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Reconfiguring Mountain Expeditions:
The Transwar Origins of the Korean Nature Conservation Movement, 1926–1962

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Abstract

This paper examines the way in which South Korean biologists developed their conservationist minds and practices through a long tradition of academic expeditions to mountains that predate the 1960s cooperation with US conservationists. By focusing on mountain expeditions carried out by Korean alpinists and scientists from the late 1920s to early 1960s, this paper illuminates how Korean biologists developed forest and natural monument conservation practices they were able to incorporate into the governmental conservation activities while taking part in the Corean Alpine Club's postwar "academic alpinism" (akademik alpinijeum). I argue that their conservation activities, and specifically their military linkages, could be well understood as a transwar product rather than a Cold War outcome. Through this case study, I suggest that this transwar approach helps both historians of Korean science and Korean environmental historians study their research subject while avoiding the widespread analytical dichotomy of Japanese colonial legacies and Cold War ruptures.

Keywords: mountain climbing, academic expeditions, nature conservation, biologists, Corean Alpine Club, South Korea, transwar approach

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Introduction

In the middle of the hottest months of 1975, an academic expedition (*haksul josa*) team from the Korean Association for the Conservation of Nature (Hanguk jayeon bojon hyeophoe; KACN) arrived at their fieldwork site, the Buryeongsa Valley in Uljin. The expedition members came from diverse biological disciplines from limnology and ichthyology to animal and plant taxonomy (*Maeil gyeongje* 1975). The team conducted a comprehensive survey of the area's ecological aspects, including fauna, flora, geography, as well as their interactions, just as the expedition members had been doing at other mountain and island sites since 1970. They also surveyed for the presence of endangered animals and plants often already designated as natural monuments (*cheonyeon ginyeommul*). Though the work of this expedition was serious, in appearance the team members would not have differed from the amateur climbers and hikers they often encountered while conducting their surveys in the mountains (KACN 1977). Plant ecologist Lee Il-Koo (1916–2003) grudgingly acknowledged the similarity in the traveling outfits of academic field scientists and amateur climbers: "Despite our academic team's different purpose [that is, studying nature] from ordinary climbers, that's how things went since scientists also had to climb mountains just as ordinary hikers do" (I. Lee 1975).

Although Lee presumed a distinction between field expeditions and climbing in his comparison, the boundary between the two was obscure, and in fact, had not been established until a decade previous. Scientists on the KACN expedition team had climbed mountains with alpinists dozens of times and worked as leading members of national and university alpine clubs since the early period of liberation from Japan. Lee himself had also gone to Mt. Everest with his former workplace's (Shinheung University, later Kyunghee University) alpine club in 1962. Old and young botanists and zoologists at the KACN were active members of the Corean Alpine Club (Hanguk sanakhoe; CAC) and university alpine clubs, which had organized academic expeditions accompanied by alpinists from the early post-liberation period through the late 1960s.

As scientists covered their ties to mountain climbing by separating their

academic survey and collecting practices (*dapsa*) from climbing activities (*deungsan*), this historical episode of postwar mountain expeditions has been overlooked by the literature on the history of science in South Korea.[1] This paper highlights the significance of this period of mountain climbing for the institution of nature conservation in South Korea.[2] In recent years, historians of science have paid attention to the United States-South Korea cooperative survey at the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) of 1966–1968 as a key event in the rise of South Korean environmentalism. For instance, US conservationist Harold J. Coolidge (1904–1985) encouraged Korean biologists to organize a precursor association to the KACN. Coolidge supported Korean participation in international conservation conferences and pushed the Korean government to designate national parks (Hyun 2021a). He finally succeeded in bringing ecologists at the Smithsonian Institution to the DMZ, and this two-year cooperation with American ecologists was enough to impart the concepts and practices of US nature conservation to South Korea actors and inspire the KACN-led nature conservation movements in the subsequent decades (Moon 2020; Myung 2019).[3]

This paper sheds new light on the US-centered conservation narrative. One of the common misassumptions in the past literature is that of an immediate, close link between ecology and nature conservation. From this perspective, there was no conservationist mindset in South Korea prior to the introduction of the scientific discipline by American ecologists in the

1. Another reason historians of science have overlooked Korean biologists' mountain expeditions alongside alpinists is a widespread assumption, at least in the 20th century, that exploration activities are not science. For the criticism of this view separating exploration from science, see Heggie (2014). Meanwhile, for the Korean history side, one can also point out that Korean historians have mainly considered colonial mountain climbing a modern form of tourism and thus paid little attention to its scientific aspects.
2. For an exceptional case that addresses the need to examine the role of mountain climbing in the development of science in twentieth-century Asia, see Fedman and Hood (2019).
3. For scientists' memoirs describing the DMZ project as a key event in the local history of nature conservation movements, see Kang (1982). KACN also agrees with the description. For another case study of the Smithsonian DMZ project, see Brady (2021).

1960s.[4] However, as science historian Peter Bowler has shown, the ecological science-conservation link is not so apparent in the history of American conservation (Bowler 1992).[5] In the US, if science played a role in the rise of the conservation movement, scientific forestry would have assumed the role, as shown by the life of Gifford Pinchot (1865–1946)—American forester and the US president Theodore Roosevelt's (1858–1919) *de facto* conservation advisor (C. Miller 2013). The combination of ecology and conservation was established via postwar intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations and its affiliated organizations, when resource conservation became recognized as a critical issue for international peace (Warde et al. 2018; Selcer 2018).

The misconception regarding the ecology-conservation link and the erasure of the prewar history of nature conservation in Korea are also found in some Japanese literature, although now a revisionist understanding is replacing it. For instance, Knight (2010) has argued that there was a lack of a nature conservation movement in prewar Japan, a narrative accepted by some other scholars (Avenell 2012; Mason 2014). According to this narrative, relative to their counterparts in Germany and the United States, prewar Japanese intellectuals were less concerned with ecological issues and uninterested in developing an ecological philosophy. In fact, it argues, nature conservation awareness was only taken up by the Japanese public when the pollution crises of the 1950s and 1960s began to affect their lives. Japanese environmental historians have recently begun to challenge this *environmental orientalism* narrative in several aspects (I. Miller 2013, 6–7). First, there was already an active community of Japanese ecologists in the 1920s and 1930s; however, those scientists rarely saw their activities in relation to nature conservation. The ecology-conservation link was

4. Such a perspective is an artifact of the historiography of the first generation of Korean ecologists (J. Kim 2004).
5. In recent years, European historians of science have dug up a counter-case showing how ecologists played a role in promoting the national park movement around the first half of the 20th century. This does not mean that the ecology-conservation connection was a common pattern in the global history of the nature conservation movement. See Kupper (2012).

established only when the US conservationists in the late 1950s encouraged both Japanese conservationists and ecologists to understand themselves as being interconnected (Sumida 2009). Second, prior to 1945, Japanese historians paid attention to the role of scientific forestry in promoting conservationist attitudes in both Japan proper and the Japanese colonies (Morris-Suzuki 2013; Komeie 2019; Fedman 2020). These historians have also shown how the forest preservation movement often went hand-in-hand with the preservation of historic and natural monuments (*tennen kinen-butsu*) in early twentieth-century Japan (Havens 2011, 62–73). The passion for protecting forests and natural monuments on mountains was the primary motivation for nature conservation before the rise of anti-pollution environmentalism and the linkage of ecology with nature conservation in postwar Japan.

In this paper, engaging with the Japanese historiography on science and nature conservation, I examine ways in which South Korean biologists developed their conservationist attitudes and practices prior to the arrival of US conservationists in the early 1960s. Their mountain fieldwork was the very site at which conservationist concerns about forests and about natural monuments emerged. Their conception of nature conservation differed from American conservationists' ecological understanding of this, and the pattern of their activities to understand and protect nature assumed the same structure even after the 1960s. In particular, the connections between Korean field researchers and the Korean military, which were essential to the US-Korean cooperative DMZ project of the mid-1960s, had already been formed in the context of their wartime and early postwar mountain expedition activities.

This case study contributes to both the fields of the history of science and technology and environmental history in modern and contemporary Korea. Revisiting the Japanese forestry activities in colonial Korea, historian David Fedman (2020) has persuasively argued that colonial forestry played a role not only in exploiting natural resources but also in promoting conservationist minds on the Korean Peninsula. Environmental historians have also become aware of the imperial origins of the Park Chung-hee regime's forest management and infrastructure projects (W. Lee 2010; Moore

2019; Kang 2021a). Meanwhile, the analysis of these academic expeditions is also important in the framework of the recent historiographical turn that problematizes the traditional understanding of the development of science and technology in East Asia within the bilateral relations of Cold War America. This new framework has encouraged scholars to pay more attention to intra-Asia connections and historical contexts over a longer period of time, instead of confining their focus to the postwar period (Mizuno et al. 2018; Iida 2021; Kadia 2019; Ghosh 2021; J. Lee 2021; Liu 2017; Kang 2021b; S. Park 2021). By tracing wartime academic expedition activities and their connections to postwar ones, I will propose conceptualizing the Korean nature conservation movement as a transwar outcome, at least in part, rather than simply a product of the Cold War.

Academic Expeditions in the Colonial Era

Expeditions as Ecotourism and National Pilgrimage

In colonial Korea, academic expeditions to mountains were undertaken for diverse purposes by different actors in terms of ethnicity and profession. Although the Japanese Government-General of Korea (JGGK) initiated the most expeditions and Japanese scholars and officials played the most prominent roles during the colonial period (1910–1945), Korean nationalist leaders, scientists, and alpinists sometimes participated in and organized such expeditions. During the colonial period, Korean scientists and alpinists did not participate in the expeditions of other groups; each group's distinct expedition experience would become a precious asset when initiating academic expeditions on their own with the end of the Pacific War (1941–1945) and national liberation from Japan.

In the 1920s, when the JGGK's basic resource survey of Korea was almost complete, a new type of expedition emerged that incorporated the goal of promoting regional ecotourism. This was an outcome of the JGGK Railway Bureau's tourism promotion program, which proceeded in tandem with the *discovery* of scenic and historic locations (*myeongseung gojeok*) by

JGGK-led historic investigation projects (S. Cho 2011; S. Lee 2008).[6] Over 40 mountains, including Mt. Baekdu, Mt. Geumgang, Mt. Jiri, and other famous peaks, became the most important tourism resources for the JGGK Railway Bureau in the early 1930s (C. Jung 2015; B. Kim 2014). The local governments having such mountains under their jurisdictions convened sightseeing-combined academic expeditions to promote regional tourism (S. Cho 2011). In this context and with the support of the local governments, the JGGK Korean Educational Society (Chōsen kyōikukai; CES) organized the Natural History Expedition Summer School for schoolteachers on Mt Baekdu (1926), Mt. Halla (1928), and Mt. Jiri (1929). Although the official aim of the CES fieldwork-based summer school was to educate natural history teachers, the summer schools were only enabled by the regional supporters interested in promoting mountain tourism and boosting the regional economy.

While the JGGK used academic expeditions as a means of natural resource management, and later for tourism promotion, colonial Korean intellectuals began to utilize the ecotourism infrastructure to encourage nationalist aspirations. During the period from 1923 to 1925, the editorial board of the monthly magazine *Gaebyeok* (Dawn) carried out "the Basic Investigation of the Korean Culture" project, to include expeditions to scenic mountain locations, as a cultural nationalist movement (H. Cho 2019). Pilgrimages by individual Korean intellectuals then followed. The nationalistic travel essays by these Korean writers soon became established as a genre attracting a wider Korean audience (Ku 2004). While the JGGK approved some nationalistic voices during the so-called "cultural policy" (*bunka tōchi*) period of colonial rule in the 1920s and early 1930s, these pilgrimages by Korean nationalist intellectuals often took place as part of JGGK-sponsored academic expeditions. For instance, Choe Nam-Seon (1890–1957) took part in the CES's natural history field trip to Mt. Baekdu

6. Visits by Japanese from the metropole to Korea and the rise of the imperial tourism industry in Japan proper emerged earlier, from the mid-1900s to mid-1910s. For the role of imperial tourism in articulating and disseminating the empire's cultural pluralism, see McDonald (2017).

in 1926. Based on his experiences, he wrote his pilgrimage essay, *Baekdusan geunchamgi* (Travels to Mt. Baekdu, published as a book in 1927) that played a crucial role in envisioning Mt. Baekdu as a sacred mountain and origin of the Korean ethno-nation. In a similar manner, An Jae-Hong (1891–1965) penned another well-known pilgrimage essay, *Baekdusan deungcheokgi* (Record of a Climb up Mt. Baekdu, 1931) after participating in a Mt. Baekdu expedition organized by the JGGK in 1930 (C. Park 2013, 23–25).

In the 1930s, the Korean newspapers *Chosun Ilbo* and *Dong-A Ilbo* recognized a commercial opportunity in such national pilgrimages. This opportunity also coincided with Korean newspapers and magazines paying significant attention to scientific and technological activities carried out by Koreans as the cultural nationalists leading the Korean press believed self-improvement in science and technology to be a key element in national survival (J. Lee 2013a). Thus, for the Korean press, academic expeditions to the sacred mountains led by Korean scientists were a fascinating initiative serving both commercial and national survival aims. On one hand, the academic purpose justified the eagerness of the Korean press to organize large-scale expeditions and climb nationally sacred mountains. It was crucial that such expeditions mitigate any nationalistic tones if they were to obtain the JGGK's support, or at least its acquiescence. On the other hand, these expeditions offered the Korean press an opportunity to focus attention on "Korean scientists" (*Dong-A Ilbo* 1930). Their participation in these press-organized expeditions also promised that the outcomes of their "scientific research" would be of a Korean nature. The insect and plant specimens and minerals collected during future expeditions would later provide the teaching materials for educating a wider Korean readership about both the natural sciences and their national land. For these reasons, the newspaper companies throughout the 1930s took a lead in organizing and supporting large academic expeditions distinct from the JGGK's tourism promotion expeditions.[7] The *Chosun Ilbo* organized academic expeditions to Mt. Halla

7. Meanwhile, Japanese elite scientists from Keijō Imperial University went abroad, in particular to Manchuria and Mongolia, following Japan's imperial expansion into those areas. See J. Jung (2015) and Kadia (2019).

in 1930 and 1937, to Mt. Baekdu in 1936, to Mt. Jiri in 1938, to Mt. Myohyang in 1939, and to Mt. Seorak in July 1940. From the beginning, the expedition teams consisted primarily of Koreans, although Japanese guards and police accompanied them for security reasons, especially in the case of the Mt. Baekdu expedition due to the Japanese Empire's continuous expansionism into northern China, beginning with the invasion of Manchuria (1931–1932). For instance, the 1936 Mt. Baekdu expedition team was guarded by 20 Japanese border guards (Seo et al. 1989, 24).

Korean naturalists actively participated in and benefited from joining both varieties of expeditions. For example, the first generation of Korean biologists, Won Hong-gu (1888–1970), Cho Pok-Sung (1905–1971), and Maeng Won-Young (1900–?), participated in the 1926 Mt. Baekdu expedition organized by JGGK.[8] They were schoolteachers who were interested in natural history and later played a crucial role in organizing a Korean national-exclusive Korean Research Society for Natural History (Joseon bangmul yeonguhoe; KRSNH) in 1933. Natural history teachers and (future) KRSNH members, such as Kim Byung-ha (1906–?), joined the 1930 JGGK-organized expedition team, and they were also part of the 1936 *Chosun Ilbo* team.[9] These expeditions allowed Korean naturalists to collect rare specimens and increase their public exposure and status. Particularly in this context, the press introduced these naturalist-cum-teachers and their fieldwork outcomes as "national scientific achievements," thus enabling them to obtain recognition and nationwide fame. Using the heightened nationalist interest in their work, Cho Pok-Sung and Kim Byung-ha were able to gain support from *Dong-A Ilbo* to hold the first Korean Insect

8. Cho Pok-Sung recollected his participation in the Mt. Baekdu expedition of 1926 as the critical point in his career transition from a teacher interested in butterflies to a serious entomologist (P. Cho 2011).
9. One should be cautious about citing the chronological chart of Korean mountain climbing history included in Son's 2010 book. Despite its comprehensive effort, the year, place, and names of participants are often erroneously stated. For instance, the 1930 expedition is wrongly recorded as the 1931 expedition led by An Jae-hong and other Koreans. The CES expeditions are also only partly stated and also with the erroneous information. See Son (2010, 567–568).

Exhibition, with the slogan "From Mt. Baekdu to Mt. Halla," in 1931.[10] The insect specimens from Mt. Baekdu and Mt. Halla were the very specimens they had collected through the 1926/1928 CES and 1930 *Chosun Ilbo* expeditions. The popularity this exhibition attracted was partially responsible for the establishment of the Korean-led KRSNH. For this reason, Do Bong-sup (1904–?), a leading Korean medicinal botanist at Keijō Pharmacy Professional School, praised the *Chosun Ilbo*'s mountain-climbing campaigns as having made a significant contribution to the future of "Korean botany," not botany in general (Do 1935).

It is worth noting that Korean naturalists' specimen collections accumulated through the expeditions would have been nothing new from the perspective of contemporary Japanese biologists. Japanese botanists and zoologists had already carried out extensive fieldwork in the mountains with JGGK support in the decade from 1900 to 1910, and in the 1920s at the latest. However, as historian Lee Jung correctly points out through her case study, Korean naturalists pursued their collecting activities with a nationalist faith that aimed to rediscover their own country's nature independent of the previous research by Japanese imperial scientists. Although they did not make any meaningful contribution to *universal* science, their activities centered on collecting and naming national species in the Korean language contributed to the construction of a national science that had not existed previously (J. Lee 2013b). In this sense, for Korean naturalists, expeditions to mountains formed a core set of activities in the future establishment of national science, and Korean biology in particular (Moon 2012).

Expeditions for Total War

In the late 1930s, when the so-called wartime mobilization regime began coinciding with the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, the JGGK suspended all Korean nationalist expeditions and reconfigured academic expeditions in ways that served wartime purposes. In August 40, the *Chosun Ilbo*, which had initially managed to survive by converting into a

10. For Cho Pok-Sung's activities, see S. Kim (2008).

pro-Japanese paper in 1937, was finally shuttered,[11] and all climbing activities fell under the control of the JGGK's Chōsen Sport Promotion Association (Chōsen tai-iku shinkōkai; CSPA). Mountain climbing was now defined as "national defense training" under its new name, *tōkō*.[12] In this context, expeditions were only enabled by justifying them within wartime discourses, such as training youth leaders for joining the war and praying for the victory in the Japanese emperor's sacred war. Such discourses were adopted by the Mountain Climbing Training Association (Tokō renseikai; MTA) at CSPA when they promoted academic expeditions to Mt. Baekdu in the summers of 1942 and 1943 and winter of 1943.

Ironically, the MTA opened space for Korean amateur alpinists in organizing and managing academic expeditions from which they had been completely excluded in the previous decades. This was enabled by the transformation of the division of mountain climbing labor. In contrast to the previous expeditions, the 1942–1943 expeditions showed a hierarchical division of teams drawn along ethnic lines despite its Japanification objective. Academic and intellectual roles were assumed solely by Japanese scholars. A great number of Korean teachers and young students participated, but their role was as subjects to be taught by Japanese scholars and to receive military and spiritual training (CTA 1943). As a result, Korean naturalist-cum-teachers, who had participated in both JGGK and Korean newspaper-organized expeditions in the 1920s and 1930s, were not listed by name. Ethnologist Song Seok-Ha (1904–1948) and journalist and alpinist Hong Jong-In (1903–1998)—who played roles in organizing the climbing events for students and female military training at the JGGK newspaper

11. The *Dong-A Ilbo*'s removal of the emblem of the Japanese flag from the shirt of the Korean Olympian athlete Sohn Kee-Chung in 1936 and the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 were the primary causes of the Governor-General's tightened newspaper control from 1937 (Chang 2021).
12. This may be a Japanese transliteration of the German word *Bergaufgehen*. In some sense, the JGGK newspaper *Maeil Sinbo* succeeded the *Chosun Ilbo* in supporting climbing activities, though it was more focused on the military training (*rensei*) of females and young Koreans through long-distance mountain climbing (*tōkō*) on Mount Geumgang, Mount Jiri, and the mountains near Keijō (Seoul) in 1942–1943. The academic aspect of expeditions was excluded from the *Maeil Sinbo* events.

Maeil Sinbo—were the only Korean intellectuals involved in the event, and they participated only as observers.[13] The role the Korean side fulfilled for the expedition was dealing with the expedition's practical aspects, such as guiding routes and managing logistics.

Korean alpinists took charge of practical climbing affairs. During the war, they were afforded more power and voice at the Japanese settler-centered organization, Chōsen Alpine Club (Chōsen sangakukai, established in 1931), which emerged from the significant number of Japanese who had been mobilized into the military. Thus, for instance, Kim Jung Tae (1916–1988), a Korean alpinist and member of the Chōsen Alpine Club from 1937, became the MTA's secretary in charge of expedition logistics. Although they had occasionally climbed mountains with Japanese scholars, the 1942–1943 expeditions to Mt. Baekdu were their first experiences with academic expeditions in such large and systematic formats (Son 2010; Kim et al. 2020). In addition to academic expeditions, the MTA also attempted the mass mobilization of students and teachers to promote various campaigns. The "loving nature" (*shizen aikō*) campaign was such an activity. The MTA's Keijō faction leader, Haraguchi Norio, proposed caring for mountains by not breaking branches or dumping waste, and he sought to instill nature-loving as one of the principles of climbing ethics (Haraguchi 1943). The 1942–1943 Mt. Baekdu expeditions also included planting trees in barren areas and releasing fish into the ponds and lakes.[14] These greening campaigns were deeply connected to wartime forest resource policy.[15]

It would be worth noting at this point that the Japanese nature protectionists did not follow the American distinction between preservation and conservation from the early period when they introduced the Euro-American idea of landscape (*fūkei*) and its protection, partly due to their

13. Hong had worked at the *Chosun Ilbo* from 1926 until just before moving to the *Maeil Sinbo* in 1940 and often dealt with mountain-climbing stories in his news reports. Such a career at the *Chosun Ilbo* would have naturally led to him assume the job of organizing climbing events in his new workplace. For his journalism activities during the colonial period, see Hong (1999).
14. Song Suk Ha recollected those "nature restoration" activities after the war (Song 1947).
15. For Japan's wartime forest policy, see Fedman (2020).

strong national developmentalist orientation (Jones 2016). Although the Japanese translation of "nature conservation" (*shizen hogo*; *jayeon boho* in Korean) appeared only in the 1950s and *hozon* (*bojon* in Korean) was more widely used in the prewar years, both English terms "preservation" and "conservation" were often translated as the same word *hozon* in Japanese (Sumida 2009, 8–28). South Korean biologists would also apply this indistinct definition toward these two aspects in their postwar activities.

Irrespective of the MTA's sincere commitment to the JGGK policy, in 1944, when the war situation became desperate for the Japanese empire, climbing mountains became impossible. As a result, for the Korean alpinists, the Mt. Baekdu expeditions, which had gathered over a hundred participants and obtained the JGGK's full support, faded in wartime memories to a final fling. For this reason, Korean alpinists would later reorganize a postwar mountain climbing activity drawing heavily on their wartime academic expeditions.

Academic Alpinism in Postwar Militarized Mountains

Biologists Enter the Corean Alpine Club

A month after Korea's liberation from the Japan on August 15, 1945, Korean alpinists quickly re-established a national alpine club—the Chosun Alpine Club (CAC, renamed the Corean Alpine Association in 1948). Kim Jung Tae and other alpinists recognized their low profile and sought out a place for their new organization in post-liberation Korea by bringing in prominent figures and promoting socially meaningful projects. It was no coincidence that they reintroduced networks and formats that they had come to know while working at MTA during the wartime period. Song Suk Ha, who had participated in the wartime Mt. Baekdu expeditions and had just become a professor of history at Kyungsung University (later Seoul National University, SNU), was nominated as the first president of the CAC. Other participants in the prewar academic expeditions to Mt. Baekdu and Mt. Halla also joined the CAC executive committee (J. Kim 1975; HBJ 1976).

Among the wartime participants, Hong Jong-In, who had managed wartime climbing events at the *Maeil Sinbo* and now returned to a revived *Chosun Ilbo*, became the CAC's de facto leader throughout the following two decades (HBJ 1976).

Together with this, the CAC leaders initiated a series of academic expeditions titled National Land Research Projects (NLRP, *gukto gyumyeong saeop*), spanning from February 1946 to August 1955 (Table 1). The CAC claimed their "service to the Korean nation" through "their activities that academically investigated its animals, plants, minerals, geography, geology, agriculture, history, and language" (HSH 1980, 25). The NLRP resembled both the nationalist academic expeditions initiated by the Korean press and the wartime expeditions managed by the JGGK's MTA. On the one hand, as Korean naturalists did in the 1930s, they wanted to rediscover their land and nature on their own despite the widely available information produced by the previous Japanese colonizers.[16] On the other hand, as the Korean alpinists did in the 1940s, they wanted to serve (newly emerging) state purposes, particularly the making of new national subjects and territorial boundaries and promoting forestry conservation campaigns.

The CAC wanted to start their first NLRP by climbing Mt. Baekdu as they had done in the wartime period, but due to the political division between North and South, they had to change their target to Mt. Halla. On February 26, 1946, they went to Jeju-do with seven scholars, including members of the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK). Due to resource depletion situation at the time, the USAMGIK was their only supporter. Therefore, military transport, equipment, and meals played an essential role in the first post-liberation

16. In the 1930s, Song Suk Ha led a similar project—to devise Korean names for Korean folklore, just as Korean naturalists did with Korean fauna. Kim Jung Tae and Hong Jong In recollected how Song strongly encouraged academic alpinism. After Song's death on August 5, 1948, while serving as vice-president of CAC, Hong continued the tradition of academic expeditions and continued the NLRP. Hong's commitment to academic alpinism was maintained throughout his term as CAC president from 1954 to 1970 (Jeon 1999, 121–124).

expedition (HSH 1996, 70–73).[17] It is important to note that despite *Chosun Daily*'s praising it as "the first scientific expedition after the liberation," no scientists were included in this first expedition, so they could not claim to have promoted a "scientific" understanding of the mountain (*Chosun Ilbo* 1945).

Table 1. CAC-NLRP Expeditions, 1946–1955

Year	Place	Number of Participants/Leader
February 26–March 17, 1946	Mt. Halla and Jeju-do	19 / Song Suk Ha
July 25–August 12, 1946	Mt. Odae and Taebaek Mountains	53 / Song Suk Ha
July 12–25, 1947	Sobaek Mountains	18 / Hong Jong-In
August 16–28, 1947	Ulleung-do and Dok-do	62 / Song Suk Ha
August 17–29, 1948	Charyeong and Sobaek Mountains	23 / Seok Joo-myung
June 11–17, 1949	Seongap-do and Deokjeok-do	52 / Seok Joo-myung
August 8–24, 1949	Dadohae sea area	23 / Seok Joo-myung
September 18–26, 1951	Jeju-do and Parang-do	58 / Hong Jong-In
September 17–28, 1952	Ulleung-do and Dok-do	48 / Hong Jong-In
October 11–17, 1953	Ulleung-do and Dok-do	61 / Hong Jong-In
August 18–28, 1955*	Mt. Seorak	29 / Hong Jong-In

Source: Adapted from HSH (1996, 589–591).
* The year of the final expedition to Mt. Seorak was wrongly recorded as 1954 in the source (HSH 1996, 591).

After the first NLRP, and to strengthen the scientific part, CAC quickly established an academic committee and recruited Korean scientists, especially biologists. At the first meeting held in 1946, botanist Do Bong Sup, the first president of the Chosun Biological Society (Joseon saengmul hakhoe; CBS)—renamed the Korean Biological Society in 1951—came over from the colonial-era KRSNH and was newly nominated as the vice

17. On expeditions by Japanese anthropologists with the US military during the same occupation period, see Kadia (2019).

president, along with the journalist Hong Jong-In. Cho Pok-Sung and Seok Joo-Myung (1908–1950), two big players on the post-liberation zoology scene, and well known for their extensive fieldwork at mountain sites, also became executive members. With this new lineup of field biologists, the second NLRP took place at Mt. Odae and Mt. Taebaek. This expedition consisted of 53 members in total in addition to the academic group led by Joo-Myung led and which included leading botanists Lee Min-Jai (1917–1991) and Lee Young-No (1921–2009). Later, zoologist Choi Ki-Chul (1931–2002) of SNU and Shim Hak-Jin (?–?) of Kyungsung Pharmaceutical College also joined the CAC executive committee and actively worked with the serial academic expeditions. The KRSNH's doyens also joined in CAC activities. Lee Duk Bong (1898–1987) listed his name as part of later expeditions, and Jung Tae Hyeon (1882–1971) lectured several times at local climbing events. The young generation of field biologists, such as botanist Jung Yeong-Ho (1924–1994) and Hong Soon-Woo (1927–1988) also commenced their research and alpinist careers with the NLRP. During the period from 1947 to 1950, particularly after president Song's death on August 5, 1948, CAC vice president Seok Joo-Myung actively led the NLRP. CAC field biologists were mostly dually affiliated with CBS and took a lead in the surveying portion of the NLRP (Table 2). For this reason, Seok commented, "CAC and CBS are almost completely united with each other in terms of their activities," such as their professional networks and expeditions (Seok [1947] 1992, 74–75). CAC defined its early mountain-climbing practices as "academic alpinism" (*akademik alpinijeum*), promoting scientific investigations that preceded alpinism (Son 1995, 211–213).

Why did biologists come to dominate the CAC's scientific wing? First, active Korean naturalists in the colonial period were mostly insect or plant collectors; the number of Koreans trained in other fieldwork-based professions was quite limited under the institutional conditions of science education during the colonial period (Moon 2012). Material conditions also played some role in shaping the biologist-dominated scene. On the Korean Peninsula, highlands and high mountains, such as the Gaema Plateau and Mt. Baekdu, which are higher than 2,000 meters, are located in the northern part of the peninsula. The highest point of the southern peninsula is Mt.

Table 2. Biologists Participating in NLRP, 1946–1955

Name	Professional field	CAC position	CBS position	Affiliation
Do Bong-Sup	Botany	Vice president	President (1945–1946)	Kyungsung Pharmaceutical College (KPC); SNU from 1946
Jung Tae Hyeon	Botany	Member*	President (1946–1951)	Central Agricultural Experiment Station; Sungkyunkwan University from 1954
Lee Duck Bong	Botany	Executive member (1947)	Vice president (1945–1946)	Sookmyeong University (1947); Korea University from 1951
Chang Hyeong-Du	Botany	Member	Member	SNU from 1948
Cho Pok-Sung	Zoology	Executive member	Executive member; Vice president (1946–1949)	National Science Museum; Korea University from 1955
Seok Joo-Myung	Zoology	Executive member/ Vice president (1948–1950)	Member	National Science Museum
Shim Hak-Jin	Botany	Executive member	Editorial Board	KPC; SNU from 1946
Choi Ki-Chul	Zoology	Member	Vice president (1955)	SNU from 1948
Nam Tae-Kyung	Zoology	Member	Member	SNU
Lee Min Jai	Botany	Member	Editor-in-chief /vice president (1952–1953)	KPC; SNU from 1947
Jung Yeong-Ho	Botany	Member	Member	SNU
Hong Soon-Woo	Botany	Member	Member	SNU; Yonsei University from 1952
Em Kyu-Baek	Botany	Member/secretary member (1954)	Member	SNU
Lee Young-No	Botany	Member	Member	Kyunggi Middle School
Jang Jin	Botany	Member	Not identified	SNU; left in 1947

Source: Adapted from HSH (1996), Son (2010), and SMSH (1994).
* Only participated in Gwangneung forest love camping events.

Halla (1,950 m), followed by Mt. Jiri (1,915 m). In those southern mountains, specific medical conditions, such as altitude sickness, which is caused by low oxygen levels at elevations over 2,500 meters, do not occur at all. Furthermore, glaciers and other geological peculiarities are also absent in those southern mountains due to climatic conditions. Given that mountain sciences usually include high-altitude physiology or glaciology, South Korea's low mountains were not suited for traditional mountain sciences.[18] On the other hand, for field biologists, who were still working on compiling lists of the fauna and flora of specific regions, low mountains were valuable field sites. The animal inhabitable warm climate of the southern peninsula was favorable for biologists but presented the worst condition for glaciologists. Since biologists joined the CAC, expeditions under the NLRP were mainly conducted during the summer or the early autumn months when plants and animals were most abundant and active, allowing biologists to more easily collect specimens.[19]

Continuities rather than Discontinuities

The CAC's academic expeditions were considered useful for the US military government, and later the new South Korean government, in the context of the now fluid and unfixed maritime borders between South Korea and occupied Japan. When the fourth NLRP was organized to visit Ulleung-do and the Liancourt Rocks (Dok-do) in August 1947, the interim government's

18. It is worth noting that mountain medical research appeared only in the colonial period (for Mt. Baekdu) and then more generally in the 1960s-1970s, when Korean alpinists began to climb high mountains beyond Korea, like Mt. Everest. For high-altitude physiology research, see Heggie (2019). For the beginnings of scientific involvement with mountains in the various fields, see Bigg, et al. (2009). For Japanese glaciology, see Fedman and Hood (2019).
19. In fact, the primary complaint of CAC alpinists regarding the academic-centered NLRP was the season for the expeditions. To the original alpinist members who had climbed northern mountains during the colonial period, the southern mountains were too low to achieve alpinism. In order to elevate the climbing difficulty, a winter expedition to snowy mountains was widely favored among Korean alpinists, but biologists did not like the idea of a winter expedition due to their collecting concerns. See Son (2010).

coast guard offered transport and security support. Even during the Korean War (1950–1953), the South Korean government supported the CAC's NLRP to Socotra Rock (known as Parang-do at the time) in 1951 and Ulleung-do and the Liancourt Rocks in 1952 and 1953. It used these expedition events to support the Syngman Rhee Line, which established South Korean maritime sovereignty over the Liancourt Rocks on January 18, 1952.[20] The Syngman Rhee Line was proclaimed by the South Korean government to claim its maritime sovereignty over waters averaging 60 nautical miles from the Korean coast, which went beyond the internationally permissible range.

With the NLRP activities, which the wartime expedition alpinists and intellectuals had originally initiated, the continuity with previous decades can be easily identified. First, terminological continuity with the wartime expeditions is worth noting; the *Dong-A Ilbo* reported the Mt. Odae expedition as *deunghaeng,* a Korean transliteration of *tōkō* (Kwak 1946). The Seoul National University's student alpine club, a champion of postwar academic alpinism, also described their academic expedition to Mt. Jiri with *deunghaeng*, rather than *deungsan* (the usual Korean term for hiking or mountain climbing).[21] This is not surprising given that the leader of the pre-Korean War predecessor of the SNU alpine club, Ko Hee-Sung (1927–2018), had been a student participant in the 1943 Mt. Baekdu expedition (NMM 2017, 34–37, 45–47). In fact, CAC's academic alpinism slogan certainly resonated with the phrase "*tankyū tōkō*" (academic alpinism), which had been used for the wartime academic expedition. The expedition structure and format were also maintained. The expedition team was divided into alpinist-centered logistics and scholar-centered academic groups. Within that structure, the very Korean alpinists who had taken charge of the practical aspects of the former wartime expeditions retained their roles, while Korean biologists and humanities scholars replaced Japanese settler

20. The CAC side's records wrongly place the order of incidents, as they initiated the expedition first and later President Rhee Syngman announced the Peace Line in 1953. Son Kyeong-Seok made a same mistake despite his extensive research (Son 2010).
21. The term *deunghaeng* was maintained in a different event—Climbing Tournament—organized by the CAC until 1960.

scholars. Korean alpinists also continued to organize post-expedition events, such as specimen exhibits and lecture series. Thus, although the wartime purposes of and the Japanese presence in such expeditions had been displaced, the intra-Korean networks and expedition structure remained in the new postwar configuration.[22] Indeed, the first postwar generation of Korean alpinists disliked this academic alpinism while pointing out its similarities with the wartime academic expeditions (Son 2010, 107).

Throughout the ten-year NLRP project, a visible continuity even in the financial sources and military presence can be noted. The NLRP obtained financial and transport support from the *Dong-A Ilbo*, *Chosun Ilbo*, and the Korean interim government (later the South Korean government from 1948). The *Dong-A Ilbo* supported the first NLRP, and most NLRPs were financially supported by the *Chosun Ilbo*, the old patron of the prewar nationalist academic expeditions. The CAC vice-president (de-facto president from 1950 and official president from 1955) and the press journalist Hong Jong-In's presence would have made it easier for the *Chosun Ilbo* to restart their academic expedition support.[23]

The specter of the military was always present in these academic expeditions. Japanese border guards and police had accompanied expedition teams in the prewar and wartime periods, and now the interim government military and police assumed that role. The military presence was deeply connected to the political instability of the country's mountain areas. In fact, post-liberation Korea's mountains were always dangerous areas. Already in October 1946, communist partisan organizations had begun to carry out guerrilla warfare in the South Korean mountains (T. Lee 2020). The third NLRP to the Sobaek Mountains in July 1947 was suspended due to concerns regarding partisans. The fifth NLRP to the Charyeong and Sobaek

22. According to Son Kyeong-Seok, the alpinist exchange between Japan and South Korea resumed only from 1965 when interactions between private citizens of each country were enabled and encouraged by the diplomatic normalization between the two countries (Son 2010).

23. Hong's memoir only mentions the *Chosun Ilbo*'s support and elides any mention of wartime activities (Hong 1999).

Mountains in August 1948 was the last mountain expedition until 1955 as the government prohibited the climbing of all mountains due to the intensified combat between North Korean partisans and South Korean military troops following the Jeju April 3 incident in 1948 and the Yeo-Sun (Yeosu-Suncheon uprising) incident in autumn of the same year. Even for the first NLRP to Mt. Seorak in August 1955, the CAC expedition team had to ascend together with South Korean Army elements due to occasional scuffles with partisans. Even in 1958, the CAC alpinists continued to discover skulls and used military equipment while climbing. Such discoveries were also the case on other mountains, in particular on Mt. Jiri. By December 1956, the South Korean military and police implemented operations to *mop up* North Korean partisans, so local police guarded the CAC alpinists during that year's summer expedition. Even into the following decade, local police often misidentified the CAC team as a North Korean spy group. As the mountains were consistently militarized over the course of the post-liberation turmoil and the Korean War, such military and police connections were essential for ensuring that the academic expeditions could continue.

The Rise of *Gukto bojon* Experts

Conservation Campaigns and Expeditions

The biologists who actively participated in the NLRP found their postcolonial vocation in natural resource conservation. Their emphasis on resource conservation resonated with the increasing international concerns about resource conservation as a method of securing international peace in the early postwar era (Warde et al. 2018, 50–71; Selcer 2018, 62–96). However, in contrast to the global conservationists surrounding the UN and related organizations, Korean biologists still understood resource conservation in terms of national survival and practiced their vocation within the conservation institutions established during the colonial and wartime periods; "national land conservation" (*gukto bojon*) was a keyword

in their activities.[24] In this sense, their activities were meant to fill the vacuum left by the withdrawal of Japanese biologists from Korea following liberation. Yet the lack of human resources for natural resource conservation activities was not the only reason they worked in this field. The NLRP and the CAC's other state-linked activities sparked their concern about protecting alpine flora, fauna, and forests, in addition to providing an institutional basis for their activities as conservation experts.

From the outset, as the wartime organization MTA had promoted the forest love campaigns for the JGGK, the CAC was committed to being part of the USAMGIK's afforestation campaigns. In 1946, the USAMGIK recognized deforestation caused by the massive wartime mobilization, illegal logging, and slash-and-burn agriculture during the post-liberation period as a severe problem (USAFK 1988, 293–295). A series of mega-floods that occurred in the deforested areas led to a worsening of public health and agriculture conditions, conditions that created the background for political turmoil. The USAMGIK's disaster concerns certainly resonated with the Japanese Empire's concerns about forest *devastation* in its colonies and USAMGIK also found an answer in the policy of the previous imperialist regime (Komeie 2019). Following the JGGK's prewar forest policy, the US military government promoted reforestation and erosion control programs and forest conservation consciousness campaigns (USAFK 1988, 286–287). When in 1946 the USAMGIK designated April 5 as Arbor Day, the CAC quickly placed itself as the leading organization by promoting tree-planting climbing campaigns starting the following year. The USAMGIK's Bureau of Agriculture welcomed and supported their campaign activities by offering 4,000 plants for the tree-planting event (HSH 1996).

The CAC developed a pro-afforestation argument by linking their tree-planting campaigns to national resource conservation. At the introduction of their tree-planting climbing activities and while remembering his tree-planting efforts to increase natural resources on Mt. Baekdu during the wartime expedition, CAC president Song Suk Ha urged nationwide tree-

24. For the resonance/dissonance of the postwar discourse of national land with its imperial conception during wartime, see McDonald (2017, 103–134).

planting campaigns to utilize the mountains, which occupied "70 percent of the total national land area (*gukto*)" to achieve "national reconstruction" and to "maintain national strength" (Song 1947). Vice-president Hong Jong-In also encouraged the public to participate in the CAC tree-planting event and USAMGIK's afforestation campaigns by arguing that "the [current] bare, devastated *gukto* is the loss of national resources […] and of our passion for being devoted to the nation (*minjok*) and the state (*gukga*)" (Hong 1947).

For the CAC tree-planting campaigns, biologists used their intellectual authority to enlighten the public about forestry conservation. Do Bong Sup, another CAC vice-president, lectured about "the *gukto* conservation and forest love (*sallim aeho*)" at the first tree-planting climbing campaign. CAC executive member Cho Pok-Sung also worked as an active tree-planting campaigner (P. Cho 1947b, 1947c).[25] Like Song and Hong, Cho published a column in the *Chosun Ilbo* that promoted the CAC's tree-planting climbing campaign and urged the raising of forest love consciousness. Cho's column was generally in line with the statements of other CAC members; the difference was his professional tone and scientific advice about tree-planting. Cho introduced the tree distribution situation on the Korean Peninsula, the types of trees, and the scientific method of tree-planting and management (P. Cho 1947b, 1947c).

An illegal logging incident, which had occurred in the Gwangneung Forest a month prior to the CAC tree-planting climbing event, prompted more biologists to engage with CAC forest conservation activities. Gwangneung was a well-known habitat for Tristram's woodpecker, an endangered species designated a natural monument by Japanese biologist Mori Tamezō during the colonial period (*Keijō Nippō* 1934). Unfortunately, through bribery, the director of the Gwangneung Forest Experiment Station

25. Some Korean biologists had already been involved with the US military government's afforestation policy due to their governmental position, albeit indirectly. For instance, the first CBS president Chung Tae-Hyeon worked at the Office of Forestry, Central Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES). Although forestry and agricultural research was the CAES's main function, Chung was concerned with forestry conservation issues. It is thus not surprising that the name of Chung's close personal friend Cho Pok-Sung appeared in the USAMGIK's afforestation campaigns (P. Cho 1947a).

allowed the illegal and massive logging of the habitat area. This illegal activity quickly became a symbolic incident signaling the urgent need for forest conservationism nationwide. Further, Korean biologists were deeply concerned about the extinction of the natural monument species as a result (*Chosun Ilbo* 1949).[26] In response, they issued a CBS statement of condemnation that urged the protection of natural monument birds and their habitats. At the same time, as part of the CAC afforestation campaigns, they also promoted annual forest love camping events (*aerim kaempinghoe*) in the Gwangneung Forest from 1947 to 1950.[27] Cho Pok-Sung, Chung Tae Hyun, Shim Hak Jin, Seok Joo-Myeong, and other CBS biologists lectured about Korean fauna and flora, natural monuments, and forest conservation at those events.[28]

The expedition activities convinced biologists of the need for forest love campaigns and the deep connection between natural monuments and forest conservation. During the first NLRP at Mt. Odae and the Taebaek Mountains, the expedition team was impressed with the contrasting landscapes between the bare, red mountains in the populated Gyeonggi-do province and the green mountains of the less developed Gangwon-do province. This NLRP was the occasion at which Seok Joo-Myung actively participated in the CAC tree-planting climbing event, which continued in the following years (B. Lee 2002, 167). While collecting specimens through the NLRP activities, Seok's assistant Lee Hee-Tae at the National Science Museum further recognized that many animals and plants designated as natural monuments were in danger and urged the necessity of natural monument conservation (H. Lee 1950). In the same vein, Seok also agreed with the idea that forest conservation was closely linked to natural monument conservation (Seok [1950] 1992).

26. Their concerns about a possible extinction of Tristram's woodpecker continued to appear in 1949 and they began to criticize legal leisure activities in the Gwangneung Forest.
27. The event was resumed in 1955 but suspended after the seventh camping meeting in 1957.
28. The Conservation Decree of the Chōsen Treasures, Historical and Natural Monuments, which the JGGK enacted in 1933, was preserved by the USAMGIK. Thus, the natural monuments at the time had been designated such in the colonial period, mainly by Mori Tamezō.

Incorporating Expeditions into Government Conservation Activities

While the Gwangneung campaign was suspended due to the outbreak of the Korean War, this war itself offered biologists a chance to exert influence on government conservation activities. The war outbreak in June 1950 worsened the deforestation process and brought widespread destruction to the habitats of natural monument plants and animals. Historical sites and many other cultural properties could also not avoid bombardment. The South Korean government recognized that the forest and cultural properties situation was so desperate that it implemented restoration-related laws and institutions. Notably in 1952, the government established the Special Conservation Committee for National Treasures and Historical and Natural Monuments ('special' was removed from the name in 1955) under the Ministry of Education to restore damaged cultural properties, to include natural monuments. The committee's role was to promote cultural properties and natural monument conservation campaigns and to carry out fieldwork surveys to identify the status of designated monuments and their environments (Hyun 2021b).

Biologists joined the governmental committee for scenic landscapes and natural monument management. On the committee for 1952, six members among a total of nine were biologists, and two of these were CAC-affiliated biologists (Chung Tae-Hyun and Lee Min Jae). On the 1955 committee, two more CAC-affiliated biologists (Cho Ki-Chul and Cho Pok-Sung) joined, remaining until 1960. Lee Min Jae and Choi Ki-Chul held their positions into the mid-1960s, and the well-known mountain climber-cum-botanist Jung Yeong-Ho also joined in 1960. Until 1975, two or three CAC-affiliated scholars, among a total of six to eight, maintained their committee membership despite its 1962 reorganization—which I will describe in more detail below (S. Jung 2008).

Due to the overlapping membership between the governmental committee and the CAC, the natural monument survey and protection campaigns under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education were incorporated into the CAC's academic expedition activities. In the 1950s, the field biologists working at CAC claimed the need for systematic surveys

of natural monuments while inspecting devastated alpine habitats after the Korean War. Thus, from the period 1955 to 1960, the CAC and many university-based alpine clubs undertook academic expeditions to Mt. Seorak, Mt. Jiri, Mt. Halla, and the Dadohae maritime islands with the transport assistance of the South Korean military and the financial support of media outlets.

The SNU Liberal Arts College Alpine Club is the best illustration of the links between the CAC, young biologists, biological research, and conservation activities. Jung Yeong-Ho, an original CAC member as a young man and now a faculty member in the Department of Biology at SNU, served as an advisor professor for the student alpine club. Biology student and CAC member Em Kyu-Baek and political science student and the CAC member Ko Hee-Sung led the student club. Em took care of its academic aspects, while Ko took charge of expedition logistics under the guidance of Jung (SMSH 1994). In 1955, for the first time since the Korean War, the student club undertook an academic expedition to Mt. Odae. While climbing the mountain under military police escort, the expedition team leader Jung Yeong-Ho observed ruined historical sites and destroyed forests firsthand. In particular, the student expedition team found alpine plant and native fish habitats. The latter was already in danger because of overfishing by local fishermen, while the alpine plant habitat was sure to meet the same fate at the hands of future hikers if the mountain was opened to the public. Such extinction concerns led Jung to urge "urgent action [from the government] to protect Mt. Odae area's natural environment as well as national historic treasures" (Y. Jung 1955). It is worth mentioning that Jung became among the core set of scientists promoting nature conservation movements in the 1960s and 1970s, and this 1955 post-expedition statement was his first report about nature conservation.[29]

During the late 1950s, the CAC and other alpine clubs, such as the Daegu-Gyeongbuk Student Alpine Association, began to establish a "nature conservation" (*jayeon bojon*) or "natural monument conservation" (*cheonyeon ginyeom-eul bojon*) committee. A small regional alpine club in

29. As an example of his achievement in the field of nature conservation, see Y. Jung (1979).

Gurye, Jeollanam-do, added a statement on "nature conservation" to their club charter in 1955 (Mun and Park 2017). Thus, well before the arrival of US conservationists in South Korea in 1963, Korean field biologists and alpinists at the CAC were using the term "nature conservation," although the meaning differed slightly from the American version.

Coincidently, the academic alpinism-cum-conservationist activities of alipinist-cum-biologists gained a rigid institutional basis. The Cultural Property Protection Law passed in 1962 led to the establishment of the Bureau of Cultural Property Preservation (CPP) under the Ministry of Education. Together with the emergence of this new conservation-oriented agency, the previous natural monument conservation committee was also reorganized as the Cultural Property Committee under the Bureau (CPC-CPP). Now, CAC-affiliated biologists at the CPC-CPP became recognized as an official group for conservation activities. They also gained institutional power to designate specific animals, plants, and habitats as natural monuments. Their long-traditioned academic expeditions had become into official surveys investigating candidate areas for natural monument designation.

It was no coincidence that the first official mountain expedition under the new CPC-CPP regime headed toward Mt. Halla in 1962. The expedition was initiated only two years after the CAC-affiliated biologists at SNU led an interdisciplinary expedition to Jeju-do. The Asia Foundation-supported expedition team consisted of almost 65 SNU professors from the social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences, and six alpinists. Their aim was to survey regional resources, including natural resources—which were doubtlessly catalogued by CAC-affiliated biologists like Jung Yeong-Ho for twenty days during the summer of 1959 (HJJ 1959). In the same vein, the 1962 expedition organized by the CPC-CPP aimed to survey natural resources on Jeju-do. Pu Jonghyu (1925–1980), a local botanist and a pioneering mountaineer on the island, who had already worked as a local informant in the Asia Foundation-SNU expedition in 1959, guided the 1962 expedition team again. As they had done on other mountains, the CAC-affiliated biologists identified the massive loss of primeval forests; meanwhile, by accident, they also discovered the habitat of the flowering

cherry (*Prunus yedoensis Matsumura*), which had been considered a Japanese species. While promoting the designation of the habitat as a natural monument, they argued for designating the entire island as a national park to protect its natural resources (Hyun 2021b).

Ultimately, when one considers the CAC activities of Korean biologists in the examination of US-South Korea conservation collaboration in the 1960s, the US-centered narrative becomes decentralized, or even collapses entirely. The basic requirements were already established a year before US conservationist Harold Coolidge arrived in Seoul to spark national park movements and foster conservationist minds. At the level of praxis, Korean biologists had already promoted similar activities in mountains via their alpine club participation and transformed their mountain expeditions into official government means of designating nature reserve areas. There is no doubt that Korean biologists in this period were not natural conservationists in the American sense, especially when it comes to the links with ecology; the Korean biologists did not have any ecological thinking, such as conceptualizing a specific wildlife area as a regional ecosystem, nor did they attend to wildlife extinction and its implications for ecological capacity. Certainly, the systematic concerns about the conservation of migratory bird species facing extinction and the ecosystem-based argument were only raised after the Korean biologists became engaged with Coolidge and other American conservationists around the early 1960s. However, while carrying out mountain expeditions, they recognized a need for preventing deforestation, conserving some wildlife habitats, and reducing overfishing, and embraced those conservationist agenda in their activities in the name of *jayeon bojon*.[30] The rationale of conservation was not based on an ecological conception of nature, but on concern about the devastation of their national land (*gukto*), made up of national resources (in both economic and

30. I should emphasize that the Korean biologists kept the term *bojon*, which had originated from forest and natural monument conservation practices, even after they officialized the slogan "nature conservation" in relation to ecology in the mid-1960s: *jayeon bojon* remained as the Korean translation of "nature conservation" until the 1980s, and it was only in the 1990s that *bojon* came to be considered the translated term for "preservation," as opposed to the new Korean term for "conservation" (*bojeon*).

nationalistic senses), such as forests and historical and natural monuments. In that sense, if they were not ecology-minded conservationists, they were definitely *gukto* conservation experts.

Conclusion

In 1963, the CPC-CPP created a local special committee, which would ultimately become the KACN, in order to select candidate sites for national parks. Although American conservationist Harold Coolidge offered a financial and political backup for the KACN's establishment, human and practical resources came from a pre-existed setting: CAC-affiliated biologists at the CPC-CPP and their academic expedition experiences. The biologists architected the special committee and thus the KACN. Cho Pok-Sung, an early active member of the CAC and now doyen of field biology, became the first president of the special committee. The committee listed the candidate sites where they had extensively climbed and surveyed during their previous CAC expeditions and decided to pursue designating Mt. Seorak and Mt. Halla as the first national parks in 1964. As the first step in the national park movement, the CPC-CPP special committee organized academic expeditions, exactly as they had done throughout the last two decades. The mountain expeditions remained a coreset activity even after the special committee was reorganized as the KACN in 1974 (D. Cho 2010). In this sense, nature conservationism and national park movements in South Korea in the 1960s and 1970s were not a simply a product of US-South Korean scientific interactions; rather they were a byproduct of conjoining preexisting academic alpinism-cum-conservation activities and the timely press from American conservationists.

The academic alpinism in the biologist-dominated CAC took place in the post-liberation period and this expedition activity was incorporated into government conservation initiatives during the 1950s and early 1960s. Yet the postwar configuration was basically grounded on the inter-Korean network and expedition structure, which had been formed during the wartime mobilization period. In particular, wartime expeditions had already

been involved with the military; the Cold War confrontation on the Korean Peninsula militarized mountain areas so that biologists-cum-mountain climbers were unable to carry out mountain expeditions without cooperation with the military, just as the prewar scholars and alpinists had climbed Mt. Baekdu while guarded by the Japanese border patrols. The striking similarities between the prewar and postwar mountain expeditions do not indicate that expedition-centered conservation activities to be solely a colonial legacy. I have suggested elsewhere that historians of South Korean science should follow how post-colonial actors reassembled colonial knowledge and ties in order to adapt to new postwar scientific and socio-political conditions, instead of hastily introducing the binary of colonial continuities and Cold War ruptures into their analyses (Hyun 2017). This case study of mountain expeditions and their involvement with conservation practices illuminates how those activities came into being against a backdrop of continuous mountain warfare, from the Manchurian invasion of 1931 through the Korean War and its aftermath up until 1956. In this respect, South Korean biologists' expedition-centered conservation was a transwar product that transgresses the simplistic periodic division of colonial period and Cold War. As the recent literature in Japanese studies has problematized the conception of 1945 as a zero-point dividing the prewar (*senzen*) and postwar (*sengo*) through the transwar perspective (Mizuno et al. 2018; Kadia 2019), I believe that Korean historians (at least of science) could also develop this perspective as a way of letting go of their periodic constructs, that is, colonial legacies and Cold War ruptures.

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