

Cultural Policy and National Culture Discourse in the 1960s and 1970s

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(In lieu of an abstract) Bak Jeonghui (Park Chunghee) came to power in the Republic of Korea through a military coup on May 16, 1961, after a short-lived period of democracy brought by the April Revolution of the previous year. Park's regime can be characterized as one of developmental dictatorship. It made economic development the national priority, while cementing an authoritarian political system known as the Yusin (Renewal) regime. This study aims to determine the nature of cultural policy during this period. It does not address the entire character of Korean culture in the 1960s and 1970s; rather, by focusing on government cultural policy, it tries to reveal the ideology of national culture that the state attempted to form. Among the important agents of cultural production, i.e. market, civil society, and the state, I focus on the state. Of course, these agents did not act in mutual isolation. They influenced and were influenced by each other, and it is right to regard the state's cultural policy as often conflicting with market's pop culture and the people's (or, subaltern) culture movement supported by civil activists, or to see these agents as interpenetrative. These questions, however, are not discussed in earnest here.

1. Introduction

Bak Jeonghui (Park Chunghee) came to power in the Republic of Korea through a military coup on May 16, 1961, after a short-lived period of democracy brought by the April Revolution of the previous year. Park's

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regime can be characterized as one of developmental dictatorship. It made economic development the national priority, while cementing an authoritarian political system known as the Yusin (Renewal) regime. This study aims to determine the nature of cultural policy during this period. It does not address the entire character of Korean culture in the 1960s and 1970s; rather, by focusing on government cultural policy, it tries to reveal the ideology of national culture that the state attempted to form. Among the important agents of cultural production, i.e. market, civil society, and the state, I will focus on the state. Of course, these agents did not act in mutual isolation. They influenced and were influenced by each other, and it is right to regard the state's cultural policy as often conflicting with market's pop culture and the people's (or, subaltern) culture movement supported by civil activists, or to see these agents as interpenetrative. These questions, however, are not discussed in earnest here.

Assessments of cultural policy in the 1960-70s have been varied and sometimes conflicting. Government-compiled publications judge the period to have laid a foundation for the state's cultural policy (KACS [Korea Arts and Culture Service] 1988: 90-94), providing structure and direction to overcome the absence and confusion of national culture policy since Independence in 1945. Cultural-activist groups critical of government cultural policy, however, regard this period as one of expansion of a fossilized official national culture and decadent commercial pop culture (Jeong 1985: 19; Cha and Im 1985: 104). I do not agree with the government's self-assessment, but I also believe there are serious inadequacies in the assessments offered by critical cultural-activist groups. The expression *fossilized official national culture* is valid to some extent, but does not fully capture the meaning and nature of government cultural policy in the historical context of this period.

The cultural policy of the 1960-70s was more than simply a showcase of bureaucratic administration. It was one of the important ways in which political ideology, intimately related to regime maintenance, was expressed. As such, it must be recognized for the considerable conscious and sub-conscious effects it exerted on the minds and emotions of the people. Planned by bureaucrats and intellectuals, and backed by the strong power and financial support of the state, the cultural policy of this period undeniably resulted in the formation of an important part of Korea's cultural reality at the time. Given that government cultural policy concentrated on restoring past culture that was far-removed from the

everyday culture of Koreans, it can be deemed as building a “fossilized official national culture,” but even this “fossilized culture” exerted substantial impacts on the consciousness of people with respect to how to imagine national culture. The ideology and symbols of the cultural policy in the 1960-70s were constantly spread via educational institutions and the media, and were also hugely influential on subsequent cultural policies. Most of the places we now travel to or visit as tourists are sites of cultural heritage that were restored in the 1970s or 1980s, and the specific pictures that these impose in our imagination about the nation and history are not to be taken lightly.

This study begins from a realization that the cultural policy in the 1960-70s was an important vehicle for publicizing and educating political legitimacy to mobilize the general public and maintain the regime. My aim is to determine the nature of the ideologies thus used and to identify the constituent elements selected to create them. In particular, I aim to analyze how cultural policy at this time was structured in order to cultivate imagination and memory of the state, the nation, and history, with a focus on the arts and cultural heritage, which it established as the realms of its governance. The 1960-70s, particularly from the Yusin regime in the early 1970s, was a period that saw the flourishing of statist ideology. Statism was transmitted by discourses that evoked primordial emotions of patriotism, and the state tried to take a leading stance in defining and regulating the nature and content of nation-ness. Statism and national culture discourse deeply penetrated the national education system, the media, arts policy, and cultural heritage policy; by way of these, statism and its national culture were reproduced and promoted, becoming dominant ideologies.

One of the core aspects of the cultural policy of this period – which remained important into the 1980s – was the active attempts to utilize history to arouse national sentiment and affect. This can also be described as a process whereby the state created public or dominant memory as an ideological means of maintaining the regime. I investigate this process in two ways: the examination of agents and institutional devices that created this memory – thereby reconstituting history – and the analysis of constituent elements of the memory itself, focusing on cultural heritage policy and arts policy.

2. Cultural Heritage Policy

1) The Cultural Heritage Administration and the Cultural Heritage Protection Act

After Independence, the first legal and institutional devices in Korea's cultural heritage policy came with the establishment of the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA) in 1961 and the passing of the Cultural Heritage Protection Act in 1962. The CHA was created by integrating the Former Royal Household Properties Office,¹ which managed palaces and other royal assets, with the Ministry of Education's department in charge of cultural heritage conservation to form an external body affiliated with the Ministry of Education. CHA was later transferred to the Ministry of Culture and Public Information [MCPI] (MCPI 1979: 280). The Cultural Heritage Protection Act had its origins in the Joseon Conservation Act for National Treasures, Historical Remains, Scenic Sites and Natural Monuments enacted in 1933 by the Japanese colonial government imitating Japan's National Treasures Protection Act. The 1933 Act aimed to preserve, in perpetuity, buildings, books, paintings, sculptures, craft items, and other objects with historic or artistic value, and historic remains such as shell mounds, tombs, temple sites, fortress sites, and kiln sites, plus natural scenic sites, animals, plants, geological features, and minerals with academic value (KACS 1992a: 62). The Cultural Heritage Protection Act inherited the 1933 Act while newly including intangible cultural properties and folklores. Article 2 of the Act designated cultural heritage as: 1. buildings, books, old documents, paintings, sculptures, craft items, and other cultural products of great historic or artistic value to Korea, and archaeological materials of similar value (hereafter referred to as tangible cultural heritage); 2. drama, music, dance, craft skills, and other intangible cultural products of great historic or artistic value to Korea (hereafter referred to as intangible cultural heritage); 3. shell mounds, tombs, fortress sites, palace sites, kiln sites, earth deposits containing historical artifacts, and other historical sites, scenic sites, animals, plants, and minerals of great

¹ During the Japanese colonial period, royal palaces and assets were managed by Yiwangjik, the office of the Joseon royal family. In 1945, the office was renamed the Former Royal Household Affairs Office by U.S. military decree. In 1955 it was renamed once again, becoming the Former Royal Household Properties Office (MCPI 1979: 279).

historical, artistic, academic or aesthetic value to Korea (referred to hereafter as natural monuments); and 4. customs related to clothing, food, and shelter, occupation, faith, and annual events, and the garments, tools, houses and other items used in connection with them, that are indispensable to understanding trends in people's everyday lives (referred to hereafter as folklore).

The Cultural Heritage Protection Act was a special law that classified tangible and intangible cultural heritages, and authorized regional or central governments to administer their conservation and protection. The designation and release of cultural heritage sites or intangibles was placed under the absolute authority of government officials and a cultural heritage committee, members of which were appointed by the government. Restrictions were placed on the property rights of cultural heritage owners to buy, sell, use, alter, or dispose of it; these rights were placed in the hands of the state (Cultural Heritage Protection Act, Chapter 3, paragraph 2). In other words, private ownership of cultural heritage was limited and the concept of public ownership was applied to it instead. It needs to be noted that the concept of public ownership applied here is a modern one, distinct from that of traditional communal ownership or royal ownership. The state was designated as the agent exercising the right of public ownership: this was premised on the formation of a modern nation-state, and reflected the definition of the public by the state. Not only was the state accorded absolute authority to designate national cultural heritage sites or intangible property; the evaluation of a given instance of cultural heritage was defined according to its significance for the state. The Cultural Heritage Protection Act was already premised on the state as an imagined political community.

The executive branch of the state exercised almost absolute authority in the process of passing the Cultural Heritage Protection Act under the Park Chunghee regime. This is in contrast with the National Heritage Act passed in the United Kingdom, to which parliament took a tentative approach for a long time, and in which civil conservation groups actively exerted their influence (Bommes and Wright 1982: 269-276). In Korea, the national cultural heritage legislation was led exclusively by the state, and the infringement of private property rights did not emerge as a political issue. This is an illustration of the dominance of the state over civil society in the 1960s.

2) *Cultural Symbolism Embodied in Cultural Heritage*

Cultural heritage designated by the Cultural Heritage Protection Act is categorized into that which memorializes Korea's past (tangible and intangible cultural property, historical sites, and important folklore) and that which represents her natural environment (natural monuments and scenic sites). Here, the term *Korea* refers both to the nation and the state, and is premised on the existence of a nation-state in which the nation and the state are in conformity. But the designation of cultural heritage entails not just the passive meaning of a nation-state protecting the heritage it possesses. It also has active significance as a vehicle for arousing national sentiment and conjuring a specific imagined political community: the nation. Smith notes that the "ethnic" plays a core role in building a unique national identity and a sense of community in the process of forming a modern nation-state, and that the state concentrates efforts to make its own national identity by "locating its community in space and time, by lovingly recreating poetic spaces and reconstructing golden ages" (Smith 1986: 209). History and natural scenery are used actively as educationally effective vehicles for reviving national consciousness. Artifacts and ruins render visible the physical immediacy of a vanished past and lend it vivid substance, while natural scenery, flora, and fauna symbolize geographical space and nature as the home of the nation (Smith 1986: 181). This symbolic meaning of cultural heritage is clearly manifested in the texts of official government documents:

Protection of cultural heritage goes beyond short-term cultural policies such as managing museums or developing tourism resources. In broad terms, it is also a question of creating new national culture, a vision for the future of the country and a humane living environment (Cultural Heritage Administration 1970: 7).

Cultural heritage is both legacy and substance of history. It is therefore the best educational material and means for acquiring historical consciousness and discovering the national self ... It follows that all conservation and reconditioning of cultural heritage proceeds to play a national educational role as a spiritual pillar of the people, creating a new national history. From this perspective, cultural heritage conservation naturally concentrates on three tasks: historic sites related to overcoming national crisis; places related to sages who helped establish national ideas; and historical space for the conservation and continuation of traditional culture. (MCPI 1978: 4)

Cultural heritage was accorded the meaning of “a schoolroom to learn history” in order to create new national culture and discover a national self (KACS 1985: 132). Restoring culture to its original form was not simply the reproduction of retrospective, fossilized culture. History was actively used in the creation of present and future national culture, and as a means of constituting public memory of the past. This task inevitably accompanied the selective reconstitution of history; it is to precisely this process that I turn my attention now.

In cultural heritage conservation projects in the 1960-70s, particular emphasis was placed on the restoration of historic sites related to national defense and its military heroes (MCPI 1979: 284-285). Such projects were understood to be highly effective for educational purposes to engender a sense of national pride. The comprehensive restoration of Hyeonchungsa Shrine, which began in 1966 and was the first of several large-scale cultural heritage restoration projects, served to sanctify the shrine of Admiral Yi Sunsin, a paragon of loyal spirit against the Japanese invasion in the sixteenth century. Hyeonchungsa became a new holy place of pilgrimage for middle- and high-school students on their school trips. Historic sites restored during this period as symbols of national defense and national unity include: Tongiljeon (Unification Hall) in Gyeongju, which commemorates the unification of the Three Kingdoms in the seventh century; Nakseongdae, the birthplace of General Gang Gamchan; the Chilbaekuichong Tombs in Geumsan, the resting place of 700 righteous warriors martyred while fighting against the Japanese invasions in the sixteenth century; Jeseungdang Shrine in Tongyeong, a former headquarter of Admiral Yi Sunsin; historic battle sites on Ganghwa Island; Anti-Mongolian Righteous Martyrs’ Monument in Jeju island; Jinjuseong Fortress; Namhansanseong Fortress; and Haengjusanseong Fortress. All of these restoration projects were aimed at arousing a spirit of independence and national defense (MCPI 1979: 287-288). A list of the 10 top ancestral portraits of national heroes, designated in 1973, included five military figures who defeated foreign enemies or contributed to national unification: Yi Sunsin (1), Gang Gamchan (5), Eulji Mundeok (6), Jo Jungbong (8), and Kim Yusin (10) (Ministry of Culture and Information 1979: 236). Under the Park Chunghee regime, Yi Sunsin was cherished as the greatest hero in Korean history; he was a historical model of Park Chunghee himself; intended to convey a loyal and patriotic military man who saved the state at a time of national crisis. The military hero myth during the

Park Chunghee regime identified by Yu Hongjun (1993: 164) is clearly expressed in the cultural heritage conservation and restoration projects of this period. Interestingly, although no crisis faced by the nation and state was graver than that of Japanese colonial rule in the twentieth century, historic sites related to anti-colonial movements were neglected in the cultural heritage conservation projects. This is in stark contrast to the strong emphasis placed on anti-Japanese revolutionary battle sites by North Korea as symbols of national liberation – albeit as part of the project to idolize Kim Il Sung and his lineage (Yi 1994: 51-52). The Park Chunghee regime claimed to advocate a similar nationalist ideology, but its historical models were located in the more remote past, such as the unification of the Three Kingdoms in the seventh century or the Japanese invasion in the sixteenth century. This may be an inevitable choice, given the limitations of a regime headed by Park Chunghee, a graduate of the Japanese Manchu Military Academy.²

The cultural heritage restoration projects in the 1970s were heavily concentrated in Gyeongju, the old capital of the Kingdom of Silla in Gyeongsang Province. In 1971, President Park gave the order to “redevelop the old capital at Gyeongju to give it a sense of grandeur, brilliance, refinement, vivaciousness, progressiveness, leisure, elegance and profundity.”³ The Gyeongju Comprehensive Development was the biggest cultural heritage management project, receiving a total of about 12.5 billion won in investments (MCPI 1979: 285-286). Silla culture was regarded as the essence of national culture, and the period of the Unified Kingdom of Silla was imagined as the golden age in Korean history.⁴ The Gyeongju project aimed to restore the city’s artifacts and historic sites to their original forms, rather than preserving them as they remained at the time. But in fact, as can be seen in the restoration projects of Bulguksa Temple, Five Royal Tombs, and Anapji Pond, heavy emphasis was placed on creating a grand

² After Park’s death, during the presidency of Chun Doohwan, the huge Independence Hall of Korea was built and historical sites related to anti-Japanese resistance actively restored (KCAS 1985: 113-121, 133-134).

³ (Editor’s note) Reference is not provided in the original.

⁴ The reign of King Sejong during the Joseon dynasty was considered another golden age in Korean history. King Sejong was regarded as a sage who developed independent Korean culture in areas such as the creation of the Hangeul alphabet, science, and technology. In North Korea, by contrast, King Sejong is omitted entirely from the school history curriculum because he was a feudal ruler (Jeong 1998: 39).

and splendid image of the past. Gyeongju restoration projects corresponded to the prominence given at this time in national ethics education to Silla's *hwarang* warrior youth as embodiments of the national spirit and an emphasis on their notion of loyalty to the state as the spiritual basis for the unification of the Three Kingdoms. When compared to North Korea's search for the golden age of Korean history in the Kingdom of Goguryeo located in North Korea and Manchu, the Gyeongju projects demonstrate how and where the South Korean government tried to find historical legitimacy. In addition, the Park Chunghee regime placed particular importance on the historical legacy of the Kingdom of Silla in Kyeongsang Province, which was then a regional political base of the ruling party, while neglecting the historical legacy of the Kingdom of Baekje in Jeolla Province, then a regional political base of the opposition party.

Architectural excavations at this time, despite their academic efforts, also contributed to the dominant national-cultural discourse in the same way as cultural heritage conservation and restoration projects. Unearthing magnificent cultural artifacts from the past created a passionate drama reconstructing a "golden age," by way of some loud media propaganda. The excavations of the Cheonmachong and Hwangnam Daechong royal tombs in Gyeongju were sensational events, while the discovery of the underwater tomb of King Munmu of Silla left suspicions of a historical fabrication.

Though some intangible cultural heritage received legal and financial protection for the first time in this period, its position within government cultural heritage policy remained marginal and peripheral, amounting to no more than a policy of protection, literally, to save disappearing traditional culture. This attitude was contrasted with that of civil culture-activist groups the members of which attempted to revive and recreate folk culture in the contemporary social context, as shown by flourishing traditional mask dance movements among university students in the 1970s as a means for expressing their discontent against the authoritarian government (Chae and Im 1985). Although the government and cultural activists both claimed to advocate ideologies of national culture, their views on what constituted the core of that culture were strongly at odds.

Cultural heritage management was allocated the largest segment of the budget in the First Five-Year Plan for Culture and Arts Promotion (1974-1978). This shows that the government recognized cultural heritage management as the most effective and appropriate platform within its cultural policy to promote national consciousness. Much of this huge

budget was channeled into large-scale heritage restoration projects that concentrated on symbolically highlighting national heroes and the golden age of national history. The cultural heritage policy of this period revealed selective reconstitution of history and national culture: an emphasis on military rather than scholarly figures, on Gyeongsang Province in terms of geographical location, on the distant past rather than the modern period, on elite culture rather than folk culture, and on national heritage rather than regional heritage.

3. Culture and Arts Policy

In a narrow sense, the state's cultural policy in the 1960-70s can be described as arts policy. Article 2 of the Culture and Arts Promotion Act, passed in 1972, defines "culture and arts" as "items related to literature, fine arts, music, entertainment and publishing," thereby making the hidden assumption that culture equals art. This is not greatly different from the clearer scope of cultural policy in North Korea which focuses on "literature [and] art" (Song 1997: 120). Cultural activists too focused on artistic activity that includes performing arts (theater, music, and dance) and expressive arts (literature and fine arts). "It is therefore probably more appropriate to call [their work] culture and arts activism, or simply art activism" (Kim, 1989: 55). This shows a common understanding on the part of the South and North Korean governments and South Korean critical intellectuals at this time to restrict the realm of cultural policy or cultural activism to within the scope of art. This emphasis on art is reflected constantly in the subsequent works of the Korean Culture and Arts Service, the Culture and Arts Revival Declaration, and the First Five-Year Plan for Culture and Arts Promotion. Here, I refer to art-related cultural policy as culture-arts policy, distinct from cultural heritage policy.

1) Institutionalization of Culture-Arts Policy and Culture and Arts Promotion Plans

Institutional and legal mechanisms for culture-arts administration underwent major changes and were systemized beginning in the 1960s. Cultural legislation passed in the 1950s included the National Theater Establishment Act (1950), the Culture Protection Act (1952; National

Academy of Sciences and Art Act), and the Copyright Act (1957). Most current culture and arts-related laws were passed in the 1960-70s, including the Performance Act (1961), the Cultural Heritage Protection Act (1962), the Buddhist Asset Management Act (1962), the Confucian School Asset Act (1962), laws on the registration of newspapers and news agencies (1963), the Broadcasting Act (1963), the Regional Culture Project Development Act (1965), the Film Act (1966), laws on record production (1967), and the Culture and Arts Promotion Act (1972) (KCAS 1992b: 66-67). Among these, the Culture and Arts Promotion Act was passed at a time when the government was attempting a change in policy direction toward active intervention in the arts.

An important institutional change in culture-arts administration was its integration, after being controlled by the Ministry of Education in the 1950s, into the Department of Public Information (DPI). The DPI took over the film, performance, and entertainment-related duties of the minister of education upon its establishment in 1961. Then, when the Ministry of Culture and Public Information (MCPI) was inaugurated in 1968, it was placed in charge of administering the Cultural Heritage Administration, the National Museum of Korea, arts (including literature, fine art, music), publishing and religion, previously under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, “finally integrating administration of culture and the arts” (KCAS 1985: 20). That the MCPI became the main ministry in charge of culture and arts administration shows that government considered its cultural policy as a part of public information management. This belief also reveals itself in *30 Years of Culture and Public Information*, compiled by the MCPI, which points out that cultural policy has been implemented in conjunction with heightening a spirit of autonomy, self-reliance, defense, and building a stable and unified society, all of which were pillars of public information policy (MCPI 1979: 92-94).

While the Culture and Arts Promotion Act in 1972 was an important legal mechanism for cultural policy, the Korea Culture and Arts Service (KCAS) established in 1973 was an institutional tool for implementing it. The KCAS was built “to promote culture and the arts by supporting the conservation and development of national culture, and scholarly and creative activities relating to culture and the arts” (KCAS Articles of Association, Article 3). Among the tasks in the First Five-Year Plan for Culture-Arts Promotion, the KCAS was in charge of Korean Studies, traditional craft, literature, fine art, music, dancing, publishing, and

international cultural and artistic exchange (KCAS 1976: 8).

The First Five-Year Plan for Culture and Arts Promotion (1974-1978) applied the same principle of comprehensive planning and strong government intervention into the fields of culture and the arts as those implemented in the Five-Year Economic Development Plans of this period. The Culture and Arts Promotion Plan broadly consists of four sectors: foundation building, establishing a national historical consciousness (*gukhak* “national studies,” traditional arts, cultural heritage), promotion of the arts (literature, fine art, music, theater, dance) and development of pop culture (film, publishing). Out of a total budget of 48.5 billion won over five years, 70.2 percent was spent on the sector of establishing a national historical consciousness, an overwhelmingly greater amount than on arts promotion (12.2 percent) or pop culture (8.9 percent). The cultural heritage administration budget came from the national sector responsible for establishing a national historical consciousness. The allocations to cultural heritage administration accounted for 63.1 percent of the total cultural heritage budget (MCPI 1979: 228). While the cultural heritage budget was allocated by the national budget accounts, arts promotion projects were mainly paid from the Culture and Arts Promotion Fund. The Culture and Arts Promotion Fund was created and managed by KCAS, based on the Culture and Arts Promotion Act of 1972. The Fund’s money was raised from ticket sales at theaters, palaces, museums, and historical sites, as well as private and corporate donations (KCAS 1988: 142-144). Money raised through ticket sales – at least 95 percent of it at movie theaters – accounted for about 90 percent of the Fund (KCAS 1988: 144-151).

2) *Ideology Expressed in Culture-Arts Policy*

Culture-Arts Revival Declaration (October 20, 1973)

At a historical turning point in national revival, we are acutely aware of our mission to create new culture. The fundamental strength of a nation to determine its destiny lies in its powers of artistic and cultural creation. When art loses its creative power, the nation stagnates; when culture finds autonomy, the country thrives. This is proved by the great achievement of national unification by the Kingdom of Silla and the cultural creativity of the reign of King Sejong. We are developing a heritage to last far into the future and creating the new culture with national spirit. Wary of blind restoration of the past, and rejecting indiscriminate imitation and decadent trends, we will make Korean art flourish firmly within tradition and implant our culture

solidly in the independent mind. (MCPI 1979: 450)

The Culture-Arts Revival Declaration contains the ideological basis of cultural policy in the 1970s. It reflects the same statism and national culture discourse expressed in cultural heritage policy. A focus on the projects included in the KCAS's Arts Promotion Plan reveals how this ideology was applied in the field of the arts. The plan is divided into literature, fine arts, music, drama, dance, film, and publishing sections, for each of which it provides highly monotonous directions (KCAS 1976: 24-30). In literature, the plan projects the building of a new "Korean literature," portraying a national spirit that has forged a great past or the images of new Koreans actively participating in national economic development and the New Village Movement (새마을운동) in contemporary history. In fine arts, the plan calls for the raising of national consciousness through paintings depicting historical events of national crisis and paintings documenting the achievement of the New Village Movement and national economic development. In music, the plan supports the composition and performance of national or folk music, and disseminates wholesome songs to inspire national unity and patriotism. In drama, it develops a national theater movement to lead national unity and prosperity and provides intensive support for the performance of original plays. In dance, it promotes the modernization of folk dances and develops traditionally-based dance techniques. And in film, Korea Motion Picture Promotion Corporation produces its own national films depicting the overcoming of national crises, the greatness of the nation, or the new Koreans of the day, as well as developing films for public education.

Various prizes awarded for artistic activity in the 1970s show that the government was actively using the arts for political ends. Works highlighting values of national revival such as economic development and the greatness of the nation – thus conforming to the government's ideology – were awarded important prizes. Award-winning fine art works, for example, included *A Patriotic Poem* (President's Prize, calligraphy, 17th National Art Exhibition, 1968), *The Square of National Unification* (Grand Prize, 1st Architectural Photography Exhibition, 1971), *The Potential of the Korean Race* (National Assembly Chairman's Prize, Western-style painting, 22nd National Art Exhibition, 1973), and the Western-style painting *Resurrection*, the photograph *New Morning*, and the Chairman's Prize sculpture *Will* (23rd National Art Exhibition, 1974) (MCPI 1979: 457-

460). In literature, government prizes included the Anti-communism Literary Awards (1976), the Earth Literary Awards (1977), and the Children's Literary Awards (1979). Grand prizes at the Anti-communism Literary Awards were given to works addressing freedom from communist rule, while those at the Earth Literary awards were won by works that could raise a spirit of self-help and cooperation in Korean society – namely, works that fit the ideology of the New Village Movement (KCAS 1988: 170-171). Film was regarded as a highly effective field for publicizing government policy. The government made and disseminated its own national documentary films, which were circulated among places such as regional cultural centers. “Cultural films” produced at the National Film Studios in the 1960-70s concentrated on highlighting the compassion and leadership of the president, publicizing economic development, expressing the will for national revival, and praising the works of historic national heroes (MCPI 1979: 97-98). Meanwhile, government guidelines in the 1970s for selecting outstanding Korean-made films stipulate criteria beginning with propaganda for the Yusin regime and going on to include boosting the values of national independence, the New Village Movement, industrial workers driving modernization of the fatherland, overcoming national crisis, national unity, an increase in exports, devoted civil servants, love for cherished customs and cultural heritage, preservation of traditional culture, and exaltation of national art (Korea Motion Picture Promotion Corporation. “Film Policy: 1973,” quoted in Jeong 1986: 297-98).

The projects of the Arts Promotion Plan and various awards reveal a clear picture of how the government defined the character of national art. The government was not merely interested in the preservation of traditional arts – though that was one aspect of national art. In addition, the government focused on a national domain of art recreated with the aim of expressing and instilling a national consciousness of service to the state. Here, the nation is understood to be equal to, or to serve, the state. In contrast to the people's cultural movement of 1970s and 1980s which imagined the people as the nation, the governmental cultural policy imagined the nation as the state. The former attempted to locate the original forms of national culture in people's culture, asserting that contemporary recreation of tradition must reflect the reality of people's lives (Chae & Im 1985). The latter, by contrast, generally emphasized recreation of tradition for the sake of preserving it, or for the sake of national development and unity. Artistic representation of the past and

present were judged according to how “national” their choices of subjects and methods were. From the government’s point of view, this criterion was intimately related to national development and unity. Ultimately, the meaning of *national* relates to the legitimacy of the current political regime; this is how art was used as a tool of the ruling ideology. The culture-arts policy of the 1970s, then, was not oriented towards apolitical “pure” art, but showed the politicization of art as led by the state.⁵

3) *Local Cultural Policy*

If we approach cultural policy in the 1960-70s in terms of a distinction between the center and the local, it can be regarded as predominantly central. National culture, which lies at the heart of cultural policy ideology at this time, is imagined through the state as political community, while local, class or gender distinctions are eliminated or understood as sub-categories of the national culture. The central government planned and implemented cultural policy, and cultural activities supported by the policy were assessed in terms of their value to the state and to the nation. According to this scheme, what is valuable to the state is often distinct from what is of local value: the former stands out at the core of national culture, while the latter, local culture, was treated as subordinate to national culture. Any cultural practices that conflicted with or resisted national culture were thoroughly excluded or marginalized in cultural policy; it was hard for such activities to even attain the status of local culture.

There was not, however, a complete absence of policy regarding local culture in the 1960-70s, although it was meager in terms of organizational scale and finances compared to the attention it received in the 1980s. In the 1960s and 1970s government policy toward local culture was implemented through local cultural centers and local festivals. The local cultural centers first emerged in the early 1950s, when community leaders around the country established and ran private cultural centers. These early cultural centers aimed not only at development of local culture but also at the operation of anti-communism consolidation and cultivation of rural

⁵ People’s cultural activists criticized pure art and called for politicization of arts in order to boost revolutionary consciousness. Though its goals and direction greatly differed from those of government cultural policy, the two were common in their pursuit of politicization of arts.

leaders (Federation of Korean Cultural Centers 1974: 86). The significance and role of these centers was finally recognized by the Park Chunghee regime, after which they received government protection and support. The government began officially supporting local cultural centers because it recognized their function as valid quasi-governmental groups for publicizing the policies and achievements of the state and local authorities. The activities of local cultural centers in the 1960-70s concentrated on publicity rather than on developing local culture: this included important tasks such as distributing and exhibiting government propaganda, screening government's promotional films, and organizing government rallies by proxy. After the Yusin regime began in the early 1970s, these centers took on a role of publicizing and educating the public in the ideology of the Yusin and the New Village Movement:

The role to be played by local cultural centers in the New Village Movement is direct involvement in this important spiritual revolution. They must spur on projects currently underway, pour all of their energy into culture and arts promotion with or without the cooperation of local authorities, gather all their wisdom and lead local people to achieve a New Village spiritual revolution. (Presidential secretary Jeong Jongtaek. September 14, 1974. Lecture at National Seminar for Local Cultural Center Heads, quoted in the Federation of Korean Cultural Centers 1974: 57)

The significance of local cultural centers in terms of publicity activity on behalf of the government had already been established in the 1960s. This role became more pronounced after the adoption of the Yusin Constitution. These centers ended up completely under the ideological and financial control of the central government. The "local," rather than being recognized for its own uniqueness, was defined as a series of objects to be controlled and guided by the "center."

In terms of conserving traditional culture, local and folk cultures have been the objects of government cultural policy. Local cultures were included among designated examples of intangible cultural heritage from 1964; in 1974, the KCAS began supporting the Korean Folk Arts Festival and local cultural festivals with the aim of conserving and transmitting unique traditional rural culture. The number of local festivals receiving this support increased year by year. In 1974, 21 local cultural festivals were selected: these included Silla Cultural Festival, Halla Cultural Festival, March 1 Folk Cultural Festival, Gaecheon Art Festival, Chuncheon

Festival, Yeongwol Danjong Festival, Daehyeon Yi Yulgok Festival, Miryang Arirang Festival, Hansan Naval Battle Festival, Haengju Battle Festival, Yu Gwansun Memorial Festival, Uiam Nongae Festival, Byeokgol Cultural Festival, Gabo Donghak Cultural Festival, Jirisan Mineral Water Festival, Sejong the Great Cultural Festival, Hangeul Memorial Festival, Chungbuk Arts Festival, Baekje Cultural Festival, Cheolla Arts Festival, and Namdo Cultural Festival (KCAS 1988: 255). Some of these can be regarded as traditional rural cultural festivals, but many were chosen with a view to showing off a history of overcoming national crises or the superiority of national culture. Local cultural festivals were not only highly dependent on financial support from the government; they were run and supervised by local cultural centers or the Federation of Artistic & Cultural Organizations of Korea (FACO), both of which were under the control of the central government. This had a bearing on the fact that the festivals went beyond the goal of conserving and transmitting unique rural culture and played a role in reflecting the government ideology. For example, the opening declaration of the Halla Cultural Festival equated the spirit of Jeju island, as embodied by Seolmung Daehalmang, a character from a local tale, with a dignified force that guards the southern end of the fatherland and a powerful spirit that overcomes hardship. This shows folklore and locality serving the ideological dominance of state power (Kim 1995: 93-94). This is a reversal of Jeju's image which had been as a place of exile during the period of the Kingdom of Joseon and a place of rebellion and resistance against the central government in numerous grass-root revolts and the uprising of April 3, 1948. These counter governmental actions were repressed in the national memory. The Halla Cultural Festival bore the strong character of a government-led event in terms of the way it was conducted, the financial support it received, and the people involved in it. In terms of content, too, it lacked unique Jeju elements ingrained in the lives of local islanders and was not truly an event of the Jeju people. Most of the folklore "performed" at the Halla Cultural Festival had been "excavated" by folklore scholars or civil servants in charge of folklore. Such folklore and traditional culture was "decontextualized from the daily lives of local residents" (Kim 1995: 100-101).

4) Pop Culture Policy

Intellectuals critical of government cultural policy in the 1960-70s point

out its dual character of creating fossilized traditional culture on the one hand, while cultivating decadent, commercial pop culture to depoliticize the public on the other. So far, I have discussed how the former criticism is insufficient, but I now turn to analyze the criticism of pop culture policy from various angles, too.

The cultural tastes of the Park Chunghee regime displayed puritanical, ascetic, and pragmatic characteristics.⁶ Park took a very negative view of so-called decadent and hedonistic culture, sometimes punishing practices it considered in this light with excessive harshness. The government reinforced discipline and punishment in everyday life, handing prison sentences to married women who snuck out to cabarets, making vagrants and gangsters perform forced labor in national rehabilitation teams, and in the early 1970s, cracking down on long hair and acoustic guitars, marijuana and gambling, which it regarded as an imitation of decadent hippy culture. In terms of pop culture policy addressing films, radio, TV dramas, records, and published material, the state not only censored anti-government activities and thought, but also applied strict controls to behavior judged to be unethical, such as violence, lasciviousness, vanity, and money squandering. Wholesomeness, an enterprising spirit, industry, unity, order and discipline, pragmatism, patriotism, nationalism and loyalty to the state were the values actively promoted by the cultural policy. These values were expressed repeatedly in the Charter of National Education, Family Ritual Standards, Yusin ideology, and the New Village Movement.

Yi Okgyeong (1984) notes the tension between bureaucratic authoritarianism and commercial pop culture in Korean society in the 1970s. Pop culture at this time had a dual character of consumerism and hedonism under the influence of commercialism (American and Japanese) on the one hand, and an emphasis on traditional, submissive values on the other. Yi explains this dual character as the result of contradictory intervention of bureaucratic authoritarianism in commercial pop culture (Yi 1984: 278-279). The escapist, apolitical character of pop culture was helpful for maintaining bureaucratic authoritarianism, but the government also worried that the dissemination of numbing and hedonic pop culture worked against the general mobilization of people for national reconstruction:

⁶ A correlation can be observed between these cultural tastes and Japanese militaristic culture.

Bureaucratic authoritarianism would have demanded people to be apolitical, yet also non-hedonist and submissive for the sake of “national unity.” This was pursued in two ways: firstly, sporadic restraint of the decadence or excessive entertainment of pop culture driven by commercialism; secondly, attempts to protect and expand traditional culture that upholds conservative values to make up for the adverse effects of pop culture. (Yi 1984: 279)

This pop culture policy was implemented in earnest after the adoption of the Yusin Constitution. In 1973, the Broadcasting Act was amended, reducing the amount of advertising time during TV broadcasts and introducing a censorship whereby each broadcaster had to submit content in advance for review. Content guidelines included a reduction in daily soap operas, the elimination of indecent and decadent elements from entertainment and amusement programs, and an increase in educational programs (including those about the New Village Movement). The so-called marijuana scandal of 1976 saw many celebrities imprisoned and banned from acting – a prime example of punishing so-called decadence. In 1976, Korea’s three TV broadcasters simultaneously changed their schedules at the urging of the MCPI. Children’s hour began at 6 pm, followed by programs without celebrities from 7 pm, then educational programs for establishing a national historical consciousness from 8 pm, with the news allocated a 9 pm slot. Entertainment and amusement programs were shunted back to late-night slots and broadcast for a shorter time, while children’s, social education and even government policy programs occupied 65 percent of total prime broadcasting time (Yi 1984: 279-280). The drama purification guidelines issued by the Broadcasting Ethics Committee in 1977 banned: 1. excessive depiction of male-female affection; 2. content that could damage the institution of marriage and family life; 3. content that could arouse regional or class-based sentiment; 4. content emotionally harmful to children or adolescents; and 5. depictions of extravagant lifestyles. The guidelines announced that luxury and unwholesome, decadent foreign trends that harmed Korea’s own beautiful customs must be banished and demanded that pop culture contain concrete depictions of conservative values based on national loyalty and filial piety. Conservative values of loyalty and filial piety, self-help and cooperation, and a spirit of overcoming national crises were chosen as traditional culture to be preserved, while pragmatism, progress, and creativity were emphasized as new modern values. This reflects attitudes of statist, militaristic puritanism, moral asceticism, and sexual repression.

Cultural activists in the 1970s and 1980s criticized the commercial nature of pop culture and asserted that it contributed to reproduction of the ruling ideology. This cannot be regarded as an accurate diagnosis of the Park Chunghee regime's pop culture policies. Conflict existed between pop culture and the state's national culture ideology, and the government attempted to control pop culture through its regulation and censorship. Some similarities are found between the government and the cultural activists in their critical attitudes to commercial pop culture. If the cultural activists showed limitations in their understanding of pop culture by placing it in a dichotomous position "thoroughly opposed" to people's culture (Kim 1995: 18), the government's stance was premised on opposition between pop culture and official national culture.

4. Statism and National Culture Discourse in Cultural Policy

The dominant ideology of the Park Chunghee regime in the 1960-70s was based on nationalism (statism) as represented by anti-communism, national prosperity, and military power, and on modernization of the fatherland (MCPI 1979: 36). The state aroused nationalist sentiment, as the home of the nation and as an imagined community with a long history of shared destiny. While the Park regime emphasized modernization, represented by economic development, in its early years, this emphasis was shifted to national revival from the late 1960s, advertised as a spiritual modernization movement based on nationalist ideology. The spiritual modernization movement meant boosting people's enthusiasm for engaging in self-help, self-reliance, and autonomy (MCPI 1979: 81). Expressions such as rediscovery of the national self (national spirit), establishment of a national historical consciousness, and creation of a new model Korean (New Village citizens) underscore the fact that the national revival movement was a spiritual revolution.⁷ Expressed in texts like the Charter of National Education and Family Ritual Standards, this ideology became standardized in the forms of Yusin ideology and the New Village

⁷ The word *revival* (*junghbeung*) means bringing back to life something that existed in the past but has now been lost. This may indicate restoration to a past "original form"; it may also mean recreating and inventing a past original spirit to fit the current situation. The slogan "national revival" shows mixtures of these two meanings, according to specific context.

Movement in the early 1970s; it was also the dominant ideology behind cultural policies at the time.

The cultural policies of the Park regime cannot be considered in isolation from the political and social realities of their time. They show a clear political discourse and ideological tendencies. The character and orientation of cultural policies at this time can be located in the context of conflict with North Korea, and the domestic motivations of regime maintenance. Notably, major cultural policies – such as the passing of the Culture and Arts Promotion Act, the founding of the KCAS, the implementation of the First Five-Year Plan for Culture and Arts Promotion, and large-scale cultural heritage restoration projects – were established in the early 1970s. This could be explained by the fact that the “construction first” economic development policies of the 1960s had been somewhat effective, allowing investment in the cultural sector. More important, however, was that a flood of these policies emerged around the time of the Yusin reforms of 1972 – this cannot be regarded as mere coincidence. The cultural policies of the 1970s show strong ideological similarities with the Yusin Constitution and can be regarded as a major ideological means of legitimizing it. While complaints and criticism against the Yusin regime were repressed through censorship and sheer force, cultural policies were a soft means of mobilizing the general public, capable of producing voluntary popular consent (Han 1977: 367). The state charged itself with the historical calling of national revival, thus attempting to advertise the regime’s historical legitimacy to the public. By extension, the revival of national culture (spirit) came to be synonymous with increasing national strength. If national strength was emphasized in the economic development policies of the 1960s, the revival of national culture was interpreted as the spiritual driving force of economic development. Pragmatic economic development and ideological revival of national culture were judged to be the two horses drawing the cart of national strength and fatherland modernization.

Meanwhile, the formation of cultural policy ideology in the 1970s took place amid a competitive struggle with the North Korean regime for historical legitimacy. The North’s regime emphasized national autonomy from early on, thereby advertising its own legitimacy both domestically and internationally. At the same time, it judged the South Korean regime to be a pawn or puppet of U.S. imperialism (Sim 1996: 156). In response, the Park regime attempted to show, through interest in and support for

national culture, that it was an independent national government. The “nation” was mobilized by each regime as a means of asserting its own historical legitimacy while denying that of the other. As homogeneous nation-states, North and South Korea did not face the domestic issues of multi-ethnic nations, but the unusual historical circumstances of national divide brought an urgent need to reconstitute the meaning of the “nation.” Both regimes emphasized that Koreans were part of a homogeneous nation with shared history, culture, and traditions, but in fact each produced a different definition of this national culture, claiming itself to be the bearer of the “true” version and criticizing the other as advocating a distorted “fake” version. The North Korean regime located the essence of national culture exclusively in people’s culture, which it regarded as the origin of modern socialist culture, and attempted to leave out ruling-class culture. The national culture of the South Korean regime, by contrast, emphasized the “high culture” of royalty, officials, and intellectuals, while people’s culture was approached from the perspective of saving folklore, and accorded a peripheral position in national culture.⁸ While the North and South Korean regimes resembled and imitated each other in their obsessions with national culture and its political mobilization, they diverged increasingly in terms of its specific content and meaning.

Cultural policy in the 1960-70s was not merely a passive means of creating fossilized, government-controlled culture or an apolitical public. It was a way for the state to actively intervene in the cultural realm to establish statism and national cultural discourse as dominant ideologies. Jeong Gabyeong (1993: 96) points out that while cultural policy at this time established the emphasis on traditional culture as the basic direction for cultivating national culture, critics of the government based their vision of national culture on anti-foreign and anti-feudalist ideology, giving the single term, *national culture*, very different meanings. This point is valid to some extent, but the Park regime did not take traditional culture unaltered as a model for national culture. While excessively emphasizing and beautifying reinterpreted statism and loyalty to the ruler as purported parts of traditional culture, the Park regime took a fairly negative stance toward “traditional” customs and attitudes. In its cultural heritage and culture-arts

⁸ This point was used by people’s cultural activists in the 1970-80s as a criticism of the government cultural policies, which they regarded as the reflection of official national culture.

policies, the regime did tend to emphasize the glory, independence, and autonomous spirit (or powerful spirit of overcoming national crises) of the nation, selectively reconstituting history and national culture to this end. However, as can be seen in Family Ritual Standards and the New Village Movement, it also labeled traditional customs “out of date,” regarding them as targets for purification. Some aspects of traditional culture are accorded national culture status and actively praised in symbolic, ideological, and spiritual eulogy, while others are disparaged in terms of their mal-function in contemporary everyday life, and regarded as targets for improvement.

Cultural policy in the 1960-70s is deeply infused with the character of “official nationalism” as recognized by Anderson (1983). The nation is imagined, above all, as intimately related to the state, while the state takes the lead in creating and solidifying this image. This also reflects the way the state overpowered and stood above civil society in Korea. In the relationship between the state, civil society (the people), and the market as producers of culture, the state occupied a dominant position, while intellectuals of civil society resisted this with cultural movements and the market expanded its own unique realm amid compromise with and control by the state. Among these agents, we see more conflict, exclusion, isolation, oppression, and resistance than harmony or balance, but national cultural discourse has surrounded these interchanges, forming a common framework in which the state and cultural activists have competed; in this sense, it remains the dominant discourse on culture.

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