrative districts by the Japanese, and therefore showed the shift of power that the colonizers brought from dynastic power to their new administration. New and old public spaces became places where Japanese assimilation of Koreans took place. The city's public spaces became a meeting ground for the Japanese ideas and policies for their colonial rule and the practices of the people who occupied, visited, and lived around these public spaces.

<sup>6</sup> Todd, 2014, p. 4, 36.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 97.



appropriated to Japanese government personnel, or relocated in Seoul or provincial cities.<sup>8</sup> Buildings were also disappearing at later dates, either moved to Ch'angdök palace, or to make room for Japanese constructions on the palace grounds. Around 1915 mostly buildings around the main palace hall were removed to create space to make this hall the main ceremonial space for the exhibition of 1915. It also made room for the Government-General building that would be built years later, in 1918 (finished in 1926). In the same year, the new Chōsen Sōtokufu museum was placed in a new building on Kyōngbok grounds. The Japanese also decided to relocate the Kwanghwamun (gate) in 1926, it went from front- to side entrance. The gate stood in front of the Government-General building, and thus hid the building's full potential as a symbol of Japanese colonization. The last Japanese addition to the palace grounds was the construction of the Blue house in 1939. It became the new residency for the Government general. So not only did the Japanese remove symbols of the Yi dynasty, they added their own symbolic buildings to aid the demystification, desacralization of the palace and the assimilation of the Korean People. By the end of the Japanese colonization, the Kyōngbok palace grounds could barely be recognized as place for the Korean identity.



Figure3. Government-General Building, ca.1930s

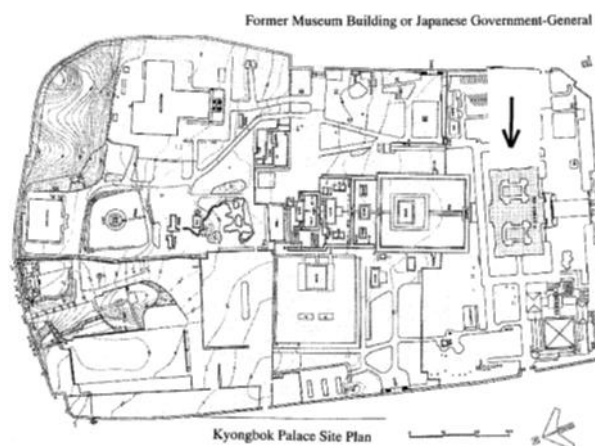


Figure 4. Map Kyōngbok grounds, the arrow marks the building

## 1. Theoretical framework: discussions on heritage, nationalism and identity

<sup>8</sup> Son, 1989, p. 65-66.  
Yi, 1993, p. 29.

Heritage is everywhere these days, but answering the question: ‘what is heritage?’ is difficult on its own, for there are different ways to interpret ‘heritage’. In a general sense, heritage can be seen as the past, in the form of i.a. buildings, monuments, traditions and culture, preserved for the future. However, there is more to heritage than that, for memory, remembrance, sense of identity/nationality are all also inherent to heritage. Heritage is also closely related to feelings of loss, as we can see in the nineteenth century where we can find the first tentative steps in preservation of objects. However, Harvey notes that a concern for the past is much older than the nineteenth century. According to him, remembrance of the past is inherent to ideas of both individual and group identities. Therefore, people in the past have also actively cared for the material aspects of the past.<sup>9</sup> The modern forms of heritage management are derived from the nineteenth century Europe (Britain, France, Germany). This century brought the rise of modernity, which brought a new rationale with ideas on progress. This led to colonialism and imperial expansion, which in turn led to new discourses on race, identity, history, territory and nationality and the links between these concepts. The new rationale also brought a feeling of loss. Industrialization and the following urbanization displaced people, who in turn felt the loss of their previous sense of social and geographical place in life. The rise of museums during this period shows that they played an important role in propagating values and educating the public. In museums, civic and national duties were promoting stability in the form of the ‘national’ community. Meanwhile, countries also turned to the conservation and management of historic buildings and antiques, and creating the first legislation and preservation acts. The new discipline of archeology aided in the countries’ game of claiming the past by uncovering numerous objects and ancient civilizations.<sup>10</sup> By the 1970’s heritage had become recognizable as it is today. Heritage was managed by a set of procedures and techniques, guided by national legislation and national and international charters, conventions and agreements, and concerned with the preservation and management of a range of heritage sites and places.<sup>11</sup>

Where heritage first started off as protection of monuments, it has evolved to be more encompassing. Heritage was generally first seen as just monuments. Monuments were important in the European context of greatness and beauty. Monuments were first used to

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<sup>9</sup> Harvey, David. 2001, p. 333.

<sup>10</sup> Smith, 2006, p. 17-19.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 26.

affirm a sense of aesthetic sensibilities, but were later recognized to also have a commemorative role; affirming certain memories and values.<sup>12</sup> In France the term *patrimoine* has been coined. The concept assumes that the present has a duty to the past and its monuments, that we inherit the past. This term, however, underwrites the monuments idea of aesthetics, which is only applicable to monuments, and is more personal than the monument. As the Romantic Movement also started to pay attention to the natural landscape, the terms monument and *patrimoine* were not encompassing enough. And as the European conservation ideas spread beyond Europe, the ideas have become internationally neutralized as heritage.<sup>13</sup>

### *Discussions on the heritage discourse*

Since most problems with heritage deal with ‘identity’ and ‘historicity’, it is important to remember that these terms are artificial constructs, created by nationalistic regimes, institutions, revolutionaries, and intellectuals. Other problems in heritage can stem from economic and national politics. The nations that create the identities and histories are just as much a creation of men, and today’s ‘national culture’ is a combination of various invented identities, histories, and traditions.<sup>14</sup> We have to keep in mind that all these constructed representations and categories are also consciously, subconsciously, and unconsciously played off one another. Academics, artists, performers, or students are continuously adopting, adapting, and integrating one another’s motifs and themes.<sup>15</sup> The overlap will be seen in the following paragraphs where we explore some issues within the heritage discourse.

David Lowenthal has been very outspoken against heritage practices. In his book *The Heritage Crusade* he notes that in talking about the past there is a distinction between what history and heritage do with the past. The function of history is to tell the past objectively, but it never does so. While this is problematic on its own, it means that the past is beyond retrieval. On the other hand, the function of heritage is to deform history; it does not try to

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<sup>12</sup> Choay, 2001, p. 15.

Carrier, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Smith, 2006, p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> Anderson, 2006.

The invented tradition in a broad sense, as per Hobsbawm’s terms, both includes traditions that are actually invented, constructed and formerly instituted, as well as traditions that are less traceable in to a time period and which are establishing themselves rapidly. Invented traditions have come to mean: “... a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of rituals or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.”

Hobsbawm, 1993, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Pai, 2000, p. 246.

retrieve the past.<sup>16</sup> A problem Lowenthal has with the concept of heritage is that it is not testable or even a reasonably plausible account of some past, but a declaration of faith in that past. He says that heritage is not history, not even when it mimics history, because history seeks the truth, heritage exaggerates and omits, invents and forgets, and thrives on ignorance and error. His biggest problem with heritage is that bias is the main point of heritage. The pride in the past is prejudiced and not a just consequence of heritage. With this pride heritage affirms worth and attests identities.<sup>17</sup> Because heritage passes on exclusive myths of origin and continuance, it gives only a select group of people prestige and common purpose. This exclusion/inclusion effect of heritage is Lowenthal's biggest concern/argument.<sup>18</sup> Therefore he says: "History is for all, heritage for ourselves alone."<sup>19</sup> In- and exclusion of people can, for example, create trouble in countries where minorities get no room for their own identity. They will not feel as part of the country, feel that their voice is not heard, do not feel included. By excluding others, it means that heritage cannot be universally true.<sup>20</sup> The above arguments point out that, for example, sites on the UNESCO'S World heritage list, in theory, should be called world heritage. The heritage cannot be universally enjoyed when the reasons for promoting something as heritage are argued from an identity point of view. Although Lowenthal notes this as the biggest problem of the concept of heritage, he offers no solution to this problem.

In *Theatres of memory*, Raphael Samuel also paints a general negative picture of heritage related to memory making and history writing. He conceptualizes heritage as 'systemic and projecting a unified set of meanings which are impervious to challenge'. Heritage also seeks to be hegemonic.<sup>21</sup> He links his idea on heritage, that heritage projects a set of meanings, to Umberto Eco's hyper reality. Hyper reality a condition in which the distinction between what is real and what is fiction has been blurred to a point where it is unclear one begins and the other ends. Eco's hyper reality is to desire a reality and in trying to achieve that desire you create that reality and is then consumed as real. 'Absolute unreality is offered as real presence'.<sup>22</sup> Samuel uses this theory to argue that by projecting meanings that are not necessarily true, heritage creates a hyper reality. He also notes that heritage in our consumer-led society turns into

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<sup>16</sup> Lowenthal, 1998, p. 106.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p, 121-122.

<sup>18</sup> Lowenthal uses Said's theory of orientalism. Heritage also uses the idea and creation of 'the Other' to include or exclude identities. Said, 1977

<sup>19</sup> Lowenthal, 1998, p. 128.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 128-129.

<sup>21</sup> Samuel, 2012, 243.

<sup>22</sup> Eco, 1986, p. 7.

tourist spectacles, while at the same time creates simulacra of a past that never was.<sup>23</sup> With the creations of simulacra filled with created meanings, Samuel notes that heritage has contributed to the revival of nationalism as a force in the political life.<sup>24</sup> This means that Samuel agrees with Lowenthal that there is a difference between history and heritage, that heritage never is, and never can be history, and that heritage creates a different meaning from the past than history would. But while most of his tone on heritage is negative, he does attribute a few good qualities to heritage, and some to which historians could learn from. These qualities are that heritage is more hospitable towards archeology than historians, heritage has an edge over the academic history of the environment, made habitat into a new centrality and lastly it has helped to create ‘public history’.

Similar to Lowenthal, Laurajane Smith recognizes that in the heritage discourse there is no room for those who are excluded. She does offer a way to give more room to dissonant voices surrounding heritage. In her book *Uses of heritage*, Smith claims that there is no such thing as heritage; it is a hegemonic discourse. This discourse has formed the way we think, talk, and write about heritage. It validates certain heritage practices and performances, while undermining alternative ideas about heritage. Heritage discourse is a cultural practice, involved in the construction and regulation of a range of values and understandings. Smith defines this as the ‘authorized heritage discourse’ (AHD) which relies on power/knowledge claims by authorized institutions and people in the heritage field. In this way, the AHD becomes self-referential.<sup>25</sup> She argues that what makes the AHD passive is a (Western) controlled way of looking that has no need to redefine itself, because it works to legitimize itself. Smith argues that therefore we should: “(step outside of the AHD and) offer a reconsideration of heritage, not as a thing but as a cultural process – to examine not only what the AHD ‘does’, but what competing discourses about heritage also ‘do’ to get a sense of the cultural and social phenomena that is ‘heritage’.”<sup>26</sup> Smiths’ book brings forth the argument that there are different ways of looking at heritage that need to be explored more. Especially the themes of active identity making, memory and remembering, heritage as a performance, sense of place, dissonance and the intangibility of tangible heritage need to be revised and stressed as important factors of heritage making outside of the AHD. They form the principle

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<sup>23</sup> Samuel, 2012, p. 242.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 261.

<sup>25</sup> Smith, 2006, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 300.

of heritage ‘doing’. This stands against the argument she uses in describing the AHD: that it is passive and legitimize itself.

Smith is not the only one who explores ‘heritage doing’. In an article on colonial heritage tourism in South Korea, Hyung Yu Park argues that heritage tourism can create a safe area where political dissent and historical contestation can be expressed and communicated.<sup>27</sup> Her idea on heritage tourism is different from Samuel’s view. He saw it as a mere spectacle, a place to make money and to show a hyper reality created by an established, power-wielding institute, while Park argues that by coming to heritage destinations people are interacting with heritage and in that way might be able to see, feel and think things that deviate from the established meanings and imagery.

The theories and arguments these authors bring forth, will come back later in the thesis. When we will analyze the way, nationalism has influenced Korea’s heritage politics, the theories will aid in forming an image of the way heritage works, both in general as in South Korea and how nationalism plays a role in this. For example, we will see how Park uses nationalism to create hyper realities of heritage sites with the help of the characteristics of heritage such as manipulation of the past (Lowenthal). Under Kim we will see how the site of Kyōngbok palace is further manipulated to fit Park’s hyper reality. In the chapter on president Lee we will see that tourism becomes more popular and we will try to gain some insight in the effectiveness of heritage ‘doing’ at the palace.

## **2. Where does South Korean nationalism in cultural and heritage politics stem from?**

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<sup>27</sup> Park, 2016, p. 114.

To answer this question, we need to know under which circumstances the basis for the current form of nationalism developed in South Korea to understand how it influences cultural and heritage policies. After that we will consider the question how heritage as a field of study has developed in South Korea. This is important as we will see that the development of the field of heritage still partly dictates heritage policies and management. Lastly we will examine how the early form of Korean nationalism has influenced the development of the heritage policies.

### *How did nationalism develop in South Korea?*

The period of the Japanese colonization of Korea is crucial to understanding where Korean nationalism in heritage policies stems from. For South Korean nationalism; history writing; and as an aid to that, cultural and heritage policies mostly started out as a reaction to the Japanese colonization. Japan had already started to enforce its presence on Korea after the treaty of Kwanghwa-do in 1876 when Korea officially opened to the world. The treaty was signed by Korea at the hand of Japan who stood to gain trade and diplomatic relations. It can be seen as the beginning of the Japanese penetration into Korea.<sup>28</sup> Initially after the treaty it was Korea's chance to reform following Japan's example, but Korea's leaders were reluctant to do so for it was mostly China to which Korea looked regarding reforming. Due to shifts in power relations, Japan started to gain the upper hand Korea, leading up to the Kabo reforms (1894-1896), an implementation of new laws and regulations which marked a break with historical Korean traditions.<sup>29</sup> These new laws and regulations could not prevent Korea from becoming a Japanese protectorate established (officially) in 1905.<sup>30</sup> However; what started off as a protectorate in 1905 became the annexation of Korea in 1907. Although internally not much changed in this period, it was a step closer to colonization.

It was in 1910 that Korea was colonized by Japan, which lasted until 1945. The Japanese rule consisted of three periods: the dark (1910-1919), the cultural (1919-1931), and the military period (1931-1945). The dark period is characterized by harsh political repression and a stifled cultural and political life.<sup>31</sup> Japan's need to legitimize its colonial rule led to the

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<sup>28</sup> Seth, 2011, p. 234.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 247.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 254.

<sup>31</sup> Seth, 2011, p. 266.

political repression. To legitimize their rule Japan needed to disband the Chosŏn ruling class, consisting of both political and intellectual elites, and get rid of armed resistance.<sup>32</sup>

The cultural period can be marked by Japanese policy slogan ‘Harmony between Japan and Korea more tolerate towards Korean cultural activities’.<sup>33</sup> Although the new policy was announced in 1919, the government officials had begun to experiment with strategies associated with cultural rule before 1919. Because Japan was shocked by what had happened during the March First Movement in 1919, they tried to appease the Korean people. Japan used a divide and rule tactic, while also employing tactics of appeasement. This tactic of appeasement was apparent in the way Japan reluctantly tolerated some forms of freedom on the Korean cultural and social front.<sup>34</sup> Japan had noticed that the rigid control and disbandment of the Chosŏn ruling class was met with resistance and it was thus futile. However, it was not until the mid- 1920s that the new form of colonial rule started to work in favor of the assimilation projects that the Government-General had supported since the 1910s.<sup>35</sup>

From 1931 until 1945 the Japanese shifted to a form of wartime colonialism.<sup>36</sup> For Korea this meant two historically important developments: uprooting people and the Japanese effort to noticeably assimilate the Korean people more forcefully, to make them into Japanese citizens. Todd sees this period of Japanese control as less of a break than the previous shifts. The military shift implemented experiments of governmentality of the earlier shifts but in a new form, thus not creating a new set of policies but rather refining and perfecting the rules that worked in the earlier periods.<sup>37</sup>

The Korean resistance and nationalism that formed during this period were a reaction to the Japanese assimilation efforts. The Japanese government used history writing, cultural properties and heritage to assimilate the Korean people, to turn them into dutiful, and ultimately loyal, subjects of the Japanese emperor. In the eyes of the Japanese, the Koreans were historical, cultural, and behaviorally miles behind the Japanese. Other concerning racial features of the Koreans were lack of creativity, a stress on formality, illiteracy, a lack of

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<sup>32</sup> Buzo, 2007, p. 17.

<sup>33</sup> Seth, 2011, p. 270.

<sup>34</sup> Lee, 2013, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Todd, 2014, p. 16.

<sup>36</sup> Seth, 2011, p. 292.

<sup>37</sup> Todd, 2014, p. 16-17.



appreciation of the fine arts, a failure to preserve monuments, factional strife, authoritarianism, individualism, optimism, and the inability to distinguish private possessions from public property.<sup>38</sup> By becoming Japanese, the Koreans would get the chance to become a better race, and become modern. The Japanese were the first to carry out systematic studies of Chōsen, as they called Korea (after Chosŏn) by collecting, compiling, studying, and documenting Korean historical texts.<sup>39</sup> The studies these scholars produced, and the knowledge they created in the field of Korean historical studies meant that they were studied as part of Japan's national history in Japanese lead universities by the early 1900s.<sup>40</sup> Japan used several disciplines as tools in creating a historical link between Japan and Korea that proved Japan's superiority over Korea.

There were four main themes based on the results of archeological and anthropological studies that would 'prove' Japanese superiority over Korea. The first theme was the theory of *Nissen dōsoron*. This meant that the data they found in Korea pointed to common ancestral origins of the Korean and Japanese races, thereby legitimizing the Japanese claim on Korea. The second theme proved that Japanese emperors ruled over Korea between the fourth and seventh centuries. The third theme was the major impact of the Chinese on Korea and the consequent lack of unique Korean features. Japan used theories of racial origins, providing prove that Koreans were related to ancient races in Manchuria. This worked well for the Japanese, because they aimed to position the Chōsen people as inferior to China in the past through their Manchurian roots and inferior to the Japanese race in the colonial present because of those same roots.<sup>41</sup> The last theme was the backwardness and stagnation of the Korean civilization which served as a legitimization for the implementation of laws that aided Korea on the path of modernization.<sup>42</sup>

The eradication and distortion of the Korean identity sought Korean nationalists to create their own historical Korean identity and to educate the Korean people about their history and identity. Historical education was seen as the only way to save the nation, and it in turn paralleled the Japanese efforts of assimilation through enforced study of the Japanese

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<sup>38</sup> Pai, 2000, p. 37-38.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 23-24.

<sup>40</sup> Imanishi, 1936, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Pai, 2000, p. 36, 55.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p. 36.

language, history, and culture.<sup>43</sup> These efforts came from nationalists such as Yi Kwangsu , Ch'oe Namson, An Ch'angho, and Kim Songsu who worked on a cultural approach to nationalism, for whom educational and cultural projects were to be preferred over radical independence movements.<sup>44</sup> An independent movement could create independence and a period of chaos, but if there would be no common idea of history and identity to keep the nation together, the Korean nation would have trouble to create a strong nation in this modern world. Korean nationalists searched for the articulation of an eternal and unchanging *minjok* (Korean ethnic nation) in the new modern world.<sup>45</sup> This *minjok* identity was created through historical reinventions by historians such as Pak Unsik, Sin Ch'aeho, and the before mentioned Yi Kwangsu. They urged Koreans to relive their shared cultural heritage and historical legacies in order to remember the Korean identity in a modern era.<sup>46</sup>

The recreation of the story of Tan'gun as the founding ancestor of Korea is one such effort in reliving historical legacies, as well as a counterpart to Japan's *Nissen dōsoron*. With Tan'gun Korea had its own sacred lineage as well as a historical identity. Tan'gun later came to represent the soul of the nation, which lead the nation to strive for political independence and prosperity.<sup>47</sup> The characteristics of Korean culture and identity today stem from nationalist and historical efforts to recapture the Korean essence. *Han minjok* has come to be the basis of modern Korean nationalism.<sup>48</sup> The characteristics of the Korean race that every Korean knows by heart are the idea that Koreans have been a homogeneous race since prehistoric times: the Korean race descended from the first ancestor, Tan'gun, and in the Tan'gun narrative, the magical birth took place atop Baektusan, Korea's highest and northernmost mountain (a mountain which features heavily in Korean geomancy, Buddhism and Taoism traditions).<sup>49</sup> In short, the Korean race has a long unified existence; it is homogenous; and owns a national consciousness.

*How did the basis for the current heritage policies develop, and how has the early nationalism influenced the development of these heritage policies?*

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<sup>43</sup> Pai, 2000, p. 8-9.

<sup>44</sup> Robinson, Michael, 1988.

<sup>45</sup> Choi, 2009, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> Em, 1999.

Choi, 2009, p. 16-17.

<sup>47</sup> Pai, 2000, p. 8-9.

<sup>48</sup> Yim, 2002, p. 38.

<sup>49</sup> Pai, 2000, p. 57-58.

When the Japanese started forming Koreans studies in their universities they were uncovering archeological remains and incorporating Korean history into the Japanese imperial history. The combination of archeological studies, the need for proof in the form of objects, and the need to ‘own’ Korea in the form of their artefacts meant that the Japanese wanted to preserve Korean cultural properties. The deplorable state of cultural objects, monuments and architecture from before the Chosŏn Dynasty, that the Japanese encountered during their surveys, lead to the promulgation of Korea’s first heritage laws in 1916. It was the first of three stages of Japanese heritage management laws. The 1916 law was on the ‘Regulations on the preservation of ancient sites and relics of Chōsen act’, and predated Japanese heritage laws by three years.<sup>50</sup> The second stage of the colonized heritage management was the promulgation of the ‘Historic remains, famous places, and natural monuments act’ in 1919. The third and final act of 1933 was the ‘Treasures, ancient sites, famous places and natural monuments act’.<sup>51</sup>

The Japanese used these laws to register hundreds of archeological and historical sites, monuments and objects. In their quest to preserve Korean cultural properties, they were held back by the lack of finances. Only the most important monuments and sites, those that could be used as proof for the assimilation of Koreans, and the sites and monuments that were in danger of collapsing were protected. When those monuments were too far out in the countryside to be protected, they would be moved to museum grounds where they were promoted as proof for assimilation.<sup>52</sup> Artefacts, monuments, and sites were not only used as evidence for a shared history and culture. The Japanese also used such heritage to create and to foster a sense of belonging to the Japanese empire and a sense of pride for the empire. This longing and pride was not just focused on the colonized Koreans, but also on arriving tourists who were mostly from Japan, and for Japanese settlers. The cultural objects, monuments and sites should also evoke a sense of nostalgia in the Japanese settlers as Korea was now part of the Japanese empire.<sup>53</sup> They should be reminded of the time before the Meiji restoration, and remember how Japan has grown as an empire. However, specialists saw that heritage could serve a purpose greater than just providing scientific evidence for a shared history. They

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<sup>50</sup> Pai, 2015, p. 19.

<sup>51</sup> Pai, 2001, p. 79.

<sup>52</sup> Pai, 2000, p. 34-35.

<sup>53</sup> Pai, 2015, p. 19.

believed the sites, monuments and cultural objects could also be used as cultural assets, museum treasures, and scenic tourist destinations.<sup>54</sup>

After the colonization and the Korean War, historiography in Korea became an important part of the Korean nationalism. New institutions arose and old institutions were reformed to deal with the new imagery that was promoted through historiography. Heritage was one of the ways to promote the historic image of the nation. South Korea based its heritage programs on the existing Japanese programs and regulations. South Korea could use them because they were an example of western ways of heritage management, and could be voided of Japanese connotations. Where Japan used heritage to prove Korea's subservient role to Japan, South Korea used heritage to boost the image of the Korean race and identity. Koreans worked with the same tools because these tools were known to create the effect that the Koreans were looking for. Sites, monuments and objects that enhanced and proved Korea's historic identity were favored. President Rhee Syngman, South Korea's first president, also created Korean symbols that reflect the Korean race.

### **3. How has Park Chŏng Hŭi's created Korean national narrative and the following nationalism influenced the Kyŏngbok palace during his term (1961-1979)?**

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<sup>54</sup> Pai, 2015, p. 15.

Park became President of South Korea after staging a military coup on May 16<sup>th</sup> 1961, due to the issues of corruption, both in the military and society, and the politicization of the military. Between 1961 and 1963, Park gained control of the instruments of state power, to reshape them, using state building and economic policies to unite his power. In 1963 Park Chông Hui consolidated his power in the form of his presidency. Economically Park focused on import protection, industrial policy, and export promotion.<sup>55</sup> For the social modernization, which could strengthen his economic and political strategies, he focused on spiritual reforming of the Korean people.<sup>56</sup> Modernization was only necessary for economic development, to be achieved on the basis of self-reliance and self-help. Still, he insisted that the goal of modernization was the reconstruction of democracy, though his form of democracy was more authoritarian than democratic.<sup>57</sup> In 1972 Park made a turn in his reign. After winning the 1967 elections he slowly started to turn his back on South Korea's constitutional progress by editing earlier laws and policies. By 1972 Park had enough power from the revised laws that he could put a new constitution in order. This new constitution was issued under the pretext of a need for 'revitalizing reform' (*Yusin*). Korea needed to be more flexible to deal with the changing international threats; these threats legitimized the new rationale of his regime. The new constitution made Park even more into an authoritarian ruler, for Park could now rule without being constrained by legislative and judicial checks-and-balances. Under the new ruling Park was also granted life-long presidency.<sup>58</sup> Park's reign ended when he was assassinated on October 26<sup>th</sup> 1979.

*What kind of role did nationalism play in Park's cultural and heritage policies?*

Park used nationalism as a tool to legitimize his rule. He put South Korea's past in the most unfavorable light possible, while also projecting the future as one of a 'rich nation, strong army'.<sup>59</sup> Between 1961 and 1967 nationalism was the motor for the country's economy and national harmony through spiritual reforming Koreans in a new civil society. From 1966 onwards, culture and tradition started to play a big role in aiding Park's nationalistic rhetoric. After the military coup, Park had been negative in regards to Korea's past and culture,

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<sup>55</sup> Moon, 2011, p.127.

<sup>56</sup> Kim, 2011, p. 115-116.

<sup>57</sup> Moon, 2011, p.126, 131.

<sup>58</sup> Im, 2011, p. 233.

<sup>59</sup> Moon, 2011, p. 123.

however, after 1966 he said traditions and culture would foster the creation of a new culture. Culture and traditions were also needed in order to establish a firm national identity and to overcome social apathy. Park encouraged South Koreans to be proud of their history in order to achieve president Park's political and economic goals.<sup>60</sup>

After the Japanese colonization, the South Korean government became the authority on the subject of nationalism, history, and identity. While Ryee Syngman stressed the notion that national culture should be led by the government and would lead to state development, he lacked the funds to create a complete official apparatus for Korean history writing and the creation and maintenance of the new Korean identity. It was Park Chŏng Hŭi who created this national apparatus. Park used nationalistic rhetoric to legitimize his cultural and heritage policies. This nationalistic rhetoric stemmed from three goals for culture and heritage. The first goal was to restore Korea's racial tradition, which the Japanese had been trying to obliterate during the colonization. The second goal was to revive the Korean spirit, which had faded because of the Japanese, but which was needed to make Korea a strong country once again. The third goal was to overcome national disasters through cultural education.<sup>61</sup> What these national disasters are, is unclear. It could both be a threat to Park's rule, or the looming presence of North Korea.

Through new and reformed institutions, the Park government was able to achieve these goals. They gave new symbolic meanings of the past and the future to museum objects, cultural laws, monuments, heritage, and restorations. These symbolic meanings were all influenced by nationalistic politics because the institutes that created them were closely linked to the government. Park's priorities for cultural policies were the search for excellence and to make it accessible to Koreans. Culture needed to be accessible because culture and its policies could create a Korean cultural identity by highlighting specific cultural traditions.<sup>62</sup> For Park, culture and education were the second economy and driving force for modernization. As a result, cultural policy became an indispensable part of economic policy.<sup>63</sup> The rapid economic growth (since 1960s) and culture participation (from 1970s onward) efforts affected cultural welfare and led to an increase in the demand for culture.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Chŏn, 1998, p. 244.

<sup>61</sup> Pai, 2001, p. 86.

<sup>62</sup> Yim, 2002, p. 40.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p. 44.

<sup>64</sup> Yim, 2002, p.44- 45.

The Korean cultural property and heritage management was also focused on the Korean national rhetoric; here it showed in the repatriation of Korean artifacts and monuments taken by foreign invaders (Japan, USA, Europeans).<sup>65</sup> This narrative was used to legitimize Parks economic and military development plans as striving to regain the countries spirit to prepare for the modern threats to the country.

In order to preserve objects and monuments the Office of Cultural Properties was founded in 1961 under Park's presidency. This Office fell under the Ministry of Culture and Sports (until 1998). Not only did this institute preserve, but a large part of its finances was reserved for building shrines, monuments, altars and cemeteries in order to showcase the national historical narratives, mostly narratives of foreign resistance.<sup>66</sup> Another aspect of the Office was the reconstruction of palaces, fortresses, temples, ancestral shrines and burial mounds. Preservation; the promotion of national monuments, customs, and heritage; designation and ranking of cultural objects were also tasks of the bureaucratic and academic members of the Office of Cultural Properties. The 1962 'Cultural Properties Preservation Act' provides the legal framework under which they classify Korean cultural properties to this day. Classification is based on four categories which are based on notions that were passed on from the Japanese colonization. The categories were (and still are): 1) tangible cultural properties (national treasures, treasures), 2) intangible cultural properties, 3) monuments (historic sites, scenic sites, and natural monuments), 4) folk recourses (both tangible and intangible).<sup>67 68</sup> Not only are the categories within the Cultural Properties Preservation Act based on categories used by the Japanese, the act itself is also based on the previous Japanese heritage laws ( 'Regulations on the preservation of ancient sites and relics of Chōsen act' 1916,

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<sup>65</sup> Kim, 1965.

Yi, 1973.

<sup>66</sup> Pai, 2013, p. 14-15.

<sup>67</sup> These categories are for state and city/province designated heritage. Cultural heritage material, registered cultural Heritage (Cultural heritage of early modern times), and Undesignated Cultural Heritage( General movable cultural heritage, buried Cultural heritage) are the other categories. CHA, 2016.

<sup>68</sup> It is interesting to note that South Korea had already adopted intangible heritage in 1962. UNESCO, one of the leading institutes on the preservation of heritage, had only adopted intangible heritage preservation in an international convention in 2003 ('International Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage'), while tangible heritage was already covered by the 1972 convention 'Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage'. The 2003 convention was created to fill the gap in normative instruments related to heritage. The 2003 convention includes folklore as intangible heritage; it is interesting to see that the Korean preservation act of 1962 has made a distinction between intangible heritage and folk resources. Korea was the 55<sup>th</sup> country to join UNESCO in 1950, but only adopted the UNESCO treaty for the convention Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1988. The convention on intangible heritage was signed in 2006.

‘Historic remains, famous places, and natural monuments act’ 1919, ‘Treasures, ancient sites, famous places and natural monuments act’ 1933).

In 1967 there was an amendment made to the ‘Cultural Preservation Act’ in order to stop the looting of burial sites. More and more burial sites came to surface because of Parks industrialization and economy development plans. But on the other hand, the industrialization was also good for Korea’s archeology and heritage preservation since it lead to the discovery of new archeological and historical sites.<sup>69</sup>

Park used the restoration and promotion of, among others, heritage and archeological sites, monuments, parks, graveyards to emphasize the Korean identity, and to legitimize the new national narrative. In doing so only the extraordinary objects and sites where promoted such as Royal palaces, Buddhist temples, national heroes, and other grand sites that promote the national narrative (or objects found at these sites).<sup>70</sup> The erection of a bronze statue of Admiral Yi Sunsin in April 1968 on Kwanghwamun square follows the narrative of a country of hero’s defending Korea from foreign invasions.<sup>71</sup> The placement of the statue is also very central and on a busy square in front of the Kyōngbok palace. Though it fits the narrative and uses historical heroes, the statue is not designated heritage (a war diary of Admiral Yi Sunsin has been designated a national treasure). Among others, 116 national treasures and 112 historical sites were designated during the first year of the Office of Cultural Properties. National treasures range from buildings, stupa’s, Buddhist statues, pagoda’s, but also smaller objects such as celadon, paintings and other small objects. Mostly the Office focused on preservation of buildings in the form they were found, site investigations and isolated restoration projects due to insufficient budget. Former capital cities such as Kyōngju Kongju, and Pujō were simply designated as national heritage sites, without any restoration work being done.<sup>72</sup> Kyōngju, the capital of Shilla, plays an important role in the national narrative. It was deemed so important, that in 1971, Park personally launched the ‘Kyōngju Tourism Comprehensive Development Plan’ and set aside large government subsidies dedicated to restoring the ancient glories of the Silla kingdom for foreign tourists.<sup>73</sup> Sîntionean argues that

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<sup>69</sup> Pai, 2000, p. 3-4.

Pai, 2013, p. 24.

<sup>70</sup> Sîntionean, 2013, p. 255.

<sup>71</sup> Admiral Yi successfully fought against Japanese invaders from the Korean coast in 1593, and did so by inventing a new type of warship: the turtle boat. Seth, 2011, p. 147.

<sup>72</sup> Sîntionean, 2013, p. 258.

<sup>73</sup> Pai, 2013, p. 14.



in the 1960s the Office was making up for the loss of cultural identity, acting as the protector of Korean heritage and culture as they argued that the Japanese had been neglecting and destroying Korean heritage. In the 1970s the Office focused on historical sites that had been neglected and started designating defensive structures as heritage (as per the national narrative).<sup>74</sup> Another site that got a lot of attention under Park was the *Ch'ilbaek Ŭich'ong* (Tomb of the seven thousand martyrs). This site is linked to the casualties of a large battle against the Japanese and, again, showcases Park's national narrative of resistance. On this site the tomb was enlarged, old annexes were reconstructed, and new structures were added.<sup>75</sup>

### *What happened at the Kyōngbok palace during Park's reign?*

In between the end of the occupation and the beginning of Park Chōng Hŭi's reign, the palace has been used in various ways. After the Japanese were defeated, the Americans came to occupy it. They took over the Government-General building at the Kyōngbok Palace grounds for their administration. The Government-General building was also used for the inauguration of the new Republic of Korea's National Assembly. In a short period, the palace grounds became linked with both a new foreign invader and the new Korean government. After the Korean War the palace grounds were damaged. The Government-General building was not fit to be used and largely neglected until the reign of Park Chōng Hŭi in 1962.

On January 21<sup>st</sup> of 1963 the palace grounds were designated as a historic site by the Office of Cultural Properties. This list contains places and facilities that are of great historic and academic values. Between 1961 and 1967, Park and the Office restored thirty one buildings on the palace grounds. They were all small projects because funds were lacking in this early phase of Parks reign. Major plans to reform the palace were started in 1966. The highlight of the major plans was the reconstruction of the Kwanghwamun. Both a committee from the city of Seoul and the Office of Cultural Properties revealed their plans for the reconstruction to Park. The plan of the city of Seoul was to build a gate of steel and concrete on the original location, while the Office's plans were to rebuild the gate out of wood and on its current location. The idea of the Seoul committee won, for Park thought it represented a new era in which steel and concrete represented Korea's drive for modernization and his plans to rebuild the nation. By building the gate on its original location he not only set himself apart

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<sup>74</sup> Sîntionean, 2013, p. 258-259.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p. 263-264.

from the Japanese legacy but he also linked the past with the future, and the traditional with modernization. The new gate was finished in 1968 and inaugurated with a wooden sign in *han'gŭl* (the Korean name for their language) penned by Park himself.<sup>76</sup> 1966 is also the year a new museum is placed on the palace grounds in the form of the Korea Folk Pavilion. At that time it was still a part of the anthropology department of the National Museum, but by 1975 it became its own museum, moving from the *Sujŏngjŏn* Hall to the old Modern Art Museum building of the Palace grounds: the National Folk Museum.



Figure 5. Park's Kwanghwamun

*Analysis: How has Park Chŏng Hŭi's created Korean national narrative and the following nationalism influenced the Kyŏngbok palace?*

Noticeable in the restoration of the palace is the question of authenticity; it does not seem important to Park. In Western countries heritage is almost completely synonymous with authenticity, while Park's resurrected Kwanghwamun gate is not.<sup>77</sup> In Asia this is not always the case. An example is the Nara document on Authenticity. This ICOMOS document argues that there is more to authenticity than just the Western view; just like cultures can be different so can the definition of authenticity be different.<sup>78</sup> From a Western point of view it means that during Park's term the Kyŏngbok palace is not seen as authentic and is thus not an accurate historic site. The fact that South Korea deemed it a historic site shows they have a different

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<sup>76</sup> Kim, 2010, p. 86-87.

<sup>77</sup> Kim, 2010, p. 88.

<sup>78</sup> ICOMOS, 1994.

view on authenticity or that the site, despite the discrepancies in the history of the site, is deemed important enough to gain the status of a historic site.

The earliest mentions of the Kyōngbok palace buildings on the national treasure list were the *Gūnjōngjōn* Hall and the *Gyōnghoeru* Pavilion, which were designated national treasures in 1985. It seems reasonable to believe that the palace was not seen as national heritage when one looks at the reconstruction of Kwanghwamun; the plans made by the authority on preservation and reconstruction of Korean cultural monuments are brushed aside. One does have to take into consideration in how far Park's personal motives played a role in the reconstruction of the gate, for the legitimization and consolidation of his power and policies seem to be the deciding factors in his decision-making. A gate that represents modernization, just as president Park would like to present himself as the president that brings modernization, would invoke more feelings of legitimacy for Park's rule.

Where Park destroyed a part of the Japanese colonization with the reconstruction of the Kwanghwamun gate, he left an opportunity to do the same thing with the Blue House. The former residency of the Japanese Government-General, the Blue House, is as much a form of Japanese dominance on the palace grounds as the Government-General building. Although the Government-General building was of course a statement in the face of the Koreans, placing the new ruler's house on the grounds of the Chosŏn dynasty should be seen in the same way. It would therefore not have been out of place to destroy the Blue House. Nonetheless, Park was not the first president to move in this building; Rhee used it as his residency too and also used it as the presidential office. By keeping this building in use Park could use it as a legitimacy of his rule by the association with Rhee and the official status as the presidential offices. The 1969 enlargement of the Blue House then may have been a statement as well, proving he had done better than Rhee, for through industrialization he had the funds to expand his rule and thus the offices.

At last, it is noteworthy to pay attention to the fact that most of the reconstructions and adaptations to the imagery of the palace took place before the 1970s. I think this can be contributed to several reasons. It gives a powerful statement to start the changing of the national identity at the former center of Japanese power in Korea. With the administrative center and the personal residency of the Government general on the palace grounds it sends a strong image of denouncing the Japanese dominance over Korea. In this way, he also created

an image for the narrative of Korean resistance against the Japanese. As a symbol of the Yi dynasty, the palace represents the former greatness which Park wanted to reclaim. By projecting the image of former glory, it would be easier to legitimize his new economic and political development policies that, according to Park, would lead greatness to again. The location of the palace also makes it easier for Park to represent his nationalism. With the Kyōngbok palace he would have managed to impact more people than if he had first started a project in the countryside. The implementation of the *Yusin* constitution may also have impacted the reconstructions at Kyōngbok palace. The preparation to gain enough power to implement this constitution may have taken time and concentration away from culture and heritage, as it played smaller role compared to enforcing Park's rule and economic development. The *Yusin* constitution also brought a different type of society, to which culture and heritage from the 1970s onwards, and thus the palace reconstruction, were less of a priority. Lastly, by the 1970s the narrative that Park had created for the new history had already been in place for a few years and accepted, it meant that you could put funds into other projects without needing to keep renewing projecting and legitimating his policies through the Kyōngbok palace.

Through nationalism and the new narrative, the Kyōngbok palace turned from a dynastic symbol to a symbol of resistance against the Japanese.<sup>79</sup> Park's nationalistic rhetoric of a nation fighting of invaders influenced the Office of Cultural properties to protect certain sites and objects. Since the palace played a big role during the Japanese colonization we can easily see how it could be turned into a place of resistance. Unfortunately, what is happening here, is what Lowenthal disliked about the concept of heritage. The suggestion is made that the site was prominently resisting Japanese occupation, while evidence of destruction and reimagining of the palace suggest that if there was resistance, it was passive and low key. Park is therefore omitting, inventing, forgetting and exaggerating the role of the palace. By restoring the smaller buildings and restoring the gate, not even as authentic as possible, Park has created a theater of memories that has, perhaps, also become a hyper reality in Korea's identity.

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<sup>79</sup> Sîntionean, 2013, p. 260.

**4. How has Kim Yŏng Sam's use of Korean nationalism influenced the Kyŏngbok palace during his term (1993-1997)?**

Kim Yŏng Sam became the first civil president in 1993 (until 1997), ending the military authoritarian rule. Kim wanted to make the government accessible to the people, and to eliminate waste and fraud in public finances in order to make more money available for

national development.<sup>80</sup> The goals of Kim Yŏng Sam's government were to strengthen the international competitiveness of Korea and to overhaul bureaucracy.<sup>81</sup> Public servants had an attitude of being opportunistic and a reputation to do nothing. Through reformations and energizing of the Korean people, the economy would be reinvigorated, and would gain a competitive edge.<sup>82</sup> Economically, South Korea fared well since the 1960 modernizations, however, cultural development and traditional value systems lagged behind its increasing material prosperity (Kim's 'Korea disease').<sup>83</sup> Kim's *Segyehwa* reform would make political and socio-economical institutions internationally more compatible and raise the country's quality of life up to global standards of excellence.<sup>84</sup> Korea could improve their own quality of life by promoting the world's economy, technology, cultural developments and advance towards a universal peace and prosperity. On the domestic front, it meant an emphasis on quality-oriented growth and a balance between economic growth and public welfare, and between development and environmental preservation.<sup>85</sup>

*What kind of role did nationalism play in Kim's cultural and heritage policies?*

During Kim's presidential term the nationalistic rhetoric was used to counter negative effects of globalization and to bring more awareness to Korean people. In the globalizing world Koreans must take pride in their own culture, while at the same time accept other cultures with an open mind. Education and culture should play big roles in this process. Education was reoriented towards fostering national appeal and creativity, and characteristics such as initiative, self-discipline, and competition were emphasized. Education was seen as not only the corner stone for national development but also essential for the public well-being of the Korean citizens. Since the 1980s, culture and arts was seen as the solution to social problems. Social problems were attributed to a deserted spiritual world and confused ethics due to the economic growth. Hence, enhancing the national culture was seen as the enrichment of the spiritual world, to counteract the negative effects of materialism and commercialism of the economic growth. The Korean culture and the Korean's way of thinking were also to be

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<sup>80</sup> Kim, 1996a, p. 1-3.

<sup>81</sup> He needed four major reforms to accomplish this. The reforms were: 1.) demolishing the past pillars of authoritarian rule: the military, 2.) disclosure of assets of public officials to the public, 3.) banning anonymous financial accounts, 4.) the introduction of three political reform bills to promote clean and frugal politics in general. Kim, 1996a, p. 5-8.

<sup>82</sup> Kim, 1994, p. 5.

<sup>83</sup> Kim, 1996b, p. 9-10.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 5-6.

<sup>85</sup> Kim, 1996a, p. 16.

globalized. Koreans had to rediscover the intrinsic richness of their traditional culture and integrate it with global culture.

The Korean cultural policy objectives were to assert cultural democracy, enable the creativity of the Korean people, enhance regional culture, improve and nurture the cultural industries, create more cultural tourism, work towards unification and globalization. The cultural policies also aided in establishing the Korean cultural identity, as well as emphasizing the economic importance of culture and the arts.<sup>86</sup> Kim Yŏng Sam also had the government reshape cultural policies for more cultural exchange in 1995. The Korean cultural identity became part of the competitiveness of the state within the global society and fostered domestic cultural industries and cultural exchange between countries.<sup>87</sup> There was also increased policy concern for the quality of cultural life of people. These policy concerns were linked to the government's efforts to establish the Korean cultural identity. The concerns had a positive effect on the increase quality of cultural life for it led to more cultural education programs after the 1990s.<sup>88</sup>

During Kim's presidency, the Protection of Cultural Properties Act (year) was still the ruling force behind the Office of Cultural properties. In the five years of Kim's rule the act had been amended four times, but with no major changes.<sup>89</sup> During Kim's rule, the Office got very little critique on its top down authoritarian management style. According to Pai, there were two reasons for this. During the years of military reign all political, educational and cultural institutions, as well as their staff, activities and publicity materials of media outlets were subjected to censorship. As public servants they also stood under close inspection by state mandated authorities and the Korean Central Intelligence Agency. The Office committee membership was also very exclusive, meaning that very few people knew that the Office only favored certain sights and monuments. It was a closed network that had been hard to dismantle, but since the first civilian rule, there seemed to be some critique on the rise, mostly in the form of public debates. In 1998 the Office of Cultural Properties was upgraded to an independent status and was renamed the Ministry of Cultural Heritage Administration (or CHA). The upgrade was due to the increase of nationwide projects.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Yim, 2002, p. 41.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p. 46.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p. 45.

<sup>89</sup> Protection of Cultural Properties Act, 2002, p. 941.

<sup>90</sup> Pai, 2013, p. 14-16.

South Korea also gains its first enlistment on the UNESCO World Heritage list under Kim Yŏng Sam. In 1988 Korea, had adopted the UNESCO convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Seven years later, in 1995, Korea had the Sokkuram Grotto, Haeinsa Temple and the Chongmo shrine on the World heritage list. These sites were followed by the Ch'angdokkung Palace and Hwasong fortress in 1997. The World heritage listings also aided Korea's tourism development. As part of the globalization, tourism had become more important. Kim had become conscious of the economic value of the Korean culture, this was shown by the first five-year tourist development plan of 1994. This plan designated six strategic cultural (heritage) places to be developed and promoted for tourism. The areas were Seoul (Yi dynasty), Puyo/Kongju (Paekche), Kyŏngyu(Shilla), Chungwon, usan (Kaya), and Cheju island. By staging events at these locations, such as reenactments, festivals and ceremonies, The Office of Cultural Properties hoped to develop these locations as tourist attractions and for Koreans to rediscover their traditional culture.<sup>91</sup>

*What happened at the Kyŏngbok palace during Kim's reign?*

Kim Yŏng Sam mentioned in the beginning of his presidency two years before, under president Roh, a ten-year project to restore Kyŏngbok palace had begun and that during his term the restoration would follow the original architectural plan.<sup>92</sup> The reconstructions took place under the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA). Kim Yŏng Sam's government made the final decision to demolish the Government-General Building that stood in front of the main hall of the palace. The destruction of the building was one of his main presidential campaign pledges in 1992; to restore the former glory of the Korean race.<sup>93</sup> The building had served as the National Museum since 1986, which would get a new building on a different location in the city. The government made a spectacle of the demolition by starting demolition on Liberation day 1995, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Japanese colonization.

With the destruction of the Government-General building the Heungnyemun Gate and its cloisters could be reconstructed, as they had been removed by the Japanese to make place for the Government-General building. The bedchambers of the king and the queen, named

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<sup>91</sup> Pai, 2015, p. 624.

<sup>92</sup> Samstag, 1996, p. 114.

<sup>93</sup> Pai, 2000, p. 239.



Gangnyeongjeon Hall and Gyotaejeon Hall, as well as Donggung Palace, or the East Palace, the residence of crown prince, were restored next.<sup>94</sup>



Figure 6. Demolishing the Government-General building, 1995

*Analysis: How has Kim Yŏng Sam's use of Korean nationalism influenced the Kyŏngbok palace?*

The deconstruction of the Government-General building was linked to efforts by Kim to establish legitimacy for his civilian rule, and to distance himself from previous military rule. By starting the demolition on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Japanese colonization Kim also distanced himself from Japan and showcased himself as victorious over Japan as well as victorious over the military rule with the first civil government. This fits in Lowenthal's description of inclusion and exclusion of groups surrounding heritage by using Said's theory on 'the Other'. In the case of the Kyŏngbok palace, the Japanese are made into 'the Other; a group and period in history to be excluded from the Korean history and national narrative shown on the palace grounds. Kim seems to act harsher towards the Japanese in contrast to Park, for Park's personal history is shaped by the Japanese influence. Park used some of the Japanese accomplishments to set up his reign. In his view, respect for the Japanese accomplishments and the distrust and enmity toward Japan, because of the colonization, were not contradictory and thus could exist in favor of his development policies. Therefore, for Park, Japan was not 'the Other'.

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<sup>94</sup> Gyeongbok palace, 2016.

Pai also thinks that the transfer of the objects from the National Museum, which stands for the Korean identity, played a role in Kim Yŏng Sam's plans to destruct the building. She compared it to the transfer of objects during Napoleon's and Hitler's reign, when transfers of art, treasures and monuments signified a widely accepted imperial tradition of warfare and diplomacy. The objects of the National Museum were not only physically moved, but the move was also symbolic for the transfer of power and cultural ownership from the former president to President Kim. Pai also puts this cultural ownership in a broader and nationalistic context by saying that this symbolic transfer has happened before; as the palace moved from Korean royal hands to the Japanese, from the Japanese to US and then back under Korean patronage.<sup>95</sup>

The destruction of the building as a material artifact of the Japanese colonialization also fits in another movement. The 1990's saw intensive debates related to Korea's colonial heritage. There was the idea that Korea had to settle the unresolved colonial past. Issues such as collaborators, comfort woman, and forced labor became part of the present-day debates on colonialism in South Korea.<sup>96</sup> The settlement of the unresolved colonial past in at Kyŏngbok palace came in the form of the destruction of the Government-General building. Unfortunately, this also meant that one of the few visible objects on the palace grounds that told the story of Korean resistance disappeared. The history of the palace as a place where Korea had both resisted and overcome dark periods of its history became void. By reshaping the palace grounds, and destroying traces of its colonial history it seem as if Korea was hiding, polishing or shaming their history, or implicating that the Japanese colonization barely affected Korea, thereby also marginalizing the victims. Here we see how both Lowenthal and Samuel can argue that heritage manipulates, creates, and refuses to show 'real' history. According to Samuel, the palace has become a hyper reality where the Japanese colonization and assimilation efforts did not happen, but where Korean resistance took place by being an almost perfect picture of the Korean identity, as told by Park's created national narrative.

Although the destruction of the building fits into the view against colonialism, there was still public opposition to it. The opposition should be seen within the context of the democracy movement since 1987 and the rapid growth of communications media and public

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<sup>95</sup> Pai, 2000, p. 240.

<sup>96</sup> Ahn, 2014, p.110.

debates. The public challenged civilian government's authority as the sole custodian of traditions. The public criticized the lack of public involvement in the process of decision making. The critiques on the demolition of the Government-General building discussed many different issues, but the central thought that surrounded many of those issues was the lack of preparation for preserving the museum pieces. People thought that the decision to demolish the building was of a too short notice. The renovations of the Kyōngbok palace became challenged by a newly emerging public discourse that questioned the government's fundamental authority over public spaces.<sup>97</sup> Debate and opposition came not only from the public. Museum officials, archeologists and art historians had also complained about being left out. They had wanted to remain in the Government-General building because a lot of energy, money, and expertise had already been put into the museum to ensure the necessary tools for running the museum.<sup>98</sup> It is interesting to see here how the critique does not seem to involve the Palace's role in the Korean identity and national narrative, but rather the lack of insight in the whole process. We could thus say that Park's hyper reality, the palace as a national icon and a place where Korean resistance to the Japanese took place, has been readily accepted, by both society and more importantly by the agencies that promote the national identity and narrative.

The economic prosperity of Korea since the 1960s led to the urban growth and development of Seoul. By the 1990s this same growth and development was slowly eating away the remains of the ancient city center and the city's government became acutely aware of this problem. The Namsan Mountain Restoration program from 1990 and the restoration of the Namsan Hanok village in 1994 were examples of the tentative city center restorations. These restorations were also deemed good for the attraction of tourists, both domestic and international. The Kyōngbok palace restoration project should partly be seen in this light since tourism became more important during the 1990's.

Under the Office of Cultural Properties, Seoul was also indicated as one of the regions where heritage tourism would be encouraged for both domestic and international tourists. Certain locations were endorsed mainly for their economic value as tourist attractions, but also to promote the Korean identity and national narrative. Heritage tourism is a form of Laurajane Smith's definition of heritage 'doing'. To be able to move beyond the authorized

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<sup>97</sup> Kim, 2010, p. 89-90.

<sup>98</sup> Pai, 2000, p. 240-241.

heritage discourse, a more active way of engaging with heritage is needed. For Korea, the national narrative is the driving force behind heritage management. By promoting heritage tourism, the Office of Cultural properties creates room for alternative narratives, outside of the authorized heritage discourse.

### **5. How has Lee Myōng Bak's view on Korean nationalism influenced the Kyōngbok palace during his term (2008-2013)?**

Lee Myōng Bak was president between 2008 and 2013. Before becoming Korea's president he had been a businessman at Hyundai for 27 years. Between 2002 and 2006 he was a politician and the mayor of Seoul. His history as a CEO resounded during his presidency as he has been called the CEO President after his election in 2008. Lee was mainly selected for the faith in him to counter the slowing Korean economic growth, linked to rising international

competition from China and Japan. The other major issues Lee dealt with during his term were the North Korea nuclear issues and the demands for a new era of trust and cooperation in the Korea-US relations.<sup>99</sup> In his inaugural speech Lee also spoke of progress towards modernization for which public unity would be essential, the economic revival, and the establishment of the rule of law.<sup>100</sup> For the revitalization of the Korean economy, Lee introduced the ‘Korea 7-4-7’ plan. It should raise economic growth to seven percent, it would raise Korea’s income per capita to 40000 US dollars, and it should make Korea the seventh largest economy worldwide. Finally, North Korea’s denuclearization remained important during his presidency, but he also tried to shine more light on human rights in North Korea.<sup>101</sup>

*What kind of role did nationalism play in Lee’s cultural and heritage policies?*

In Lee’s governmental vision for economic growth, cultural identity became important again. Just like during Parks reign, cultural identity was used to justify and legitimize governmental spending. Lee had an outspoken interest in the cultural industry, as it makes products that enhance the Korean (cultural) identity. While Park used the cultural identity for personal gain by using it to legitimize his rule, Lee used it for economic gain. The use of the Korean (cultural) identity also became more important because Korean cultural products were also enjoyed internationally.<sup>102</sup> It was a way to spread the Korean identity and Korea as a brand. When President Lee took office in 2008 he immediately raised his concerns about Korea’s overseas image. In his inaugural speech, Lee stresses that: “By emphasizing the importance of cultural diplomacy, we will work to allow Korea to communicate more openly and easily with the international community. Our traditional culture, when coupled together with our technological prowess, will no doubt transmit to the world an image of a more attractive Korea.”<sup>103</sup> It is clear here that according to Lee the present image was not attractive enough. Lee was not the first to start branding the nation; his predecessors Kim Dae Jung and No Mu Hyŏn (Roh Moo-Hyun) had explored this path as well. Kim held an active image campaign during the 2002 World Cup in South Korea and Japan, while Roh established the Government Information Agency to supervise the development of Korea’s national brand. However, it was

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<sup>99</sup> Koehler, 2008, p. 1.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p. 21.

<sup>101</sup> Koehler, 2008, p. 32-33.

<sup>102</sup> Shim, 2008, p. 45.

<sup>103</sup> Lee, 2008.

under Lee that the nation brand started to be more accepted outside of Korea due to intensified nation branding.

The national cultural and heritage policies were also approached from a pro-business and pro-market stance to increase tourism.<sup>104</sup> Competition and profits became more important than before as culture was seen more and more as an economical product. Lee, in his inaugural speech in 2008, specifically mentions that culture had become an industry. He concluded that modernizing traditional culture would be useful for facilitating arts and culture, which in turn would dignify the country's economic prosperity. In addition, he noted that the country had developed its competitiveness in the contents industry, to lay the foundation to become a nation strong in cultural activities and with a strong (cultural) industry.<sup>105</sup> The economical stance on culture can partly be explained by the economic crisis in 1997 that redirected cultural policy and administration towards a more economic view. It can also be explained by the Korean wave that swept out from Korea, first across East Asia, in early 1990s onwards, into the rest of Asia, and even now ebbing further into the rest of the world.<sup>106</sup> By 1999, the Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT) began realizing the cultural and economic benefits of the Korean wave.

The economic stance on culture and its effects can also be seen in the traditional arts and heritage. An increase in domestic purchasing powers lead to an increase in commercial enterprises such as Korean folk villages and numerous traditional culture-learning centers in Seoul and its surrounding cities. Such ethnic revivals also benefited from the increase of both foreign and domestic tourism in Korea. Traditional arts and crafts also profited from these new tourists as the interest for these traditional cultural products grew; the demand for these products grew as well. Cultural products have become tied to big business, showing again their market value. Hyung Il Pai considers that this mania for cultural revival could be a manifestation of the rediscovery of a new history of Korea. People continuously seek the affirmation of belonging to Korea's unique racial and cultural heritage by visiting, consuming, and displaying all things that could be considered Korean.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Choi, 2013, p. 257.

<sup>105</sup> Lee, 2008.

<sup>106</sup> Laurel, Abigail, 2012, p. 80-81.

<sup>107</sup> Pai, 2000, p. 5-6.

The CHA has an impact also on the marketing of traditional culture. Pai notes that a contemporary society with educated citizens wants tangible evidence of their cultural heritage. Museum collections, museum galleries, exhibitions, and heritage sites are places where this tangible evidence is shown.<sup>108</sup> As the CHA oversees several such institutions, the CHA enables and plays into the marketing of traditional culture. But not only museums and galleries are managed, heritage and consequently archeology have been inherently linked to the economy and tourism. The first five-year plan for the development of heritage tourism in 1994 (see chapter 4) has set in motion a considerable governmental involvement. From 2000 onwards the government has become increasingly involved in the planning, management, and marketing of archeological remains and museums as destinations of culture and commerce. This impacts their final transformation as national sites of common memory and nostalgia as they become state agents for the Korean identity.<sup>109</sup>

In 2000 Pai noted that, at that time, the market for culture and heritage determined which sites (archeological, heritage) were selected for excavation and/ or reconstruction.<sup>110</sup> Pai notes that by 2013 heritage designation is still highly determined by the market and tourism. Just like the five-year plan of 1994, the goal was to define core areas for intensive tourist development in both urban and rural areas. For this plan, only a handful of sites were selected and designated as cultural centers. Only the best-selling monuments and heritage sites were selected to attract foreign and domestic tourists. Yet, there were also campaigns initiated by the Korean Tourism Organization to attract visitors to distant areas outside of Seoul. These initiatives involved festivals with events promoting local cuisine, seasonal festivals, beauty contests, trade expositions, and the building of ethnic theme parks and family entertainment destinations. Although tourism is highly appreciated and necessary for the dependence on ticket sales as the main source of revenue, Pai notes that the competition for tourist destinations has overtaken the main goal of preservation of these destinations.<sup>111</sup>

*What happened at the Kyōngbok palace during Lee's reign regarding heritage?*

The restoration of the Kwanghwamun was revealed in 2010 to mark the one-hundred-year anniversary since the Japanese annexation. Michael Kim called it the final chapter of the

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid, p. 12-13.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. p. 625.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, p. 624.

<sup>111</sup> Pai, 2013, p. 30-32.

palace reconstruction of a twenty-year effort to restore the palace to its original appearance during the Chosŏn dynasty.<sup>112</sup> Although the gate had been renovated during President Park's reign in 1968, it was decided to take his gate down. Park's gate was standing several meters from the original position of the gate and it stood at a wrong angle.<sup>113</sup> The CHA would build a wooden gate on the original location. The sentiments that were revealed together with the plans was a desire to return to an age before the arrival of modernity, and to restore a proud symbol of the nation on its original location<sup>114</sup>



Figure 7. The back of the new gate, 2014

*Analysis: How has Lee Myŏng Bak's view on Korean nationalism influenced the Kyŏngbok Palace?*

The removal of Park's gate can be seen as a part of a twenty-year effort to restore the palace, but also as an excuse to destroy a symbol of Park's dictatorial reign and what that gate stood for in his reign. In contrast to the decision for a new gate during Park's era, there was now no competition for the renovation plans; the CHA revealed the details of the plans for a gate with authentic materials and on the right location. The renovation done on the right location and with authentic materials may seem to strive for the realization of an authentic palace grounds,

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<sup>112</sup> Kim, 2010, p. 75-76.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, p. 90.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, p. 91.



however, it also negates all its colonial history and the other signs of its later history. Once again, the removal of a building indicates that the CHA (and the Korean government) are striving for a certain image of the palace. This image is a created/invented example of Korea's identity. It brings us back to Lowenthal and Samuel's view of heritage; it is a fabricated version of history. During Lee's term, even the palace's recent history gets undermined. Park's role in the creation of the national narrative and his (self-made) role as a person who shows resistance against foreign invaders gets erased from the site by the removal of his version of the Kwanghwamun gate. In the branded image of Korea's identity, Park's dictatorship and its imagery do not play a role in today's Korea.

The renovation of the Kwanghwamun gate can also be seen as part of a grand scale city renovation to foster historical accuracy and to stimulate recreation and tourism. city planners adopted new management strategies for the city center. They continued the 1990 ideas to stop urban growth that was destroying the ancient city center. They saw the demolition-oriented development as detrimental to the unique characteristics of the traditional center. Instead of starting with thinking in terms of demolition for modernity, to create space for a modern way of living in, and enjoying a city, the city center was planned with preservation in mind first. There were several plans developed over the years that focused on the management of the historical city center. These involved the 'City Center Management Plan' (1999), the 'City Center Development Plan' (2004), the 'Comprehensive City Center Recreation Plan' (2008), and the 'Historical City Center Management Plan' (2010). Within these plans, there were also projects to bring back citizens to area's that had been more traffic oriented. Lee's Seoul plaza (during his mayor years) was an example of redirecting traffic and creating pleasant urban spaces that could be used for recreation. The restorations of historical sites in the area such as the palaces, the Jongmyo shrine, the Sungnye gate plaza and the Kwanghwamun square, and the addition of more open spaces are also good examples of the preservation of the city's historic center and ways to attract tourists. Not just particular monuments were restored. The Bukchon hanok village, the Hanyang Township and the ancient city walls were also included in various projects to restore the historic city. Seoul Solution says these restorations and development plans have helped the city to reclaim its identity as a timeless historic, yet modern city.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Seoul Solution, 2016.

The renovations to the palace, the surrounding heritage, and the city center have made the area interesting for tourists. The palace has attracted more tourists and it has catered to their needs. Around 1995 Kyōngbok palace is said to be a shadow of its former glory by the 1995 edition of the Lonely Planet travel guide to South Korea. The guide also mentions that there are usually ladies in traditional Korean clothing trying to get people to take pictures with them for money. Because the guide says that they are usually there seems to imply that they do this on their own accord, not that it is a legit business run by the palace. By 2010 the Lonely planet guide mentions more attractions at Kyōngbok palace for tourists. There is a changing of the guard and that there are guided tours and that audio information is available. The two museums on the palace grounds are also mentioned.<sup>116</sup> The audio, guided tours, and changing of the guard are signs of the marketing of Korean heritage on the palace grounds. Although it is not mentioned in this guidebook, there was also a booth with Korean traditional clothing which you can put on to take pictures with when I visited the palace in 2012. In a comparison between the two guidebooks we see that cultural (by-) products have been added to the palace as a result of national cultural and heritage policies. The pro-market and pro-business stance of President Lee has made the Kyōngbok palace more accessible for tourists. Although the Lonely Planet guides are directed at people outside of Korea, the attunement of the palace to the tourist is for both foreign and domestic tourists.

The problem with the consumerist attitude towards heritage is that it transforms the site too much and the history of the palace becomes unimportant since that is apparently not marketable enough. Pai notes this as a competition for tourist destinations that has taken over the main goal of preservation of these destinations.<sup>117</sup> This leads us to question how effective Smith's heritage 'doing' is when commercialism has taken over heritage. How much room is there for people to create their own image and ideas of the Korean national identity at the palace when the intended image is plastered all around the visitors? In the study '*Tourism as reflexive reconstructions of colonial past*' Hyung Yu Park examined tourism as a transformative force in the creation of alternative or oppositional narratives of the colonial past. The study is focused on Ch'angdōk and Changgyōng palaces, which were also distorted

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This website gathers all representative policies implemented by Seoul Metropolitan Government and works together with other companies to provide knowledge, pending issues and policy information surrounding urban planning of Seoul.

<sup>116</sup> Robinson, 2007.

Richmond, 2010.

<sup>117</sup> Pai, 2013, p. 30-32.

and destroyed during the Japanese colonial period, but they share destruction and reimagining as a result of the Japanese assimilation efforts. Changgyōng palace was made into a park with a zoo and a botanical garden, while Ch'angdōk palace was more disfigured and transformed in the architectural sense. Both palaces have been restored to show the Chosŏn dynasty's former glory.<sup>118</sup> Ch'angdōk palace is a UNESCO world heritage site since 1997, an exceptional example of Far Eastern palace architecture and design.<sup>119</sup> In the study Park finds that the colonial past is an unappreciated part of the history of the palaces. This could perhaps be attributed to both the disdain for the colonial period and the lack of visual reminders of this period at the palaces. Park also emphasizes that, ironically, the denial of Japanese influence at the palaces can also be understood as another manifestation of reaffirming a strong sense of national identity. The study also shows that showing aversion to the colonial past while visiting a palace is regarded as a crucial factor in defining Korean national identity and solidarity.<sup>120</sup> This leaves us to believe that there is no room to create alternative ideas of the colonial past. However, Park stresses that there are some visitors that do offer contradictory viewpoints and ambivalent feelings regarding the national narrative concerning the colonial past. For those visitors, the commerce and the hyper reality that the palace shows are not a certainty. It seems, unfortunately, that this is only true for a small share of the visitors.

## **6. Analysis: how has nationalism influenced heritage politics in South Korea during the presidency of Park Chōng Hŭi, Kim Yōng Sam, and Lee Myŭng Bak, and how it has affected the Kyōngbok palace?**

During Parks term nationalism in culture and heritage was used to legitimize Park's rule and to create a new narrative for the country and a new Korean identity through the remaking of Korea's history. With the new narrative, shown through culture and heritage, Park gave the Korean people a national identity that stood against the Japanese colonial ideas of the Korean

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<sup>118</sup> Ch'angdōk palace was restored in the 1970's. Changgyōng was restored in the 1980's.

Park, 2016, p. 118-119.

<sup>119</sup> UNSECO, 2016.

<sup>120</sup> Park, 2016, p. 120-121.

identity. The new Korean history was one of resistance against foreign invaders, and those who had led the resistance became national heroes to transmit the Korean identity. New museums, monuments, institutions and heritage protection laws were utilized to showcase Park's narrative. In this new narrative, the Kyōngbok palace became a symbol of victory over Japan. The resurrection of the Kwanghwamun gate and the reconstructions of other smaller buildings aided the national narrative. It created an image of the palace where the signs of colonial occupation were minimized, while the Korean nationalistic aspects of the palace grounds were emphasized. Through the resurrection of the Kwanghwamun gate, the palace also became a symbol for the new modern rule of Park. It also solidified the picture of Park as a national hero for he too was (symbolically) victorious over the Japanese with the restoration of the palace.

Under Kim Yōng Sam nationalism in culture and heritage was deployed as a way to oppose previous military rulers and to vow for more democracy. Even though Park himself became discredited in this period, the narrative that Park had created for the Korean identity was not contested, neither were the cultural and heritage institutions that portrayed this narrative. Culture and heritage in Kim's era obtained legitimacy for his globalization policies. Their role was more to legitimize globalization than to construct the Korean identity, as globalization was the future and would give new meaning to the Korean identity. The Korean identity as formed by Park was not working against Kim. On the contrary, the narrative of resistance helped him in legitimizing the civilian Korean government. During Kim's term, the palace had some minor reconstructions with at the end of Kim's term the destruction of the Government-General building. The demolition of this building can be seen as a belated victory over Japan. It destroyed a physical symbol of the resistance against the Japanese. Regrettably, it also destroyed the narratives that the building had created after the Korean War when it became tied to Korean identity making.

In Lee Myōng Bak's term nationalism aided Korea's economy and culture and heritage had become almost synonyms with economy and tourism. The Korean identity was used to boost the economy, to improve Korea's nation brand, and to increase tourism. Culture and heritage no longer seemed to actively engage with the narrative of the Korean identity by showcasing resistance, but rather showcased cultural and heritage sites as profitable tourist destinations. The reconstruction of the Kwanghwamun gate aided with the idea that the palace had now become even more authentic, closer to the palace during the Chosōn period, but it also meant that there were now more pieces of its history that were left out. The demolition of

Park's symbolic victory of the Japanese and the victory for the Korean national identity also meant that his role in the creation of the Korean identity gets undermined. The legitimization of the authenticity is linked to economic benefits of heritage sites. The pro-market and pro-business attitude of President Lee, together with the increase in tourism had also undermined Korean identity showcased through the Kyōngbok palace. Even though the last part of the palace reconstruction, the Kwanghwamun gate, can also be seen as a show of resistance, against the Japanese colonization, the palace as a whole seems more concerned with tourism.

The national narrative created during Park's term had gained legitimacy to remain the national narrative over the years. The idea that resistance to foreign invaders is part of the Korean identity has not been challenged during either Kim or Lee's presidential term. This also meant that heritage management stayed focused on the same kind of periods and objects. In terms of heritage management, at the Kyōngbok palace we see that each president has in some way has aided to perfecting the image of the palace as being as one with the Korean identity and national narrative. Park's Kwanghwamun gate being the only exception, all the other restorations strove for creating an authentic palace complex. This also meant that the history of the palace since 1945 is overlooked and replaced by a Chosŏn image of the palace. The removal of the Government-General building during Kim's presidency had opened the gate to smoothen the history of the palace of the darker edges of its past. In this way the palace has become a showcase for a polished version of Korea's past, with no place for dark or contested heritage. The story of the palace has been reduced from stories of resistance, be it to the Japanese or to military rulers, to a tourist destination to be crossed on a list, just to tell people you have been there. Accordingly, the palace reconstructions have shown how, true to Lowenthal and Samuel's theories, heritage is manipulated and a created history by nationalistic rhetoric and imagery. As Lowenthal argued, the palace now does not show history, for it now shows an image of a history. For Samuel the palace is a theatre of memories that have been carefully selected and which have created a new reality, a hyper reality, through which the Korean identity is shown. Each president has added his own layer to this hyper reality by selecting what to restore and what to demolish. Thus, strengthening the image of the national identity.

To counter the static and state-created image of the palace, and Korean identity, both Smith and Park argued in favor of heritage 'doing'. Heritage tourism is a form of this. From Kim's term, we see a growing interest in the CHA for heritage tourism. Unfortunately, this

interest seems to stem more from the economic benefits of heritage than from the preservation and propagation of ideas of Korean identity. The restorations on the palace grounds have contributed to the creation of an image of the palace which is attuned to tourists. The palace looks like it came undamaged out of the Chosŏn period. It shows the authorized version of the palace's history. For tourists who do not know its history it is hard to find anything beyond the Chosŏn image. Domestic tourists do know the palace history, and according to Hyung Yu Park's study when they encounter the seemingly small influences of the Japanese occupation that have been left behind, they show an aversion to the Japanese impact. Park insinuates that showing aversion to the colonial past while visiting a palace is regarded as a crucial factor in defining Korean national identity and solidarity. This means that the palace has become a governmental tool in fostering anti-Japanese and anti-colonial ideas. Perhaps this was not intentional but it does mean that most domestic tourists validate the dominant national narrative. This leaves us to believe that there is very little room for alternative narratives. Park's 2016 study has, nevertheless, shown that there are some visitors that in small ways ask questions about the authorized national narrative. Unfortunately, the study does not tell if this, in any way, might have an influence on the national narrative.

Heritage tourism as the only form of heritage 'doing' alone does not seem enough to create a space for alternative narratives at the Kyŏngbok palace. Through nationalism the image of the Kyŏngbok palace as a vital part of the Korean identity has been solidified early on and has not really been questioned. Although there were different reasons for employing nationalistic rhetoric in culture and heritage practices, the effects have been the same; the national narrative gets enhanced and spread. The Kyŏngbok palace was a billboard for the presidents to display their nationalistic cultural tendencies. Since the presidents after Park used his creation of the national narrative and identity as well, we do not see a break in the role of the palace. In an ascending manner, the palace became the picture of Korean identity, without the reminders of the colonial and post-colonial history.

## **Conclusion**

The three periods examined in this thesis show how nationalism is used and transformed in different moments in time, and how this affects heritage policies. It traced the nationalistic influence in the making of the Kyōngbok palace as a national icon. The first period is marked by Park's dictatorial rule and the role nationalism played in legitimizing his political career through the creation of a new national narrative and identity. To fit the new narrative and identity, the palace gets new small buildings as well as a new gate. Traces of the Japanese

colonization are slowly starting to get erased, while the new gate adds legitimacy to Park's rule. The second period is marked by the democratizing role of nationalism and the effects of globalization on the nationalism and the national identity during Kim's term. With the destruction of the Government-General building a very prominent feature of the Japanese colonization is removed. This adds another layer to the idea of the palace as national icon. The last period is marked by the way nationalism is used in nation branding and in aiding tourism under Lee's presidency. The national identity has become more and more ingrained and heritage management has used sites to sell the concept of Korean identity. With the restoration of the Kwanghwamun gate all architectural traces of the Japanese occupation are removed. By now nationalism has created an image of Kyōngbok palace as a national icon, a hyper reality in which there is no room for alternative narratives but the authorized national narrative. The consumerism that has also overtaken heritage emphasizes its image as a national icon.

At the moment, globalism and heritage tourism are still the highest components in the need for assertion of the Korean identity and for nationalistic rhetoric. There are different scenarios that could change the tone and way nationalistic rhetoric and the national identity are used to meet the challenges of the time. This will also influence the meaning of the palace and the way it is used to represent the Korean identity. I feel that if the high consumerism attitude regarding heritage persists nothing will change for the palace, if there are no new challenges for South Korea in which the national identity could play a role. These challenges could come from a unification of North and South Korea. Depending on the way they unite, the heritage could become a way to bring North and South together as they find a way to create a new national history. Or perhaps Trumps election as the president of America disrupts the current Asian relations, which could offer a new set of problems in which nationalism and identity are deployed.

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