Korea Journal, vol. 55, no. 1 (spring 2015): 112–137.

National Identity Discourses in Visual Culture and Art Education

Hyungsook KIM

Abstract

This study examines discourses on Koreanness as constructed in the 1970s through visual culture in South Korea and argues that visual images were utilized to serve the state's objectives by uniting people's consciousness. This study first discusses how traditions were discovered under the government-led Five-Year Cultural Renaissance Plan and how the country's modernization was achieved in the 1970s using nationalism towards national integration. Next, aspects of nationalism and discourses on Koreanness, which were portrayed in visual culture in the 1970s, are deciphered through specific works, including visual images from the fields of fine art and design. This study then examines how discourses on Koreanness took shape in art education to nurture national identity and nationalism under the Park Chung-hee regime. This study posits that in the 1970s, Korean visual images were a crucial tool as visual-cultural phenomena to enhance the national spirit, promote development, and trigger competition with other countries, as they reconstructed the identity of the Korean people and clearly differentiated Koreans from others.

Keywords: Koreanness, national identity, visual image, art education, tradition, tourism posters

Hyungsook KIM is Associate Professor in the College of Fine Arts, Seoul National University.
E-mail: kimhys@snu.ac.kr.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to analyze national identity discourse embedded in visual images that were produced in the process of economic development and modernization in South Korea during the 1970s. Visual images represent national identity through history and tradition, and integrate national consciousness within visual culture through the usage of traditional media. It was during the 1970s that the visual images that have come to be recognized as "Korean" were developed, and as a result of being reproduced through national advertising and education, became settled as a dominant discourse within the fields of visual culture and art education, as a visual system representing a type of aesthetics of Koreanness. As can be seen in the Five-Year Cultural Renaissance Plan of 1973, various policies—meant to foster a sense of national identity and excellence among the citizenry—were developed, and such efforts also led to discussions on Koreanness within the field of art. The focus of the present research is not on how visual images of Korean culture were constructed by others outside, but on how Koreans themselves redefined and reconstructed cultural identity through visual culture and art education (Y. Kim 2003). I argue that the visual images represented in the paintings, designs, and art textbooks of the Third Education Period were meant to both remember and imagine national history and traditions and that these images played the role of media meant to foster national identity.

There have been previous studies concerning the discourse on national identity and Koreanness in the art world. Chung Young-Mok has pointed out the lack of "inner necessity" in the context of criticizing the production process of 1970s Monochrome Paintings (1999, 58). Building on Chung's research, Park Young-taik (2005) argued that the cultural policy during the Park Chung-hee era centered on nationalist culture. Further, Kim Hyungsook has discussed national identity as embodied in artwork from the 1960s and 1970s. Kim Min-Soo (2000) argued that design policy, or the cultural interpretation of design, was used to build Korean-style democracy as design positioned itself as a "pillar of industry" under the development-oriented authoritarian regime and as a "pillar of culture" for

the twenty-first century.

The literature on Korean identity and the art world includes discussions of national identity, tradition, and references to Koreanness in the 1970s, with focus on areas such as painting, design, or cultural policy. However, it is difficult to find studies of the linkages between fine art, design, and cultural policy. This is because previous research has focused on specific genres instead of the visual arts as an interdisciplinary approach. Proceeding from this problem, I shall discuss cases of visual images that show how tradition and Koreanness fostered a national consciousness in the fields of fine arts, visual culture, and art education. Furthermore, the aforementioned studies sought to discover Koreanness embedded in visual images but did not seek out connections between Korean identity and art education in schools. Based on the recognition of this gap in scholarship, this study aims to examine the process of discovering traditional themes and characters to reconstruct Koreanness in visual culture and education. It also reveals that this process was intended to mobilize the people behind government policies.

Therefore, this study sets off by investigating the Five-Year Cultural Renaissance Plan implemented immediately after the inauguration of the Yushin (Reform) regime and analyzes how visual themes and characters were uncovered as "traditions" in the historical context of the 1970s. Next, this study aims to draw out features of Koreanness as reflected in visual art and design in the historical context of modernization and industrialization by looking at examples of visual images that represented cultural circumstances of the 1970s. To this end, this study intends to identify characteristics of Koreanness that were reconstructed in art exhibitions, artists' works and experiences, and design magazines and posters produced in the 1970s. Finally, this study examines the political aspects embedded in visual images in the 1970s by exploring how "Korean visual images" were represented in art textbooks.

Constructing and Reconstructing National Identity

The 1970s was a period during which national identity was reinforced and modernization gained momentum. To eliminate anti-government sentiments then prevalent among the Korean population and to realign a divided public opinion around the government, the government put forward a strategy for national integration: the modernization of the fatherland through nationalism. A driving force behind this effort was the creation of "our own things" (synonymous to *national identity*) through the construction of a new cultural and social point of view based on notions of national uniqueness, traditions, self-reliance, culture, and art. President Park emphasized that:

> It [Art] thoroughly rejects feudal pre-modernism and the notion of unconditional submission to a stronger, foreign power. It selectively adopts the strengths of foreign trends in the past and present of Korea, and establishes the new Korean view and new national cultural view based on national uniqueness, traditions, and sense of sovereignty. It will create a new cultural view and build a new public tendency to form, maintain, and boast "what is ours" (C. Park 2005, 201).[1]

The issue of modernization under the Park Chung-hee regime in the 1970s was construed as an issue related to nationalism rather than to liberalism or Western culture (Jeong, Sim, and Kim 2001, 218–220; Y. Park 2005, 213). People began to highlight the disintegration of a national consciousness. It was claimed that the solution to this disintegration was the construction of a strong nation-state through "the fundamental reform of national characteristics" (C. Park 1963). In other words, an emphasis was put on a "spiritual modernization" that would purify the people's mind by promoting national culture. In other words, the country's modernization was crucial to running the country, and modernization could be achieved only through the recovery of national traits. The direction for the economic development and modernization of the fatherland, the goal set by

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are the author's own.

the Yushin regime, was justified as a unifying force for the nation. In this process, the efforts to specify "national traits" were undertaken under the Five-Year Cultural Renaissance Plan adopted in 1973.

Cultural renaissance was centered on the development of traditional culture, the promotion of art and culture, and the nurturing of popular culture, but the government's primary focus was on traditional culture policy. The basic objective of the "cultural renaissance" was to address the lack of recognition and discontinuation of traditional culture and eventually to find our "own things" in the midst of consumer culture. As a result, 60 percent of government investment in the project was allocated to the development of traditional culture (H. Kim 2012, 47). Funds were given to the study of classic Korean literary works and their translation into modern Korean. The government also designated the Nakseongade (Birthplace of General Kang Gamchan), Hyeonchungsa Shrine (shrine to Admiral Yi Sun-sin), Hwaseong Fortress, and Namhansanseong Fortress as cultural properties. Additionally, cultural properties such as Bulguksa temple, the *Tripitaka Koreana*, and Gwanghwamun Gate were refurbished. Cultural properties were considered an important medium by which national cohesion and unity could be enhanced (H. Park 2009, 166).

In addition, promotional projects for traditional culture were carried out. Education and promotion of traditional performing arts, such as Korean traditional music (*gugak*) and Korean traditional dance, were conducted. Meanwhile, large investments for the production of paintings depicting Korean historical subjects were made. When a cultural project was underway, people were educated at the same time, and thus the objective of the project was achieved. Even as the greatness of national culture was being emphasized, cultural properties began to be institutionally refurbished from the late 1960s. It was considered a big task to build national identity by modernizing the fatherland in order to achieve self-reliance, and traditional symbols that appeal to people's democratic patriotism were appropriately selected and used. Traditions were selectively restored only if they were useful for modernizing the fatherland and maintaining the Park regime's legitimacy (Y. Park 2005, 216; Y. Kim 2003, 83).

According to Eric Hobsbawm, in people's consciousness "traditions"

take the form of a past that has been naturally passed down through the generations to be accepted as a part of a consistent identity owned by the nation. Hobsbawm and Ranger define traditions formed in this way as "invented traditions" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 2012, 33; Han 2003, 8). In the context of the Park Chung-hee regime in the 1970s, Hobsbawm's notion of invented traditions can also be applied to the South Korea case as various commemorative practices—tributes paid to patriotic martyrs, the erection of statues, excavation/management of cultural properties, and designation of various events to honor traditions and revered ancestors—demonstrate. Because the invented traditions that Hobsbawm refers to have been regarded as practical tools that allow current problems to be constantly resolved in the future through education, mandatory public education is the institution that best able to regularly inculcate invented traditions. For instance, during the morning assembly held at Korean elementary schools in the 1970s, pupils paid silent tribute to patriotic martyrs and recited the "Gungmin gyoyuk heonjang" (Charter of National Education). In addition, composition/drawing contests were held to install national pride in pupils and to celebrate the nation's outstanding cultural assets. Students drew posters to inspire anti-communist sentiments or notions of loyalty (*chung* 忠) and filial piety (*hyo* 孝). They were also encouraged to work on paintings that propagated government policies such as the promotion of eating rice mixed with other grains, the Saemaul Movement, or honoring patriotic martyrs, the government encouraged its people to internalize new way of thinking.

The Park Chung-hee regime forged ahead with "modernization of the fatherland" in the 1960s and 1970s. The military regime forcefully pushed its Remaking-of-the-man (*in-gan gaejo undong*) under the banner of modernization of the fatherland. Terms such as "modernization," "reconstruction," and "reform drive" were emphasized because they were considered prerequisites to social reform (Sim 2006, 109). To achieve national development, "education for production" became a political slogan found in any school during that period (B. Kim 1985, 104). Education had to fulfill not only the economic needs but also the political needs of the state.

Discourses on Koreanness in Visual Culture

Inventing Tradition in Fine Art

In the 1970s, when tradition was emphasized at the national level in relation to nationalism, interest in cultural asset restoration projects and traditions arose. Emphasis was placed on things relevant to Koreanness in the art world. The cultural policy established by President Park's regime was part of the nationalist project. Through this policy, Park's regime passed its nationalist identity on to Korean citizens. The regime strove for economic development in order to buttress its legitimacy. In the course of this, the regime employed nationalism in order to actively involve its citizens. While advertising the success of the economic development project through nationalism and instilling hope among the citizenry for a wealthy future, the Park regime also intended to establish national identity by emphasizing the spirit and prescience of the nation's ancestors. Tradition, as an extension of the past, was necessary for the political purpose of strengthening national identity required for the nation's modernization (M. Oh 1998).

This was a period when the nation, its history, and traditions could be structured, reimagined, and remembered through visual images. For instance, Suh Youngsun who attended Seoul National University's College of Fine Arts during this period, recalled his memories in words below:

> I became deeply interested in Eastern painting. I believe that the paintings of pine trees in the early 1980s resulted from my interest in the art of the Orient going back to the 1970s. . . . During this period, my university often held symposiums on the characteristics of the authentic Koreanness.[2]

Visual images related to tradition were subjects of artworks by artists, as well as having an educational impact towards the revival of national consciousness. Traditional items such as white porcelain, ceramics, swords,

2. Suh Youngsun, interview by author, Seoul, January 1, 2014.

antique furniture, masks, and handicrafts were frequently used in artistic works for arousing historical nostalgia among Koreans who were experiencing rapid industrialization.

As part of its policy to promote national identity, the Park Chung-hee regime sought to provoke national consciousness and identity by holding the *National Art Exhibition* (*gukjeon*) at the national level. At that time, artworks on display at the exhibition frequently featured traditional themes and characters (Y. Park 2005). For example, traditional Korean footwear (*beoseon*) styled with a simple image in white appeared in the work *Trace, White F-75* by Park Gil-woong (Fig. 1), the winner of the Presidential Award —the exhibition's highest—at the 1969 *National Art Exhibition*. The theme of "national sentiment" or "ancestral spirits" became the main theme of Park's works. Further, Korean traditional paper (*hanji*) was a major theme in the works of Kwon Young-Woo, who used traditional material in his artwork (Fig. 2).

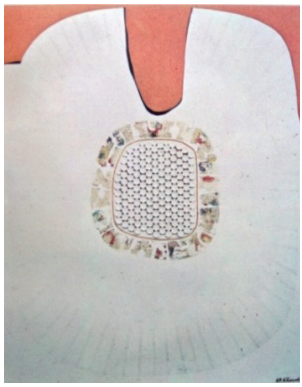


Figure 1. Park Gil-woong, *Trace, White F-75*, 1969. *Source*: National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea.

Figure 2. Kwon Young-Woo, *Untitled*, 1973. *Source*: Kwon (2007, 41).

Kwon used *hanji* with a view to demonstrating modern applications of traditional materials. He attached *hanji* to the surface of the canvas to create (or plug) partial holes or add multiple layers. He was interested in the

texture of the paper itself and white color, which could be acquired through layered sheets. In the context of rapid social change in modern Korea, Kwon viewed *hanji* as reflective of Korea's past (J. Kim 2003).

By the mid-1970s, these subject matters were reorganized and developed into Monochrome Paintings emphasizing the Eastern mentality and Koreanness.[3] Monochrome Paintings of the 1970s are discussed in close connection with Eastern or Korean traditions. The works of artists such as Park Seo-bo, Ha Chong-hyun, Kim Gi-jin, Kwon Young-Woo, Jung Chang-sup, and Youn Myeong-ro utilized colors like gray, white, and brown in order to create an impromptu and single icon. Critics offered discussions of these works in relation to Western modern art, on such topics as the works' "planar characteristics," "materiality of materials," "agency," "escape from image," "escape from theme," and "escape from subjectivity" in addition to discussions on monotone paintings, including inherent notions of "Eastern spirituality" and their "connection with Korean sentiments" (K. Oh 1998; Oh 1997; B. Kim 1985). Park Seo-bo explained how he "drew straight lines on the canvas countlessly as potters of the Joseon dynasty spun the pottery wheel without thinking."[4] He presented a series of works entitled *Ecriture* (Drawing) which prominently features white color with no painted images. In addition, Lee Il characterized monochrome paintings as a "return to the original associated with the Eastern view of nature," while Oh Kwang-su described them as "dematerialization using materials," and Kim Bok-young as "neutral compositions of a flat surface" (S. Kim, 2004).

Lee, who was a member of the Selection Committee for the 1975 *Five Korean Artists* exhibition held in Japan, remarked that white color provided

3. However, the main issue in art circles during this time period was the expansion of Experimental Art. Experimental Art rebelled against the systematization of Informel—the radical movement of the previous period. It gradually spread from the mid-1960s as an art movement encompassing the object, dimensionality, installation, happening and conceptual work that reflected the tendency of post-paintings, post-flatness, and post-Informel (S. Kim 2004). Experimental Art of the 1970s was a resistance against mainstream arts and the government's art cultural policy centered on exhibition as well as a promotion of artistic freedom. Experimental artists began to disperse and disappear through censorship and control within the dark atmosphere of the Yushin system.

4. Park Seo-bo. "Ecriture" (Drawing), *Dong-A Ilbo*, October 1, 1973.

a vision or a medium for Korean painters to embrace the world. Lee also argued that white had a different meaning in Korea than in the West. As "white color" came to represent Korean characteristics in connection with Taoism, the color became a symbol of Koreanness in the international art world.

Monochrome painters who believed in the harmony of man and nature, the central concept of Eastern Taoism, painted nature's space, accents, order, and harmony in abstract forms. They tried to express the eternity of the world on the canvas, which they considered a spiritual space, just as traditional writers in East Asia understood the intrinsic value and characteristics of nature. When it comes to explaining "Korean beauty" embedded in Monochrome Paintings, the beauty of the color white was influenced not only by Yanagi Muneyoshi's Japanese Eastern aesthetics but also by the Yushin regime's policy of national renaissance. In particular, the fact that monochrome painters were construed in connection with the spiritual paradigm of East Asian philosophy was an effective tool for convincing people that Korean art had an identity that differentiated itself from Western art.

The trend of Monochrome Painting in the art world as discussed above became a mainstream throughout Korea in the 1970s. The perspective that art should be separated from the politics and ideology and construct the purity of painting resulted in the alienation of art works from social issues or concrete tendencies. Therefore, the resistance to the uniformity of the discourse of the 1970s on authentic Korean beauty emerged from Korean artists in the 1980s, who emphasized the role of art in reproducing the life of people, politics, and society.

A Visualization of Tourism and Tradition in Design

In the 1970s, traditional themes were explored and expressed in the fine art while the same phenomenon occurred in design. In the field of design, Korean traditional images, which represented Korean national spirit and beauty, were used for industrial purposes. At that time, design functioned as part of an "export strategy" in the government's export promotion policy.

In other words, the function of design in the 1970s was to serve as a means of implementing the major government policy of promoting exports.[5] Design magazines published in the 1970s also emphasized discussions of traditions and the Korean people. Design was stressed as a means of upholding traditional culture, and analyzing and organizing the present. Thereby, design was considered as a means of establishing an ethnical and cultural mindset and passing down outstanding cultural traditions to future generations. This indicates that design was fundamentally based on national policies on culture. Design was not a part of daily life but was a combination of the national spirit and industry in visual form.

The "Korean beauty" section of the magazine *Design*, first published in 1976, introduced new themes, government-led excavation of cultural relics and the progress of renovation projects. The magazine's section entitled "For the Proper Protection of Traditional Designs" carried articles on traditional patterns, such as of plants and animals, together with applied pattern designs created by contemporary artists (Im 1979). These Korean themes and patterns could be used in package designs for products intended for export as well as in tourism posters to attract foreign visitors.

Design as "export art" that ultimately promoted government policy was considered to have an essential function and duty of exploring and applying the "proud images of Korea" as well as boosting recognition of Korea. On December 17, 1976, the artist Kim Kyo-Man held an exhibition titled *Variations of Korea* in the showroom of the Korea Design Package Center (currently the Korea Institute of Design Promotion, KIDP). The exhibition was designed to contribute to the promotion of tourism by presenting fresh tourism posters depicting a mixture of folk customs and traditional assets alongside images of a developed, modern Korea. Traditional per-

5. Launched in May 1970, the Korean Design and Packaging Center was led by Chairman Lee Nak-sun, who also served as the Minister of Commerce and Industry. It was established by merging and integrating private design promotion agencies that had emerged in the latter half of the 1960s, such as the Korea Craft Design Research Institute (later renamed the Korea Export Design Center), Korea Packaging Skill Association, and Korea Export Item Packaging Center. These three private organizations were established based on approval and support from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for the purpose of increasing national exports.

forming arts such as farmer's music (*nongak*) and fan dance (*buchaechum*) were the themes of Kim Kyo-Man's tourism posters, geometric patterns and a humorous atmosphere (Fig. 3). In his poster with figures performing farmer's music, the man looks like a clown on the street, while the woman, or his bride, is wearing special Korean wedding make-up called *yeonji-gonji*. The folk tradition of farmer's music depicted in this tourism poster was the image of an agrarian society that no longer existed. While the entire Korean nation in the 1970s was rapidly industrializing, these posters focused on the past. Anthony Smith (1987) asserts about the past and history that a man purifies himself from the dregs of the ordinary and ambiguous present by going back to his glorious past. Smith argues that, by doing so, the man can go back to the pure fate of the community. Identifying with the idealized past allows the man to surpass the present, and to overcome death and incompetence in his individual life.

Figure 3. Kim Kyo-Man: *Source: Design* (1976).

During the 1970s, traditional images of women were used in visual culture, and particularly on tourism posters. During Park Chung-hee's authoritarian rule, all citizens were called upon to participate in the regime's proposed modernization of the fatherland and plans for economic development. The traditional women's images used in tourist posters were selected for the purpose of prescribing Korean characteristics and culture. These were

subsequently utilized as powerful tools for advertising Koreanness to the West. For Westerners, women symbolized the East, a terrain waiting to be discovered. Korea was a mysterious and unexplored country with hidden beauty. The tourism posters with images of Korean women played to the West's Orientalist views, mystifying and gendering the East to arouse the desires of the targeted tourists. In the tourist posters, traditional images of women were the medium for attracting tourists. Women were mobilized to fulfill the pleasure of male tourists. Korean visual images, which were used to attract foreign tourists, reflected the desires found in the Western gaze. The themes and symbols helped create particular images of women and traditions to meet Western travelers' expectations of the East (Fig. 4). Korean visual images in the 1970s were produced with the full consciousness of the gaze of the West (Y. Kim 2003).

During the 1970s, the Korean fan dance was a favorite theme in tourism posters for foreigners. A woman in traditional Korean costume forms a curve, with their fans unfolded, in a circular *buchaechum* formation (Fig. 3). The poster featuring a group of dancers performing *buchaechum* at tracted the attention of foreign tourists. The tourists' attention signfied the West's view of the East, while the woman performing the dance was the symbol of the East—mystical and alluring.

Figure 4. Cho Young-jae, *Tourism Poster* (Korea). *Source*: *Third KSGD Exhibition* (1977).

Meanwhile, the Korean Image Exhibition held at Midopa Gallery in Seoul on September 27, 1979, was an example of an exhibition that sought to put traditional visual images to practical use. Posters displayed at the exhibition featured typical subjects of Koreanness that had been frequently used and promoted under the Yushin regime, such as traditional handicrafts

—including fans, combs, and tea sets, magpies—the traditional bride, and natural scenery of Korea. What merits attention about this exhibition was that beyond employing material themes, Korea's "spiritual heritage" was emphasized and traditional beliefs such as Buddhism as well as Confucian principles like filial piety were given visual representation.

Figure 5. Work by Jeon Yeong-gi incorporating the traditional Korean image of the *gwimyeon*. *Source*: Im (1979).

For instance, the designs of Jeon Yeong-gi deliver unique Korean beauty by including an image of ogre face (*gwimyeon*) and an imaginary bird from Buddhist tradition (*kalavinka*) designs to be found in Korean architecture (Fig. 5). The *gwimyeon* design is in the image of the ghost or goblin which appears in legends and folk tale. It was used to decorate pillars of ancient tomb murals. The *kalavinka* has the torso of a bird and a human head. It wears divine clothing and is either standing or flying above the clouds. According to a legend, this divine bird creature had a beautiful figure and made beautiful sounds. It is also called the "bird of heaven" because the bird was said to dwell in the Land of Happiness. The *kalavinka* design can be discovered in roof tiles, bricks, and stone pagodas from Korea's Three Kingdoms period. In Jeon Yeong-gi's works, these designs are based on abstract and simple lines and colors, reflecting Korean traditions and beauty (Im 1979).

As we have seen thus far, the early 1970s design with emphasis on the traditional Korean characteristics was a medium that helped Koreans take pride in their culture. It also promoted national interest and fostered a love for Korea's cultural heritage. Meanwhile, the restoration of a national culture came to be a factor driving economic development. By the latter half of the 1970s, design shifted toward an expression of national identity through Korea's history and traditions in response to trends in the fine arts.

Koreanness Embedded in Art Education

Discourses of tradition and Koreanness derived from the cultural policy of the Park Chung-hee regime were related to a process of selecting particular ideologies and subject matter while discarding others. The government sought to unite the people and encourage them to participate in economic development by promoting interest in traditions as well as in national identity through an art education curriculum. The Park Chung-hee regime put forward a nationalist ideology to help implement its plans for economic development and modernization.

This process was carried out in the context of cultivating nationalism as emphasized by the Third National Curriculum (1973–1981). While the curriculum was intended to establish a national image based on a heightened and positive national consciousness and national history, it also aimed to rally the patriotic spirit of citizens. In this context, art as a subject was revised and reorganized into the categories of 1) painting, 2) sculpture, 3) design and handicrafts, 4) calligraphy, and 5) art appreciation. Art education curriculum in public schools was revised to enable cooperative production of art for students at every grade. It also emphasized the importance of handicraft, provided systematized instructions on colors, and stressed the decorative and propagandist nature of design. Moreover, it mandated education in art appreciation and traditional art for all students (Ham 2003).

According to an article in the *Dong-A Ilbo* on the revised education curriculum, the new curriculum was intended to strengthen national consciousness, with a focus on realizing the Charter of National Education. But the article argued that because the curriculum, which heightened national consciousness, was still unfit for an age of global exchange where students were open to contact with many others in developing countries, and were thus in danger of becoming "lost in the pool." As a result, the new curriculum needed to offer education that proudly strengthened Korean national identity.[6]

6. "Gyoyukgwajeong gaepyenan" (Reform of Curriculum), *Dong-A Ilbo*, February 1, 1972.

The Third National Curriculum placed an emphasis on teaching traditional culture and arts in order to inspire national pride. Traditional art works and cultural properties were presented as teaching and learning materials in order to demonstrate the Korean nation's uniqueness and development. In the 1970s, the national curriculum was established to nurture an understanding of national culture and identity. The Koreanness of this period not only referred to general themes and forms of expression, but also to specific aspects of the fine arts, design, and art textbooks.

Discussions of Koreanness in the socio-political context of the Yushin regime were reflected in public school textbooks as well as in the fields of fine arts and design. The Korean government, which enacted the Yushin Constitution in 1972, also conducted an overhaul of the national curriculum and realigned the curriculum, pursuant to the Ordinances number 310, 325, and 350 of the Ministry of Education. Middle and high school curricula focused on enhancing the national identity, creating a national culture based on traditions, and nurturing the quality of life by creating harmony between individual development and the country's prosperity. These priorities are presented succinctly in the Charter of National Education, which describes the national ethics that included such notions as anti-communism, patriotism, cooperation, responsibility, duty, and service (Ministry of Education 1971; 1979b, 3).

The goal of art education during the Park Chung-hee era was to develop a collective society that could contribute to national development. This objective of art education can be seen in the art textbooks at that period. The primary objective of the Charter of National Education can be summarized as the establishment of a national identity, the creation of a new national culture via the harmony of tradition and progress, and the development of democracy through a harmonious relationship between individuals and the nation.

For the aforementioned purposes, the art textbooks created in the 1970s shared certain characteristics. First, they explained methods of creating traditional paintings and ink-and-wash paintings, providing many traditional examples. Depicting the "four gracious plants" (plum, orchid, chrysanthemum, and bamboo) or using Indian ink was regarded as further

developing the national identity. Relevant teaching and learning methods were introduced in art textbooks. In design-related content as well, there was substantial information on everyday items, such as traditional Korean tables, bowls, and furniture, so that students might appreciate traditional Korean aesthetics and actually apply that understanding in their own creative endeavors. Second, with regards to art appreciation, examples of paintings, sculptures, design works, and traditional crafts were presented. These examples were from different periods in the history of Korean art. What is worth noting is that during this period the term "ethnic art" was used instead of "traditional art."

The 1970s witnessed heightened interest in traditional art education as a means of developing national identity. Under President Park's Yushin regime, a revision of the Third National Curriculum was conducted in 1973. Overall, art education aimed to develop citizen appreciation of national artworks and an understanding of the value and significance of traditional art, thereby contributing to the growth of national culture. In addition, the curriculum reflected an emphasis on traditional art education meant to teach students how to appreciate art and thereby develop a sense of pride in Korean culture. In art classes, elementary school students created crafts or posters using patterns or icons found in traditional Korean art.

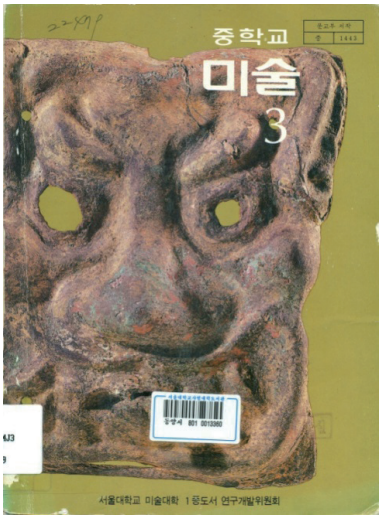
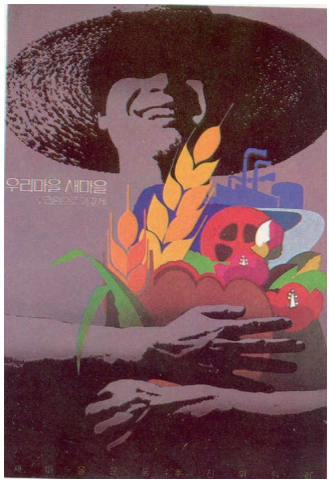


Figure 6. Bronze ornamental plaque depicting an ogre face (*gwimyeon*). *Source*: *Misul*, Ministry of Education (1979b).

During the Yushin regime, the bronze ogre-faced ornamental plaque that was excavated at the Cheonwangsa temple site in Buyeo was featured on the cover of the authorized fine arts textbook for third-year middle school students (Fig. 6). The inner front page of that textbook featured *Streams and Mountains without End* (*Gangsan mujindo*), a landscape painting by Yi Inmun

(1745–1821), an artist of the late Joseon dynasty. Other official textbooks also carried traditional art works and handicrafts of various eras on the cover and inner front cover. The method of compiling and publishing these textbooks demonstrates the desire to achieve a strong and wealthy nation via the discovery and preservation of Korean culture, a process that would solidify a sense of national identity and pride.[7]



Figures 7 and 8. Student artworks on the Saemaul Movement. *Source*: *Misul*, Ministry of Education (1979a).

7. While traditional paintings or handicrafts were used as major theme in art textbooks of the Third National Curriculum (1973–1981), modern geometric patterns, paintings of contemporary abstract artists including Jackson Pollock, and compositions of geometrical shapes had appeared in textbooks of the First National Curriculum (1954–1963) and Second National Curriculum (1963–1973). The latter reflected a yearning for and influx of Western art and culture in the wake of Korea's liberation from Japanese occupation. When progressive education was introduced in Korea after the Second World War and the National Curriculum Framework and reforms were laid out. Works of Pollock, a representative artist of Abstract Expressionism, appeared on the cover or inner front pages of the country's art textbooks. This revealed the historical, political, social, and cultural context in which the textbook was written.

Under the Saemaul Movement, the Korean government infused the masses with various theories on social evolution and economic growth (Sim 2006, 111). The movement pursued modernization through diverse cultural programs and was grounded in a very economy-oriented mentality that advocated frugality, the eradication of waste, and the rejection of human relations in their traditional context (K. Kim 1998, 17). The Saemaul Movement was explained in official art textbooks. The fact that the movement was introduced in the textbook attests that the formation of art knowledge was greatly influenced by the Yushin regime (Fig. 7). In official art textbooks, the Saemaul Movement was promoted at the national level as a movement comparable to Germany's Bauhaus:

> Let us explore on how the formative logic embedded in Western social construction was disseminated through the Bauhaus Movement, how the Saemaul Movement was implemented, and how social development and the theory of plastic arts were related (Ministry of Education 1978, 37).

Student artworks on the Saemaul Movement also appeared in the official art textbook (Fig. 8). The Saemaul Movement placed emphasis on diligence, self-reliance, and cooperation to rural villages, factories and cities. Under the banner of the Saemaul Movement, the government accomplished projects for land preservation, natural conservation, housing, environmental improvement and the restoration of cultural sites by utilizing artists' ideas and the latest technology. By doing so, the movement would help the people to lead a beautiful, satisfying, and enjoyable life. This perspective is an important clue on how the regime's political discourse was manifested in art textbooks.

In the quest for economic mobilization, the Saemaul Movement sought to utilize farmers who had a desire to be freed from poverty. The movement also sought to establish new life patterns and regulations for farmers using the images of modernity and rationality. From the 1970s, the Park Chung-hee regime earnestly established measures for farmers who had been marginalized by rapid economic growth in the industrial

sector. The Saemaul Movement was viewed as the state's farmer mobilization system rather than as a social movement because within farmers' autonomous judgment and decision-making were difficult to find (D. Kim 2004). However, in the art textbook, the Bauhaus and the state-led Saemaul Movement were described as an autonomous movement of artists from the formative perspective. This comparison between Saemaul Movement and the Bauhaus designated the absence of the political and social contexts of the period in which the Saemaul Movement.

In the 1970s, the role and purpose of design as a tool to educate people as required by industry and the Yushin regime was emphasized in *Misul*, the art textbook for third year of middle school (comparable to Sophomore in the Western system), from 1979 (Ministry of Education 1979a, 3). A close look at this art textbook reveals that when it came to teaching design, teachers were required to select themes suitable to the needs of the country and society as much as possible.

Figure 9. Student poster on anti-communism. The caption reads: "National security for national solidarity." *Source*: *Misul*, Ministry of Education (1974).

Figure 10. Middle school student's tourism poster promoting Jeju-do. *Source*: *Misul*, Ministry of Education (1979b).

Posters produced during the 1970s had unique characteristics. They were also an effective means of modern education and medium for transmitting messages to the public. They frequently appeared in design chapters of art textbooks in the 1970s. In the field of art education, drawing posters became a regular feature of the curriculum for elementary school students in the 1970s. In art classes, students were required to create posters for various types of public announcements. The subjects of these posters included economic development, anti-communism, tourism, and Koreanness, to name a few (Fig. 9 and Fig. 10). Drawing posters was not only a creative activity, but also an educational one. Posters were hung not only in classrooms, but also on walls of school buildings.

Tourism posters were frequently discussed in middle school art textbooks as an important design field in a new era. The posters were considered as a fundamental aspect of visual communication design that could not only communicate tourism resources and advice, but also introduce traditional culture, scenery and customs and promote national development. As an exemplary illustration of a tourism poster, Cho Young-jae produced promotional poster for Korean Air using a photo of the seventeenth century gilt-bronze pensive Maitreya Bodhisattva (Fig. 11).

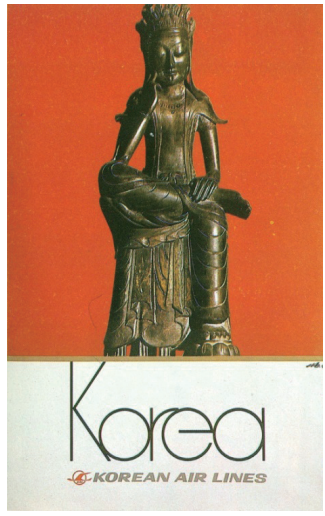


Figure 11. Cho Young-jae's tourism poster.
Source: Middle school art textbook *Misul*. Ministry of Education (1979b).

Thus far, my investigation into official public school art textbooks of the 1970s indicates that the textbook pursued art education with the larger aim of developing an industrialized nation through the creation, promotion, and preservation of national culture. To this end, the cover, unit classification and contents, and exemplary artwork were selected and presented for school textbooks. In particular, design education was used to achieve national mobilization and served the Yushin regime's larger political

and economic purposes. In this period, design was a way of effectively increasing industrial value, and thus, design education was dealt with at the level of industrial strategy and designers came to be thought of as "workers for industrialization." Design education taught the characteristics of official design promoted by the Yushin reform system, and it was used as a way of publicizing economic development by visually reproducing the discourse on national identity and tradition—or Koreanness—as emphasized by the government.

Conclusion

This study is based on the premise that visual culture and art education cannot be considered independently from their social, political, and economic contexts. Studies on visual culture and art education approached from a social perspective are not new, but studies on visual culture and art education within the context of 1970s Korean society have not been extensive. This study has shown that discussions on "national identity" that occurred in the wake of the Five-Year Cultural Renaissance Plan, and the Koreanness of the visual images they employed, are not restricted to specific themes, ways of expression or forms. Rather, this study has defined "national identity" and Koreanness as the visualization of discourses formed within the cultural and social environment of the 1970s.

Discourses on Koreanness and its visual reconstruction reflect the needs felt by the Korean society in the 1970s. The Park Chung-hee regime used visual art to promote discourses on democracy and Koreanness in order to unite the citizenry behind the regime. The Five-Year Cultural Renaissance Plan invented Korea's "unique traditional culture" by promoting aspects of traditional culture, excavating historical sites and relics, and conducting traditional culture education. Before the Yushin regime, interest in modernization was stronger than interest in tradition. However, from the 1970s, visual culture and art education began to construct tradition and became a part of the Korean population's daily lives and consciousness.

The ruling class of Korean society establishes traditions based on their own cultural identity and then makes other members of society share in the same awareness about those traditions. In this process, traditions are structured according to the political, educational, and cultural ideologies of the ruling class. A prime example is the Saemaul Movement, which was pursued by the Yushin regime to promote economic development toward modernization. The ruling class under the Yushin regime touted the "instillation of national spirit" as an important slogan in the fields of culture and education in order to achieve regime legitimacy. The emergence of folk art themes and Saemaul Movement-related themes in the fine arts at that time reveals how the regime used them as tools to strengthen and promote traditions in order to boost the Korean national spirit and overcome various political and social contradictions and conflicts that arose in the process of rushing toward economic development.

Accordingly, visual images in the 1970s reconstructed Korean identity, and discourses on Koreanness appeared in visual culture and art education as follows: First, Korean themes and characters that appeared in the *National Art Exhibition* also appeared in the design field. Discourses on the aesthetic beauty of Koreanness among paintings and in the design field obviously indicated that this Koreanness was a key subject of visual culture during the 1970s. Second, Orientalistic and aesthetic attitudes towards Korean beauty were reconstructed from the perspective of Korean artists alongside the discovery of cultural heritage under the regime's cultural renaissance policy. Based on discourses related to the 1970s national characteristics, Monochrome Paintings emerged in the field of Korean fine arts. In the design field, Korean beauty was reconstructed through the rendering of mysterious, Eastern and traditional images that needed to be discovered. Finally, we have seen that in the context of the Third National Curriculum traditional art was emphasized in order to heighten national consciousness. The contents of the art education curriculum were selected or discarded according to standards based on national traditions and an emphasis on promoting national spirit.

Visual images do not reconstruct beauty in a neutral or objective way. Rather, they are influenced by the political, economic and socio-cultural

context of their time. This study has shown this regarding the visual culture of the 1970s in Korea. Korean visual images reconstructed the identity of the Korean people and clearly differentiated Koreans from other nationalities. Therefore, the images were an important tool for nurturing national spirit and promoting the nation's development.

REFERENCES

Chung, Young-Mok. 1999. "1970nyeondae-ui hanguk monokeurom hoehwa" (Korean Monochrome Paintings of the 1970s). In *Misulhak-ui jipyeong-e seoseo* (On the Horizon of Art Sciences), edited by Chung Young-Mok et al., 36–59. Seoul: Hakgojae.

Ham, Chong-gyu. 2003. *Hanguk gyoyuk gwajeong byeoncheonsa yeongu* (A Study of the History of Change in Korean Education). Seoul: Gyoyuk Kwahaksa.

Han, Kyung-ku. 2003. "The Anthropology of the Discourse on the Koreanness of Koreans." *Korea Journal* 43.1: 5–31.

Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence Ranger. 2012. *The Invention of Tradition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Im, Yeong-ju. 1979. "Jeontongmunyang-ui hwallo" (The Way of Traditional Patterns). *Design* 26: 27–37.

Jeong, Yunjae, Sim Ji-yeon, and Kim Yeong-su. 2001. *Chang Myun, Yun Po-sun, Park Chang-hee: 1960-nyeondae cho juyo jeongchi jidoja yeongu* (Korean Political Leadership in the Early 1960s: Chang Myun, Yun Po-sun, Park Chung-hee). Seoul: Baeksan Seodang.

Kim, Bok-young. 1985. *Hyeondae misul yeongu* (Studies in Modern Korean Art). Seoul: Jeongeum Munhwasa.

Kim, Dae-yeong. 2004. "*Park Chung-hee gukga dongwon mekeonijeum-e gwanhan yeongu: Saemaul undong-eul jungsim-euro*" (A Study on the Mechanism of the Park Chung-hee Regime's State Mobilization: Focused on the New Community Movement). *Gyeongje-wa sahoe* (Economy and Society) 61:184–221.

Kim, Haengseon. 2012. *1970nyeondae Bak Jeong-hui jeonggwon-ui munhwa jeongchaek-gwa munhwa tongje* (Cultural Policies and Cultural Management by the Park Chung-hee Administration in the 1970s). Seoul: Seonin.

Kim, Jung-Hee. 2003. "Hanguk hyeondae misul sok-ui 'hangukseong' hyeongseong

yoin-ui damyeonseong" (Multisided Factors for the Formation of "Koreanness" in Korean Modern Art). In *Sigak yesul-eseoui dongyangseong dasi bogi* (Rethinking of Orientalness in Visual Art), edited by Korean National Commission for UNESCO, 111–138. Seoul: KNCU.

Kim, Kwang-Ok. 1998. "The Communal Ideology and Its Reality: With Reference to the Emergence of Neo-Tribalism." *Korea Journal* 38.3: 5–44.

Kim, Min-Soo. 2000. "Heogong sok-ui hangukjeok yesul minjuhwa: jeongchi eomneun dijain jeongchi" (Korean Democratization of Art in the Empty Void: Design Politics without Politics). *Dijain munhwa bipyeong* (Journal of Design Culture and Criticism) 2.1: 78–95.

Kim, Suhyeon. 2004. "Monokeurom hoehwa-ui gongganseong-gwa siganseong" (Spatiality and Temporality of Monochrome Paintings). In *Hanguk hyeondae misul 1970-80* (Korean Contemporary Art 1970-80), edited by Hanguk Hyeondae Misulsa Yeonguhoe, 47–72. Seoul: Hakyeon Munhwasa.

Kim, Young-Hoon. 2003. "Self-Representation: The Visualization of Koreanness in Tourism Posters during the 1970s and the 1980s." *Korea Journal* 43.1: 83–105.

Kwon, Young-Woo. 2007. *Kwon Young-Woo*. Seoul: Image Art Research Institute.

Ministry of Education. 1971. *Misul* (High School Art Textbook). Seoul: Munhwa Seojeoksa.

_____. 1974. *Misul* (Commercial Art Textbook). Seoul: Daehan Gyogwaseo.

_____. 1978. *Misul* (High School Art Textbook). Seoul: Goryeo Seojeok Jusik Hoesa.

_____. 1979a. *Misul* (Art Textbook: Second year Middle School). Seoul: Samhwa Seojeok.

_____. 1979b. *Misul* (Art Textbook: Third year Middle School). Seoul: Samhwa Seojeok.

Oh, Kwang-su. 1997. *Hanguk hyeondae misul-ui miuisik* (Aesthetic Sense of Korean Modern Art). Seoul: Jaewon.

_____. 1998. *Hanguk hyeondae misul bipyeongsa* (History of Criticism of Korean Modern Art). Seoul: Mijinsa.

Oh, Myung-suk. 1998. "1960–70 nyeondae-ui munhwa jeongchaek-gwa minjok-munhwa damnon" (Public Discourse on National Culture and Cultural Policy in the 1960s and 1970s). *Bigyo munhwa yeongu* (Cross-Cultural Studies) 4.1: 121–152.

Park, Chung-hee. 1963. *Gukga-wa hyeongmyeong-gwa na* (The Nation, the Revolution, and I). Seoul: Hyangmunsa.

_____. 2005. *Bak Jeong-hui eorok* (Quotations of Park Chung-hee). Seoul:

Dongseosa.
Park, Hyung Yu. 2009. "Heritage, Tourism, and National Identity: An Ethnographic Study of Changdeokgung Palace." *Korea Journal* 49.4: 163–186.
Park, Young-taik. 2005. "Park Chung-hee sidae-ui munhwa-wa misul" (Culture and Art in the Park Chung-hee Era). *Hanguk geunhyeondae misulsahak* (Studies in the History of Contemporary Korea Art) 14.1: 207–238.
Sim, Seong-Bo. 2006. "Reflections on the Formation of a Dependent Educational System and Ideology in Korea." *Korea Journal* 46.3: 103–131.
Smith, Anthony D. 1987. *The Ethnic Origins of Nations.* New York: Blackwell.