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Free World, Cheap Buildings: U.S. Hegemony and the Origins of Modern Architecture in South Korea, 1953-1960

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Free World, Cheap Buildings:  
U.S. Hegemony and the Origins of Modern Architecture in South Korea, 1953-1960

By  
Dongmin Park

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Architecture  
in the  
Graduate Division  
Of the  
University Of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:  
Professor Andrew Shanken, Chair  
Professor Greg Castillo  
Professor Margaret Crawford  
Professor Michael Southworth

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Abstract

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Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Andrew Shanken, Chair

This dissertation examines the role of U.S.-aided construction projects as an instrument of power and legitimacy in the rebuilding of South Korea after the Korean War through the Eisenhower years, by situating them in the socio-political context of the Cold War. It specifically addresses two intertwined historical questions: (1) How did the United States, portraying its image as an anti-imperialist nation, quickly establish a powerful hegemony in South Korea? (2) What influence did those construction projects have on the development of modern architecture in South Korea? This study argues that, in a war-ravaged Korea, construction projects were America's core hegemonic projects in the making of a democratic, capitalist society. Through numerous construction projects in South Korea, the U.S. nurtured democratic citizenship, established a private enterprise system, spread Christianity, instilled democratic governance, and offered the "American way of life" to Koreans. In addition, they provided a unique opportunity for the U.S. to fashion, with humanitarianism, America's image and presence in Korea. Both in Korea and globally, images of the U.S. sponsorship of South Korean rehabilitation and peaceful co-existence between the Koreans and Americans became a powerful propaganda tool that promoted an image of American's benevolence and leadership.

Grandiose and high-style architecture is not the focus of this dissertation; instead, the majority of buildings this study examines are simple and utilitarian structures. After the war, a great number of buildings had to be built in a short period of time using a limited amount of construction materials. A lack of building technicians also necessitated simple construction. Simple buildings provided an easier model for Korean architects and builders to learn American building technologies and the tenets of modern architecture. This dissertation examines the socio-political context of these construction projects, their ideological uses, the self-help approach employed by the United States, and the compromises made to accommodate Korean local conditions and customs. I analyze the diplomatic and governmental sources as well as construction documents. I also investigate the reception of the architectural projects from Korean journals, magazines, and newspapers. Using a variety of different sources from both the U.S. and Korea, this dissertation specifically focuses on the tensions and paradoxes between the promises and the reality of these



construction projects as they took form in the process. In addition, by examining North Korean newspaper articles and other publications as well as archival sources from the former communist world, it compares South Korean reconstruction projects with North Korean counterparts.

Unlike the visual spectacle of North Korea's monumental buildings, large squares, and wide boulevards, U.S.-assisted construction projects in South Korea were mostly small, utilitarian structure and mainly targeted the everyday life of the Korean populace (Chapter 1). For U.S. officials, the question of how to conceptualize their assistance was an important concern. Specifically, the United States called for international collaboration, rather than using the nameplate of the U.S. government (Chapter 2); construction projects were actively used as a propaganda tool (Chapter 3); and U.S. officials urged private sector entrepreneurs to participate in South Korea's rebuilding (Chapter 4). Most importantly, the reconstruction had to be done by the Koreans. America's primary role was to provide knowledge and materials with which Koreans could build their own cities and towns. Koreans actively participated in U.S.-sponsored construction projects, and through educational exchange programs, the U.S. government trained pro-American Korean elites in American universities and institutions (Chapter 5).

By examining architecture as a lens through which to address the social, political, and cultural dimensions of the U.S. influence on South Korea in its reconstruction period, this study fills the lacuna of the unexamined relationship, one that linked the political contexts of the Cold War in East Asia, the foreign policies of the United States, post-war nation-building in North and South Korea, and the development of modern architecture in South Korea.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments .....	ii
List of Figures .....	iv
Introduction .....	vi
Chapter 1. Monuments and Huts: The Post-Korean War Reconstruction of North and South Korea .....	1
Chapter 2. United Power: The United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency .....	23
Chapter 3. Building Goodwill: Armed Forces Assistance to Korea .....	48
Chapter 4. Free World, Expensive Homes: The Homes for Korea Project .....	77
Chapter 5. Intellectual Baptism: Educational Exchange Programs and the Rise of Pro-U.S. Architectural Elites in South Korea .....	102
Conclusion .....	132
Bibliography .....	137

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## List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Global Conflicts between the communist world and the “free world” in 1950 .....	3
Figure 1.2 Lowering the Japanese Flag and Raising the U.S. Flag, Seoul, 1945 .....	5
Figure 1.3 Master Plan of the Pyongyang’s Reconstruction, 1951 .....	9
Figure 1.4 Moscow Master Plan, by L. M. Kaganovitch, 1935 .....	11
Figure 1.5 Kim Il-Sung Square, Pyongyang, 1956 .....	13
Figure 1.6 Reconstruction Model of Kim Il-Sung Square .....	13
Figure 1.7 Stalin Street and Neighboring Buildings under Construction, Pyongyang .....	14
Figure 1.8 Naeri School, Kyonggi-Do, Korea, 1954 .....	19
Figure 1.9 The Pong Dong Church, Seoul, 1957 .....	20
Figure 1.10 Crowds at Kim Jong-Il Memorial, Kim Il-Sung Square, Pyongyang, 2011 .....	22
Figure 2.1 Hamhung Master Plan, c. 1955 .....	28
Figure 2.2 Adobe Brick Factory, Hamhung, c.1955 .....	29
Figure 2.3 East German Technicians and Their Families in a Parade Commemorating the Anniversary of the Foundation of North Korea, Hamhung, 1957 .....	30
Figure 2.4 East German Architect, Erich Ressel, with the Reconstructing Hamhung in the Background, c. 1957 .....	31
Figure 2.5 Landcrete Machine .....	34
Figure 2.6 UNKRA Experimental Housing Project .....	35
Figure 2.7 Standard Koran House Plans, c. 1953 .....	37
Figure 2.8 UNKRA Housing Project at Hweekee-Dong, Seoul .....	38
Figure 2.9 UNKRA Housing Program for Two-Story Units, Seoul .....	39
Figure 2.10 Newspaper Advertisements for the Earth Block Machine Manufactured by Ajou Association Inc., 1954 .....	40
Figure 2.11 The National Medical Center, Seoul .....	44
Figure 3.1 Graduation Ceremony of Geumho Elementary School, 1960 .....	56
Figure 3.2 The Reconstructed Seoul Baptist Church, Seoul, c. 1955 .....	57
Figure 3.3 The Memorial Chest Hospital under construction, Seoul, 1956 .....	58
Figure 3.4 Before and After Photos of an AFAK-aided Presbyterian Church Reconstruction Project .....	62
Figure 3.5 A Sign Board for an AFAK school construction, 1954 .....	63
Figure 3.6 Yun Chon Catholic Chapel by Charles Moore, Korea, c.1952-1954 .....	69
Figure 3.7 The Immaculate Heart of Mary Girl’s School, Uijongbu, c.1954 .....	70
Figure 3.8 Model Korean School, designed by the 24th Division .....	71
Figure 3.9 Material List for One and Two Classroom to Be Furnished by AFAK .....	72
Figure 3.10 A Proposed Design for a Small Town Office, Designed by Corporal Robert J. Macon, c.1954 .....	74
Figure 4.1 A Newly-built Residential Neighborhood in Pyongyang, 1957 .....	79
Figure 4.2 A Modern Housing Block in East Pyongyang, 1959 .....	79
Figure 4.3 A Donation Receipt to the Homes for Korea, 1956 .....	86
Figure 4.4 Model of Pilot Village, c. 1954 .....	87
Figure 4.5 Perspective Rendering of the Streetscape of the Homes for Korea Project .....	87
Figure 4.6 Drawing of the Ondol Radiant Floor Heating System, 1954 .....	89

Figure 4.7 Site Plan and Land Cost of the Homes for Korea Project, 1956 .....	90
Figure 4.8 Heating System for Apartment Units, 1956 .....	91
Figure 4.9 Row houses by J. J. P. Oud, at the Weissenhofsiedlung, Stuttgart (1927) and the Homes for Korea project (1957) .....	92
Figure 4.10 The Opening Ceremony of the Homes for Korea Project, Seoul, 1956 .....	96
Figure 4.11 The Homes for Korea Project and Neighboring Single-family Houses Constructed by the city of Seoul (left), 1958 .....	97
Figure 4.12 The Homes for Korea Project after Completion, c. 1958 .....	98
Figure 4.13 The Interior and Exterior View of an Apartment Unit of the Home for Korea Project .....	101
Figure 5.1 SNU Engineering College Buildings Showing War Damage .....	107
Figure 5.2 U.S. Universities Contracts in Operation by Country, 1957 .....	112
Figure 5.3 SNU Engineering Campus, Seoul .....	114
Figure 5.4 Graduation Work of Jung-Soo Kim, 1941 .....	128
Figure 5.5 St. Mary Hospital by Jung-Soo Kim, Seoul, 1958 .....	129
Figure 5.6 East Elevation Drawing of St. Mary Hospital by Jung-Soo Kim, Seoul, 1958 .....	129
Figure 5.7 Concrete Mullion Detail for YMCA by Jong-Soo Kim, Seoul, c. 1960 .....	130
Figure 6.1 The Taedongmun Theater (1955) and the Pyongyang Grand Theater (1960) .....	135
Figure 6.2 The French Embassy by Joong-Up Kim, Seoul, 1965 .....	136

## Introduction

On July 27, 1953, U.S. Army lieutenant general, William K. Harrison, Jr, representing the United Nations Command, and North Korean General, Nam Il, senior delegate of the North Korean Army and the Chinese People's Volunteer Army, signed the Korean Armistice Agreement, whereby the fighting ended with no clear victory for either side.<sup>1</sup> The war left cities and towns devastated and made the lives of more than thirty million people miserable. Paradoxically, a war-ravaged nation provided a *tabula rasa* for the United States and the Soviet Union to showcase their culture, ideology, and ultimately their power. Once a battlefield, the Korean Peninsula became the main theater of the Cold War.

America's ambition in South Korea was far greater than a normal postwar recovery program. For Americans, the reconstruction of South Korea was a symbolically important example of their attempt to create a new democratic Asia as a bulwark against communist expansion. It offered an alternative to Soviet hegemony for people in nations recently under the yoke of colonial domination. Through various economic and technical aid programs, the United States promoted economic development and democratic governance in South Korea.

The U.S.-led "free world" promised a society in which a democratic political system and the freedom of the individual were guaranteed in opposition to its communist counterparts. In reality, however, America's endeavor to extend the "free world" to South Korea did not always reflect these core values. The United States supported its anti-communist, but authoritarian, partner—the Syngman Rhee regime—throughout the 1950s until it was overthrown by a popular uprising in April 1960. Construction projects were probably the most visible example of this uncomfortable disparity between the promises and the reality of U.S. foreign assistance to South Korea. In this large-scale nation-building project, the United States helped to build tens of thousands of homes, schools, hospitals, public offices, and factories in South Korea, but in the process, the U.S. government often dominated aid projects in planning and financing, and imposed the policies onto the Koreans, often using its military resources and in cooperation with Christian partners who have long collaborated in the construction of western hegemony. In fact, many Koreans viewed the U.S. efforts to aid South Korea as a strategy of creating a pro-American garrison state, rather than an independent, democratic country.

This paradox of America's rebuilding project in South Korea begs the following questions. How did U.S. policymakers build an independent, democratic South Korea during the 1950s, while extending U.S. hegemony in the country? What role did architecture play in the simultaneous pursuit of these two goals? What legacy did the two political pursuits leave for the development of modern architecture in South Korea? This dissertation works through these questions to link the political context of the Cold War and the development of modern architecture in South Korea.

In answering the questions, a review of scholarly works on the socio-political meanings of acts of assistance provides a plausible starting point. In his influential work, *The Gift*, sociologist Marcel Mauss examines the reciprocity of gift-giving practices in archaic societies and reveals that the act of gifting has been practiced as a form of social exchange and thus

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<sup>1</sup> Korean War Armistice Agreement, July 27, 1953; Treaties and Other International Agreements Series #2782; General Records of the United States Government; Record Group 11; National Archives.

establishes a social order between giver and receiver.<sup>2</sup> The political benefits of favorable contributions are echoed by political scientist Joseph Nye, who coined the concept of “soft power” to refer to the forces of attraction and seduction. As opposed to traditional hard power that relies upon military engagement and economic supremacy, soft power arises from such intangibles as a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies. According to Nye, soft power through economic and technical aid programs is becoming a more effective tool in international diplomacy than coercion.<sup>3</sup> In this dissertation, I interpret U.S.-aided construction projects as a form of socio-political “gift” to South Korea intended to affiliate the country with the “free world” ideologically and materialistically.

Scholars of modernization theory have effectively connected American ideology and nation-building efforts in South Korea. Often focusing on positive aspects of America’s role in economic development and social and political progress in South Korea, they have examined how America’s own experiences in economic and socio-political development were transplanted to South Korea. For example, historian David Ekbladh, in his book, *The Great American Mission*, argues that U.S.-led modernization efforts in developing countries acted as a valuable means to create America’s vision as a global leader. According to his account, the reconstruction of South Korea was a “proving ground” for America’s modernization efforts to developing countries in the postwar era.<sup>4</sup> The idea of transplantation provides a good explanation of radical social, political, and cultural changes in South Korea after the Korean War. However, such an explanation has limitations in that it does not fully account for Korean agency. Modernization theory historians often assume that Americans were superior and that Koreans were not capable of progressing on their own without foreign assistance.<sup>5</sup> This orientalist worldview implicitly casts the Koreans as mere passive recipients. America’s modernization efforts were taking place in many parts of the world, but the results varied from country to country. Unlike other U.S. interventions in most Asian, African, and Latin American countries, South Korea’s reconstruction was one of the most successful U.S. interventions in history. In this regard, an account of South Korean reconstruction requires careful consideration of internal agency as well as external factors.

Another prevailing approach to U.S. intervention in South Korea is similar to modernization theory, but emphasizes the hegemonic intentions behind U.S. foreign aid programs. This view has flourished among Korean historians since the 1990s. Among them is Eun Heo’s book, *U.S. Hegemony and Korean Nationalism*, in which he specifically examines U.S. cultural intervention through its economic and technical aid programs. He argues that U.S. cultural policies in South Korea shaped social and political systems and helped to expand U.S. influence in South Korea.<sup>6</sup> However, like the modernization theory approach, this “hegemony approach” also underestimates the positive contributions derived from U.S. involvement in South Korea’s reconstruction. Even if the United States’ support of South Korea’s rebuilding was part

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<sup>2</sup> Marcel Mauss and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (New York: Norton, 1967).

<sup>3</sup> Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> For more, see James S. Chi, *Teaching Korea: Modernization, Model Minorities, and American Internationalism in the Cold War Era* (PhD dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Eun Heo, *U.S. Hegemony and Korean Nationalism* (Seoul: Research Institute of Korean Studies at Korea University, 2008).



of making the new world order that Americans sought to create, it provided the Koreans with great opportunities to learn modern technology and civilization.

The interplay between Americans and local actors has become increasingly important in Cold War studies.<sup>7</sup> Scholarship regarding local agency in South Korea's rebuilding has also enjoyed a significant growth in recent years. One of the most notable works in this category is historian Gregg Brazinsky's *Nation Building in South Korea*. In it, he argues that U.S. hegemony was achieved primarily through a dialectical process in which American nation-building efforts occurred in tandem with Korean actors.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, since the late 1990s, many scholars have shifted the focus of the Cold War studies from diplomacy to diverse forms of cultural and intellectual interactions between the core and periphery of the "free world." Many Korean scholars from diverse fields have called for specific attention to U.S. cultural penetration into South Korean films, music, art, literature, popular culture, fashion, and various other cultural mediums.<sup>9</sup>

Building on these multiple approaches of modernization theory, U.S. hegemony, and Americanization, this dissertation specifically focuses on the reconstruction of the built environment. In spite of the importance of the physical reconstruction of the country, very little has been written about this topic. Construction projects assisted by the U.S. have been doubly marginalized by both American and Korean scholars. American historians have neglected the buildings because of their geographical location and the generic quality of the architecture. Korean historians also did not consider them an important subject of Korean history, because Americans almost always took the initiative in these projects. In addition, most of the U.S.-assisted structures in the 1950s were originally built cheaply, often with non-permanent construction materials, and thus with few exceptions they failed to last until the present day. The physical loss of buildings has aggravated historical amnesia.

Architecture has long been a central medium in exercising imperial power and practicing new social relations, from the Roman castra to European colonial towns. Outside of the Korean Peninsula, the use of architecture in the Cold War has been a frequently covered subject in the field of architectural history. Many scholars have considered architecture within the context of the cultural Cold War, often focusing on one specific type of architecture in each work: trade fairs and exhibitions, international hotels, military bases, model homes, and embassy buildings.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> For more case studies on the interplay between U.S. foreign policies and local actors in developing countries, see Zachary Karabell, ed., *Architects of Intervention: The United States, the Third World, and the Cold War, 1946-1962* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> Gregg Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Sun-Mi Lee, "American Films and Metropolis (Seoul) Consuming 'America': A Meaning of Showing and Watching for American Films in the 1950s' Korea," *The Learned Society of Sanghur's Literature* Vol. 18 (October 2006), 73-105; Youn-Jin Kim, "America and Americanization: Images and Discourses as Revealed in Korean Journalism," *The Journal of American Studies* 37:3 (Fall 2005), 7-38; Sooah Choi, "The Traits of Americanization in Modern Korean Fashion," *The Journal of the Korean Fashion & Costume Design Association* 61:3 (March 2011), 1-19; Sooyeon Hahn, "Americanization Expressed in Korean Fashion: Focused on 1950s-1980s Nora Noh Fashion," *The Journal of the Korean Fashion & Costume Design Association* 14:3 (2012), 195-204; and Jae Young Cha and Chan Hee Yom, "Documentary Films of the USIS Korea in the 1950s for Constructing American Images," *The Korean Journal of Journalism & Communication Studies* 56:1 (February 2012), 235-263.

<sup>10</sup> Robert H. Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty: Exhibiting American Culture Abroad in the 1950s* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997); Annabel J. Wharton, *Building the Cold War: Hilton International Hotels and Modern Architecture* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Mark Gillem, *America Town: Building the Outposts of Empire* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007); Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front:*

Many scholars argue that, American architecture advertises the United States through its innovative design and modern technologies as a democratic and future-oriented nation and effectively served as American cultural propaganda across the globe during the Cold War. Nevertheless, the postwar reconstruction of South Korea does not nicely fit the existing research frame that was essentially developed from European experiences. In this regard, it is necessary to consider the differences between European and Asian experiences during the Cold War.

For both the United States and the Soviet Union, Europe was the main theater of the Cold War. Not surprisingly, it has been the focus of the Cold War studies, as well.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the dominant research paradigm was set out by the political and historical conditions of Europe. Korea of the 1950s, however, differs from Europe of the late 1940s mainly in the following three aspects.<sup>12</sup> First, the U.S. fell behind the communist world in the Asian arena of the Cold War, rather than taking a lead. In Europe, the U.S. successfully engaged a Cold War. The western European countries rapidly regained their economic strength largely due to America's foreign aid programs—namely, the Marshall Plan—and formed a solid bulwark against the Soviet Union. However, Asian countries except for Japan received only limited attention from the United States. The U.S.'s limited interests in Asia led to the growing power of Soviet communism in Asia. In post-World War II Asia, the communist world was successfully and effectively engaged in battle with the U.S.-led "free world," using not only its military and economic assistance, but also its classless socialist ideals.<sup>13</sup> Socialist ideologies convincingly appealed to people in nations recently under the yoke of colonial domination in Asia, such as China, North Korea, and Southeast Asian countries. The communist takeover of China—the traditional power broker in the region—tipped the scale even more against U.S. hegemony in Asia. In order to contain and potentially roll-back communist expansion in Asia, the U.S. often copied a similar aid pattern that the communist world had done before, such as military civic action, educational exchange programs, and large-scale top-down planning schemes.

Second, unlike Europe, the cradle of modernity, Korea was a barren ground for modernization and modernism. In the 1950s, Korea still remained mostly an agricultural society. Only a very limited number of Koreans received modern education during the Japanese colonial period. Architectural education and practice was not an exception. Only a small number of Koreans could receive architectural education, and even those Korean recipients barely had a chance to design and build important projects under the Japanese reign. Putting material resources aside, Koreans did not have enough human resources to build modern buildings. Specifically, few experienced Korean architects or urban designers existed when the

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*The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); and Jane C. Loeffler, *The Architecture of Diplomacy: Building America's Embassies* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2011).

<sup>11</sup> For more, see Gienow-Hecht, Jessica C. E. "Shame on US? Academics, Cultural Transfer, and the Cold War: A Critical Review." *Diplomatic History*. 24.3 (2000): 465-494.

<sup>12</sup> See Charles K. Armstrong, The Cultural Cold War in Korea, 1945–1950, *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (February 2003), 72. In this article, Charles Armstrong points out three differences in experience of the cultural Cold War between Europe and East Asia. (1) East Asia during the Cold War was the site of actual military conflict, and thus the cultural Cold War in this region was not often cruder than in European counterpart, (2) Europe was considered to be the center of the conflict between the two superpowers, so the best cultural resources were put into Europe, and (3) Asia's communist countries such as China, Vietnam, and more notably North Korea are still inaccessible to scholars, compared to the Eastern bloc's sources that are being more open to researchers.

<sup>13</sup> Vladislav Zubok and Konstantin Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 3.

reconstruction began. For this reason, training Korean experts, as well as construction projects themselves, was an important part of South Korea's reconstruction.

Last, the U.S. Armed Forces played a more important role in the construction of South Korea than it did in Europe. The Cold War was "hotter" in Asia than its European counterpart; armed conflicts, great and small, occurred in Asia during the Cold War years; the potential for regional conflict loomed. In its peak in 1953, more than 550,000 U.S. military personnel were stationed in South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Guam, and the Philippines. The number decreased after the Korean War, but on average from 1955 to 1960, approximately 61,000 U.S. service members were still stationed in South Korea to deter further armed conflict.<sup>14</sup> These military personnel and American military bases served not only military purposes, but also had an influence on many construction projects. American military procedure, military efficiency, and Army engineers and architects cast a long shadow over the development of Korean architecture. These differences between European and Korean experiences necessitate the employment of a different set of approaches to understand Korea's unique experiences in reconstruction.

This dissertation argues that, through numerous construction projects of modern institutions and facilities, Americans could expand their influences over South Korea, by nurturing democratic citizenship, establishing a private enterprise system, spreading Christianity, instilling democratic governance, and offering the "American way of life" to Koreans. Simultaneously the humanitarian projects served as an important propaganda tool to make America's presence in Korea look less hegemonic and to improve America's image abroad. Moreover, tens of thousands of construction projects nationwide effectively disseminated America's core values and ideologies—individualism, pragmatism, grassroots participations, Christianity, and the free market—to Koreans through the construction process and labor practices as well as the activities that were taking place within the buildings.

This study is not a comprehensive history of U.S. foreign aid to South Korea; rather, it focuses solely on architectural assistance.<sup>15</sup> Also, this dissertation does not address the issue of the stylistic development of modern architecture, nor does it analyze architectural space. The particular interest of this study is the way in which the employment of new construction materials, methods, and ideas brought the new architecture in Korea into being. In the post-Korean War Korea, a great number of buildings had to be built in a short period of time using a limited amount of construction materials. A lack of building technicians also necessitated simple construction. Rather than high style modern buildings, simple and ordinary structures that could be inexpensively built became the main medium of the assistance during the 1950s in Korea. Simple buildings provided an easier model for Korean architects and builders to learn American building technologies and the tenets of modern architecture—the use of industrially-produced materials, simplistic aesthetics, and functional plans. In addition, America's construction processes, scientific management, labor practices, building types, and standardization became important characteristics of architectural practice in Korea.

This dissertation pays particular attention to the following three aspects of the U.S.-aided construction projects. First, it compares South Korean reconstruction projects with North Korean

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<sup>14</sup> Tim Kane, "Global U.S. Troop Deployment, 1950-2003," The Heritage Foundation.

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2004/10/global-us-troop-deployment-1950-2003> (accessed March 1, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> For U.S. economic aid programs to Korea during the 1950s, see Hyun-jin Lee, *U.S. Foreign Economic Aid Policy to Korea, 1948-1960* (Seoul: Hyeon, 2009).

counterparts. To better understand the United States' strategy in South Korea, the strategies and activities of the communist world in North Korea have to be considered. This comparison reveals that the reconstruction of North and South Korea mirrored each other in many ways, meaning that, although the two Koreas not only competed with each other, they often pursued the same goals, such as nation-building and economic development. North Korea, however, is still the world's most inaccessible region and rarely allows their documents to be available to outside researchers. This study relies heavily on articles from North Korean daily newspaper (the *Rodong Sinmum*), architectural magazines (*Konchuk kwa Konsol* and *Chosun Konchuk*), and various types of periodicals such as *Kulloja*, *Yoksa Kwahak*, and *Cho-Sso munhwa*. These publications provide important information on the reconstruction of North Korea, other communist countries' efforts in this process, and North Koreans' perception to the aid. In addition, archival sources from the former communist world provide important information about the relationship between North Korea and other communist countries. With the collapse of the former Eastern bloc countries, a great number of diplomatic and governmental documents that were formerly behind the Iron Curtain were released; some of these documents were translated into English and are currently available to researchers.<sup>16</sup> Beginning from the late 1950s, the Juche (self-reliance) ideology became the dominant political ideology in North Korea. Since then, North Korean literature attributed all their achievements, including previous accomplishments assisted by other communist countries, to the great leadership of Kim Il-Sung. For this reason, primary sources from the 1950s provide a unique channel through which to gain information on the role of foreign advisors from other communist countries, which was not yet filtered in the literature through nationalist lenses.

Second, this study examines a complete trajectory of the architectural transfer from the U.S. to South Korea, from the diplomatic level to implementation level, in order to answer how American building technologies, materials, and ideas were spreading to the ordinary local builders and artisans throughout the country who were previously not familiar with modern architectural practice. Diplomatic and governmental documents are important sources that can be used to better understand how U.S. foreign policymakers envisioned a new Korea, but these official documents tell only half the story. To complete the entire narrative, I take account of what actually took place at the construction sites and who was involved in the process. I pay particular attention to under-researched sources in Cold War studies: construction-related documents, such as field notes, progress reports, and completion reports. I then investigate the reception of the project in Korea. Articles and advertisements from Korean journals, magazines, and newspapers published during this time period provide an account of Korean perceptions of U.S.-aided construction projects. The potential sources in this category are innumerable both in their type and amount. I limit my investigation to one architectural journal (*Konchuk*), and three major daily newspapers—the *Choson Ilbo*, the *Donga Ilbo*, and the *Kyunghyang Shinmun*.

Last, this investigation underlines the collaborations and conflicts among the wide range of actors. Architects are not the only protagonist of this dissertation; rather, policy makers, philanthropists, entrepreneurs, Army engineers, missionaries, and nameless builders in Korea played an equally important role. The reconstruction of Korea provided not only an arena of ideological conflict between the U.S. and the Soviet government and its agencies, but also a

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<sup>16</sup> For example, the North Korea International Documentation Project, supported by the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, provides unique access to invaluable declassified documents on the North Korean reconstruction. For more, see Digital Archives of the North Korea International Documentation Project. <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/document-collections> (accessed August 14, 2015).

stage on which many different actors pursued their own interests. Their involvement in Korea's rebuilding originated at least partially out of self-interest. Christian organizations, for example, saw the Cold War as a missionary opportunity, and for American entrepreneurs in the building industries, war-torn Korea provided a new economic opportunity. Oftentimes these two were combined, at least rhetorically. Many types of voluntary, private organizations such as the American-Korean Foundation, the Boy Scouts, the 4-H Club, Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, and Carnegie Foundation also had their own interests in Korea. The United States' construction assistance was often conducted by the collective efforts of these multiple actors. This study focuses on how these American and local Korean actors with different interests collaborated to achieve their common goals. This research demonstrates that the conflicts between the actors were no less significant than the collaborations. For a similar reason, this study looks at internal struggle inside the "free world" as well as external conflict against the communist world. Upon closer inspection there was often discordance between the core and periphery of the two empires, and among a variety of actors. For example, from the beginning of his term until his resignation in 1961, South Korean President Syngman Rhee clashed with the Truman and Eisenhower administrations on many important issues.<sup>17</sup> Also, the U.S. governmental aid agency often clashed with private agencies over aid policies. In North Korea, a faithful follower of Joseph Stalin, Il-sung Kim also had many disagreements with Khrushchev's policies on North Korea from the mid-1950s, primarily related to Khrushchev's policy of the de-Stalinization of the communist world.

To highlight the collaborations, conflicts, and controversies that took place, this study approaches Korea's rebuilding from both American and Korean sources. Each illustrates different actors' intentions and activities. The U.S. National Archives at College Park, Maryland provides rich sources—correspondence, telegrams, project proposals, photographs, memoranda, pamphlets, reports—relating to U.S. foreign aid programs and projects.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the United Nations Archives in New York, the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas, the University Archives of the University of Minnesota in twin city, Minnesota, the George C. Marshall Research Library in Lexington, Virginia, the Archives of Appalachia in Johnson City, Tennessee, the American Institute of Architects Archives in Washington, D.C., the Seoul National University Archives in Seoul, the Syngman Rhee Institute in Seoul, and the National Archives of Korea in Gwacheon also provide a large number of relevant documents.

This dissertation provides the origins of Korean modern architecture. Previous studies have tended to focus on a few master architects and their works from the 1960s, rather than on the social and cultural conditions in the 1950s that enabled them to emerge.<sup>19</sup> Scholars have shown little interest in locating the architectural developments in the larger context of the political changes. The result is that narratives of Korean modern architecture have been isolated

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<sup>17</sup> These clashes included Rhee's opposition to the Armistice, Rhee's release of some 25,000 anticommunist North Korean prisoners, and the adjustment of the U.S.-Korean dollar exchange rate.

<sup>18</sup> RG 59 – General Records of the Department of State; RG 84 – Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State; RG 286 – Records of the Agency for International Development; RG 306 – Records of the U.S. Information Agency; RG 331 – Records of Allied Operational & Occupation Headquarters, World War II; RG 338 – Records of U.S. Army Operational, Tactical, and Support Organizations; RG 407 – Records of the Adjutant General's Office; RG 469 – Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, 1948 – 1961; RG 550 – Records of United States Army, Pacific; and RG 554 – Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander, Allied Powers and United Nations Command

<sup>19</sup> For previous studies on Korean modern architecture, see Gil-Ryong Park, *A Critical Biography of Modern Architecture in Korea* (Seoul: Space, 2015).

from the architecture of other part of the world. One of the few pioneers in this field is Korean architectural historian Chang-Mo Ahn. He has researched American influence after the Korean War, mostly through Korean-language sources and interviews with Korean architects who were involved at the time.<sup>20</sup> However, my study moves beyond his and other Korean scholars' research methodologically, in terms of materials under investigation, and in taking in a wider historical context. In addition, this study is an important empirical contribution of widening the geographical boundary of American architecture abroad in the postwar era. The use of American architecture as a means to extend America's global hegemony is by no means an unexplored theme. Considerable research has been devoted to American engagements with Latin America, Middle East, Europe, India, China, and other parts of the world, but the architectural relationship between the U.S. and South Korea is still sparsely documented in the world of English-speaking scholarship.<sup>21</sup> This study fills this lacuna.

My narrative begins in 1953, when the armistice agreement of the Korean War was signed; it ends in 1960, before the new leadership emerged in both the U.S. and South Korea. This period roughly covers U.S. president Dwight D. Eisenhower's two presidential terms (January 1953 – January 1961) and the second and third presidential term (August 1952 – April 1960) of president of South Korea, Syngman Rhee. Global attention to the Korean Peninsula as a theater of the Cold War did not last very long. As early as the late 1950s, media coverage of Korea was fading and global attention was shifting to Berlin and Cuba. Accordingly, the U.S. foreign aid budget allocated to South Korea was significantly decreased during the 1960s. This study focuses on these few years of intense assistance and rebuilding when the Korean Peninsula was the main stage of the global Cold War.

This dissertation is structured in five chapters. The first chapter, "Building Two Utopias," discusses the different reconstruction patterns of communist North and capitalist South Korea. Unlike North Korea's top-down approach primarily focusing on the construction of monumental buildings, large squares and wide boulevards in their major cities, South Korean cities were rebuilding from the bottom up. Rather than monumental architecture, South Korean reconstruction mainly consisted of small, utilitarian structures, such as schools, hospitals, churches, and various practical grassroots facilities. In addition, monumental architecture and space in North Korean cities, most importantly in Pyongyang, was aimed to impress their citizens visually. Yet, U.S.- and UN-assisted construction projects in South Korea mainly targeted the everyday life of the Korean populace. Thus, the entire population of South Korea experienced the new, modern, and essentially pro-American space everywhere. The remainder of this dissertation is divided into four chapters, each with a particular focus on one type of aid

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<sup>20</sup> Chang-Mo Ahn, "Influence of American and Japanese Architecture on Building the Post-war Korean Contemporary Architecture," *Journal of the Korea Academia-Industrial Cooperation Society*, Vol. 12, No. 12 (2011), 5974-5983; and Chang-Mo Ahn, "Western Architectural Culture and Its Implantation: Foreign Aid Policies and the Reformation of the Korean Architecture," *Korean Architects* (July 2006), 70-77.

<sup>21</sup> For more, see Jeffrey W. Cody, *Exporting American Architecture, 1870-2000* (London: Routledge, 2003); Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1995); Jane C. Loeffler, *The Architecture of Diplomacy: Building America's Embassies* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998); Robert A. Gonzalez, *Designing Pan-America: U.S. Architectural Visions for the Western Hemisphere* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2011); Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); and Greg Grandin, *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009).

program: the UN assistance program (United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency), the U.S. military civic action program (Armed Forces Assistance to Korea), an American private sector's housing assistance program (Homes for Korea project), and the educational assistance program.

Chapter 2, "United Power," examines the construction projects carried out by the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA), with particular focus on the tension between its multinational nature of the assistance and America's leadership. Approximately 40 countries helped the reconstruction of South Korea via the UNKRA aid programs, but among them, the U.S. contributed approximately 80 percent of the total UNKRA aid fund. The international collaboration between the "free world" nations was important because it symbolically legitimized America's leadership in the Cold War. UNKRA's aid helped to rebuild schools, orphanages, and many other urgently-needed facilities. Most importantly, UNKRA became the main agent responsible for housing construction. This chapter discusses how various countries collaborated in construction projects within the frame of the United Nations and the way in which Koreans participated in these projects.

Chapter 3, "Building Goodwill," examines U.S. Armed Forces' direct involvement in rebuilding South Korea. Established in November 1953, the Armed Forces Assistance to Korea (AFAK) program called for all US military units in South Korea to aid Korean reconstruction projects. By 1960, the AFAK program was responsible for the construction of more than 4,000 buildings in South Korea, including schools, civic buildings, orphanages, public health facilities, churches, bridges, and highways. Compared to UNKRA, AFAK restricted itself to the provision of construction materials and technical assistance. In each project, Koreans provided labors and indigenous construction material by themselves. This chapter analyzes how the AFAK program made America's influence reach out to the general public of South Korea. It also demonstrates how these simple constructions for the maximum efficiency made an influence on the use of construction materials and building technologies on a national scale.

Chapter 4, "Free World, Expensive Homes," discusses an American private sector's endeavor to create private housing developments in South Korea. In this ideological conflict, U.S.-aided housing became an important vehicle for American values and ideologies such as individualism, democratic participation, and free market capitalism. The Homes for Korea housing project was one of America's earliest endeavors to create private residential communities in South Korea. Believing that the market should actively solve the housing shortage, an American private aid agency, the American-Korean Foundation, launched the project in 1953. Headed by I. M. Pei of Webb & Knapp, a team of Americans and six Korean architects collaborated to design modern housing units that incorporated Korean customs and traditions. In sharp contrast with the inadequate amenities and social services of other low-cost housing projects in Korea, this project was equipped with a variety of modern amenities and landscaping. This chapter reveals that U.S. officials perceived the project primarily as an ideological instrument and their attempt to blend its political and practical goals together ended in failure.

Finally, chapter 5, "Across the Pacific," examines the Americanization of architectural education in South Korea during the 1950s, paying particular attention to the U.S.-educated architectural elites' activities within and outside school—such as curriculum changes, publications on American architecture, and design projects. It argues that, although few in number, the beneficiaries of America's educational exchange programs became the main vehicle for bringing American architectural style and technologies to South Korean soil. Mainly inspired by the success of the Soviet Union's educational exchange programs, the U.S. governmental and

private agencies launched various educational exchange programs that aimed to train young elites in the U.S. with the hope that they would become pro-U.S. intellectuals in their respective fields. Although in most cases short-term, non-degree exchange programs, they provided a unique opportunity for promising Koreans to study America's architectural education and practice. The U.S.-educated elites were preferred not only by the South Korean government, which desperately needed experts in modern design and construction methods, but were also able to join a privileged network within the favored circle of the U.S. aid agencies because they were relatively fluent in English and familiar with the American values and system. As a result, the program played a role in reinforcing a pro-U.S. tendency of architectural practices and education in South Korea.

By examining South Korea's reconstruction, this dissertation discusses the ideological appropriation of U.S.-aided construction projects and their role in rebuilding South Korea as a modern, democratic nation; the ways in which the Koreans participated in the projects; and the legacy that they left in the development of South Korea's modern architecture.



## Chapter 1. Monuments and Huts: The Post-Korean War Reconstruction of North and South Korea

*In a sense, a country devastated like Korea is a great opportunity. To build anew, one must first destroy the old. The enemy has done the latter for us. With our friends we shall do the former.*<sup>1</sup>

- President Syngman Rhee, 1953

*We should not simply restore Pyongyang to its original state, but reconstruct it as a modern city that eradicates its backwardness and malformation resulted from the Japanese colonial rule and that is fully equipped with cultural facilities and amenities for plenty of working people.*<sup>2</sup>

- Premier Kim Il-Sung, 1951

It was a bloody battle of brother against brother. Once a single country, North and South Korea spent three years destroying each other in a war that devastated cities and the countryside killed or injured more than four million Koreans. The massive destruction, paradoxically, contained the seeds of Korea's rebirth as a modern state—politically, socially, and even in terms of the built environment. The division of Korea into two different sides—which actually took place in 1945, but came to be more widely known globally due to the Korean War—meant Korea would assume the same role in Asia that Germany did in the European theater of the Cold War. The global media attention to the Korean conflict and subsequent war damage made North and South Korea's rebuilding from the rubble as an important “proving ground” for the superiority of the communist world and the “free world,” especially for other newly independent countries in Asia and Africa.

With the powerful patronage of the two worlds in competition, North and South Korea could reconstruct an ideal socialist and liberal democratic state, respectively. Inevitably, the two Koreas showed very different patterns of physical rebuilding. North Korean leaders and their foreign comrades built cities according to the Soviet model based on both their socialist ideas and Stalinist planning experience. South Korean cities also began to incorporate the ideas that the “free world” allies offered.

Scholars in various fields have done considerable research regarding the reconstruction of North and South Korea. In spite of limited sources of information, several important studies have revealed that the rebuilding of war-ravaged Pyongyang was one of the most important tasks in North Korea's reconstruction.<sup>3</sup> A greater number of studies have analyzed the reconstruction of South Korean cities from various angles, such as demographic changes, social transformation

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<sup>1</sup> A Speech of Syngman Rhee to the American-Korean Foundation's Second Mission to Korea in August, 1953, from the American-Korean Foundation, “Report of the Second Mission to Korea, August 20-27, 1953,” p.iii, UD 422, Box 27; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>2</sup> Il Kim, *Pulgŏn Haepal Arae Ch'angjo Wa Kŏnsŏl Ŭi 40-Yŏn* (Pyongyang: Chosun Worker's Party Publishing House, 1981), 234.

<sup>3</sup> For more, see Charles K. Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950-1992* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013); and A. Schinz and E. Dege, “Pyongyang—Ancient and Modern—the Capital of North Korea,” *GeoJournal*, 22:1 (September 1990), 21-32, 121-136.

and architectural rebuilding.<sup>4</sup> Some scholars provide a comparative approach between North and South Korea's rebuilding. Sociologist Se Hoon Chang compares the process of urbanization in Seoul and Pyongyang. Chang argues that, although North and South Korean cities went through different urbanization processes largely influenced by communism and capitalism, the Korean War provided a chance to clear away the colonial urban structures, and both Seoul and Pyongyang were turned into military cities.<sup>5</sup>

Rather than covering specific construction projects in depth or their sociological meaning, this chapter discusses the different patterns that North and South Korea showed in their early phase of reconstruction, especially focusing on the role of outside assistants. Unlike North Korea's top-down approach, South Koreans reconstructed their country from the bottom up. The greatest effort of North Korea's early rebuilding was given to the construction of monumental buildings, large squares, and wide boulevards in their major cities. Meanwhile, South Korean postwar reconstruction concentrated greatly upon the construction of schools, hospitals, churches, and many other practical grassroots facilities that were not necessarily grandiose. Geographically, unlike North Korea's emphasis on the reconstruction of major cities, reconstruction projects in South Korea were relatively evenly distributed around the country.

From these comparisons, this chapter argues that, unlike the visual spectacle of North Korean cities aimed to impress their citizens, U.S.- and UN-assisted construction projects in South Korea mainly targeted the everyday life of the Korean populace. Thus, the entire population of South Korea experienced the new, modern, and essentially pro-American space everywhere.

## **Two Cold War Imaginaries**

When the World War II ended, the United States quickly emerged as a successor to the former European empires that were exhausted by the war. The U.S. extended its influence all over the globe through military and economic assistance programs, but America's attempt to construction a new world order was often challenged by another giant hegemonic nation, the Soviet Union. During and after the war, Eastern Europe, including East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Albania, became the Soviet zone of influence. Stalin's Soviet Union also expanded its military, economic, and cultural influence over neighboring countries in Central Asia and Far East, such as China, Afghanistan, Mongolia, and North Korea. The Soviet influence was constantly spreading to other newly-independent countries in Asia and Africa during the 1950s (Figure 1.1).

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<sup>4</sup> For the history of city planning of Seoul, see Jung-mok Son, *Söul Tosi Kyehoek Iyagi* [Seoul City Planning Story] Vol.1. (Seoul: Han-Wool, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> Se Hoon Chang, "Korean War and Urbanization of Seoul and Pyeongyang in 1950s: Focusing on After-war Urban Reconstruction," *Society and History*, Vol. 67 (June 2005), 207-259.

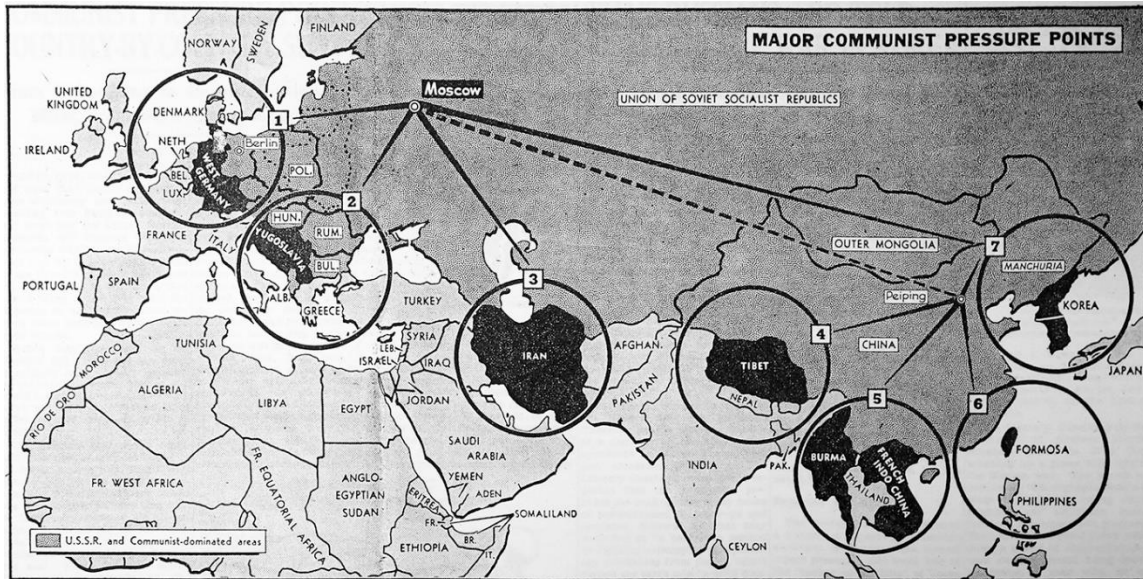


Figure 1.1 Global Conflicts between the Communist World and the “Free World” in 1950  
 (Source: *The New York Times*, September 24, 1950, in the Eisenhower Library)

The Soviet-influenced territory reached from East Germany in Europe to the Northern half of the Korean Peninsula, Sakhalin, and the Kuril Islands in the Far East. However, unlike traditional empires, Stalin’s Soviet Union did not merge the new territory; instead, the Soviet Union built up an independent, pro-Soviet government in each country. Although most communist countries were under Soviet influence until the mid-1950s, their political systems and cultural representation varied one country to another, depending on their relations with the Soviet Union.

The United States and Soviet Union offered competing visions of society, both of which attempted to bring extensive changes to social, economic, and cultural life of the people around the world. The U.S. presented a vision of ideal democracy, freedom, the right to property, and the free trade. The basic premise of the U.S. model was that, once the U.S. provided the appropriate assistance to the undeveloped country, the recipient countries would accomplish the social and economic development that the Western countries made previously. Learning from the New Deal experience, the U.S. government developed a specific development model for developing countries. In this model, the local state had to play a central role, detailed planning was crucial, and close collaboration with international and voluntary groups was emphasized.<sup>6</sup> The Soviet Union offered an even more dramatic path of progress. It was a vision of a non-capitalist, anti-colonial, and classless society for working people. In the Soviet model of progress, property was owned by the public and economy was centrally planned by the state.

On the face of it, the American and Soviet empires were anti-hegemonic and anti-colonial, but they were also heir to traditional imperialism. During the Cold War, it became increasingly difficult to separate supporter and dominator; protecting countries from the opposing world became often indistinguishable from the subjugation of the country by other means.<sup>7</sup> In this context, European colonial practice provided a hint of the two postwar empires’

<sup>6</sup> David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 115.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 176-178.

strategies. According to architectural historian Gwendolyn Wright, European colonizers developed two types of strategies in the first half of the twentieth century: French assimilation and British association. The “assimilation” approach refers to the French colonizers’ destructive way that erased cities and towns and created a new architecture and cities. Wright points out that the distinct French architectural style and planning manifested cultural predominance of the European civilization and symbolized their continuing military presence in its colony. Meanwhile, “association,” Wright argues, was the English system of colonization, in which the local elite and their existing institutions of power were more widely used. It was more indirect, but also more invasive and hegemonic than the “assimilation” approach because it was scientific and dealt with people’s lives by improving them in terms of transportation, sanitation and health, recreation, industrialization, and education.<sup>8</sup>

The Soviet model inherited the legacy of both the British and the French colonial approaches. It created homogeneous, canonical space on its imperial territory, in which Soviet style architecture and planning played a role in creating a visual symbol of the communist bloc, but the local was also actively employed in this task. However, partly building on the British model, the Americans developed their unique style. The American empire was less territorial. Most of America’s allies were separated by the ocean. What the United States had to defend was not territorial security, but the ideologically defined domain.<sup>9</sup> Architecture has long played a role in defending symbolically-define space. Buildings and cities effectively visualized the power, order, and boundary of two empires in their own particular way. Germany’s war-torn capital, Berlin, became the first showcase and the Soviet Union and the United States assisted East and West Berlin, respectively.

The Chinese communist victory in 1949 and the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 shifted the main theater of the Cold War from Europe to the Far East momentarily. In August 1953, shortly after the armistice, U.S. president Dwight D. Eisenhower in a radio speech emphasized the need to bring America’s attention to South Korea’s rebuilding, as follows:

Our action in Berlin—this reaching out to people to help, to feed, to strengthen their faith in freedom—partakes of the same spirit directing our course in Korea. There is a significant connection between these distant spots on the great globe. Berlin and Korea have been two of the scenes chosen by the Communist world for flagrant acts of aggression since World War II. Today precisely these same two places present dramatic evidence of the will of free men to stay free and to make freedom work. No clearer proof is needed of the power of the free world not only to defeat what is evil but also to create what is good.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 73.

<sup>9</sup> The United States’ territorial security was hardly challenged during the Cold War, but what the U.S. did not accept was ideological challenges within the self-defined domain. For more, see Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 291.

<sup>10</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Radio Report to the American People on the Achievements of the Administration and the 83d Congress," August 6, 1953. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9666> (accessed March 1, 2015)

It was a moment when South Korea became America's ideological frontier with the communist world. In Korea, the United States and the Soviet Union to showcase their legitimate leadership to the entire world, much as Germany provided a similar ideological battlefield in Europe.

### **Korea as a New Battlefield**

On August 8, 1945, a week before the surrender of Japan in World War II, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan and began to occupy the northern part of Korea, with relatively minor Japanese resistance. The Soviet Army's liberation of Korea stopped at the 38th parallel north, as per an agreement with the United States. Still devoting most of their energy on the disarmament of the empire of Japan, the United States Army landed in Korea approximately a month later in September and occupied the Southern part of the Korean Peninsula (Figure 1.2).<sup>11</sup> The Koreans did not have a strong natural aversion to the two newly-coming garrisons. In fact, many Koreans welcomed the foreign troops as a liberating army.



Figure 1.2 Lowering the Japanese Flag and Raising the U.S. Flag during Surrender Ceremony at Seoul, September 9, 1945, Taken by a USS San Francisco photographer (Source: 80-G-391464 / 80-G-391465, the Photography Collection of the Naval History and Heritage Command)

With these two powerful patrons arrived two different groups of Korean political leaders. Shortly after Japan's surrender, Kim Il-Sung who served in the Soviet Army as a Major during World War II arrived in Korea and developed his political influence in the Soviet-occupied area of Korea. In the South, an old, but strenuous anti-communist Syngman Rhee returned from the U.S. and constantly increased his popularity. Rhee earned a PhD from Princeton University in 1910, was well-versed in U.S. and international politics, and already established close relations with American political leaders.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly, North and South Korean leaders envisioning different societies could not reach an agreement on the establishment of a unified

<sup>11</sup> United States Pacific Policy, Korea, p.1, n.d., in folder US-Pacific Policy, Box 2, Miscellaneous Series, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower as President, 1953-61, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>12</sup> Syngman Rhee was one of the first Korean students studying in the United States. Rhee obtained a Bachelor of Arts from George Washington University in 1907, a Master of Arts from Harvard in 1908, and a Ph.D. from Princeton in 1910. For more, see Gregg Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 16.

Korea. In 1948, two ideologically opposed governments were officially established; in the U.S.-occupied part of Korea, Syngman Rhee was elected as the first president of the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and Kim Il-sung became Premier of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) in the Soviet-occupied part of Korea. Once the two governments were established, the U.S. and Soviet troops withdrew but their economic aid continued.

The first U.S. governmental aid to South Korea began shortly after World War II. Between 1945 and 1948, the Government Aid and Relief in Occupied Areas (GARIOA) program allocated \$301 million for the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK).<sup>13</sup> The GARIOA was a U.S. aid program for the relief and economic rehabilitation of the occupied nations after World War II, such as Germany, Austria, and Japan. The GARIOA fund was used for the political and economic stability of the U.S. occupation zone in Korea, as former Japanese occupied territory. From January 1949, when the South Korean government was established, the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) became the main agency of the U.S. economic assistance. Established in 1948, the ECA was originally aimed at rebuilding war-ravaged western European countries, but a small portion of ECA fund was spent for other regions, including South Korea. Until April 1951, the U.S. provided \$123 million of economic aid to South Korea through ECA.<sup>14</sup> U.S. officials clearly understood South Korea's symbolic importance. On May 1949, the Acting Secretary of State, James E. Webb wrote:

Korea is the only area in the world in which democratic and communist principles are being put to the test side by side and in which the U.S. and the USSR have been, and no doubt in the estimation of the world will continue to be, the sole contenders for the way of life of 30,000,000 people. The entire world and especially Asia is watching this contest. ... To the degree the United States continues to support the efforts of the South Korean people to develop a self-supporting economy and a stable democratic government the people of this area will be persuaded of the firmness of U.S. determination to support Democracy and oppose Communism.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, concentrating on rebuilding Western Europe, the Truman Administration's main concern was South Korea's social and economic stabilization, rather than Korea's unification or long-term economic development.

On October 1949, Mao Zedong's Communist Party proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China. America's most important World War II ally in Asia and the world's most populous country's turning into a communist country shocked Americans. A few months later, on June 25, 1950, North Korean troops, equipped with Soviet tanks and artillery, invaded the South. As historian Charles Armstrong points out, it was the Korean War that permanently changed American's perception of the means and significance of the East Asian

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<sup>13</sup> Gregg Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 33-34.

<sup>14</sup> "United States Pacific Policy, Korea," pp.2-3, n.d., in folder US-Pacific Policy, Box 2, Miscellaneous Series, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower as President, 1953-61, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>15</sup> Letter from the Acting Secretary of State (James E. Webb) to the Director of the Bureau of the Budget (Pace), May 16, 1949. In *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1949. Volume VII. The Far East and Australasia. (In two parts) Part 2* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1955), 1025.

theater of the Cold War.<sup>16</sup> U.S. officials came to believe that if they did not defend South Korea from communism the rest of Asia would fall to it as well. Thus, the Korean peninsula suddenly became a bulwark against communism in Asia.

Shortly after the North Korean attack, the U.S. requested the United Nations Secretary-General call an immediate meeting of the Security Council. On June 27, the UN Security Council authorized the UN forces to assist South Korea. The U.S. General Douglas MacArthur was appointed as commander of United Nations forces in Korea, including all South Korean troops.<sup>17</sup> Sixteen countries directly fought on the side of South Korea under command of the U.S. Eighth Army, which took up approximately 90 percent of the total UN forces.<sup>18</sup>

### **Planning for the Rebuilding**

The entrance of UN forces into the war quickly turned the tide of the battle. On October 19, 1950, UN forces captured the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, and soon marched to the Yalu River, the border between Korea and China.<sup>19</sup> Military triumph seemed imminent, and the U.S. proposed to begin planning the unification and economic reconstruction plan for a unified Korea under civilian control.<sup>20</sup> On October 7, 1950, the UN General Assembly set up the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK). As the principal representative of the United Nations in Korea, the UNCURK aimed to establish an independent, democratic government in a unified Korea.<sup>21</sup> The UN officials also believed that a special UN authority was necessary to plan and implement rehabilitation and economic reconstruction programs in South Korea. On December 1st, the General Assembly set up the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA) to establish the economic foundation for a unified Korea.<sup>22</sup>

However, around this time, the war entered a completely new phase. In early November 1950, the Chinese People's Volunteer Army unexpectedly entered into the war and UN troops were forced to retreat southward.<sup>23</sup> While the armed conflict and prolonged armistice negotiations deterred an immediate implementation of rebuilding programs in Korea, it provided adequate time to plan the reconstruction of two Koreas. The first priority was given to immediate

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<sup>16</sup> Charles K. Armstrong, "The Cultural Cold War in Korea, 1945-1950," *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 62, No. 1 (February 2003), 73.

<sup>17</sup> "A Korea Chronology, December 27, 1945 to July 27, 1953," *United Nations Bulletin*, Vol. XV, No. 3 (August 1, 1953), 75. In file U.N. Publications, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0173-04, United Nations Archives.

<sup>18</sup> UN nations that directly fought on the side of South Korea included the U.S., the U.K., Canada, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Colombia, Ethiopia, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Turkey, Greece, Thailand, Philippines and Luxembourg. For more, see "Korea: Proving Ground for Collective Action against Aggression," *United Nations Bulletin*, Vol. XV, No. 3 (August 1, 1953), 66-67. In file U.N. Publications, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0173-04, United Nations Archives.

<sup>19</sup> Charles K. Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950-1992* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 35.

<sup>20</sup> Division of Public Information, UNKRA, "Basic Information on UNKRA," p.1, January 20, 1953. In file Early History & Goals, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0149-07, United Nations Archives.

<sup>21</sup> *United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency Historical Narratives*, pp.7-8, n.d., in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0168-no folder, United Nations Archives.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>23</sup> "Korea: Proving Ground for Collective Action Against Aggression," *United Nations Bulletin*, Vol. XV, No. 3 (August 1, 1953), 65. In file U.N. Publications, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0173-04, United Nations Archives.

relief, but the two Koreas had to plan long-term war recovery as well. Houses, factories, and buildings destroyed during the war had to be rebuilt. The United States and the Soviet Union helped their reconstruction with comprehensive plans.

The Soviet Union played a crucial role in planning and implementing the early phase of North Korean rebuilding. Soviet experts drew up North Korea's first three year plan. In South Korea, UNKRA employed Robert R. Nathan Associates, a U.S. consulting firm, to outline the current situation in Korea and draft an overall plan for the reconstruction of Korea. A year-long study was published as a book, the so-called the Nathan Report. The report estimated that South Korea would require economic assistance of \$1.75 billion to become self-supporting by 1959-1960. The Nathan Report became the groundwork of later UN and U.S. aid programs.

During the war, the central region of Korea, including Seoul, changed hands four times; most other areas twice. The war ended in July 1953, with cities and villages in both Koreas in ruins. Approximately 10 percent of the entire population of two Koreas died, were injured, or were missing. The figures vary by source, but in South Korea, the war resulted in a million civilian deaths, five million people on relief, two million refugees, 300,000 widows, 100,000 orphans, and 15,000 amputees.<sup>24</sup> More than 600,000 houses were destroyed; more than half of public facilities was ruined.<sup>25</sup>

The war had done greater damage on North Korea. In December 1950, the U.S. Far East Command ordered the retreating Eighth Army to "destroy everything that might be of use to the enemy."<sup>26</sup> In addition, because of Stalin's reluctance to engage in direct conflict with the U.S., the U.S. Air Forces almost completely commanded the air. U.S. carpet bombing destroyed major North Korean cities completely. It was estimated that 635,000 tons of bombs were dropped from American planes during the Korea War, which was 26 percent more than was used against Japan during World War II.<sup>27</sup> According to North Korea's official census, the North Korean population decreased from 9,622,000 in late 1949 to 8,491,000 in December 1953, due to death and defection to the south.<sup>28</sup> 600,000 houses, 8,700 North Korean factories and manufacturing facilities, 5,000 schools, 1,000 hospitals and dispensaries, 260 theaters, 670 science facilities and libraries, and thousands of other public buildings were destroyed during the war.<sup>29</sup>

On July 27, 1953, the armistice was finally signed and 2.5 mile wide Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) divided two Koreas. The blueprints for reconstruction were already prepared. On each side, Koreans began to construct their new nations according to these plans. For another few

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<sup>24</sup> "Helping Koreans Help Themselves," *Life* Vol. 34, No. 15, (October 12, 1953), n. pag.

<sup>25</sup> Andrew Headland Jr., "The Present," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (June 19, 1955), 26.

<sup>26</sup> Charles K. Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950-1992* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 47.

<sup>27</sup> *Tyranny of the Weak*, 47.

<sup>28</sup> Chosŏn Chungang T'ongsinsa [Korean Central News Agency], Chosŏn Chungang Yŏn'gam [North Korean Central Yearbook] (Pyongyang: Chosŏn Chungang T'ongsinsa, 1962), 321.

<sup>29</sup> "Memo from K. Koval to the CPSU CC, 'Concerning the main issues of the economic situation of the DPRK,'" April, 1956, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, RGANI Fond 5, Opis 28, Delo 412. Translated by Gary Goldberg. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/120799> (accessed September 23, 2015); Hwa-Son Ri, *Chosŏn Kŏnch'uksa* [History of Korean Architecture] (Pyongyang: Kwahak Paekkwa Sajŏn Chonghap Ch'ulp'ansa, 1989), 2: 92; and Military History Research Institute of the Academy of Military Science in China, *Kāngmǐyúáncháo zhànzhēngshǐ* [History of the Korean War], trans. Dong-goo Park (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, Institute for Military History, 2005), 3: 770.



years, the reconstruction of North and South Korea became the largest international development project for the communist world and the “free world.”<sup>30</sup>

### Pyongyang between Marx and Stalin

Because of UN troops’ “scorched-earth” policy, most buildings in major North Korean cities virtually disappeared. North Korean political leaders and city builders envisioned their rebuilding as a unique opportunity to build their socialist utopia, free from the existing urban fabric. “Capitalist” developments, from a Marxist perspective, created crowded, chaotic, and polluted space, and most importantly caused social inequality. Although, under the Marxist understanding, fundamental or meaningful changes could be obtainable only through structural changes led by a Proletarian revolution, cities in the communist world were perceived as an important agent for social and economic change reflecting some ideas of Marxism. As understood by geographer James Haber, socialist cities had a few characteristics as opposed to its “capitalist” counterpart, including: nationalization of all resources; planned land use; certain restrictions in liberty of movement and freedom to choose residence; and planned urbanization according to principles of equality and hygiene.<sup>31</sup> The reconstruction of Pyongyang shared some of these characteristics.

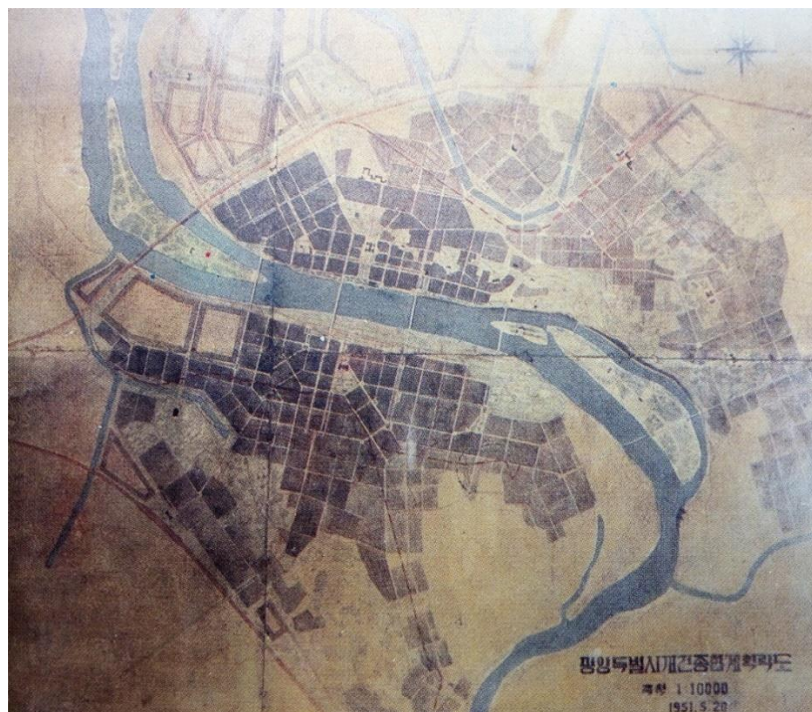


Figure 1.3 Master Plan of the Pyongyang’s Reconstruction, May 20, 1951  
(Source: *Complete History of Pyongyang Construction*)

North Korea’s reconstruction plan began shortly after North Korea’s regain of its capital, Pyongyang. The first master plan was prepared in May 1951 (Figure 1.3). Many North Korea sources indicate Jung-Hee Kim as the master planner of Pyongyang. Jung-Hee Kim was one of a

<sup>30</sup> David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 115.

<sup>31</sup> James H. Bater, *The Soviet City* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1980), 5.

few North Korean architects with a Soviet education. He studied architecture and city planning at the Moscow Architectural Institute from 1947 before he came back to North Korea for the reconstruction in 1952. However, sources from other communist countries tell a different story. For example, a 1953 Polish report indicated an anonymous Soviet architect as the main designer, and a study from German scholars also reveals that a few Bauhaus graduates in East Germany participated in the planning and architectural design of Pyongyang.<sup>32</sup> Considering that Soviet and other communist countries' experts were involved in almost every aspect of the reconstruction, it would be more reasonable to speculate that North Korea architects were not alone in planning the new Pyongyang. As Charles Armstrong clearly points out, Kim Il-Sung and his group knew nothing but military tactics and some Stalinist economic development.<sup>33</sup> North Korean leaders barely had a knowledge on nation-building. Accordingly, North Korea's reconstruction relied heavily on foreign advisors, and was inevitably influenced by the earlier reconstruction experiences of the communist world, especially of Stalingrad and Warsaw.<sup>34</sup> The new plan's wide intersecting boulevards and monumental squares had a hint of European city planning of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century, most notably of Haussmann's plan for Paris and Pierre L'Enfant's Plan for Washington D.C., but more direct influence was probably the 1935 Moscow General Plan. The Moscow Plan and new Pyongyang Plan shared similar features, such as the limit of the total population in the city, the state control of housing, the creation of multiple centers, the connection and separation of urban centers by green space, and the creation of symbolic center in each center (Figure 1.4).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> For more, see "Report from a Conference Organized by the Government of the DPRK on the Issue of Implementing the Plan of Reconstruction for Pyongyang," June 05, 1953, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive. Obtained for NKIDP by Jakub Poprocki and translated for NKIDP by Maya Latynski. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114954> (accessed September 23, 2015); and A. Schinz and E. Dege, "Pyongyang—Ancient and Modern—the Capital of North Korea," *GeoJournal* 22:1 (September 1990), 26; see also, Charles K. Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950-1992* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 71.

<sup>33</sup> *Tyranny of the Weak*, 62.

<sup>34</sup> "Report from a Conference Organized by the Government of the DPRK on the Issue of Implementing the Plan of Reconstruction for Pyongyang," June 05, 1953, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive. Obtained for NKIDP by Jakub Poprocki and translated for NKIDP by Maya Latynski. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114954> (accessed September 23, 2015).

<sup>35</sup> For more on the 1935 Moscow Plan, see James H. Bater, *The Soviet City* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1980), 27-30.

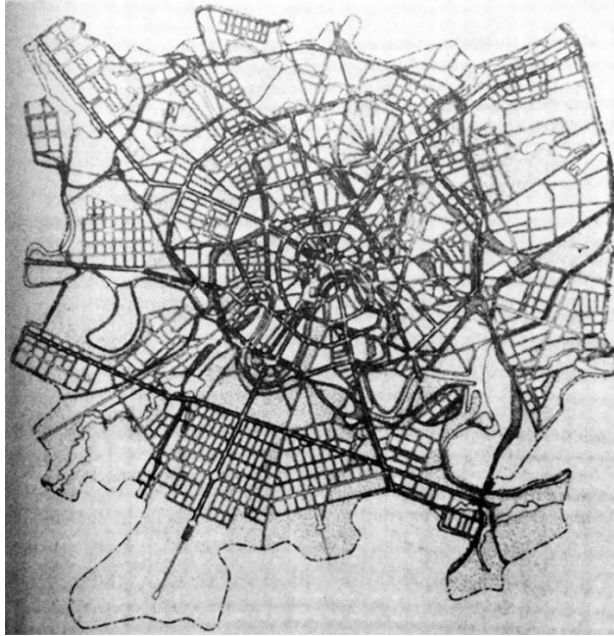


Figure 1.4 Moscow Master Plan, by L. M. Kaganovitch, 1935  
(Source: *Planning Twentieth Century Capital Cities*)

Unlike “capitalist” urban development, in Pyongyang, individual building types, location, and even height was determined by state planning, not by land value. The state took complete control over the reconstruction through a set of resolutions, preventing spontaneous private development. On July 30, 1953, three days after the armistice, the North Korean Cabinet of Ministers issued a powerful resolution on the overall reconstruction plan for Pyongyang. According to the Resolution, all construction activities in city areas became subordinated to the overall state plan of urban construction.<sup>36</sup> All construction projects had to be approved by the construction commissions of the Provincial Peoples’ Committees. The committees determined the locations of new buildings and developed plans in accordance with the plan for the city’s rebuilding. They issued construction permission to private individuals and organizations or leased state-owned lands to those who would construct buildings or facilities.<sup>37</sup>

By the 1953 Resolution on the reconstruction, approximately one third of the built-up area was occupied by residential areas. Most housing construction was centrally planned and publicly owned. Architecture was relatively homogeneous in style and planning. According to the Resolution, three-story buildings became normative, but four- to five-story buildings were to be built in the central area and on the sides of the main avenues. The construction of the residential buildings received less attention, unless they were located on the main streets.

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<sup>36</sup> The Resolution made it mandatory for all the governmental agencies, individuals, and any political and business organizations that owned the land included in the construction plans to obey to the overall plan.

<sup>37</sup> If regarded a new construction as a violation the overall plan for the city’s rebuilding, the Construction Committee could stop the construction and instead assign another land for construction elsewhere. If the land was owned by individuals or organization, the owners were forced to sell through eminent domain. The committees also held the power to stop construction that violated the overall plan. For more, see “Report No. 4. of the Embassy of the People’s Republic of Poland in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea for the Period of 26 June 1953 top 31 July 1953,” July 31, 1953, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive. Obtained for NKIDP by Jakub Poprocki and translated for NKIDP by Maya Latynski. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114955> (accessed September 23, 2015).

The Plan separated residential zones from industrial districts for textile and metallurgical industries, which were located in the southern part of the city. The creation of the production space within the city was a way to eliminate the separation between urban and rural area. As a socialist city, Pyongyang was planned to have space for production, not merely for consumption. Industrial facilities within the city made the city a self-sufficient entity without relying on other industrial cities.

Another integral part of the Pyongyang Plan was urban open space. In the newly-constructed Pyongyang, the building-to-land ratio was planned to be as low as 20 to 25 percent, in contrast to 80 percent of the pre-war time.<sup>38</sup> A large part of the city, previously built-up areas, was planned as green space relatively evenly scattered throughout the city, in the form of city parks, recreational areas, and green belts on Moranbong Mountain and along Daedong River. Public ownership of the land made it possible to convert some ruined areas into green spaces.

Social equality was one of the most fundamental concerns in all socialist states. The 1953 Resolution specified that the “uncivilized, exploitative, and oppressive” nature of the city that served the privileged class in the Japanese colonial period had to be eradicated and rebuilt it as a modern, democratic city that served the working people.<sup>39</sup> In principal, all citizens in Pyongyang were to receive equal living conditions and urban infrastructure. For this goal, the Pyongyang Plan applied a grid system to the city. Also, it adopted the idea of the micro district, in which living, business, and light industry were taking place within a closed block. The socialist reasoning behind this community unit was that the gap between different social classes could be mitigated by mixing people in the facilities of different functions. However, these closed districts also provided an efficient apparatus for the surveillance of the people.

The primary emphasis in the early stage of construction was given to the construction of public squares, large boulevards, and the architecture of state institutions. In fact, monumentality of architecture and public space was the common characteristic of the socialist cities. It derived not from the Marxist-Leninist principles, but from desire of the communist dictatorship to assert itself fully. Although it conflicted with principles of equality, the hierarchical space effectively glorified and legitimated the communist leader’s ruling in space. In Pyongyang, the main boulevards were named after the founding leaders of the communist world—Stalin, Mao, and Kim Il-Sung—and were aligned towards architecture representing the power of the central state, such as the railway station, museums, theaters, monuments, and statues.<sup>40</sup>

## **Rebuilding Pyongyang**

A quick recovery of the capital city was one of the most important tasks for North Korean communists. The urgent need for a great number of buildings and facilities existed, but more importantly, the reconstruction of Pyongyang as a capital city was symbolically in competition with Seoul being rebuilt at the same time.<sup>41</sup> Prior to the Korea War, Pyongyang had a population

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<sup>38</sup> P’yŏngyang Hyangt’o Sa P’yŏnch’an Wiwŏnhoe [Compilation Committee of Local History of Pyongyang], *P’yŏngyang chi* [Pyongyang Records] (Pyongyang: P’yŏngyang Hyangt’o Sa P’yŏnch’an Wiwŏnhoe, 1957), 502.

<sup>39</sup> *P’yŏngyang chi*, 501.

<sup>40</sup> A. Schinz and E. Dege, “P’yŏngyang—Ancient and Modern—the Capital of North Korea,” *GeoJournal* 22:1 (September 1990), 31.

<sup>41</sup> Charles K. Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950-1992* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 66.

of 450,000, and the number decreased to 150,000 shortly after the armistice.<sup>42</sup> The new Pyongyang was to accommodate one million inhabitants. The North Korean government expected to take 10 to 20 years to accomplish this goal.<sup>43</sup>

The most important space in the newly-constructed Pyongyang was Kim Il-Sung Square and the accompanying buildings of state institutions there. Located at the heart of the capital, Kim Il-Sung Square was a 3,600 square meters space functioning as a space for mass political rallies as well as the focal point of the city (Figure 1.5). It was both the physical and spiritual center of the universe, the *axis mundi*. Two main government buildings formed the northern and southern boundaries, a large elevated platform the western, and two national museums the eastern (Figure 1.6). Also framing the square on the western and eastern borders, two broad streets have been often used for political and military street parades.<sup>44</sup>



Figure 1.5 The Third Mass Meeting of the Workers' Party of Korea, Kim Il-Sung Square, Pyongyang, 1956. In this picture, on the left is a platform and on the right is the main government building. (Source: *P'yŏngyang chi*)

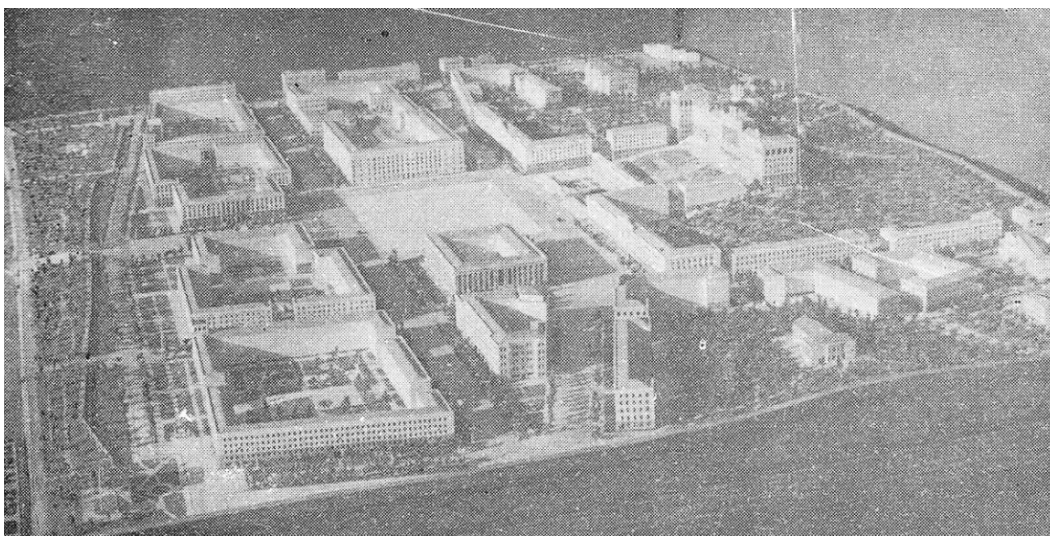


Figure 1.6 Reconstruction Model of Kim Il-Sung Square (Source: *P'yŏngyang chi*)

<sup>42</sup> "Report from a Conference Organized by the Government of the DPRK on the Issue of Implementing the Plan of Reconstruction for Pyongyang."

<sup>43</sup> P'yŏngyang Hyangt'o Sa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe [Compilation Committee of Local History of Pyongyang], *P'yŏngyang chi* [Pyongyang Records] (Pyongyang: P'yŏngyang Hyangt'o Sa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, 1957), 502.

<sup>44</sup> Hwa-Son Ri, *Chosŏn Kŏnch'uksa* [History of Korean Architecture] (Pyongyang: Kwahak Paekkwajŏn Chonghap Ch'ulp'ansa, 1989), 2: 109-110.

Along the square's eastern border was another important project, Stalin Street. Forming the city's main North-South axis, Stalin Street was 40 to 45 meters wide—approximately half the width of the also newly completed Stalin-alley in East Berlin—and run 2,500 meters parallel to Daedong River (Figure 1.7).<sup>45</sup> At the northern end of the street was the reconstructed Liberation Tower, originally built in 1946, which commemorated the Soviet Army's liberation of Korea. At the southern end of Stalin Street stood the Pyongyang Grand Theatre. Four- and five-story buildings with glazed tile facades, mostly residential, were built along both sides of Stalin Street.<sup>46</sup>

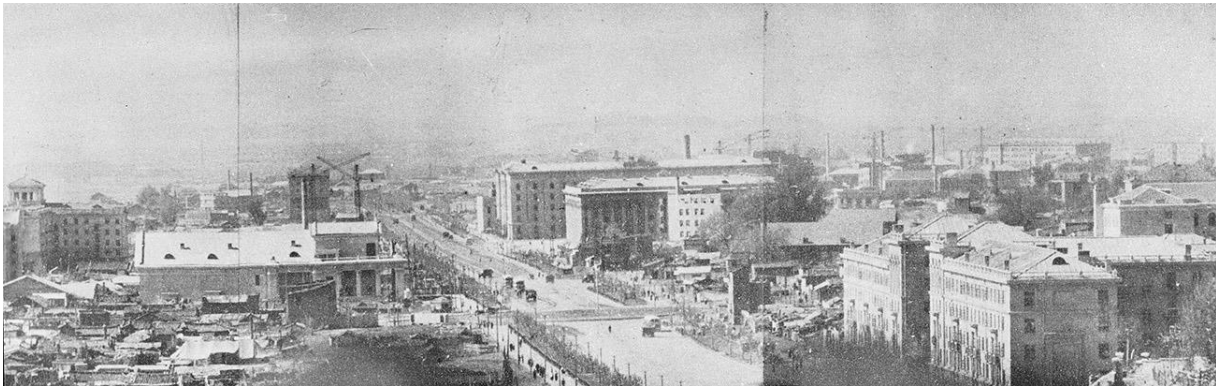


Figure 1.7 Stalin Street and Neighboring Buildings under Construction, Pyongyang  
(Source: *P'yŏngyang chi*)

Another main axis of the city was Mao Zedong Street stretching from the central city to the south. It was 35 meters wide, 2,000 meters long. Three- and four-story buildings were built on both sides of the street. On the northern end of Mao Zedong Street a sports stadium was to be built, and on the southern end was Mao Zedong Square.<sup>47</sup> In addition, a People's Army Street of 40 meters wide and 1,150 meters long was also constructed.<sup>48</sup> As Charles Armstrong asserts, Pyongyang's broad streets lined with fancy residential architecture were planned as a showcase, just as ones in Moscow, East Berlin, and Warsaw.<sup>49</sup> However, behind the show curtain were, long parallel rows of barrack-like, single-story housing structures constructed for ordinary working people.<sup>50</sup>

The North Korean government invested great effort in the reconstruction of administrative buildings and public facilities. The 1953 report from Polish Embassy in Pyongyang witnessed that “[in] the plans to rebuild towns, the DPRK [North Korea] is paying enormous attention to the quick rebuilding of the administrative centers and centers of the

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<sup>45</sup> *P'yŏngyang chi*, 508.

<sup>46</sup> “Report from a Conference Organized by the Government of the DPRK on the Issue of Implementing the Plan of Reconstruction for Pyongyang.”

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *P'yŏngyang Hyangt'o Sa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe* [Compilation Committee of Local History of Pyongyang], *P'yŏngyang chi* [Pyongyang Records] (Pyongyang: P'yŏngyang Hyangt'o Sa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, 1957), 509-510.

<sup>49</sup> Charles K. Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950-1992* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 68.

<sup>50</sup> A. Schinz and E. Dege, “P'yŏngyang—Ancient and Modern—the Capital of North Korea,” *GeoJournal* 22:1 (September 1990), 27.



DPRK's cultural life.”<sup>51</sup> Among important buildings were Kim Il-Sung University, a National Theater, two department stores, Taedonggang Hotel, Moranbong Theatre, Pyongyang Railway Station, Korean Art Gallery, Korean Central Historical Museum, and a sports stadium. Socialist realism was the dominant architectural style of the buildings.

The reconstruction of Pyongyang progressed with great speed. Many ambassadors in Pyongyang and foreign visitors expressed surprise at its rapid recovery. Among them was a French filmmaker, Chris Marker, who visited Pyongyang in 1958. Marker witnessed the high speed of Pyongyang's construction as follows: “the seventh wonder of Korea ... is the work of the builders. ... [F]ive days to make a street—five weeks to construct a house—five months to transform a neighborhood. Korea is growing the way a plant grows in the movies. This is a phenomenon that goes beyond architecture and politics to enter the realm of biology.”<sup>52</sup>

North Korea's quick recovery was partly due to North Korea's full-scale mobilization to rebuild the nation. When the war ended in 1953, the population of South Korea was approximately 21.5 million and North Korea only 8.5 million.<sup>53</sup> In order to make up for their labor shortage, the North Korean government mobilized students, government employees, and virtually all citizens in reconstruction projects; military troops were deployed in civilian construction projects. All workers of any kind had to devote 15 percent of their labor to reconstruction, and all other citizens had to participate in the construction every Sunday.<sup>54</sup> Even during the war when air bombardments continued, the people of Pyongyang salvaged bricks from the ruins and cleared building lots for immediate rebuilding.<sup>55</sup> The construction of the main squares, streets, and a few key state institutions were completed by 1954. Beginning from June of that year, North Korean builders began to construct the rest of the city, much of which was residential.<sup>56</sup> The reconstruction of central Pyongyang was completed by the end of the Five Year Plan in 1961.

### **U.S. Assistance to South Korea**

In the South, meanwhile, the Syngman Rhee government also began its reconstruction with the support of foreign assistance from the “free world.” The United States was responsible for the majority of the aid. From 1954 to 1960, the United States government alone provided economic assistance of approximately \$2.2 billion to South Korea through an array of multiple co-operating channels: the U.S. governmental aid agencies (FOA, later ICA), the United Nations

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<sup>51</sup> “Report No. 4. of the Embassy of the People's Republic of Poland in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the Period of 26 June 1953 top 31 July 1953,” July 31, 1953, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive. Obtained for NKIDP by Jakub Poprocki and translated for NKIDP by Maya Latynski. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114955> (accessed September 23, 2015).

<sup>52</sup> Chris Springer, *North Korea Caught in Time: Images of War and Reconstruction* (Reading: Garnet Pub, 2009), 80.

<sup>53</sup> “A Program for Reconstruction in Korea,” p.1, June 23, 1953, in file Early History & Goals, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0149-07, United Nations Archives.

<sup>54</sup> Charles K. Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950-1992* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 59, 70.

<sup>55</sup> “Report No. 4. of the Embassy of the People's Republic of Poland in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the Period of 26 June 1953 top 31 July 1953,” July 31, 1953, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive. Obtained for NKIDP by Jakub Poprocki and translated for NKIDP by Maya Latynski. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114955> (accessed September 23, 2015).

<sup>56</sup> P'yöngyang Hyangt'o Sa P'yöñch'an Wiwönhoe [Compilation Committee of Local History of Pyongyang], *P'yöngyang chi* [Pyongyang Records] (Pyongyang: P'yöngyang Hyangt'o Sa P'yöñch'an Wiwönhoe, 1957), 507.

Command (UNC), the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA), the U.S. Army, and various voluntary organizations.<sup>57</sup>

The largest single aid channel to Korea was U.S. governmental aid agencies—FOA and ICA. From 1953 to 1961, the two government agencies provided economic assistance of approximately \$1.7 billion to South Korea. On August 1953, the incoming Eisenhower Administration created the U.S. Foreign Operations Administration (FOA) as a single, independent government agency, in order to secure the most efficient results in foreign aid programs worldwide. In July 1955, the responsibilities of the U.S. foreign aid programs returned to the State Department; the FOA was renamed the International Cooperation Administration (ICA).

U.S. military troops also played an important role through a few military-sponsored civilian assistance programs. The U.S. Department of Defense provided its own emergency relief funds, the Civil Relief in Korea (CRIK). It provided emergency aid to South Korea in the form of the provision of medical supplies, foodstuffs, and clothing. In addition, on December 1950, the UN Command established a military unit implementing civilian relief, the United Nations Civil Assistance Command Korea (UNCACK). During the war, the UNCACK provided most of UNC's relief programs. When the war was about to end, on July 25, 1953, UNCACK was renamed the Korean Civil Assistance Command (KCAC).<sup>58</sup> The KCAC staff consisted of U.S. Eighth Army personnel and its civilian employees, and also funded by CRIK. Therefore, KCAC was technically an U.S. military aid program. The KCAC placed emphasis mainly on preventing disease, starvation, and social unrest in South Korea, by providing food, clothing, medical supplies, fertilizer, and some temporary low-cost houses.<sup>59</sup> In addition, the U.S. Eighth Army directly helped South Korean reconstruction through the Armed Forces Assistance to Korea program (AFAK).

Established in December 1950, the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA) was also a significant part of South Korea's reconstruction. If KCAC offered short-term rehabilitation programs, UNKRA was responsible for South Korea's long-term rehabilitation programs. Unlike CRIK and UNCURK that primarily concerned emergency relief, UNKRA's main emphasis was given to Korea's long-term economic rehabilitation, focusing on industry, education, mining, agriculture, fishery, health, and housing. The UNKRA implemented thousands of large and small construction projects throughout South Korea until 1959. But, like other UN's aid operations in Korea, the U.S. government assumed the primary responsibility for UNKRA'S aid operations.<sup>60</sup>

In order to coordinate these complicated aid channels, the U.S. government established the Office of the Economic Coordinator for Korea (OEC) under the UN Command. The OEC coordinated all U.S.- and UN-sponsored aid programs between agencies and in consultation with the Korean government. The U.S. appointed a former U.S. State Department official, C Tylor Wood, as the UNC Economic Coordinator. Being both a representative of the U.S. aid agency and a member of the UNC, the Economic Coordinator helped avoid duplication of activities

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<sup>57</sup> Vaughn Mechau, *Economic Assistance to Korea and Aid Accomplishments, 1954-1960* (Washington, D.C.: United States Agency for International Development, 1961), 1.

<sup>58</sup> The UNCACK began earlier as the UN Public Health and Welfare Detachment established in October 1950.

<sup>59</sup> Robert E. Bondy, "Staff Memorandum on Relief for Korea," p.1, July 10, 1953, in file UNKRA Relations, Liaison, Non-Governmental Organizations, AKF Part A, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0013-04, United Nations Archives.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*



conducted by multiple agencies. Oftentimes, more than two aid agencies worked together in the same project under the coordination of the Economic Coordinator.

Lastly, various voluntary organizations supplemented UN or U.S. aid agencies' activities.<sup>61</sup> By 1960, more than 83 voluntary groups from 10 countries contributed to South Korea's reconstruction, among which 62 were from the U.S.<sup>62</sup> They include Christian aid organizations—such as the Christian Children's Fund, the Church World Service, the National Catholic War Services Council, YWCA, and YMCA—and churches of various denominations such as the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church, the Southern Baptist Church, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the United Church of Canada, the Australian Presbyterian Church, and several Catholic churches. Before and during the colonial period, the Christian missionaries had made substantial contributions in the fields of education, medicine, and public welfare in Korea. During this time, they founded most of the first modern schools, hospitals, and orphanages in Korea. In particular, many prominent Christian schools, including the most prestigious private universities, served as the main channel through which western culture and technology was introduced and a great number of South Korean leaders were educated.<sup>63</sup> During the Cold War, these Korea-based Christian groups became a valuable partner of the U.S. government. They already had a broad knowledge of Korea from missionary experiences, and thus their supplementary assistance effectively reached to areas that government aid might overlook. Although small in scale, the aid offered by these organizations was quick acting and of a permanent nature. In addition, the American Relief for Korea, the American-Korean Foundation, the Foster Parents Organization, the Save the Children Fund, and the Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) contributed to the reconstruction of South Korea. Used clothing accounted for approximately 70 percent of the voluntary aid to Korea, but these organizations spontaneously helped to build various educational, medical, and industrial buildings in postwar South Korea.<sup>64</sup> The KCAC and UNKRA actively supported voluntary agencies by providing necessary installations and helping to ship to Korea aid goods. Led by the U.S. government, these various aid agencies helped South Korea's reconstruction and brought their own ideals to Korea.

### **Simple Construction and Its Moral Duties**

The pattern of South Korea's reconstruction differed greatly from North Korean counterpart. Although U.S. officials carefully planned South Korea reconstruction in each field, none of their plans included a singular vision of the city. Unlike North Korean cities, no comprehensive city plan was developed by foreign advisors in the 1950s. This is in part because South Korean cities suffered relatively less damage than their North Korean counterparts. Seoul, for example, became a battleground four times, but the damage was concentrated on strategically important points and facilities. Roughly speaking, two thirds of the city was relatively intact after the war. But, more importantly, for American advisors, cities were not the main focus of transporting American ideas. Neither architectural style nor planning technique represented America's values and ideologies. It is important to understand that the absence of urban planning

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<sup>61</sup> United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, *UNKRA in Action* (New York: United Nations, 1956), n.pag.

<sup>62</sup> David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 144.

<sup>63</sup> "Christianity in Korea," n.d., in file Religion, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0119-06, United Nations Archives.

<sup>64</sup> Robert E. Bondy, "Staff Memorandum on Relief for Korea," p.6, July 10, 1953.

in U.S. aid programs does not mean that the concept of urban planning was not important in the United States; rather, it was because any coercive, totalitarian element in their aid packet was thought to be un-American and potentially antithetical to what the U.S. was supposed to represent abroad. In South Korea, the U.S. constructed the city from the bottom up, rather than from a single, utopian image. The rehabilitating South Korean cities consisted of numerous grassroots structures, rather than monumental architecture and ostentatious boulevards.

Many North Korea's foreign advisors and Korean participants were from urban planning background, including the master planner of Pyongyang, Jung-Hee Kim. This stands in sharp contrast to the fact that South Korea's foreign advisors consisted mainly of engineers in the U.S. Army, aided self-help housing experts, and private architects. Working with them, Korean partners were also mostly architects and builders who mainly specialized small structures. The main areas of expertise of these "free world" participants was cost-efficient design and construction, rather than the structure's visual unity in the existing urban fabric. Moreover, because of their experiences in army engineering or low-cost housing construction, many American experts and advisors were willing to sacrifice the quality of buildings for quantity.

However, the simple and economical construction in South Korea well served two different moral duties: the American mission to build the "free world" and the moral obligation of modern architecture. As historian John Fousek points out, leading the "free world" was Americans' moral responsibility, which was largely based on their long-standing ideas of chosenness, destiny, and mission. During the Cold War, Americans saw the ideological conflict as their global mission to help the needy and to disseminate their values.<sup>65</sup> In this sense, the provision of the maximum number of necessary structures that helped the Koreans and spread their ideas satisfied Americans' moral obligation most effectively. The simplicity of these structures also accomplished its moral duty of modern architecture. Using architecture as a moralizing force had deep roots in the Enlightenment.<sup>66</sup> Abbé Marc-Antoine Laugier, an eighteenth-century French Jesuit priest and architectural theoretician, hypothesized a rustic "primitive hut" which he argued was a model for all architects to follow. For Laugier, the simplicity of architecture is its essential and inherent nature and thus the elimination of the non-essential parts of the building is the architect's moral responsibility.<sup>67</sup> His idea of an unpretentious architecture was echoed by many pioneers of modern architecture. Most notably, a nineteenth-century Austrian architect, Adolf Loos, highlighted a moral dimension of an unadorned architecture. In his influential essay, "Ornament and Crime," Loos argued that the limited resources have to be used on productive activities, not on unnecessary ornaments that is a waste of human labor, money, and material and thus a crime against the national economy.<sup>68</sup>

The political and economic circumstances in the post-Korean War made it possible that these ideas desirable and in fact inevitable. During the reconstruction period, demand for construction was extremely high, but construction materials were in critically short supply, which required that the limited resources had to be used to create simple, utilitarian structures

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<sup>65</sup> John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

<sup>66</sup> For more on the ideas the primitive hut in architectural history, see Joseph Rykwert, *On Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1972); and David Watkin, *Morality and Architecture: The Development of a Theme in Architectural History and Theory from the Gothic Revival to the Modern Movement* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1977).

<sup>67</sup> Marc-Antoine Laugier, *An Essay on Architecture* (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1977), 12.

<sup>68</sup> Adolf Loos, *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*, trans. Adolf Opel (Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press, 1998), 169.

that served functional needs without excessive elements. Little attention was given to the exterior decorations. The cost-efficient design and construction created simple structures, ones that was aiming at efficiency rather than stylistic expressions. They were not the aesthetic efficiency of avant-garde modern architecture, but practical, economic efficiency. These structures fully served their moral obligation to provide necessary facilities to Koreans.

In terms of building materials, the structures had to be built with any materials at hand. Stone was almost the only locally available material in Korea. Most of the crucial construction materials, such as lumber and cement, were imported from overseas, mostly from the United States, through various aid programs. When the material was not sufficient, even temporary tent structures were built instead. The primary goal of the construction was to create an economically-efficient structure that satisfied its functional needs and minimum structural standards. The typical structure had a cubical form with pitched roof on the top, but a flat roof was not uncommon for concrete structures (Figure 1.8). White plaster walls were rarely used; instead, structural walls were often exposed without expensive finish materials.



Figure 1.8 Naeri School sponsored by the AFAK program, Kyonggi-Do, Korea, 1954  
(source: Records of U.S. Army Operational, Tactical, and Support Organizations, Research Group 338;  
National Archives at College Park)

Almost the only exception to this norm was churches. Church buildings, great and small, often continued to be built of permanent materials, most commonly in stones (Figure 1.9). Christian organizations had built close relations with South Korean and American political leaders and with U.S. aid agencies in Korea as well as with churches in the United States. For these reasons, churches were not only among the first structures rebuilt after the war, but also were relatively well-funded projects. Typically located on high ground, these Western-style churches sharply contrasted with neighboring war-damaged buildings. Once completed, the Protestant notion of saving souls was materialized in these spaces. Churches became important venues for material relief as well as spiritual mission, where relief goods from other “free world” nations were distributed to local people. In addition, both at home and abroad, images of America’s sponsorship of church construction and the churches’ presence in harmony with local

communities became a tool to demonstrate America's spiritual values, which were in stark contrast to communists' repression of religion.



Figure 1.9 The Pong Dong Church, Seoul, 1957  
(source: Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Research Group 111-SC;  
National Archives at College Park)

The universality of construction was another virtue of these structures. In South Korea, the reconstruction efforts were relatively evenly spread throughout the nation and the difference in construction quality across the country was negligible. Regardless of geographical location, the structures being built were very similar in construction materials, building methods, and appearance, because American or Korean army engineers or civilian advisors directly supervised construction projects even in rural towns. Moreover, in order to achieve maximum efficiency, standard plans were often developed and used. A few different versions of standard home and school plans were prepared by several agencies and used for many construction projects. Almost identical houses and schools appeared throughout the country. The nation-wide construction projects played an important role in spreading the notion of efficiency and simplicity in architecture all over the country.

Not unlike in North Korea, South Korea's reconstruction essentially involved a socio-cultural and psychological reorientation program that would transform a traditional agrarian society into a modern, democratic nation-state. Even before the war, there was a huge need for the construction of modern schools, hospitals, and civic buildings. Therefore, post-war reconstruction of Korea was not simply to repair the damage to physical property, but a bigger modernization project by which the new Korea was asked to be a modern and democratic

country. This nation-building program required a massive number of construction projects of schools, hospitals, civic buildings, churches, bridges, and many other types of structures. These small construction projects were a grand public gesture of helping the Koreans in need. Students could receive a modern education in new schools, the sick were treated in new hospitals, Christians practiced their religion at new churches, democratic government was formed in new government offices, and food and used clothing were distributed to people in these U.S.-aided buildings. They became symbolic of modernization in Korea, each also being an important venue in which Koreans experienced American civilization. Overcoming their cultural and linguistic differences, architecture visually represented American values and ideologies.

These buildings, sharply contrasted with existing war-damaged urban fabric, created a heterogeneous cityscape; death and hope, destruction and reconstruction, and the traditional and the modern co-existed in the same city. The striking contrast in urban space was effective in presenting prosperity and progress that the U.S. promised to Korea and other “free world” nations. The visual intervention of newly-built structures would have been less effective if all buildings had been built simultaneously using the same architectural style.

## **Conclusion**

In 1948, Korea became officially separated into communist North and capitalist South, but the cityscapes of the two divided countries were barely different in terms of their architecture and urban structure. Most cities in the two Koreas remained largely Japanese colonial cities, composed of Korean-style wooden structures, Japanese colonial architecture, and some prominent Neo-Classical public buildings as well as a few Art Deco and the International Style architecture from the 1930s. It was the destruction during the Korean War and the subsequent rebuilding projects that created distinct differences between North and South Korean cities. North Koreans and their advisors abroad constructed new socialist cities following the Soviet planning models. A new order was given to the cities; squares, great and small, were newly built, wide and straight streets connected them, and buildings of same style and height were aligned with them. The newly-constructed monumental Stalinist architecture and impressive monumental spaces resembling ones in Moscow, East Berlin, Beijing, and other communist capitals. Meanwhile, South Korean and their foreign advisors’ main efforts were not given to create monumental spaces. Rather, the nationwide construction of small structures for modern institutions and facilities was their main task. Symbolizing America’s benevolence, technology, religion, and power, these structures’ simple appearance and ubiquitous presence modestly but effectively represented the beneficial aspect of the U.S. power over the populace.

The different focus of the two Koreas’ reconstruction left different types of legacy. North Korean reconstruction left the physical legacy of architecture. To this day, North Korean cities are still represented by monumental buildings and spacious squares and boulevards that were primarily shaped during the 1950s. Kim Il-Sung Square is still politically and symbolically the most important space in North Korea (Figure 1.10), and its intersecting street, Stalin Street (today Victory Street) still serves the city’s main axis. Most important administrative buildings around Kim Il-Sung Square and other key public buildings and museums still stand. In South Korea, few structures in the 1950s were intended to be permanent in nature and thus most of the structures could not survive very long, but the massive reconstruction projects left cost-efficient architectural tradition, such as restrained decoration, simple geometric forms, and the economical use of building materials. The functionalist tradition in architecture continued over the following decades even when the country’s economy grew and resources became more abundant.





Figure 1.10 Crowds at Kim Jong-Il Memorial, Kim Il-Sung Square, Pyongyang, 2011 (Source: [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk))

The pattern of North and South Korea's reconstruction was largely shaped by the political interests and ideologies of the Soviet Union and the United States respectively, but the two superpowers were not the single contributor to these large-scale programs. Many other countries devoted to rebuilding the two Koreas. They were often responsible for different sectors of the reconstruction and brought their unique architectural traditions to the two Koreas. The way that these multiple aid channels collaborated in Korea will be the subject of the following chapter.

## Chapter 2. United Power: The United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA)

*The United Nations is now engaged in a conflict in Korea which is frightful in its toll of human life, but which has a hopeful significance. On that Asian peninsula, for the first time in history we have united action, which must prove to this and future generations that collective security can be made to work, even in the face of the bitter international divisions which confront us today.*<sup>1</sup>

- J. Donald Kingsley, 1952

The Korean War was limited in geographic scope to the Korean peninsula, but the majority of the communist and “free world” countries provided financial or material support to North and South Korea respectively. This international collaboration continued after the war. In his statement for the *UN Bulletin* in 1952, the Agent General of the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA), J. Donald Kingsley, emphasized the significance of the United Nations as an apparatus to create and implement a united action from the “free world” nations for South Korea’s reconstruction. Not only could it reduce America’s financial burden, this international collaboration, for Kingsley and other U.S. officials, was perceived as a way to legitimize America’s intervention during and after the war and to strengthen international bonds between the “free world” nations. Thus, foremost among the agencies spearheading rebuilding in South Korea was UNKRA.

Established on December 1950, UNKRA played one of the most important economic reconstruction programs until its discontinuation in 1958. The United States played a leading role as a coordinator and contributor, but various other allied nations directly or indirectly contributed to the reconstruction of South Korea through UNKRA programs. Despite the advantages, the international collaboration revealed its own limitations. The complex decision-making process and insufficient funding from other UN member states caused many operational problems. Especially, UNKRA and other U.S. aid agencies constantly had difficulty in distributing responsibilities. Previous studies on UNKRA often focus on the tensions with various U.S. and UN aid programs.<sup>2</sup> Among others, Steven Hugh Lee argues that UNKRA functioned essentially as an American proxy that sought mainly to support social reconstruction projects, which created conflicts with the South Korean government who was more eager for economic development.<sup>3</sup> By focusing on UNKRA construction projects, this chapter examines the multinational characteristics of South Korea’s reconstruction and America’s leadership in this international collaborative project.

In order to demonstrate historical parallels as well as differences, this chapter compares UNKRA activities in South Korea with “fraternal assistance” to North Korea, whose

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<sup>1</sup> Statement by J. Donald Kingsley for United Nations Day Issue of *UN Bulletin*, September 18, 1952 in file Kingsley Speeches, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0149-09, United Nations Archives.

<sup>2</sup> Gene M. Lyons, *Military Policy and Economic Aid: The Korean Case, 1950-1953* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1961); Jeom-Suk Kim, “The Korean War and the UN’s Role,” in *Nara sarang kukka suho chŏngsin* (Seoul: Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs, 2005), 217-254.

<sup>3</sup> Steven Hugh Lee, “The United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency in War and Peace: An Economic and Social History of Korea in the 1950s,” in *Han’gukkwa 6.25 Chŏnjaeng* [Korea and the Korean War], edited by Yŏng-Ik Yu and Chae-Jin Lee (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2002), 357-396.

reconstruction was also supported by full cooperation of the communist world. North Korea was a step ahead of its rival in the production of construction materials. Under Japanese rule, colonial Korea consisted of the industrial North and agricultural South. Even before the war, South Korea lagged behind in industrial production. Therefore, not only did existing facilities need to be restored, but expansion and new construction of the plants was necessary in South Korea for long-term economic development. UNKRA-assisted plants played a particularly important role in increasing domestic production of construction materials in South Korea.

UNKRA's activities demonstrate the complex, multilateral natures of the reconstruction of Korea. They involved the provision of onsite building materials as well as the construction of large plants for modern construction materials. Ranging from small ordinary constructions to high-style modern architecture, UNKRA construction projects provided an opportunity for Korean architects and builders to experience various architectural traditions through multiple international channels. This chapter ultimately argues that, in spite of its positive impact on the development of modern architecture in South Korea, UNKRA, which conspicuously lacked references to the U.S., aimed at hiding the U.S. presence behind the nameplate of multilateral collaboration, but in fact, its teamwork created inefficiency and an imperialistic nature of its own.

### **The Greatest International Socialist Project of the 1950s**

During the Korean War, China deployed more than 1.3 million ground forces and the Soviet Union supplied tanks, artillery, and other weaponry. Stalin, who did not want to escalate the regional conflict into a full-scale, international war, limited other communist countries' roles to medical, food, and material support, but as the conflict shifted to humanitarian assistance, North Korea's all communist allies were at full strength for its reconstruction.

As historian Charles Armstrong points out, North Korean reconstruction was in its size and importance the greatest international project in the communist world during the 1950s.<sup>4</sup> It was the first and only project in which the Soviet Union, China, and all other communist countries cooperated in helping their "fraternal" communist ally in desperate need. Beginning from the 1960s, the two greatest communist powers—the Soviet Union and China—split ideologically and in their foreign policy. Since then, the world communist camp never fully cooperated as it did in North Korean reconstruction, not did it repeat such large-scale economic assistance programs.<sup>5</sup>

The material and technical assistance from the communist world was indispensable for North Korea's economic rehabilitation and physical reconstruction. Foreign assistance accounted for 31.6 percent of North Korea's budget in 1954.<sup>6</sup> Between 1953 and 1960, North Korea received a total of 879.3 million rubles from socialist countries, or 220 million dollar at then-current exchange rates. The Soviet Union contributed 292.5 million rubles (33.3 percent), China 258.4 million (29.4 percent), East Germany 122.7 million (14 percent), Poland 81.9 million (9.3 percent), Czechoslovakia 61.0 (6.9 percent), and smaller aid from Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria,

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<sup>4</sup> Charles K. Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950-1992* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 52-79.

<sup>5</sup> *Tyranny of the Weak*, 57.

<sup>6</sup> "Memo about the Situation in the DPRK," January 17, 1955, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVPRF F. 0102 Op. 11 P. 65 D. 45. Translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115798> (accessed September 23, 2015).



Albania, Mongolia, and North Vietnam.<sup>7</sup> Largely due to the foreign assistance, the economic growth rate of North Korea was far ahead of South Korea's. North Korea recovered the production of construction materials also very quickly. In 1959, North Korea domestically produced 451,000 tons of steel and 1,926,000 tons of cement, which had increased by more than three times from the prewar production.<sup>8</sup> It was significantly higher than South Korean production. For example, in the first half of 1959, North Korea produced 223,000 tons of steel, which was more than 11.5 times as much as South Korea production. Cement production was 930,000 tons, more than six times that of South Korean figure.<sup>9</sup>

Not surprisingly, the Soviet Union played the most important role in North Korea's reconstruction as the largest contributor and a coordinator of North Korean reconstruction. North Korea's first Three-Year Plan was made by Soviet advisors with help from North Koreans. Besides foodstuff and everyday supplies, the USSR provided North Korea construction equipment—such as bulldozers, trucks, cranes—and building materials. Also, the Soviet Union provided architectural drawings for approximately 140 buildings, and dispatched their technicians and engineers as technical advisors. For example, Soviet technicians introduced prefabricated reinforced concrete houses.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the Soviet Union helped build more than 40 new factories with economic and technical aid, including large-scale brick factories and a plywood factory in Kilju.<sup>11</sup> Also, North Korea's first modern furniture factory, the Pyongyang Furniture Factory, was constructed with the help of one million rubles in Soviet aid, or approximately 250,000 dollars. The factory had a daily production capacity of up to 500 chairs, 200 desks, and 120 cabinets.<sup>12</sup>

Both North and South Korean officials and their foreign advisors understood that the provision of construction materials was one of the most critical components of the reconstruction. In order to facilitate the provision of timber to North Korea, in 1957, the Soviet government allowed North Korea timber harvest in Soviet forests. North Korea sent workers and the USSR furnished machinery, specialists, and worker's quarters.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, Soviet aid

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<sup>7</sup> In addition, Romania contributed 22 million rubles, Hungary 21 million, Bulgaria 18.7 million, Albania 0.6 million, Mongolia 0.4 million, and North Vietnam 0.1. For more, see *Tyranny of the Weak*, 56; originally, ред. Ю.В. Ванин, СССР и Корея [The USSR and Korea] (Moscow: USSR Academy of Sciences, 1988), 256.

<sup>8</sup> "The Economy of the DPRK and South Korea in the Postwar Period," May 16, 1960, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVPRF fond 0102, opis 16, papka 87, delo 29. Translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116327> (accessed September 23, 2015).

<sup>9</sup> In the first half of 1959, South Korea produced 20,000 tons of steel and 149,000 tons of cement. Meanwhile, North Korea produced 223,000 tons of steel and 930,000 tons of cement during the same time period. For more, see "The Economy of the DPRK and South Korea in the Postwar Period," May 16, 1960, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVPRF fond 0102, opis 16, papka 87, delo 29. Translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116327> (accessed September 23, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> P'yŏngyang Hyangt'o Sa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe [Compilation Committee of Local History of Pyongyang], *P'yŏngyang chi* [Pyongyang Records] (Pyongyang: P'yŏngyang Hyangt'o Sa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, 1957), 522-523.

<sup>11</sup> *Tyranny of the Weak*, 62.

<sup>12</sup> "Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 20 August 1957," August 20, 1957, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVPRF F. 0102, Op. 13, P. 72, Delo 5, Listy 193-236. Translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115651> (accessed September 23, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> "Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 26-28 July 1957," July 26, 1957, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVPRF F. 0102, Op. 13, P. 72, Delo 5, Listy 146-164. Translated by Gary Goldberg. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115638> (accessed September 23, 2015).

built the Madon Cement Plant that could produce 400,000 tons of cement annually.<sup>14</sup> East Bloc countries also played a part in the efforts. Romania aided the construction of brick tile and cement factories. Bulgaria assisted in building plants for brick tile and wooden parquet.<sup>15</sup>

China provided a great amount of consumer goods to North Korea. Especially, the Chinese army assisted North Korea with its massive workforce. Roughly 1.2 million Chinese military personnel remained after the war and they supplemented North Korea's massive loss of human resources during the war. They helped rebuild schools, factories, bridges, and other labor-intensive construction projects. In addition, between 1954 and 1956, China sent more than 770 engineers, architects, and construction experts to help Pyongyang's reconstruction.<sup>16</sup>

Pyongyang was a microcosm of the reconstruction of all of North Korea. It was largely built with Soviet aid and technical assistance, but each communist country was assigned to build a few residential districts or factories. For example, Romania built the Pyongyang Central Hospital. Hungary and Bulgaria assisted housing constructions. These various countries brought to Pyongyang their unique architectural style and street pattern that they modeled themselves on. Through this multinational assistance, new ideas, designs, standards, and methods in planning and construction were brought to North Korean built environment and architectural practice.

In addition to the Pyongyang project, several East Bloc states were assigned independent responsibility to build one local North Korean city. Czechoslovakia was responsible for the design and construction of Chongjin, another major industrial city in North Korea, Romania was responsible for Sunchon, and Poland was for Wonsan. The German Democratic Republic (East Germany) assumed the responsibility of rebuilding North Korea's second largest city and the most important industrial center, Hamhung.

### **The Hamhung Project**

The Hamhung project was the second largest urban reconstruction project in North Korea. In the project, a total of seventeen communist countries contributed their share of the work. Unlike most countries that were involved in the construction of factories and other industrial installations, East Germany assumed enormous responsibilities for urban and housing reconstruction in the Hamhung area.<sup>17</sup> Between 1950 and 1962, East Germany provided a total of 490 million rubles in aid to North Korea, or approximately 120 million dollars, of which 200 million rubles were spent for the Hamhung project. Especially, from 1955 when the reconstruction of Hamhung began, most East German aid money (200 million rubles) was given to the project.<sup>18</sup>

Withdrawing from the north, the UN forces completely devastated this North Korean industrial town and thus its rebuilding had to start from scratch. The Hamhung project included various types of surveys, designs, and construction, from land survey and city planning to the construction of public buildings, schools, housing, streets, factories, and other large-scale

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<sup>14</sup> "Journal of Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK A.M. Puzanov for 9 April 1957," April 09, 1957, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVPRF F. 0102, Op. 13, P. 72, Delo 5, Listy 1-15. Translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115599> (accessed September 23, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> "Information on the Situation in the DPRK," April, 1955, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, RGANI, Fond 5, Opis 28, Delo 314, listi 34-59. Obtained for NKIDP by James Person and translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114590> (accessed September 23, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> *Tyranny of the Weak*, 70-71.

<sup>17</sup> Myeon Kim, "Economic Cooperation between North Korea and East Germany," *North Korean Studies Review* 7:2 (2002), 101-102.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 95-97.

infrastructure. In its scope and estimated budget, the project was a financially demanding task for East Germany whose own rebuilding was still underway. The motivation behind the German involvement in this project was undoubtedly from the Soviet leadership, considering that some of East German aid to North Korea made a substitution for the reparations for World War II to the Soviet Union.<sup>19</sup> But, the sponsorship of this large-scale humanitarian project also provided a unique opportunity for the East Germans to restore their international reputation, which was tainted during the Second World War.<sup>20</sup> The director of the Hamhung project, Erich Selbmann, expressed East German's high ambition for the project to come back as a new peaceful country into the international community, as follows:

[I]t is to be expected that, after a very long period, in which the name of Germany was associated with destruction and annihilation, and a brief intermediate period, in which Germany could only passively participate in the international field, the German Democratic Republic can participate in this worldwide process of establishing peace.<sup>21</sup>

For this massive task, East Germany established the Construction Staff Korea (Baustab Korea) in Berlin and recruited a large group of architects and technicians for the overseas construction projects. Named as the German Working Group (Deutschen Arbeitsgruppe: DAG) to Hamhung, the team originally consisted of 188 members of various group of experts such as urban planners, architects, landscape architects, engineers, machinist, geographers, land surveyors, and a variety of artisans. Some of the key DAG members were related to high-ranking East German politicians. The director of the team, Erich Selbmann, was the brother of Heavy Industry Minister Fritz Selbmann and the deputy director and the team's chief architect, Hans Grotewohl, was the first prime minister of East Germany Otto Grotewohl.<sup>22</sup> In addition to them, many German elite engineers and architects participated in the project. Notable members included Hartmut Colden, Peter Doehler, Erich Robert Ressel, Mathias Schubert, Johannes Schroth, Claus-Peter Werner, Hartmut Colden, Peter Doehler, Hugo Namslauer, Hubert Matthes, Gerhard Stiehler, and Konrad Püschel.<sup>23</sup> Many of them later became key members of East German development projects in Asia and Africa, such as Vietnam, Zanzibar, and Yemen.<sup>24</sup>

In Hamhung, the DAG began planning the master plan of the city in May of 1955 and completed by October of the year.<sup>25</sup> Around this time, the major construction projects in Pyongyang entered the closing stage. The two-year gap created profound differences between the architecture and city planning of Pyongyang and Hamhung. In 1953, when North Koreans embarked on the Pyongyang project, Stalinist architecture and planning exercised decisive influence over the entire communist world. Yet, the political situation quickly shifted after

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>20</sup> Young-sun Hong, *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 62-63.

<sup>21</sup> *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime*, 63.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> For more about East German participants in the Hamhung project, see Young-sun Hong, *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 63-64; Myeon Kim, "Economic Cooperation between North Korea and East Germany," *North Korean Studies Review* 7:2 (2002), 98; and Dong-Sam Shin, *Sin Tong-sam k'ölleksyön: Togirin i pon chönhu pokkugi üi Pukhan* [Shin Dong-Sam Collection] (Seoul: Nunpit Publishing Company, 2013), 477, 482.

<sup>24</sup> *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime*, 64.

<sup>25</sup> *Sin Tong-sam k'ölleksyön: Togirin i pon chönhu pokkugi üi Pukhan*, 7.

Stalin's death in 1953, so did the associated architectural style. His successor Nikita Khrushchev castigated the "excesses" of Stalinist style. In his 1954 speech to the All Union Conference of Builders and Architects in Moscow, Khrushchev called for a more practical and efficient architecture that could be built faster and cheaper. Some of these changed principles were brought to Hamhung.<sup>26</sup>

Not unlike the Pyongyang plan, the original plan of Hamhung in 1955 displayed the hierarchy of power of the city. In the central part of the city, the main square form a focal point of radiating streets and several smaller squares of lower rank (Figure 2.1). Yet, its residential areas in the outskirts of the city demonstrated its influence from functionalist urban planning. According to a North Korean participant DongSam Sin's memoir, the planning of Hamhung was greatly influenced by the neighborhood unit principle.<sup>27</sup> Originated in the early twentieth-century United States, the concept of the neighborhood unit necessitated self-contained residential communities. In Hamhung, large-scale courtyard apartment buildings were employed to serve the functions.



Figure 2.1 Hamhung Master Plan, c.1955 (Source: *Sin Tong-sam k'ölleksyön*)

From the outset, the Hamhung plan sought to surpass the reconstruction of Pyongyang in its quality and efficiency. In fact, the East Germans used the Soviet Union's achievement in Pyongyang as a comparison to theirs. The DAG often emphasized the superior quality of their buildings and interior fixtures.<sup>28</sup> However, the Hamhung project demonstrated a different complexion of the reconstruction of local cities in North Korea. Unlike the Pyongyang project

<sup>26</sup> *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime*, 72.

<sup>27</sup> *Sin Tong-sam k'ölleksyön: Togirin i pon chönhu pokkugi ūi Pukhan*, 479.

<sup>28</sup> *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime*, 71.

that was relatively well-funded, well-equipped, and well-staffed, other cities were constantly plagued by a chronic shortage of construction materials and skilled technicians and workers. Prioritizing the construction of its capital and industrial facilities, the central government of North Korea was reluctant to provide valuable resources from foreign aid to local city construction. Frequently, provincial authorities had to work with their own resources without sufficient governmental support. It was difficult for local builders and their foreign advisors to build high-style monumental architecture, like Pyongyang had at the time. Because of a severe shortage of crucial construction materials such as cement, lumber, and steel, the Germans built several onsite adobe brick factories, cement kilns, and foundries (Figure 2.2).<sup>29</sup> In particular, adobe bricks, made out of locally available clay, were considered to fill in for other insufficient materials, particularly in housing construction. German soil engineers were dispatched to Hamhung for this task.<sup>30</sup>

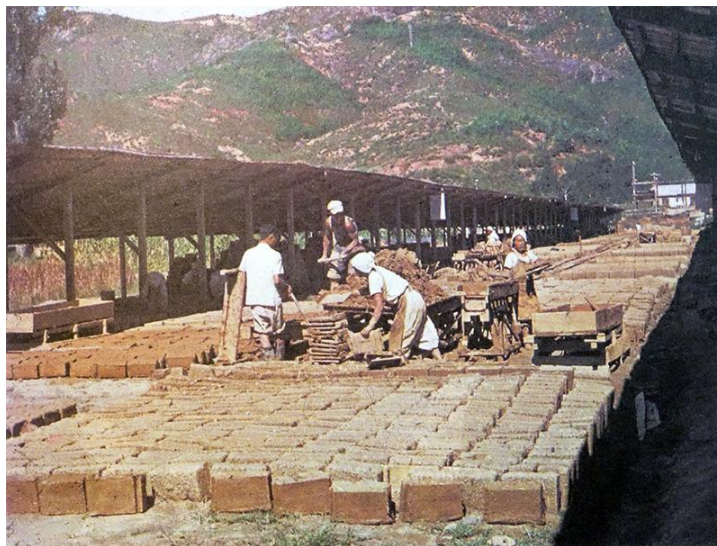


Figure 2.2 Adobe Brick Factory, Hamhung, c.1955 (Source: *Sin Tong-sam k'ölleksyön*)

The shortage of German technicians in Hamhung was another problem. Much of the personnel served on short-term appointments, but the returning members were not replaced by newcomers in a timely manner. By the end of 1956, the number of Germans locally working for the Hamhung project decreased to 79, excluding 46 accompanying family members. By 1958, the number dwindled to approximately 35.<sup>31</sup> Not surprisingly, a shortage of technicians and supervisors hampered the planning and implementation of construction projects.<sup>32</sup>

The international collaboration provided a unique opportunity for the communist world to build connections and solidarity between the countries. For example, a major boulevard in Hamhung was named Wilhelm-Pieck-Allee in memory of the president of East Germany Friedrich Wilhelm Reinhold Pieck.<sup>33</sup> In addition, the assistance from foreign countries had high propaganda value to the North Korean people. The deployed Germans often paraded along with North Korean people in the country's national and international commemorative days. In 1957,

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>30</sup> *Sin Tong-sam k'ölleksyön: Togirin i pon chönhu pokkugi ūi Pukhan*, 481.

<sup>31</sup> *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime*, 66.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 63-64.

<sup>33</sup> "Economic Cooperation between North Korea and East Germany," 102.



at a parade commemorating the anniversary of the foundation of North Korea, East German technicians and their families paraded in front of the platform decorated with flags of many communist countries (Figure 2.3). Led by a plain red flag, symbolizing communism, and flanked by East German and North Korean national flags, they were carrying a sign reading “Lebe Die Internationale Solidarität (Long Live International Solidarity).” The foreign comrades participating in North Korean national celebrations could demonstrate to local people that not only the Soviet Union and China but also many other nations around the world support Kim Il-Sung's communist government.



Figure 2.3 East German Technicians and Their Families in a Parade Commemorating the Anniversary of the Foundation of North Korea, Hamhung, September 9, 1957  
(source: *East German Architect Russel's North Korean Reminiscences*)

Yet, this “fraternal assistance” did not always reflect the collaborative spirit. In fact, the North Korean officials’ low-profile for local construction projects and East German government’s high ambition were constantly conflicting with each other in questions of where the German aid money had to be spent. The central government of North Korea always insisted to prioritize the national economic development over the quality of local construction projects. North Korean officials also proposed to reduce cost per housing unit by reducing housing size, installing communal toilets and showers instead of private bathrooms, and lowering ceiling height, all of which were in direct contradiction to what East Germans originally envisioned.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, East German’s ambition for the Hamhung project mainly emerged from their desire to advertise the new modern German state internationally. The political value of the Hamhung project could be achieved only when they concentrated all their resources and efforts on the single showcase.<sup>35</sup> In response to North Korea’s request to divert the German resources to the construction of industrial facilities in other parts of the country, East German officials insisted to devote their efforts to the Hamhung area as much as possible. However, in 1956, the East German government came to an agreement to expand the areas of their duties to include the

<sup>34</sup> *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime*, 79.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

construction of industrial plants and infrastructure of the neighboring cities of Hungnam and Bongun.<sup>36</sup> The bigger geographical responsibility without assigning extra funds represented a serious threat to the quality of the Hamhung project.

As a result, the Hamhung project became a lost opportunity for the East Germans. In a picture of Hamhung around 1957, with rebuilding efforts just underway, the majority of structures were simple, small buildings except for a few large governmental buildings (Figure 2.4). Large apartment blocks with courtyards in their original plan never materialized. Moreover, the clash of opinions and cultural differences between Korean and German officials and technicians often set the two countries at odds and sometimes fueled racial tensions. Some North Koreans likened German participants' authoritarian attitude to the Japanese colonial rulers. Some criticisms went further and drew uncomfortable parallels with Hitler's Nazi Germany, which was the exact opposite image that Germans desired to create around the world.<sup>37</sup>

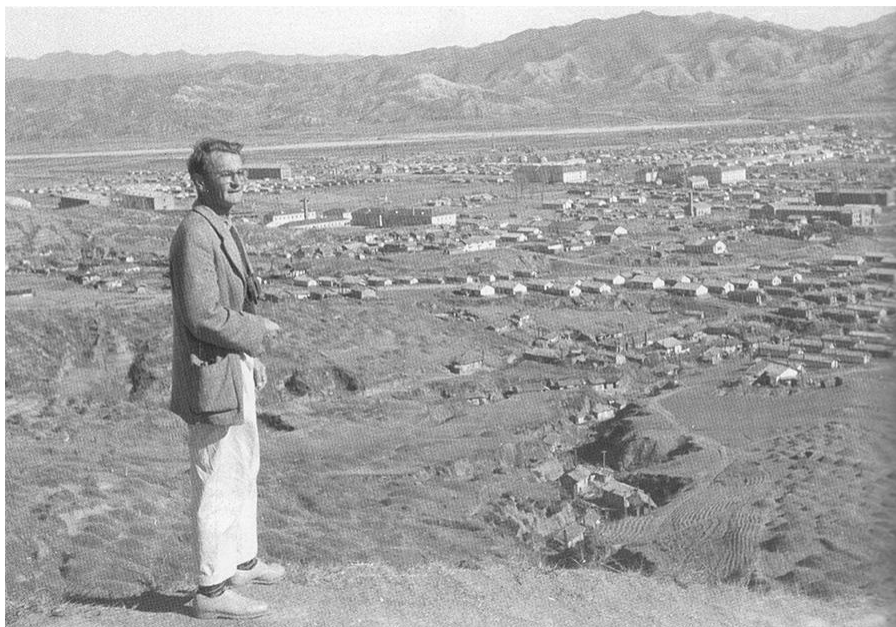


Figure 2.4 East German Architect, Erich Ressel, with the Reconstructing Hamhung in the Background, c. 1957  
(source: *East German Architect Russel's North Korean Reminiscences*)

The East Germans wanted to opt out of the Hamhung project that was no longer politically beneficial to them. By 1960, the East German government drastically cut down its aid to North Korea. The Hamhung project was officially over on September 15, 1962, by which time East Germans only spent 63 percent of the budget originally planned for the project.<sup>38</sup> As historian Young-sun Hong clearly points out, the “fraternal assistance” from the communist countries was neither simply imposed by the Soviet Union nor solely driven by humanitarian concerns. Each aid project was always the result of conflicts and negotiations between North Korea and its communist allies whose national interests were not always in line with each other.<sup>39</sup> The

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 69-70.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 62.

international collaboration, the leadership of a superpower, and the conflicts between the allies was not an unfamiliar scene in South Korea.

### **The United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency**

In South Korea, the U.S. provided economic aid through multiple channels. During the war, UNCACK and the UN Command was mainly responsible for the civilian relief program. These military-sponsored programs were essentially short-term activities that aimed at supporting their military operations. Not surprisingly, their aid efforts mainly concentrated on those areas that had direct or potential significance to military operations.<sup>40</sup> It was UNKRA that carried out Korea's long-term rehabilitation programs.

On December 1, 1950, the UNKRA was established by the UN General Assembly as a civil agency. The UN Secretary General designated a former New Deal politician, J. Donald Kingsley as the first Agent General of UNKRA.<sup>41</sup> When appointed, Kingsley was chief of the International Refugee Organization (IRO), which was another UN aid agency dealing with the refugee problems caused by World War II. Several former IRO employees also joined UNKRA with Kingsley.<sup>42</sup> UNKRA's main goal was to lay the groundwork for the economic and social recovery of a unified Korea. The main emphasis was given to the rehabilitation of industry. In order to make a self-supporting Korean economy, UNKRA rehabilitated and constructed schools, hospitals, housing, transportation facilities, and various industrial facilities for mining, forestry, fishing, irrigation, and flood control. In addition, the agency provided technical assistance in each field.

The UNKRA was the UN's first effort to collectively aid a single country's rebuilding.<sup>43</sup> In this "peaceful" conflict, the countries that had not participated in a hot war also contributed to rebuilding the two Korea. Although the U.S. was the greatest contributor, by 1956, 36 countries directly contributed to UNKRA projects, and additional 13 countries financially supported the agency.<sup>44</sup> As of September 8, 1953, among UNKRA's 417 staff members, 161 were Americans, 68 British, and 188 people of different nationality. Among 265 professionals in UNKRA, 107 were Americans and 158 non-Americans.<sup>45</sup>

The UNKRA also worked in cooperation with the South Korean government. Like all other aid programs, the Economic Coordinator appointed by the U.S. coordinated the UNKRA

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<sup>40</sup> *United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency Historical Narratives*, p.30, n.d., in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0168-no folder, United Nations Archives.

<sup>41</sup> Walter Simmons, "UNKRA Earns Bad Name in Korean Role," *The Times-Herald* (September 1, 1953). in file UNKRA, Adverse Publicity, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0046-03, United Nations Archives.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> American Regional Office, UNKRA, "UNKRA History," p.2, February 5, 1960, in file History Outlines, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0168-07, United Nations Archives.

<sup>44</sup> 36 direct contributing nations include Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Burma, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Honduras, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, Vatican, Venezuela, and Vietnam. 13 additional participating nations include Republic of China (Taiwan), Cuba, Ecuador, Germany, Haiti, Iceland, India, Japan, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, Thailand, and Uruguay. For more, see *The United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, UNKRA in Action* (New York: United Nations, 1956), n.pag.

<sup>45</sup> Letter from Bill Reiche, Acting Director of the Office of Public Information, UNKRA, to James V. Spadea, Spadea Syndicate, October 5, 1953, in file UNKRA, Adverse Publicity, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0046-03, United Nations Archives.



programs with other aid programs being implemented in South Korea, such as the Foreign Operations Administration (FOA), the Korean Civil Assistance Command (KCAC), the Armed Forces Assistance to Korea program (AFAK), and other voluntary aid organizations. Specialized UN agencies helped UNKRA activities, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations Technical Assistance Administration (TAA).<sup>46</sup> In addition, UNKRA supported activities of various private voluntary organizations played in South Korea.

UNKRA's construction programs began after the Armistice in 1953. Until 1960, when all UNKRA construction projects ended, UNKRA contributed a total of \$122 million aid to South Korea, covering a total of 4,944 building sites all over the country.<sup>47</sup> The UNKRA played a particularly important role in housing construction. It attempted to relieve the acute housing shortage mainly by providing building materials, introducing new construction methods, and building experimental, low-cost housing projects.

### **Landcrete Machine**

While a heated battle continued on the front lines, UNKRA prepared for the immediate construction of large numbers of houses. As was the case in North Korea, the biggest problem in this task was an extreme shortage of crucial building materials, such as lumber, cement, steel, and bricks. A shortage of lumber was particularly critical in home construction because lumber was essential for wall framing for the construction of small, traditional Korean houses. Moreover, the Korean government's tendency to use imported materials—cement, lumber, steel—for industrial uses made the material shortage in housing market more severe.<sup>48</sup>

The agency specifically aimed to utilize local resources to the greatest extent possible and reduce the importation and transportation costs to a minimum. Barton P. Jenks of UNKRA's Program Analysis Division surveyed and wrote a report on housing conditions in South Korea in 1952.<sup>49</sup> In his report, Jenks expressed the necessity of reducing the quantity of imported construction materials, especially lumber. Jenks specifically recommended the use of earth construction—such as rammed earth or the stabilized earth block methods—and inexpensive lightweight roofing materials.

The International Housing Activities Staff (IHAS) of the Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA) provided technical advice in survey and selection.<sup>50</sup> The HHFA conducted a comprehensive survey of the usefulness and feasibility of various building materials and methods of different countries that would be adaptable to Korean situations. A few earth block machines on the international market were considered. European and African countries had recent experience in using earth blocks in their undeveloped areas and thus the earth block machines

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<sup>46</sup> Walter Simmons, "UNKRA Earns Bad Name in Korean Role."

<sup>47</sup> *United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency Historical Narratives*, p.52, n.d., in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0168-no folder, United Nations Archives.

<sup>48</sup> Letter from C. H. Perry to John E. Goodison, May 13, 1953, in file UNKRA, Relief Programme, Provision of Shelter: Housing, General, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0025-07, United Nations Archives.

<sup>49</sup> Barton P. Jenks, "Korean Housing Survey," August 26, 1952, in file Korean Housing Survey, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0181-06, United Nations Archives.

<sup>50</sup> Housing and Home Finance Agency, "Preliminary Outline of Investigation for UNKRA of Building Methods and Materials for Korea," November 21, 1952, in file Relief Programme, Provision of Shelter: Housing, General, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0025-07, United Nations Archives.

manufactured in these countries received greater attention, such as “Diatol” from Egypt, and “Winget” from England.<sup>51</sup>

The UNKRA also consulted with pre-fabricated and pre-cut buildings manufacturers that had experience building their products overseas. Among the U.S. firms were the Hodgson Company and the Airform Corporation. The Hodgson Company was the oldest manufacturer of pre-fabricated buildings in the U.S. and regularly exported their pre-fabricated buildings to Europe, Latin America, Alaska, Hawaii, and the Near East.<sup>52</sup> The Airform International Construction Corporation was pre-cast thin shell concrete house manufacturer, and built military housing in Pakistan.<sup>53</sup> In addition, pre-fabricated housing unit manufacturers in West Germany and Sweden were also considered. The Ondulit from Italy was also considered as a lightweight, aluminum foil roofing materials.<sup>54</sup>



Landcrete machine.

Figure 2.5 Landcrete Machine  
(Source: *La construction en béton de terre*)

In the spring of 1953, UNKRA concluded that it would be more practical to import simple machinery, rather than large quantities of bulky materials or pre-fabricated houses.<sup>55</sup> UNKRA’s final decision was an earth block machine from South Africa (Figure 2.5). Manufactured by Landsborough Findlay in Johannesburg, Landcrete machine was hand-operated and produced compressed earth cement blocks. The Landcrete machine produced blocks by

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<sup>51</sup> Letter from Cyril H. Perry of Division of Supply to Barton P. Jenks, “Subject: Earth Block Machines,” September 2, 1952, in file Relief Programme, Provision of Shelter: Housing, General, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0025-07, United Nations Archives.

<sup>52</sup> Letter from Paul J. Sullivan, Hudgson Co. to Frank Ray, UNKRA, July 23, 1951, in file Relief Programme, Provision of Shelter: Housing Survey, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0026-01, United Nations Archives.

<sup>53</sup> Letter from Earle C. Marshall to Frederick C. Spryer, December 30, 1952, in file Relief Programme, Provision of Shelter: Housing, General, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0025-07, United Nations Archives.

<sup>54</sup> ACME, “Ondulit Specifications,” October 1952, in file Relief Programme, Provision of Shelter: Housing, General, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0025-07, United Nations Archives.

<sup>55</sup> Letter from Russell S. McClure to Frank Ray, Chief of UNKRA Geneva Office, September 3, 1952, in file Relief Programme, Provision of Shelter: Housing Survey, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0026-01, United Nations Archives.

compressing a mixture of earth and cement, typically in the ratio of fifteen to one. Each Landcrete Machine could produce 700 to 900 blocks a day.<sup>56</sup> The blocks were relatively durable and fireproof. The block maker expected that the blocks had a potential life of twenty to thirty years.<sup>57</sup> Landcrete blocks were used as inexpensive building materials in walls, foundations, or floors of one- or two-story houses, schools, offices, and warehouses. Landcrete blocks were widely used in Africa at the time and were expected to solve many construction problems in postwar Korea. First of all, transportation costs could be eliminated because Landcrete machines were movable and they could produce blocks on the building site. In addition, it was simple to operate by unskilled laborers.

The UNKRA purchased one hundred Landcrete machines and 42,000 tons of cement from South Africa with \$830,000. In principal, UNKRA projects had to be paid by donor countries, but the South African government was not willing to contribute to UNKRA. Payment was made from the U.K. contribution in pounds sterling.<sup>58</sup> Technical experts from the manufacturer visited South Korea for approximately three months to undertake field tests and train Korean personnel in the operation of the machines (Figure 2.6).<sup>59</sup> Landcrete machines were widely used in many small-scale construction projects sponsored by UNKRA and other agencies, but their primary use was housing construction where the need was the greatest.



Figure 2.6 UNKRA Experimental Housing Project, n.d. (Source: UNKRA series, UN Archives)

<sup>56</sup> "Housing Program in Korea," c. 1953, in file Public Information and Liaison, Requests for Information (Part 2), in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0039-09, United Nations Archives.

<sup>57</sup> Letter from Export Division of Landsborough, Findlay to D. L. Rolbein, UNKRA, September 16, 1955, in file Public Information and Liaison, Requests for Information (Part 2), in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0039-09, United Nations Archives.

<sup>58</sup> American Regional Office, UNKRA, "Country: Union of South Africa," p.2, December 1953, in file Civilian Relief to Korea, Union of South Africa, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0166-05, United Nations Archives.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from John E. Goodison to J. R. Jordaan, January 21, 1953, in file Relief Programme, Provision of Shelter: Housing, General, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0025-07, United Nations Archives.

## Earth Block Housing

The South Korean government estimated that approximately one million housing units were needed in order to replace war-damaged houses and accommodate refugees.<sup>60</sup> During the war, the UN Command's civil aid agency, Korean Civil Assistance Command (KCAC), had undertaken temporary and resettlement housing program for refugees and displaced people. From 1952 to 1954, KCAC helped to build a total of 32,000 houses. In this program, KCAC provided building materials with which Korean builders constructed houses in a traditional Korean manner. KCAC engineers conducted extensive research on the construction, using indigenous building materials. Many of these houses were built with UN-imported materials or rammed earth construction.<sup>61</sup>

However, the KCAC housing program was essentially a short-term emergency program and most of KCAC-aided houses were in rural and resettlement areas.<sup>62</sup> It was UNKRA's task to provide a long-term solution to Korea's housing problems, especially in urban areas. Soon after the armistice, UNKRA undertook an experimental housing construction program. It was a joint project with the South Korean government; UNKRA furnished Landcrete machines and all imported building materials as well as technical assistance and the South Korean government provided the land and local materials.

The UNKRA housing development project was South Korea's first postwar national housing plan. For this task, the South Korea's Ministry of Social Affairs reactivated a dormant National Housing Authority during the war. Under the supervision of UNKRA Housing Division, the Korean Institute of Architects developed a few standard low-cost housing designs, including the city-type, rural-type, two-story row house, and apartment unit. The goal was to experiment with housing design and construction using indigenous materials to the maximum extent and reducing imported building materials.

The house was traditional in its form. The floor plan was typical for Korea and had the traditional floor heating system, the ondol floor. The traditional Korean roof tiles covered wooden trusses, and doors, windows, and floors were made of typical Korean wooden construction. External walls were plastered inside and out. Both city- and rural-type units were 324 square feet. The city type plan consisted of two bedrooms with ondol floors, a wooden floor living room and kitchen, and a toilet attached to the house. The rural type plan contained two ondol floor bedrooms, a wooden floor hallway, and kitchen (Figure 2.7).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> "Housing," p.1, August 20, 1953, in file Housing, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0118-08, United Nations Archives.

<sup>61</sup> "Report on UNKRA Earth Block Housing Program," p.1, December 15, 1954, in file Earth Block Equipment, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0088-04, United Nations Archives.

<sup>62</sup> *United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency Historical Narratives*, Housing, p.1.

<sup>63</sup> "Report on UNKRA Earth Block Housing Program," p.2, December 15, 1954, in file Earth Block Equipment, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0088-04, United Nations Archives.

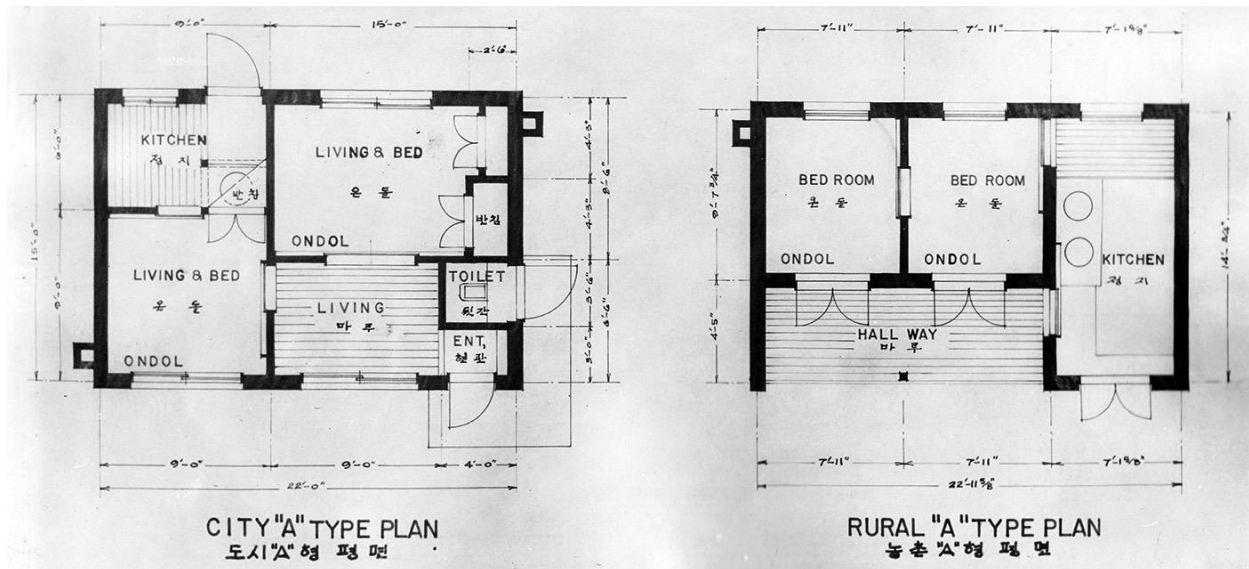


Figure 2.7 Standard Koran House Plans, c.1953

(Source: General Records of the Department of State, Research Group 59; National Archives at College Park)

In 1953, UNKRA implemented the first 5,500 housing units. The National Housing Authority chose a few project sites throughout the country, including Seoul, Pusan, Suwon, Anyang, Inchon, Choonsun and Chunju. Among them 2,500 units were planned in Seoul. Multiple rural- and city-type housing units were built. Twenty Korean housing technicians received training from Landsborough Findlay.<sup>64</sup>

In July 1953, the first units—three city-type and one rural-type houses—began as a demonstration project. The first construction materials arrived in the early autumn of 1953.<sup>65</sup> One of the projects was also built in Chungnungdong, Seoul (Figure 2.8). Each earth-block single-family house required only \$380 in imported building materials and could be built in two weeks.<sup>66</sup> The units were sold for hwan 256,000 per unit, or \$1,420 in 1953 dollars. Alternatively, the buyer could pay a down payment of approximately one-fifth of the total cost and a monthly payment for eight years.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>64</sup> United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, *Narrative Report on Status of Fiscal Year 1953 Program* (1953), 15.

<sup>65</sup> United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, *UNKRA in Action* (New York: United Nations, 1956), n.pag.

<sup>66</sup> "U.N. Makes Houses for South Korea Out of Earth Blocks," *The New York Times* (December 14, 1953), 2. in file Public Information and Liaison, Requests for Information (Part 2), in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0039-09, United Nations Archives.

<sup>67</sup> UNKRA Korea Headquarters, "Statement by the Agent General of UNKRA for the Information of Senator Knowland," p.4, February 20, 1954; UD-07D 78, Box 6; Records Pertaining to United Nations Korean Relief Organizations, 1950-1960, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.



Figure 2.8 UNKRA Housing Project at Hweekee-Dong, Seoul.  
Note that a church and a school in the background were also newly constructed.  
(Source: UNKRA series, UN Archives)

This unusual earth block housing project drew media attention from the U.S. and other developing countries.<sup>68</sup> For example, the *Iraq Times* published an article on UNKRA-sponsored earth block housing project at Anam Dong, Seoul, and in September 1953, an Iraqi importer expressed an interest of the machinery to the UN.<sup>69</sup> A few months later, in 1954, the Alaska Housing Authority also asked about the possibility of utilizing Landcrete machines in their Remote Dwelling Program, by which to relocate the Eskimo-native from a native dwelling to an improved housing unit.<sup>70</sup>

The largest number of UNKRA-assisted houses were small cottage-type houses, yet UNKRA built approximately 1,000 two-story building units in three suburban areas of Seoul—Shindang-Dong, Wolkok-Dong, and Chungryang-Ri (Figure 2.9). Intended to save ground space in more densely populated areas, each two-story building had three to six housing units. Each home cost approximately \$2,000, payable in an initial down payment and thereafter in monthly

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<sup>68</sup> “U. N. Makes Houses for South Korea Out of Earth Blocks,” *The New York Times* (December 14, 1953), 2.

<sup>69</sup> Letter from M. B. Hariri to the Secretary of UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, September 26, 1953, in file Public Information and Liaison, Requests for Information (Part 1), in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0039-08, United Nations Archives.

<sup>70</sup> Letter from J. S. Hong, Supervisor of Remote Dwelling Program, Alaska Housing Authority, to United Nations, April 12, 1954, in file Earth Block Equipment, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0088-04, United Nations Archives.

installments over six years. South Korean Engineer Corps supplied labor in this task.<sup>71</sup> Landcrete blocks were used as wall materials and the rest of the building materials was imported by UNKRA.<sup>72</sup>



Figure 2.9 A UNKRA Housing Program for Two-Story Units  
(Source: *UNKRA Historical Narratives* in UNKRA series, UN Archives)

From 1953 to 1959, UNKRA assisted the National Housing Authority to build roughly 50,000 low-cost houses across the country, spending approximately \$5 million.<sup>73</sup> However, the most important contribution of UNKRA housing program was that the project spread similar design and similar construction methods across the country. Under the program, various standard units were built in thirty-three Korean cities and town.<sup>74</sup> Private builders and contractors who participated in these nation-wide housing projects duplicated similar housing projects on their own. The UNKRA housing report testifies to this phenomenon: “[m]any private contractors now also erect housing which follows essentially the UNKRA-established area development pattern. This represents a very marked change from the customary practice of building homes only on an individual basis.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Department of Public Information of the United Nations, “New-Type Two-Story Homes Built with UNKRA Aid Changing Appearance of Three Areas in Seoul,” March 6, 1957, Papers Related to Republic of Korea Ministries and the UN Organizations on Korea, The Syngman Rhee Institute.

<sup>72</sup> G. Y. Carpenter, “Thousand New Homes for Overcrowded Seoul,” November 12, 1956, in file Public Information and Liaison, Requests for Information (Part 2), in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0039-09, United Nations Archives.

<sup>73</sup> *United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency Historical Narratives*, Housing, p.4.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.



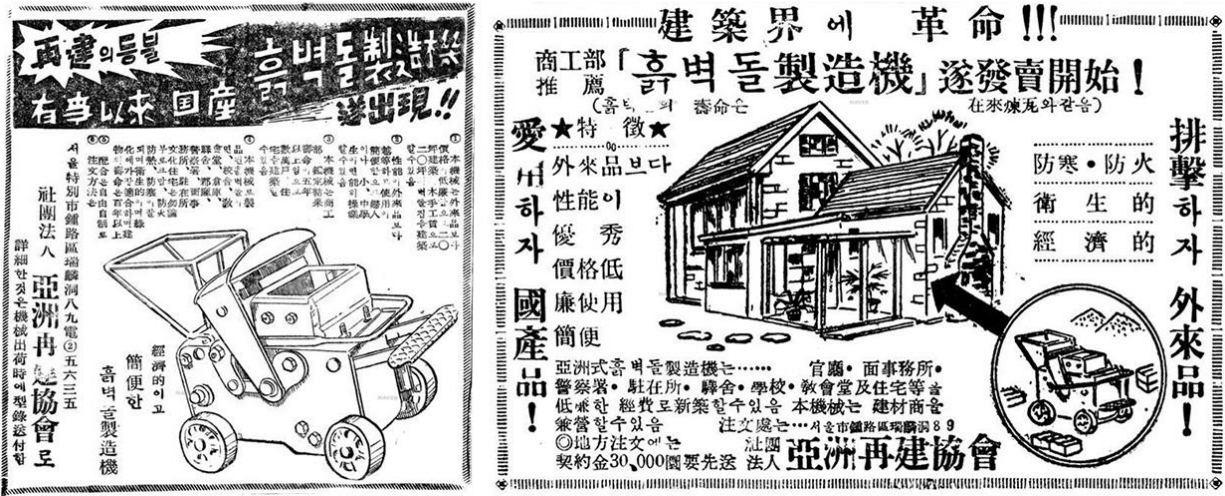


Figure 2.10 Newspaper Advertisements for the Earth Block Machine Manufactured by Ajou Reconstruction Association Inc., 1954 (Source: January 31, 1954 (left) and May 31, 1954 (right), the *Kyunghyang Shinmun*)

In addition, Korean private industry produced its own earth block machines (Figure 2.10). For example, a private Korean manufacturer of building material, Ajou Reconstruction Association, developed its own earth block machine in the late 1953 and began to advertise it in the newspapers in early 1954. This machine was not just invented by Koreans; the machine itself was “Koreanized” to accommodate Korean situations. Meant for small-scale home construction, this machine was small enough that two workers could handle it—unlike the Landcrete machine, which was operated by five laborers. Also, the Korean manufacturer reduced the weight by half so as to make it easy to move from one site to another. According to the advertisement, it could yield 200 to 250 blocks per hour, i.e., five to six times more productive than the Landcrete machine.<sup>76</sup> Interested in the machine, the UNKRA tested the Korean block-making machine on the market. According to the UNKRA report, it produced blocks that were 10 to 15 percent weaker than those made by the Landcrete machine, but the machine was domestically available at a much cheaper price, 83,000 hwan, or approximately 100 dollars.<sup>77</sup> In short, the UNKRA experimental housing projects provided local architects, builders, and manufacturers with models that could be re-produced for use at different sites.

However, the earth block housing resulted in many structural problems over time. The premise of earth blocks was that proper care was to be given to the block making and construction. In fact, earth block constructions required following very specific written instructions. In order to ensure the required compressive strength, the earth had to be carefully chosen and properly mixed with the specified amount of cement and soil of the appropriate moisture content. Only a very small number of supervisors could be present on the construction sites and thus these specifications were rarely enforced. Especially, the use of an inadequate amount of cement often resulted in the structural failure of many earth block houses.<sup>78</sup> For these

<sup>76</sup> “New Earth Block Machine to Help Rebuild Homes,” *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* (December 20, 1953), 2; and “500 Earth Block Machines to Be Produced Monthly,” *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* (October 4, 1954), 2.  
<sup>77</sup> “Report on UNKRA Earth Block Housing Program,” pp.3-4, December 15, 1954, in file Earth Block Equipment, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0088-04, United Nations Archives.  
<sup>78</sup> Letter from South Korean Minister of Health and Social Affairs, Chai Yu Choi, to Office of the South Korean President, “Report on Korean Housing Project,” 1955, Papers Related to Republic of Korea Ministries and the UN Organizations on Korea, The Syngman Rhee Institute.



reasons, UNKRA earth block housing became a symbol of structurally faulty construction and thus gradually disappeared from the construction sites.

### **Cement and Flat Glass Factories**

Shortly after the war, South Korea was almost entirely reliant upon foreign aid for crucial building materials. The importation of materials was supposed to be a short-term solution to the problem. In the long term, South Korea needed to increase domestic production for building materials to save foreign exchange. The UNKRA aimed at increasing domestic production of construction materials by rehabilitating and building large cement and glass plants, including the Samchok Cement Plant, the Mungyong Cement Plant, and the Inchon Flat Glass Plant.

Cement was essential for the construction of dams, irrigation system, public works, and home construction, and other concrete construction. Many pre-war Korean cement plants were located in the Northern part of Korea and the only large cement plant in South Korea, the Samchok Cement Plant, was heavily damaged during the Korean War. Using more than a half million dollars, UNKRA rehabilitated the cement plant, which would have an annual production of 75,000 to 100,000 metric tons. The rehabilitation project began in 1953 and was completed in 1955.<sup>79</sup> The UNKRA also built a new cement plant, the Mungyong Cement Plant. The plant was one of the UNKRA's largest projects. Using a UNKRA fund of approximately \$9 million, the plant produced more than 200,000 metric tons of cement annually. With the completion of the Mungyong Cement Plant in January 1958, the two cement plants alone supplied more than half of the total estimated annual cement requirement in South Korea.<sup>80</sup>

Another top priority project was a flat glass plant. Flat glass was used in the production of glass windows, which was essential for any construction projects. Before the war, a few small, traditional flat glass plants had been in operation, but all of these small plants were destroyed during the war and all flat glass had to be imported.<sup>81</sup> Beginning in 1953, the U.S. firm, Frazier-Simplex International Corporation conducted a preliminary engineering study and design for Korea's first modern flat glass plant.<sup>82</sup> The site was chosen in Inchon, near Seoul. The construction of the plant began in 1955 and was completed in 1957. The UNKRA funded \$3.5 million as well as technical assistance for its operation.<sup>83</sup> The new plant produced 18 million square feet of flat glass annually.<sup>84</sup>

This plant construction played an important role in the development of modern architecture. Unlike lumber which constantly had to be imported from overseas, cement and glass became cheaply and more easily available to Koreans, resulting that local builders and architects could build a structure of modern building materials without the assistance of foreign advisors.

### **UNKRA Construction Projects**

The UNKRA engaged in other types of construction, outside of the home building industry, as well. Most importantly, UNKRA put a great deal of effort in building educational

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<sup>79</sup> *United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency Historical Narratives*, Industry, pp.1-2, 13.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 13.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

<sup>82</sup> UNKRA, "Project Information, Flat Glass Plant," p.1, n.d., January 23, 1956, in file Flat Glass Plant, Construction, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0060-03, United Nations Archives.

<sup>83</sup> *United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency Historical Narratives*, Industry, p.15.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

institutions, from primary schools to vocational schools and universities. Under Japanese rule, the Koreans had few educational opportunities. As of 1944, 80 percent of Koreans had never received any formal education.<sup>85</sup> The limited access to educational opportunities available to the Korean people was aggravated by the Korean War. During the war, school buildings were often used to house troops, and therefore became the targets of enemy attacks. A quarter of schools in South Korea were destroyed or seriously damaged. Many students had to take classes in unheated, windowless classrooms. Approximately 36,000 classrooms needed to be repaired or newly-constructed.<sup>86</sup>

Between late 1952 and early 1953, the UNESCO and UNKRA jointly conducted a comprehensive survey on education conditions in South Korea and published a report on their findings and recommendations.<sup>87</sup> The UNESCO/UNKRA report concluded that education was crucial in making South Korea a democratic nation. UNKRA officials believed that classrooms could provide a vital place for young Koreans to learn the virtues of a democratic society, such as “tolerance and open-mindedness, co-operation, sense of responsibility, respect for the rights of others, leadership, concern for group welfare” and others.<sup>88</sup> UNKRA school construction, particularly of primary schools, was believed to be the way to most effectively foster “democratic citizenship” in South Korea.<sup>89</sup> The UNESCO/UNKRA report wrote: “[g]ood behavior in the classroom and the school will then be motivated, not by fear, but by a feeling of shared responsibility for the realization of group goals. The classroom and the school thus become in truth a laboratory for the development of democracy.”<sup>90</sup>

Hence, UNKRA’s greatest contribution in the educational field was given to the rehabilitation and construction of classrooms. The UNKRA furnished building materials worth more than \$5.3 million to build 3,776 classrooms. In addition, UNKRA repaired another 1,000, using \$800,000 worth of materials from the U.S. Civilian Relief in Korea (CRIK) program. Construction began in late 1953 and most of the projects (97 percent) were completed by mid-1957. The UNKRA school construction program covered a total of 1,381 schools located in 130 out of the 132 counties in South Korea. The newly-built schools accommodated approximately 200,000 children.<sup>91</sup>

UNKRA educational program included a few large buildings, such as two Vocational Training Centers in Pusan and Taejon, the Merchant Marine Academy, and a Textbook Printing Plant.<sup>92</sup> However, most of these classrooms were small structures, many of which were located in isolated areas where no architects or professional builders existed nearby. In 1953, when the program began, South Korea’s Ministry of Education provided a few simple standard designs, but soon the UNKRA Housing Division and the Korean Institute of Architects furnished their

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<sup>85</sup> Jin Geum Han, “A Study in Technical Assistance Training Program of U.S. Aid Agency in 1950s,” *Han’guk Saron* [The Korean History] Vol. 56 (2010), 442.

<sup>86</sup> David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 141.

<sup>87</sup> *United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency Historical Narratives*, Education, p.1.

<sup>88</sup> *Rebuilding Education in the Republic of Korea: The Final Report of the UNESCO/UNKRA Educational Planning Mission to Korea* (Paris: UNESCO, 1954), 21.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>91</sup> *United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency Historical Narratives*, Education, pp.2, 12.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-14.

standard designs for UNKRA school construction. These various, utilitarian designs were furnished to the local builders to create a better unit.<sup>93</sup>

In addition, UNKRA undertook a few large rehabilitation and construction projects for health facilities, including the National Medical Center in Seoul, Taegu Hospital, the National Vaccine Laboratory, the National Rehabilitation Center for the Physically Handicapped, and orphanages.<sup>94</sup> Many of these works were also based on a comprehensive survey on health conditions in South Korea, jointly conducted by the UN World Health Organization (WHO) and UNKRA from August to October 1952.<sup>95</sup> Among the projects was the rebuilding of the old Seoul City Hospital into a modern medical center. The newly-named National Medical Center in Seoul was the single largest UNKRA project. Three Scandinavian countries—Denmark, Norway, and Sweden—took main responsibility for the project. The Scandinavian governments contributed a total of \$7.5 million.<sup>96</sup> UNKRA also contributed \$2.7 million for its construction and \$4.4 million for equipment and technical Assistance.<sup>97</sup> The Korean government also contributed more than 1.1 billion hwan, or approximately 1.3 million dollars. The National Medical Center was not the first medical facility sponsored by the Scandinavian countries. In earlier years, Sweden built a hospital in Pusan and the Norwegian Hospital was established in the northern part of South Korea.<sup>98</sup> These previous experiences in hospital construction might have led to their larger project in Seoul. A Stockholm-based architect, Gustaf Birch-Lindgren, was in charge of design and engineering. The medical center first accepted patients in December 1958. Along with full renovation of damaged structures and small constructions, the project included new construction of a modern, seven-story building accommodating 465 beds, then one of the tallest buildings standing in Seoul (Figure 2.11).<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Memo from Frederick W. Lang, Chief of Housing Division, UNKRA to Y. Zarjevsky, Home Affairs & Justice, UNCACK, "Subject: Construction of Standard Classroom," April 24, 1953, in file Stockpile for Repairs to Damaged Schools, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0306-01, United Nations Archives.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>95</sup> *United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency Historical Narratives*, Health and Welfare, p.2.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>98</sup> Department of Public Information of the United Nations, "Swedish Surgeon General and Architects: Survey Seoul National Medical Center," p.2, June 14, 1956, Papers Related to Republic of Korea Ministries and the UN Organizations on Korea, The Syngman Rhee Institute.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.



Figure 2.11 The National Medical Center, Seoul  
(Source: *UNKRA Historical Narratives* in UNKRA series, UN Archives)

In addition, with a fund of \$284,025, UNKRA rehabilitated and built 69 child welfare institutions, including 44 orphanages, 10 hostels for older orphans, and training centers.<sup>100</sup> Because of the vast number and type of construction, UNKRA often provided the projects with architectural and engineering services, mainly through its Housing Division. Korean architects from the Korean Institute of Architects (KIA) were often employed for UNKRA housing projects.<sup>101</sup> Frederick W. Lang was chief of the UNKRA Housing Division, in which a few foreign architects and technicians worked. Among them was a Danish architect, Olaf Hoeck. He was able to establish particularly close ties with Korean architects, while working on many UNKRA projects. He was invited as the only foreign architect to write a congratulatory remark on KIA's new journal, South Korea's first professional architectural magazine. In the issue of *Kõnch'uk* (Architecture), published in June 1955, Hoeck expressed his first-hand impression of Korean architects learning from UNKRA projects:

In my frequent contacts with members of your Institute I have found a great will to absorb all the new influences from abroad and adapt them to use in Korea. Many of your younger architects have shown me projects designed by themselves of very high quality and utilizing all information available on modern architecture.<sup>102</sup>

In addition, Hoeck delivered several special lectures to Korean students and architects.<sup>103</sup> The encounter with foreign architects was a rare opportunity for them to look beyond the architecture familiar to them. Not only with the assistance of construction projects, but UNKRA contributed

<sup>100</sup> *United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency Historical Narratives*, Health and Welfare, p.8, 13.

<sup>101</sup> Memorandum from Charles W. Jeffers, Chief of Operations, UNKRA, "Subject: Korean Engineering Services," June 4, 1953, in file UNKRA, Relief Programme, Provision of Shelter: Housing, General, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0025-07, United Nations Archives.

<sup>102</sup> Olaf Hoeck, "Congratulatory Message," *Kõnch'uk* [Architecture], (April 1956), 6.

<sup>103</sup> For example, Olaf Hoeck gave a lecture to students at Seoul National University in 1955. For more, see Jung-Soo Kim, Hye-Ja Kim, et al., *Korean Architect Jung-Soo Kim* (Seoul: Koryõwõn, 1995), 96.

to bringing modernity to South Korean people through direct contact with foreign technicians and architects.

### **Criticism and Failure**

In the construction of South Korea, the U.S. government perceived the international cooperation within UNKRA operation as a way to reduce U.S. financial burden. More importantly, as John B. Coulter, chief of UNKRA, wrote, UNKRA was an effective tool to maintained “a strong Western united front.”<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, the agency’s multinational nature inherently limited the agency’s efficient operation. First of all, the agency had long decision-making process and slow implementation, compared to other U.S. aid agencies. For example, for all major planning and operations, it became necessary to get approval from an Advisory Committee, composed of representative of five UN member countries—the U.S., the U.K., India, Canada, and Uruguay.<sup>105</sup> It was probably a political decision to have a country from each continent—Europe, Asia, North America, and South America—in addition to the United States, but the consequence was that the committee had to go through a long compromise between nations of various economic and political interests.

In terms of cost-saving, UNKRA was not satisfactorily able to help to reduce the U.S. burden. In 1953, for example, 35 countries pledged \$210 million toward UNKRA programs, but once the war was over, interest in Korea ebbed among the participating countries, except the U.S. Many countries’ actual contribution was significantly lower than their initial pledges. Thirty nations contributed \$123 million, among which the U.S. paid \$84.3 million (68 percent) and the British \$22.5 million (18 percent).<sup>106</sup> The proportion of U.S. contribution increased every year.

Part of the problem was that the UNKRA was an expensive agency to maintain. The staff of over four hundred people was unusually large for an aid agency solely aiming at a single country. The UNKRA also had seven offices: two in Korea—Seoul and Pusan—and five abroad—Geneva, Tokyo, London, New York, and Washington, D.C.<sup>107</sup> Not only was it expensive to maintain, but also consultations among the offices was a difficult and time-consuming process. Considering the expensive administration cost, UNKRA was neither cost-effective nor quick-acting.

The struggle and negotiation of different opinions between participating was quite common for both North and South Korea’s reconstruction. But unlike North Korea’s reconstruction in which the communist world divided the responsibilities up between the countries by the types and the target regions of assistance, UNKRA was structured as a single aid channel combining international efforts. UNKRA projects had to go through complex decision-making processes in each stage, from the initial planning to the implementation of the project.

The long-delayed operation and low cost-efficiency faced frequent criticism from the media. The U.S. was the main target of this criticism from South Korean and the U.S. media.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Letter from Gen. John B. Coulter, November 22, 1954, White House Office, Office of the Special Assistance for National Security Affairs Records, Box 293, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>105</sup> Walter Simmons, “UNKRA Earns Bad Name in Korean Role.”

<sup>106</sup> “U.N. Lacks Funds to Rebuild Korea,” *The New York Times* (November 2, 1954), 11.

<sup>107</sup> “From Ruin to Revival,” *United Nations Review*, Vol.1 (July 1954), 12. in file U.N. Publications, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0173-04, United Nations Archives.

<sup>108</sup> “Gov’t Won’t Deny Protest to UNKRA,” *The Korea Times* (February 4, 1954). in file Correspondence with AG and ROK Prime Minister, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0107-07, United Nations Archives.

To make matters worse, UNKRA faced an unexpected accusation of being imperialist because of its European members. In a *Times-Herald* article of 1953, Walter Simmons, an experienced war correspondent criticized UNKRA's imperialist attitude: "[t]he staff includes many British, Dutch and French employees who formerly had jobs in colonial empires. Their colonial attitude—perhaps unintentional in many cases—has caused seething anger here."<sup>109</sup> Some criticism arose from Koreans as well. A South Korean newspaper, the *Pyonghwa Sinmun*, denounced UNKRA's refusal of hiring Korean technicians as an imperialist attitude. The article wrote in anger:

This policy of UNKRA is just the same as the Japanese government followed 40 years ago in Korea. ... UNKRA has never employed Korean technicians, but UNKRA is run by foreign people who do not understand the actual condition of Korea. As the thinking of these foreign people is colonial in approach and their attitude full of superiority their actions do not adjust to the actual conditions prevailing in Korea and therefore no good results can be expected from them.<sup>110</sup>

Although this newspaper article was not fully consistent with the facts and in reality UNKRA actively utilized Korean personnel and trained them, it became clear to U.S. officials that, without more elaborately planned publicity, their aid could be seen as colonial exploitation, rather than as being a helping hand. Such criticism from the media, combined with the delayed and decreased contributions of other nations, must have broken America's will to continue UNKRA operation. The UNKRA suffered from a serious shortage of funds every fiscal year until it stopped its operation on July 1, 1958.<sup>111</sup>

## Conclusion

Established in 1945, the United Nations was still in its infancy when the Korean War broke out. It had hardly enough experience in carrying out a large-scale nation-building project in developing countries. UNKRA's projects went through constant trial and error, but through this process, the United States learned several valuable lessons from the disappointing UNKRA experiences. First, because of the U.S.'s central role during the Korean War and subsequent reconstruction, UN assistance was often recognized by the South Koreans as a U.S. aid program. It meant that, whenever the UN aid program went wrong, Koreans turned their criticism toward the United States and caused damage to the American reputation in Korea. Second, U.S. officials learned that their economic and technical assistance did not necessarily work as American propaganda in itself. Rather, the assistance had to persuade the Korean people that Americans were benevolent and trustworthy, and that their activities were aimed at improving the welfare of the Koreans. In housing assistance, as an example, American policymakers learned that the simple provision of homes could not be the only goal. Structurally unsound or culturally unacceptable homes could adversely affect their efforts to create positive images of the U.S. in South Korea. Lastly, UNKRA's failure urged on the need for more cost-effective aid programs for Korean rebuilding efforts. When weighing the results against the cost, UNKRA was almost

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<sup>109</sup> Walter Simmons, "UNKRA Earns Bad Name in Korean Role."

<sup>110</sup> "The Work of UNKRA Is Behind the Times," *The Pyonghwa Sinmun* (February 6, 1954). in Correspondence with AG and ROK Prime Minister, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0107-07, United Nations Archives.

<sup>111</sup> The ongoing UNKRA projects continued until the early 1960. For more, see *United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency Historical Narratives*, p.4.

always unsatisfactory. In a situation when international and American domestic support for South Korea was dwindling, the U.S. had to focus on a more effective aid channel. Contrasted with UNKRA, the U.S. Armed Forces had a more efficient and successful aid program in full play in Korea.

### Chapter 3. Building Goodwill: Armed Forces Assistance to Korea (AFAK)

*I have now invited all the skilled specialists of the United States forces in Korea—engineers, signal corps, technicians of all kinds—to offer their knowledge to help rebuild the land whose freedom they have helped so bravely to save.<sup>1</sup>*

- President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1953

In a radio broadcast on August 6, 1953, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower delivered a speech to the 83rd Congress on large-scale civilian rehabilitation work in South Korea using American military units stationed in the area. The hot war ended in July 1953, but 50,000 U.S. military personnel remained in South Korea to deter further armed conflict. These personnel included engineers, signal troops, and medics, among others.<sup>2</sup> Using them to assist South Korea's rebuilding seemed a logical decision; the engineers could be used to design and oversee the construction of buildings, roads, and bridges; signal experts could repair lines of communication; the transportation corps could provide trucks and drivers; and medical troops could administer medicine and treat the wounded. Eisenhower, however, saw in these construction projects the greater opportunity of "helping win the cold war."<sup>3</sup>

In his memo on July 31, 1953, to Secretary of State John F. Dulles, Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson, and Director of Foreign Operations Harold Stassen, Eisenhower expressed that the Army-assisted construction project could "show the entire world that America and her allies are engaged in helping humans," not in simply imposing its political system and values on Koreans.<sup>4</sup> Also, as Americans did in the European theater, images of South Korea's improved living conditions resulting from this program, were put in contrast to images of North Korea, which had enormous propaganda value. Eisenhower stated that "[we] can improve the health and living standards of the Korean people, and we can assure that that region will remain a real bulwark of freedom, rather than [being] a helpless slave of Communist dictatorship."<sup>5</sup> Second, AFAK could create human bonds between the Americans and Koreans because each project was undertaken jointly with a local Korean community. Constructive cooperation between American soldiers and Korean civilians could, in Eisenhower's words, "cement the bonds of friendship" between the peoples.<sup>6</sup> Lastly, in practical terms, AFAK could relieve the boredom of American

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<sup>1</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Radio Report to the American People on the Achievements of the Administration and the 83d Congress," August 6, 1953. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9666> (accessed March 1, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> By 1960, more than 40,000 American military personnel were still stationed in South Korea.

<sup>3</sup> "It strikes me that never before have the armed forces of the United States had a better opportunity to contribute more effectively than they now have in Korea toward helping win the cold war." In Subject: Assistance to Korea. Draft Memorandum by the President Eisenhower to the Secretary of State (John F. Dulles), the Secretary of Defense (Charles E. Wilson), and the Mutual Security Administrator (Harold Stassen), p.1, July 31, 1953. In folder Dulles / Korea / Security Policy, Box 36, International Series, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower as President, 1953-61, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>4</sup> Draft Memo by Eisenhower to Dulles, Wilson, and Stassen, p.2.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



military personnel in Korea where the fighting had stopped and have a positive impact on their psychological fitness. President Eisenhower, a former five-star general of the U.S. Army, understood perfectly that the long occupation by idle troops could potentially cause skepticism regarding their presence in Korea. Eisenhower stated that if much of military personnel's time were spent on such constructive work, personnel would have more pride in defending Korea with greater vigor.<sup>7</sup> As a result of all of these benefits, Eisenhower asserted that the AFAK program could be America's "greatest victory over Communism."<sup>8</sup>

This chapter examines how the U.S. Armed Forces used construction projects as a means to expand America's influence over South Korea during the 1950s. Because of AFAK's prototypical characteristics of the military civic action plan during the Cold War, military historians were among the first to document AFAK activities. A great number of military historians and biographers discuss the program, although rather briefly.<sup>9</sup> These studies tend to emphasize the program's humanitarian aspects. A full-scale study on AFAK was done mainly by historians of modernization theory. David Ekbladh, for example, in his book *The Great American Mission*, understands AFAK as a U.S.'s global modernization efforts in South Korea to encourage extensive social and economic changes.<sup>10</sup> James Sang Chi's doctoral dissertation, *Teaching Korea*, also discusses AFAK's embodiment of modernization ideas, specifically focusing on how America's racial ideologies influenced the program.<sup>11</sup> Despite the importance of these studies, the way AFAK used architecture as a propaganda tool and the program's architectural legacy are still largely unknown.

The AFAK program was an attempt to translate America's most powerful and readily available hard power in Korea—the Eighth U.S. Army—into soft power through construction projects. In this chapter, I argue that, Korean architects, builders, and artisans received a peculiar version of American design and construction methods from U.S. military procedure, military efficiency, and Army engineers and architects, one deeply situated within the idea of scientific management, cost saving, and standardization.

### **Chinese Army's Involvement in North Korean Reconstruction**

When the fighting with guns and tanks ended on July 27, 1953, soldiers on both sides began waging a completely different form of war in Korea using cement, lumber, and nails. Not unlike the U.S., North Korea's most important wartime ally—the Chinese People's Volunteer Army (Chinese Army)—began a military-sponsored reconstruction program. When the war was over, approximately 1.2 million deployed Chinese servicemen remained in North Korea. Their participation in North Korean reconstruction projects was reported even before the armistice.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Subject: Assistance to Korea, Eisenhower to Dulles, Wilson, and Stassen, UD 1276, Box 154; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>9</sup> See John M. Taylor, *General Maxwell Taylor: The Sword and the Pen* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 183; De Pauw, John Whylen, and George A. Luz, eds, *Winning the Peace: The Strategic Implications of Military Civic Action* (New York: Praeger, 1992), 13; and Robert J. Wilensky, *Military Medicine to Win Hearts and Minds: Aid to Civilians in the Vietnam War*. (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2004), 22.

<sup>10</sup> David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> James S. Chi, *Teaching Korea: Modernization, Model Minorities, and American Internationalism in the Cold War Era* (PhD dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 2008), 56-118.

Using their workforce, the Chinese military units helped repair roads and railways and rebuilt schools, bridges, and other war-damaged facilities.<sup>12</sup>

On March 29, 1954, Chinese political leaders and Army commanders issued the “Regulations on the Assistance for North Korean Reconstruction” for more efficient operations. The instructions ordered Chinese troops stationed in North Korea to help repair irrigation system, and rebuild houses and public facilities. It further specified that each company mobilize 70 percent of unit human resources and each agency utilize 20 to 40 percent of total personnel.<sup>13</sup> During five years of assistance ending in 1958, Chinese military units helped to rebuild or repair 888 public facilities in North Korea, 45,412 rooms of civilian houses, 4,263 bridges of various sizes, 4,096 embankments totaling 430km in length, 2,295 irrigation projects measuring 1,218km in total, and various small-scale factories including brick factories.<sup>14</sup> The stories of Chinese troop’ involvement in North Korean reconstruction projects were told through various media outlets, including North Korea’s state-run newspaper *Rodong Sinmum*.<sup>15</sup>

On the face of it, the AFAK program and the Chinese army’s involvement in North Korean reconstruction projects were similar in that both used direct participation of the military in humanitarian construction projects, and both were partly an attempt to legitimize their military involvement in the Korean Peninsula in the past, and possibly into the future. The AFAK program, however, differed from its Chinese counterpart in two major respects. First, unlike Chinese military units, the U.S. Armed forces have remained in South Korea until today. China gradually withdrew its armed forces starting in September 1954. On February 1958, China declared a complete pullout of their troops from North Korea. The Chinese military withdrawal, except for a few military representatives, was completed by October 26, 1958.<sup>16</sup> U.S. military personnel, on the other hand, remained in South Korea, although the number was lower than it was during the war years. In this regard, maintaining long-term relations with Korean local community was more important to the U.S. than to China, and the U.S. military-sponsored construction program was more consciously aimed to create and spread a benevolent image of the United States and its military forces.

Second, the U.S. army’s emphasis on material and technical assistance was in contrast with Chinese army’s labor-focused aid. Chinese troops lacked modern machines and tools and thus concentrated their aid on the projects that required a large workforce, such as irrigation works, land reclamation, and other labor-intensive works. In the case of AFAK, the use of U.S. combatants as common laborers was strictly forbidden, except on a voluntary basis. Rather, the AFAK program was designed in a way to combine America’s material resources and engineering

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<sup>12</sup> For more, see Charles K. Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950-1992* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 55-59.

<sup>13</sup> Military History Research Institute of the Academy of Military Science in China, *Kàngměiyuáncháo Zhànzhēngshǐ* [History of the Korean War], trans. Dong-goo Park (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, Institute for Military History, 2005), 3: 777.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 777, 786.

<sup>15</sup> A few selected *Rodong Shinmum* articles on Chinese army’s reconstruction-related activities in North Korea are as follows: on September 8, 1953, Chinese troops repair a railway; on January 11, 1954, Chinese army helps built rural communities; on February 7, 1955, 407th Regiment participates in rebuilding; on March 14, 1956, Chinese troops help irrigation works; on April 12, 1956, irrigation works assisted by Chinese servicemen were completed; on May 27, 1957, Chinese troops help the reconstruction of Pyongyang; on June 14, 1957, Chinese troops reclaim 440 acres; on July 2, 1958, Chinese troops help the reconstruction of Pyongyang; and on July 10, 1958, Chinese troops build schools.

<sup>16</sup> *History of the Korean War*, 788-817.

skills with Korean participation. U.S. military personnel were more active in transferring technical know-how to the Koreans. The U.S. Armed Forces was equipped with abundant resources and well-trained engineering troops. Through the provision of standardized material and engineering advice as well as the collaborative process, Korean architects, draftsmen, engineers, carpenters, and many other types of construction workers could gain hands-on experience with American design and construction methods.

In sum, although both the U.S. and China's military involvement in civilian construction projects originated from similar political and humanitarian interests, AFAK's long-term material and technical assistance had much greater influence on laying the groundwork for the later architectural developments in South Korea.

### **Armed Forces Assistance to Korea**

President Eisenhower's speech was brought into being by General Maxwell D. Taylor, who first proposed using military supplies and personnel to aid in South Korea's reconstruction.<sup>17</sup> It was reported to General Taylor, then the Eighth United States Army Commander, that American soldiers were voluntarily helping orphans, widows, refugees, and other war-ravaged communities with clothing, food, and money. Taylor estimated that the value of these voluntary contributions from the U.S. military personnel, as individuals or units, amounted to \$418,658 in the period of July 1952 to August 1953.<sup>18</sup> Recognizing the great need and its effectiveness, General Taylor desired to develop these spontaneous, charitable activities into a formal, army-wide rehabilitation program on a more extensive scale.

On September 15, 1953, General Taylor, strongly backed by Eisenhower, called on all Army personnel under his command to assist in South Korea's reconstruction with technical guidance and Army equipment to the maximum extent that did not interfere with military readiness.<sup>19</sup> Soon after, the United States Congress authorized the Eighth U.S. Army to divert \$15 million worth of U.S. military supplies and building materials and to use Army construction equipment for civilian construction projects in South Korea during a twelve-month period.<sup>20</sup>

On October 18, 1953, the program was officially launched under the name Armed Forces Assistance to Korea or AFAK. General Taylor, as Executive Agent for the AFAK program, was charged with full responsibility. After him, the Commanding General of the Eighth Army assumed the position. He coordinated the AFAK program with other U.S. aid agencies such as the Korean Civilian Assistance Command (KCAC) and the Office of the Economic Coordinator

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<sup>17</sup> General Maxwell D. Taylor served as the Eighth U.S. Army commander from 1953 to 1955. After that, he served as the Army Chief of the U.S. Army until 1959.

<sup>18</sup> General Maxwell Taylor to John Hannah, Subject: Armed Forces Assistance to Korea, August 26, 1953, UD 1276, Box 14; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>19</sup> "Korea G.I.'s Urged to Aid Rebuilding," *The New York Times* (Sep. 16, 1953).

<sup>20</sup> AFAK Summary, p.1, Eighth U.S. Army, AFAK, Project Files 1954-63, A1 255, Box 2201; Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Research Group 338; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Eighth United States Army, Armed Forces Assistance to Korea Program, n.d. [1956], p.2, USOM Korea Subject Files 1956-57, Box 39; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Maxwell D. Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), 150; Headquarters, Far East Command, Public Information Office, Armed Forces Assistance to Korea, n.d., p.3, Organizational History Files, A1 1, Box 91; Records of United States Army, Pacific, Research Group 550; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

(OEC).<sup>21</sup> Taylor placed the importance of their conducting the AFAK program next to military readiness.<sup>22</sup> All U.S. military units of company size participated either as the main sponsor of a small project or as a member of a larger unit.<sup>23</sup> The Eighth Army played the leading role in the program, but the U.S. Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps also participated. The U.N. forces of other nations, such as British Troops, sometimes contributed to a few projects.<sup>24</sup> In the areas where U.S. Army units were not available, South Korean Army troops sponsored some projects as well.<sup>25</sup>

With the greatest emphasis on construction projects, AFAK also provided a medical program and voluntary assistance program on a limited scale. Out of \$27.25 million of AFAK funds in the 1950s, \$3.4 million was spent for medical aid and supplies.<sup>26</sup> Widely diversified contributions to the Korean people also came in the form of money, gifts, clothing, supplies, and voluntary work. This voluntary aid by members of the U.S. military was given on a relatively small scale.

The AFAK program was essentially a aided self-help program, requiring each project to be developed on a cooperative basis with the community. The basic principle was that the Koreans furnished land, labor, and native materials such as stone, gravel, sand, straw, and mud, and the U.S. military units provided only those that were not available from the local communities. Normally, the U.S. contribution to the project consisted only of the provision of construction materials, technical advice, supervision, and the loan of heavy construction equipment.<sup>27</sup> In a financial sense, the AFAK portion of the project was often a small segment of the total budget. Korean participation made the project less costly than other aid programs, but through this self-help approach, American officials believed that the Koreans could learn the personal responsibility necessary for citizens in a democracy.

The greatest contribution of the program was the provision of construction materials that were not easily obtainable in Korea, such as lumber, cement, glass, nails, and many other basic construction materials.<sup>28</sup> The AFAK construction materials were mostly from the standard Army supply and procured through military supply channels. At the program's beginning, AFAK utilized materials that were immediately available from the Eighth Army stocks by curtailment of other less urgent demands on them.<sup>29</sup> But, over time, the Eighth Army prepared a bulk estimate of expected construction materials in advance.<sup>30</sup> When AFAK construction materials

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<sup>21</sup> AFAK Program Directive No. 1, p.2, November 4, 1953, UD 1276, Box 14; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>22</sup> Eighth US Army, Public Information Office, Release No. 467, December 16, 1953, A1 1, Box 91; Records of United States Army, Pacific, Research Group 550; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>23</sup> AFAK Program Directive No. 1, p.3.

<sup>24</sup> British troops of the 1st Commonwealth Division helped the U.S. I Corps to rehabilitate some AFAK projects. See "U.S.-British Units Push Work on Korea Projects," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (March 31, 1954), 7.

<sup>25</sup> AFAK Policy File, n.d., p.11, Eighth U.S. Army, AFAK, Project Files 1954-63, Box 2208; Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Research Group 338; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>26</sup> AFAK Briefing to General C. B. Magruder, CINCUNC, May 23, 1960, UD 1276, Box 154; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>27</sup> AFAK Program Directive No. 1, p.1.

<sup>28</sup> Among other commonly used building materials are wire, hinges, bolts, pipe, steel bars, paint, thinner, varnish, asphalt, asphalt roofing, fiberboard, and stove pipes.

<sup>29</sup> AFAK Bulletin No. 1, p.1, January 4, 1954, A1 1, Box 91; Records of United States Army, Pacific, Research Group 550; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>30</sup> Eight United States Army, Armed Forces Assistance to Korea Program, n.d. [1956], p.3.

arrived at the Eighth Army Engineer Deposit, they were sent to the area AFAK engineering divisions. The divisions transferred the materials to the construction sites. Sufficient money, usually 10 percent of the AFAK funds, was allocated to pay for transportation costs.<sup>31</sup> Those costs included international shipments from the U.S. or Japanese ports to Korea and domestic shipments on the Korean National Railway. Other domestic transportation costs were not paid by the AFAK funds.<sup>32</sup>

Military construction equipment, such as cranes, bulldozers, road graders, and tractors, were loaned at local military commanders' discretion. The Army units also deployed operators, drivers, and technicians to operate the specialized equipment.<sup>33</sup> Although the employment of American troops as common laborers had to be avoided, some soldiers who had a construction background worked on projects on a voluntary basis. Also, personnel from a sponsoring unit in supervisory work could voluntarily commit themselves to the demonstration of construction to Korean laborers.<sup>34</sup> Ideally, and in most cases, labor to build the project was supplied by local communities. Carpenters, mechanics, welders, concrete workers, electricians, draftsmen, and various types of laborers were employed through contracting firms.

Each AFAK project progressed in five phases. First, an AFAK project was developed by the U.S. unit's own investigations or through discussions with civic leaders of Korean local communities. In either case, the unit's consultation with the local authorities was essential in order to satisfy local requirements and to secure the greatest possible local cooperation. Unless a standard plan was employed, Korean architects or AFAK architects furnished complete architectural drawings at this stage. From these applications, a screening board selected the most needy and beneficial projects.<sup>35</sup> An approved AFAK request was sent to the Division's Civil Affairs Office for final approval. Second, the plan and design of proposed projects were examined by the Division's engineers as to their actual need, priority, and legality. Each major command in Korea had a fund allocation and chose their AFAK projects within their budget. Third, once approved, lists of materials were prepared for the projects and AFAK funds were appropriated to procure the items by the sponsoring unit. The materials were issued to the local communities or the responsible Korean Army Task Force teams.<sup>36</sup> Fourth, construction materials were delivered to construction sites from the designated railhead or Supply Depot. Any available transportation means could be used. Lastly, the project was constructed and supervised by the

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<sup>31</sup> In 1960, transportation costs for AFAK construction materials were as follows: (1) shipments from the U.S. - \$21.10 per ton (stevedore costs included in lumber costs); (2) shipments from Japan - \$5.90 per ton (unloading stevedore costs \$2.87 per measured ton); and (3) \$1.00 per ton for port handling costs in Korea. For more, see AFAK Directive No. 23, p.16, October 6, 1960, UD 1276, Box 154; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>32</sup> AFAK Policy File, n.d., p.11-13.

<sup>33</sup> AFAK Directive No. 23, p.4; and, AFAK Construction Program, .n.d., p.1, USAID Mission to Korea/Executive Office, Central Subject Files, 1961-62, Box 21; Records of the Agency for International Development, Research Group 286; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>34</sup> Major General, E.W. Ridings, Subject: AFAK Program Safeguards, May 12, 1954, NM-16 204, Box 2; Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander, Allied Powers and United Nations Command, Research Group 554; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>35</sup> "Revolution in Postwar Aid: U.S. Forces in Korea Help Rebuild through AFAK," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (April 25, 1961), 15.

<sup>36</sup> When issuing the materials, the sponsoring unit had to obtain a written agreement with the local community as to the contributions and responsibilities for the project.

sponsoring unit.<sup>37</sup> During the construction, all projects were reviewed in terms of floor plans, construction materials, and uses. No change was possible without authorization from the sponsoring unit. When changes were detected on the field inspection, the unit could stop further assistance and forfeit the remaining materials. For example, upon field inspection on October 21, 1957, floor plans and wall partition plans of an orphanage, named the U-Ri-Jip Orphanage, were reported to be changed without authorization. Eighty-five percent completed, this orphanage was cancelled and remaining materials were relocated to an AFAK Supply Point.<sup>38</sup>

These sets of carefully planned military procedure not only led towards more efficient and economic operation of the program, but also helped spread specific architectural traditions, using similar and relatively high standard building materials and construction techniques, throughout the country.

### **Building Grassroots Facilities**

During the Cold War, U.S. officials clearly understood that simple military strength and economic capacity did not guarantee victory over communist ideology. Thus, many efforts were made to promote American culture, values, and political ideology. American ideas of freedom, democracy, and free enterprise were widely exported to South Korea through films, exhibitions, radio broadcasts, book distributions, and any other possible means. However, as Greg Castillo points out in his book *Cold War on the Home Front*, America's soft power projects mainly targeted elites, rather than the general public.<sup>39</sup> For example, in postwar West Germany, American policy targeted key individuals and hoped that the elites would pass their positive understanding of American culture and values to a broader public, rather than directly reaching out to the general public of the target country.<sup>40</sup>

Similarly in South Korea, most of America's exhibitions and educational exchange programs, such as the Fulbright Program, targeted elites. America's values, culture, and political ideology were positively received among Korean elites, who perceived them as a way to modernize their country. However, such ideas did not easily reach down to the grassroots. AFAK-aided construction projects were intended not just to become tangible symbols of America's goodwill at the local level, but also to offer key institutions to nurture democratic citizenship, spread Christianity, practice Western medicine, and instill democratic governance. These grassroots facilities were essential to make Korea a self-sustaining and pro-American state. This idea of implanting American values in Korea was clearly expressed in AFAK briefing material in 1960:

We must be positively and enthusiastically in favor of the American way. We must defend the American way and what we believe is best for humanity by promoting the principles of the American way right here in Korea, and we must do it constantly—every

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<sup>37</sup> AFAK Policy File, n.d., p.9; AFAK Program, November 21, 1958, UD 1276, Box 89; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; and "Revolution in Postwar Aid: U.S. Forces in Korea Help Rebuild through AFAK," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (April 25, 1961), 15.

<sup>38</sup> Daniel O. Fleming, Subject: Cancellation of AFAK Project, October 22, 1957, UD 1276, Box 89; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>39</sup> Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xii.

<sup>40</sup> Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht, "American Cultural Policy in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1949-1968," translated by Robert Kimber and Rita Kimber, in *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945-1990: A Handbook*, edited by Detlef Junker et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1: 406.

minute of every hour of the day. We must fill the area inside Korea with such a large measure of the spirit of freedom, democracy, and justice that the enemy psychological warfare efforts will never penetrate one inch across any of the borders.<sup>41</sup>

In principle, the AFAK program sponsored the construction of any facilities that were urgently needed by the general public, such as schools, libraries, orphanages, churches, public health facilities, civic buildings, public utility projects, cultural centers, and communications facilities. The program also assisted many different types of infrastructure projects, including bridge, dam, highway, flood control, land reclamation, electrification, irrigation, and farm resettlement projects. Between 1954 and 1960, more than 4,000 projects were built throughout the country, including 1,631 schools, 410 civic buildings, 314 orphanages, 314 public health facilities, 250 churches, 110 bridges, 54 highways, and 53 reclamation projects.<sup>42</sup>

The goals of AFAK assistance are best revealed by the types of projects that were not authorized. Any projects benefitting private enterprise or individuals were not to be supported by AFAK. For example, housing projects, except for a few small model housing developments, were not considered an appropriate project because only a relatively small number of people could benefit from the project. The provision of housing was considered to be mainly under the sponsorship of the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA) and the Korean Civilian Assistance Command (KCAC) assistance.<sup>43</sup> Other projects for profit-making enterprises, such as hotels and theatres, were also considered to be inappropriate for assistance because these facilities were not beneficial to the Korean people as a whole.<sup>44</sup> Also, since AFAK was aimed at benefitting the grassroots in Korea, it did not assist in heavy construction of industrial and economic facilities. The Combined Economic Board (CEB) was mostly responsible for the construction of those large-scale facilities.<sup>45</sup> Hence the state left itself out of free enterprise, and by creating infrastructure of other types, aided and abetted capitalism.

The biggest efforts were devoted to the improvement and construction of various types of school facilities. By 1960, the AFAK program had repaired or constructed 1,631 schools in South Korea, including kindergartens, primary and high schools, universities, and vocational

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<sup>41</sup> AFAK Briefing to General C. B. Magruder, CINCUNC, May 23, 1960, UD 1276, Box 154; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>42</sup> The money spent on each category during the 1950s was as follows: \$13 million on school construction, \$1,925,725 on public health facilities, \$1,419,718 on orphanages, \$922,331 on churches, \$471,904 on bridges, \$1,774,910 on various types of civic projects, and \$1,390,285 on utilities and medical program. For more, see "Revolution in Postwar Aid: U.S. Forces in Korea Help Rebuild through AFAK," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (April 25, 1961), 15; see also AFAK Briefing to General C. B. Magruder, CINCUNC, May 23, 1960, UD 1276, Box 154; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>43</sup> AFAK Policy File, n.d., p.5; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; and AFAK Director, John H. Adams, Col., Monthly Conference of Deputy Program Directors on March 15, 1954, NM-16 204, Box 2; Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander, Allied Powers and United Nations Command, Research Group 554; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>44</sup> Subject: Use of AFAK Funds to Provide Family Housing at ROKA Service Schools, Aug 27, 1957. Eighth U.S. Army, AFAK, Project Files 1954-63, A1 255, Box 2208; Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Research Group 338; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; and AFAK Directive No. 18, p.3, December 3, 1956, A1 255, Box 2203; Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Research Group 338; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>45</sup> The Combined Economic Board is an agency that was established by the U.S. and Korean government in 1952 for the stabilization of Korean economy. The CEB was replaced by the ROK-U.S. Economic Cooperation Committee in 1963.

schools for agriculture and forestry.<sup>46</sup> School construction was also preferred because educational rebuilding nicely fit AFAK's principle of helping the Koreans to help themselves. AFAK also sponsored the construction of 410 civic buildings, such as municipal offices, post offices, police and fire stations, community halls, and public bath houses. Many civic buildings were built from the early stages of the program until 1955. During the war, a great number of public facilities, such as schools or municipal offices, had been requisitioned and occupied by UN Forces, who planned to vacate them before May 1, 1954. In many cases, they were rehabilitated and returned to local communities with improved property and additions such as Quonset huts with the help of AFAK.<sup>47</sup> In many public places throughout the country, Quonset huts—U.S. military buildings—were converted into peacetime use, both symbolically and physically (Figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1 Graduation Ceremony of Geumho Elementary School, March 5, 1960.

Note that a Quonset Hut Is Being Used as a School Building (source: Seoul Photo Archives)

Much attention was also given to the construction of orphanages and public health facilities, such as hospitals, dispensaries, and sanitariums. Construction of these projects was not only a humanitarian expression, but also an anti-communist act. After the war, approximately 100,000 orphans, 300,000 war widows, and several million casualties remained. Social and economic unrest among these people was believed to open the door to communist intrusion.

For AFAK officials, Christianity was another wedge against communism. The construction of churches was among the most common projects in the early years of the AFAK program. During the 1950s, approximately 250 AFAK-sponsored churches were constructed or repaired across the country (Figure 3.2). In principle, Buddhist temples were also eligible for

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<sup>46</sup> Headquarters, Far East Command, Public Information Office, Armed Forces Assistance to Korea, n.d., p.1, Organizational History Files, A1 1, Box 91; Records of United States Army, Pacific, Research Group 550; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>47</sup> AFAK Bulletin No. 4, p.2, March 31, 1954, UD 1276, Box 14; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; and Monthly Conference of Deputy Program Directors.



assistance, but most of the funds went to the construction of churches of various Christian denominations. There were almost always objections to the construction of churches from many AFAK officials because they were not considered to benefit Koreans as a whole. In fact, church construction applications were officially given the lowest priority in the program directives. However, church constructions continued because many American policy makers and military leaders believed that religion could play a significant role in fighting Soviet communism.<sup>48</sup>



Figure 3.2 The Reconstructed Seoul Baptist Church, Seoul, c.1955

The original caption reads: "The classic lines and sturdy construction of the Seoul Baptist Church will long stand as an example of mutual American and Korean endeavor. ... This monument to the friendship of two freedom loving people was sponsored by the 60th Ordnance Group." Seoul, c.1955

(Source: Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Research Group 407; National Archives at College Park)

The program's role in promoting better community relations was often more important than its material mission—helping Korea's reconstruction and modernization. As the program progressed, the construction of vocational high schools received the highest priority among all building types.<sup>49</sup> However, a concern over public relations arose with respect to the issue. The

<sup>48</sup> William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: The Soul of Containment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>49</sup> The project priority was as follows: (1) vocational schools of high school level, (2) other high and secondary schools, (3) orphanages that provide vocational training or training for handicapped children, (4) primary schools, (5) medical facilities, and (6) bridges primarily for tactical uses. For more, see AFAK Directive No. 23, p.5.

emphasis on vocational schools was often at odds with the program's original goal—helping the local community's most urgent needs. A report pointed out that the excessive concentration on a certain building type wrongly displayed the U.S. military as if it dictated a certain policy to the community and it considerably hindered good community relations.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, in choosing projects, potential negative effects on community relations were taken into consideration.

Since the benefits of the program were aimed to reach the greatest number of people across the largest possible area, small and utilitarian buildings that could be built and maintained inexpensively were preferred.<sup>51</sup> However, in 1954, the first year when the program had relatively sufficient funds, a few large scale projects were undertaken, such as the Maryknoll Hospital in Pusan and the Dongguk University building in Seoul. AFAK's biggest project was the Eighth Army Memorial Chest Surgery Hospital on the campus of Chosun Christian University, Seoul (present Yonsei University) (Figure 3.3).<sup>52</sup>



Figure 3.3 The Memorial Chest Hospital under construction, Seoul, June 12, 1956 (source: Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Research Group 111-SC; National Archives at College Park)

On December 10, 1954, the project was launched with an agreement between Severance Union Medical College and Hospital in Seoul and Seoul Military Post, Eighth Army. Seoul Military Post provided \$400,000 through AFAK funds in construction materials alone and another \$70,000 worth of medical equipment. The post also furnished heavy construction equipment and technical assistance. Severance hospital assumed the provision of labor and land as well as responsibility of its continued operations.<sup>53</sup> In addition, the Cooperating Board for Christian

<sup>50</sup> Subject: Reasons for Concern over AFAK Policy, February 23, 1960, UD 1276, Box 154; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>51</sup> Eight United States Army, Armed Forces Assistance to Korea Program, n.d. [1956], p.3; and "Revolution in Postwar Aid: U.S. Forces in Korea Help Rebuild through AFAK," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (April 25, 1961), 15.

<sup>52</sup> The hospital was the first medical facility in Korea dedicated exclusively to thoracic surgery.

<sup>53</sup> "Plans Set for AFAK's \$470,000 Hospital," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (April 17, 1955), 8; "\$400,000 Seoul Hospital Planned," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (December 18, 1954), 8; and AFAK Program Status Report #14, p.2, January

Education in Chosen, located in New York, dispatched an American architect for the supervision of the design of the project.<sup>54</sup> Construction began on April 23, 1955 and was completed June of the following year.<sup>55</sup> The cost of the medical complex was \$2.9 million.<sup>56</sup> This four-story, reinforced concrete building was the most modern and best-equipped hospital and college in South Korea.<sup>57</sup> As in this case, when working in collaboration with other American private and religious organizations, the projects were usually better funded and larger in scale.

### **Creating Anti-conquest Narratives**

In the ideological conflict of the Cold War, the U.S. had to portray itself not only as a militarily and economically powerful country, but also as a liberator from colonial domination, a guardian from communist aggression, and a neighbor with goodwill. The AFAK program was designed to foster collaboration between American military personnel and the Korean civilian populace at the grassroots levels. Paradoxically, it was this grassroots approach of the program that made the project essentially hegemonic. The program aimed to assist in rehabilitating Korea at the community level; thus, it enabled U.S. military units of company size to connect directly with local Korean communities and exercise their influence over them without interference from the Korean government. Furthermore, since AFAK projects were considered a helping hand, local communities gratefully accepted the interventions. In short, through AFAK, the Eighth Army could act as an independent administrative agency that directly exercised power over the local populace.

Although Korean governmental officials welcomed the new aid plan from the U.S., they were concerned that the program could be an instrument to directly impose U.S. policies in South Korea. Korean officials constantly complained that the Korean government was excluded from the entire process. In a letter to Economic Coordinator C. Tyler Wood, South Korean Prime Minister, Too Chin Paik, expressed his concern that the U.S. Army initiated AFAK without joint consultation with Korean officials or even other American aid agencies. Paik also criticized the U.S. Army's "haphazard selection of projects."<sup>58</sup> Prime Minister Paik also sent a letter to General Mark W. Clark, Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations Command, asserting that the U.S. Army engineers and technicians had to be used in Korea's governmental or industrial projects, rather than utilizing the resources on the local community projects.<sup>59</sup> It was a year later when the Korean Governmental officials were allowed to make suggestions to AFAK, but U.S. military leaders always retained ultimate control over the program.<sup>60</sup>

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26, 1955, UD 1276, Box 14; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>54</sup> AFAK Program Status Report #16, p.1, March 18, 1955, UD 1276, Box 14; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>55</sup> Sp. Howard M. Ziff, "AFAK Helps War-torn Korea, Boosts Morale," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (July 26, 1955), 12; and "AFAK Hospital Complete," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (June 16, 1956), 8.

<sup>56</sup> PFC Richard Eichbauer, S&S Korea Bureau, "AFAK Has Spent \$6 Million Since 1953," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (May 21, 1959), 7.

<sup>57</sup> "\$400,000 Seoul Hospital Planned," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (December 18, 1954), 8.

<sup>58</sup> Letter from Too Chii Paik to C. Tyler Wood, March 9, 1954. In James S. Chi, *Teaching Korea* (PhD dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 2008), 96.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from Too Chin Paik to Mark W. Clark, n.d., UD 1276, Box 14; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>60</sup> Chi, *Teaching Korea*, 101.

When the AFAK program was first announced, Nathan A. Baily, wrote a letter to the *Washington Post* in favor of its effectiveness. He suggested that the AFAK program was the contemporary equivalent of the construction activities of the Roman legionnaires. Professor Baily stated:

Conquerors of the ancient world, guardians of the *Pax Romana*, and missionaries of Roman civilization, the legionnaires in peacetime built roads, aqueducts, irrigation works, etc. ... Apparently, this activity of the legions minimized the usual problems confronting an army in peacetime, added to the wealth of Roman society, and reduced the cost of the army to the state.<sup>61</sup>

AFAK's positive analogy with the ancient legions paradoxically revealed its imperialistic nature, which had to be meticulously concealed. From his personal experience with Nazi propaganda in World War II, President Eisenhower understood that images and ideas would be an important weapon in waging a Cold War.<sup>62</sup> He made an information program a key element of his foreign policy.<sup>63</sup> For American policy makers and military officers, the AFAK program provided a great opportunity to portray the presence of the U.S. Armed Forces and the leadership of the United States in a positive light. No better propaganda tool existed than showing that while communists destroyed and exploited, American combatants—often a symbol appropriated by America's enemies to generate anti-American sentiment—demonstrated goodwill by reconstructing Korean communities.

Active publicity was key for the U.S. to achieve the program's original goals. AFAK directives sent to sponsoring units clearly made the point as follows: "In order that the Armed Forces Assistance to Korea Program will achieve one of its principal objectives, that of inspiring good will toward Armed Forces on the part of the people of Korea, the Korean people must be kept fully informed of every aspect of the Program."<sup>64</sup>

The Eighth Army Public Information Office and the United States Information Service (USIS) in Korea coordinated for the efficient publicity of the AFAK program in Korea and abroad. In general, the Eighth Army produced press materials for publicity, brought them to American personnel in Korea on their own, and forwarded them to USIS by which the materials were processed and circulated to the Korean people.

The Eighth Army Public Information Office published numerous press releases regarding AFAK activities, including large quantities of photographs, radio tapes, documentary films, posters, motion pictures, and various types of press materials in both Korean and English. The story was frequently told in *The Pacific Stars & Stripes*, and American Forces Korea Network (AFKN) radio and television series. For example, AFAK aired a radio series, "AFAK on The Air," dramatizing the AFAK projects.<sup>65</sup> The Army disseminated AFAK materials to the U.S. and

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<sup>61</sup> Nathan A. Baily, "Labor Battalions," *The Washington Post* (Aug. 10, 1953).

<sup>62</sup> Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2006), 54.

<sup>63</sup> Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 6.

<sup>64</sup> AFAK Directive No. 18, Annex E (Public Information).

<sup>65</sup> The radio series, "AFAK on The Air," consisted of three 15 minutes shows each Sunday evening and several 5 minutes shows on AFAK. For more, see "Sunday AFAK Series to Start on AFKN," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (March 8, 1954), 10.

other parts of the world, through normal military channels.<sup>66</sup> These various forms of public information often covered the construction and completion of AFAK-assisted projects and the positive role of the U.S. Armed Forces.

The Army supplied USIS with the material.<sup>67</sup> USIS used their facilities and personnel to make them more suitable for Koreans. Within Korea, the USIS took full responsibility for releasing the AFAK material directly or forwarded translated material to South Korean media, such as the local and major Korean press, radio, and any other media available. The USIS in Korea chose the best stories and forwarded them to the United States Information Agency (USIA) headquarters in Washington, D.C. for distribution throughout the world. The AFAK material was used as a weapon of global psychological warfare through USIA materials, the Voice of America, the pamphlet *Free World*, and the documentary television program *The Big Picture*.<sup>68</sup>

Through mass media, the story was told to the American public at home. To increase AFAK-related news in the U.S., the program encouraged American news representatives and reporters to visit AFAK projects and write articles on them. A number of local and major newspapers published articles on the humanitarian aspects of AFAK activities, highlighting U.S. soldiers' friendship with local communities.<sup>69</sup> For example, on January 1, 1955, *the New York Times* reporter Greg MacGregor, wrote that the AFAK program "left a record of friendship, kindness and generosity for the United States Eighth Army in Korea. Many a village owed its existence to neighboring fighting units that the Communists have attempted to label as 'ruthless and bloodthirsty.'"<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Subject: Integration of Publicity for Military and Civilian Economic Aid Projects, A Memo of Robert P. Speer, Public Affairs Office of the United States Information Service, April 29, 1954, UD 2845, Box 2; Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Research Group 84; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>67</sup> The Eighth Army furnished USIS with the following materials: (a) two general releases on AFAK per week, (b) ten different AFAK pictures each ten days, (c) a feature story on AFAK with pictures each month, (d) spot news stories on AFAK and other joint Korean-American activities, and (e) AFAK wrap-up story each month. In Subject: Integration of Publicity for Military and Civilian Economic Aid Projects, A Memo of Robert P. Speer, Public Affairs Office of the United States Information Service, April 29, 1954, UD 2845, Box 2; Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Research Group 84; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>68</sup> AFAK Directive No. 18, Annex E (Public Information); Subject: Integration of Publicity for Military and Civilian Economic Aid Projects, A Memo of Robert P. Speer, Public Affairs Office of the United States Information Service, April 29, 1954, UD 2845, Box 2; Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Research Group 84; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Subject: Publicity for AFAK Program Through USIS, Headquarters of Eighth US Army, Public Information Office, April 12, 1954, UD 2845, Box 2; Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Research Group 84; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Also, see *The Big Picture: Armed Forces Assistance to Korea*; Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Record Group 111; Motion Pictures Division, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, <http://research.archives.gov/description/2569541> (accessed March 1, 2015)

<sup>69</sup> For more see Howard Rusk, "The G.I.'s Give a Hand to the Koreans," *The New York Times* (Oct. 11, 1953); Greg MacGregor, "G.I. Aid Improves Tie with Koreans," *The New York Times* (Jan. 1, 1955); and Samuel Jameson, "Aid Program That Works: GI's AFAK" *The Chicago Tribune* (Dec. 29, 1963).

<sup>70</sup> Greg MacGregor, "G.I. Aid Improves Tie with Koreans: Troops Give Time, Toil and Money Freely in Rebuilding War-ravaged Country," *The New York Times* (Jan 1, 1955).

For better public relations and political effects, much effort was specifically devoted to creating “anti-conquest narratives.”<sup>71</sup> News releases placed great emphasis on the idea that the AFAK projects will benefit the entire community.<sup>72</sup> For this goal, the Eighth Army Public Information Office had two specific guidelines for publicity regarding AFAK materials. First, the publication had to include the idea of “We build together in peace as we fought together in war.”<sup>73</sup> The material emphasized cooperative efforts by American military personnel and Korean civilians, often using Korean participants’ names and titles. The use of pictures of Korean workers on the project was highly encouraged. Yet, images showing them in a subordinate position had to be especially avoided. It was also recommended to use photographs of Korean representatives playing the main part in ground-breaking or dedication ceremonies of AFAK projects. Second, the material had to be specifically written to reflect the value of the projects. The Army recommended quotations from Koreans. The cost was played down in the publication. Dedication pictures were not necessarily recommended for use because the actual structures themselves were not particularly impressive.<sup>74</sup> In order to achieve better psychological effects, “before and after” photos were often used in the media (Figure 3.4).



Figure 3.4 Before and After Photos of an AFAK-aided Presbyterian Church Reconstruction Project  
(source: *The Pacific Stars & Stripes*, September 19, 1954)

<sup>71</sup> For more, see Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 13.

<sup>72</sup> AFAK Directive No. 18, Annex E (Public Information).

<sup>73</sup> Subject: Publicity for AFAK Program Through USIS.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*; and Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Research Group 84; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; G5 Senior Advisor, John H. Adams, Col., Subject: 8th Army AFAK Conference, April 15, 1954, NM-16 204, Box 2; Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander, Allied Powers and United Nations Command, Research Group 554; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; and AFAK Directive No. 18, Annex F (Administration), p.2.

At all construction site, prominently displayed signs gave background on the project, including the project name, sponsoring unit, and most importantly, the AFAK mark—both in Korean and English (Figure 3.5). Dedication ceremonies, speeches and public releases had to clearly identify the source of funds and technical aid given to the project.<sup>75</sup> As completed, all projects were marked with permanent AFAK metal plaques or concrete inscriptions.<sup>76</sup> A formalized system of making signs and plaques was gradually established over time. The size of the sign was to be six feet by ten feet and letters had to be large and clear enough to be seen from a distance. The sign was to remain at the site for six months after the completion of the project. The brass plaque had to have the following caption: “This is an AFAK Project being constructed under joint sponsorship of the United States Army and (community or organization concerned), for the benefit of all the people of Korea. Funds for this project are a donation from the Government of the United States of America.”<sup>77</sup>



Figure 3.5 A Sign Board for an AFAK school construction, February 24, 1954  
Note that U.S. soldiers, a Korean teacher, and children are standing next to a sign board.  
(source: Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Research Group 111-SC;  
National Archives at College Park)

Not only the formal signs, but also anything related to the construction—such as the engine noise from the military trucks transporting lumber, the hammering sound of construction, and the physical structure itself—became an effective propaganda machine. They were a softer, invisible, and more gentle advertising that would help to spread a positive image of the U.S. military units.

<sup>75</sup> AFAK Directive No. 18, Annex E (Public Information).

<sup>76</sup> AFAK Bulletin No. 2, p.2, March 31, 1954 / AFAK Bulletin No. 8, p.2, September 10, 1954, A1 255, Box 2203; Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Research Group 338; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; AFAK Directive No. 22, p.5, May 1, 1959, A1 255, Box 2207; Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Research Group 338; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; and Monthly Conference of Deputy Program Directors.

<sup>77</sup> AFAK Directive No. 18, p.4.



In order to determine the reaction of the local Korean population toward the program, the U.S. military officials of the AFAK program conducted a few public opinion surveys. One of the earliest ones was conducted by the U.S. 7th Infantry Division in two areas—urban Duk Jung-ri and in rural Ok Jung-ri. This survey revealed that, while more than 75 percent of the respondents knew about AFAK on a person-to-person basis or through the newspapers, radio, or other Korean media, people in less populated areas had relatively less opportunities to hear about the program. The survey concluded that AFAK should make greater efforts in informing the benefits of the AFAK program to the grassroots Korean communities. Based on this survey, the AFAK Bulletin of October 1954 provided three publicity suggestions in order to extend their psychological goals: more active use of AFAK signs and posters at the construction sites; encouragement of local Korean officials to discuss AFAK assistance at local meetings; and direct contact of U.S. military personnel with the local populace during construction or at the dedication ceremonies.<sup>78</sup>

Shortly after that, AFAK conducted a more extensive nationwide public opinion survey on the psychological effects of the program on the people at the local level. A U.S. military survey team with Korean interpreters interviewed 6,340 Koreans from sixteen different regions across both urban and rural areas.<sup>79</sup> The poll revealed that 89 percent of the populace was relatively well-informed about AFAK; 60 percent felt that they were directly benefiting from the program and, even if they were not personally affected by AFAK, almost all respondents agreed that AFAK was beneficial to Koreans; and 69 percent felt that the program was effectively administered where the local people were most needed.<sup>80</sup> To sum up, the survey team concluded as follows: “In general, the poll revealed that the AFAK program has reached a large proportion of the Korean people, that they appreciate it, and that the immediate, tangible, and “grass roots” nature of AFAK has contributed greatly to American-Korean friendship.”<sup>81</sup>

### **Architecture Engineered**

AFAK did not develop any stylistic preference. Its efficiency legitimized the style. The AFAK program had always suffered from insufficient funds and thus it had a long list of valuable proposals that it could not support. Therefore, AFAK officials, engineers, and architects pursued maximum economic efficiency in design, material uses, and construction methods for each project.

The Eighth Army Engineer Section played a crucial role in making AFAK projects more efficient. The Engineer Section reviewed every AFAK application, often provided architectural

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<sup>78</sup> The survey was conducted by the 17th Infantry Regiment, 7th Division, polling more than one third of the population of Duk Jung-ri and Ok Jung-ri. For more, see AFAK Bulletin No. 9, p.3, October 28, 1954, A1 255, Box 2203; Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Research Group 338; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; also see “ROKs Proud of Role in AFAK,” *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (September 18, 1954), 8.

<sup>79</sup> AFAK Program Status Report #13, p.4, December 22, 1954, UD 1276, Box 14; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>80</sup> Despite its positive reception, 26 percent of people responded that the program felt that the most needed projects were not being constructed. For example, farmers wished for more irrigation works; remote areas more medical dispensaries; and urban areas more orphanages. For more, see AFAK Program Status Report #13, p.5.

<sup>81</sup> AFAK Program Status Report #13, p.6.



drawings, supplied Army construction materials, offered technical know-how, operated heavy construction equipment, and supervised the construction.<sup>82</sup>

The efficient use of construction materials was essential. Because there was no charge for the use of U.S. military equipment and personnel, almost all AFAK funds were spent on paying for construction materials and supply. To reduce the amount of material used in each project, the engineers reviewed projects and eliminated any excessive parts by replacing them with locally available or cheaper materials.<sup>83</sup> For example, whenever possible, the rehabilitation of burnt-out masonry structures was recommended. By preserving the existing structures, the program could save critical structural materials.<sup>84</sup> Also, the installation of large windows was avoided because they were expensive and rare, and also caused high heat loss during winter. The use of imported plywood in ceilings was not recommended; instead, Korean traditional slatted wood ceilings were preferred.<sup>85</sup>

Most importantly, as a means to reduce material costs, standard stock lists were made and distributed to all AFAK engineering units. The design and material supply of each project had to be in accordance with the latest stock list.<sup>86</sup> For the maximum use of materials on hand, a new AFAK standard stock list was updated via new AFAK Bulletins, cancelling the old items that were not in demand or were in short supply. The lists were strictly enforced in the program. Materials beyond the list had to be furnished from the unit's or the local community's own resources.<sup>87</sup> The sponsoring unit or the area AFAK officer ensured that construction materials were used for its intended purpose.<sup>88</sup> By using the materials on hand, it was also possible to avoid delay in shipment of materials.

Speedy construction was another important means to reduce the cost of labor and the loss of materials. Delayed construction often resulted in storage and security problems. Once delivered, construction materials were usually stored near the construction site often without special protection and were vulnerable to spoilage, waste, and theft. Materials were not deposited on the site in quantities more than the workers could handle conveniently. When necessary, partial issues were made.<sup>89</sup> Completion of the outer shell of structures was the first goal, especially when winter or monsoon season was approaching, because the rest of the construction could be continued during bad weather conditions.<sup>90</sup> In order to expedite work, urgent requests for minor items, such as door knobs, bolts, and hinges, were supplied by improvisation or local purchase by the benefitting community or with voluntary funds—such as, the American-Korean

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<sup>82</sup> AFAK Director, J. H. Adams, Col., Subject: AFAK Activities, January 7, 1954, NM-16 204, Box 2; Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander, Allied Powers and United Nations Command, Research Group 554; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>83</sup> AFAK Program Status Report #6, p.3, May 11, 1954, UD 1276, Box 14; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>84</sup> AFAK Bulletin No. 1, p.1.

<sup>85</sup> AFAK Bulletin No. 6, p.2, June 28, 1954, UD 1276, Box 14; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; and Monthly Conference of Deputy Program Directors.

<sup>86</sup> AFAK Directive No. 18, Annex F (Administration), p.1.

<sup>87</sup> AFAK Bulletin No. 5, p.1, May 9, 1954, UD A1 1, Box 91; Records of United States Army, Pacific, Research Group 550; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; and AFAK Summary, p.3.

<sup>88</sup> AFAK Directive No. 18, p.4.

<sup>89</sup> Monthly Conference of Deputy Program Directors.

<sup>90</sup> AFAK Bulletin No. 6, p.2; and Monthly Conference of Deputy Program Directors.

Foundation funds.<sup>91</sup> By the same token, on-the-spot design changes took place to expedite construction with the sponsoring unit's permission.<sup>92</sup>

Construction supervision was also a major role given to U.S. engineering troops. During construction, they frequently visited the sites and wrote progress reports for control purposes.<sup>93</sup> Any undue construction delays were to be identified.<sup>94</sup> Also, in order to prevent widespread irregularities in the distribution and transfer of construction materials, the Korean Civil Assistance Command (KCAC), for example, employed the system of "End-use Checkers" to compare the quantity of materials delivered with ones used.<sup>95</sup>

A follow-up inspection was made about two or three months after its completion. The goals of the maintenance follow-up were (1) to detect construction faults, (2) to ensure that the benefitting organizations were using the structures as originally intended, and (3) to inspect whether the communities were maintaining the structures properly.<sup>96</sup> The beneficiary organizations were required to maintain the projects with "at least minimum military standards."<sup>97</sup>

### **Korean Army Task Force Teams**

All AFAK projects were accomplished by the cooperative efforts of multiple actors. Along with American missionaries, philanthropists, and representatives of other U.S. aid agencies, Korean military personnel also participated in the AFAK program.

Although AFAK aimed to reach down to the grassroots in every part of South Korea, the early analysis showed that the program, in fact, tended to concentrate in cities and the areas where U.S. Army troops were stationed. Due to their geographical remoteness, only a few AFAK projects had been initiated in areas where no sponsoring U.S. units were located, such as the south-western provinces of Korea. In order to expand the AFAK program further, the AFAK Task Force teams were formulated with a budget of 10 percent of the AFAK funds.<sup>98</sup> A Task Force construction team consisted of Korean military supervisors, workmen, accompanying vehicles, and necessary equipment.<sup>99</sup> A Task Force was designated to conduct field surveys, develop worthy AFAK projects, sponsor the constructions, and often provide labor.

Before dispatching a construction Task Force, the Eighth Army headquarters notified a ROK Corps to form AFAK Task Force survey teams to investigate the possibility of worthy

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<sup>91</sup> AFAK Deputy Director, J. H. Adams, Col., Subject: AFAK Conference, February 17, 1954, NM-16 204, Box 2; Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander, Allied Powers and United Nations Command, Research Group 554; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD

<sup>92</sup> AFAK Program Status Report #13, p.3-4.

<sup>93</sup> AFAK Directive No. 22, p.6, May 1, 1959, A1 255, Box 2207; Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Research Group 338; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>94</sup> AFAK Directive No. 23, p.7.

<sup>95</sup> Major General, E.W. Ridings, Subject: AFAK Program Safeguards, May 12, 1954, NM-16 204, Box 2; Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander, Allied Powers and United Nations Command, Research Group 554; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>96</sup> AFAK Bulletin No. 6, p.2; and Monthly Conference of Deputy Program Directors.

<sup>97</sup> AFAK Directive No. 23, p.5.

<sup>98</sup> Asst G5 Senior Advisor, Lt Col., Henry H. Carden, Subject: 8th Army AFAK Conference, May 8, 1954, NM-16 204, Box 2; Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander, Allied Powers and United Nations Command, Research Group 554; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>99</sup> Eighth US Army, Public Information Office, Release No. 589, April 22, 1954, A1 1, Box 91; Records of United States Army, Pacific, Research Group 550; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

AFAK projects.<sup>100</sup> The survey team was to visit the sites, examine the feasibility and desirability of the projects, determine the size and type of construction task force, and forward their AFAK requests to the Eighth Army headquarters.<sup>101</sup>

Also, when a deficit of labor was reported, the requisition was reported from the sponsoring U.S. unit to the Eighth Army headquarters, which in turn, requested a Korean Task Force unit. Once assigned, a construction Task Force moved to the selected area and participated in the work until completed.<sup>102</sup> The teams assisted the local community with skilled or unskilled labor force as well as construction equipment and materials when local civilian resources alone were not sufficient.<sup>103</sup>

Some Task Forces simply provided labor for normal U.S.-sponsored projects (ROK Army-Assistance Task Force), and in some cases, a Korean Army unit became the sponsor of the project (ROK Army-Sponsored Task Force).<sup>104</sup> In the case of the latter, technical supervision was provided by the U.S. Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) advisors.<sup>105</sup>

### **U.S. Military Advisory Group to Korea**

The Chief, KMAG appointed U.S. officers and soldiers as advisors to assist ROK Army-Sponsored AFAK projects. KMAG engineers were responsible for the issue of AFAK materials, the loan of engineering equipment, and technical advice to Korean architects, draftsmen, and engineers who participated in the AFAK project.<sup>106</sup> The feasibility and the efficiency of the design was examined by the Senior Engineer Advisor of KMAG. The Senior Engineer Advisor forwarded revised proposals to the headquarters for final approval.<sup>107</sup>

The most common architectural advice from Senior Engineer Advisors concerned cost saving measures. The engineering advisors attempted to reduce the overall budget for each project by either eliminating structurally unnecessary materials, reducing the use of higher priced lumber, or replacing rare items with readily available materials. Common suggestions included the substitution of concrete floors for wooden floors, reducing the size of timber in trusses, and changes in wall and roofing materials. For example, KMAG Senior Engineer Advisor, Colonel C. Hanburger evaluated a design by the 101st Engineer Maintenance and Supply Group, Korean Army, Pusan. In his report, he wrote that “[this] structure is technically sound in design but not economical. Cost of this structure is \$1.95 per square foot which can be cut to \$1.14 per square

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<sup>100</sup> AFAK Program Directive No. 6, p.1, June 4, 1954, UD 1276, Box 14; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>101</sup> AFAK Program Directive No. 6, p.2-3.

<sup>102</sup> Public Information Office, Release No. 589.

<sup>103</sup> For instance, in the construction of a girls' school in Chunchon, Korean Army unit contributes a large number of lumber and labor. For more, see AFAK Program Status Report #4, p.3, March 18, 1954, UD 1276, Box 14; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Public Information Office, Release No. 589; and Asst G5 Senior Advisor, Lt Col., Henry H. Carden, Subject: 8th Army AFAK Conference, May 8, 1954, NM-16 204, Box 2; Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander, Allied Powers and United Nations Command, Research Group 554; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>104</sup> AFAK Program Directive No. 6, p.5.

<sup>105</sup> Incoming Message from Commanding General, Eighth Army, March 21, 1954, NM-16 204, Box 2; Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander, Allied Powers and United Nations Command, Research Group 554; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>106</sup> AFAK Program Status Report #15, p.2, February 15, 1955, UD 1276, Box 14; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>107</sup> AFAK Program Directive No. 6, pp.1-2.

foot.” He specifically cut the use of diverse sizes of lumber, glass, and plywood that he considered to be excessive.<sup>108</sup>

The reduction in the size of materials was one of the most common suggestions. Lumber, for example, was often in short supply, especially in the early stages, and thus it was always recommended to use a design that entailed less lumber. The use of lumber that was unnecessarily large and diverse in size was to be particularly avoided. For example, 1st Lieutenant, Clarence A. Riser suggested for Masan Catholic Sung Chie Girls High School’s new classroom construction that the 8” x 20” girders and 4” x 8” beams on center be changed to 8” x 12” and 4” x 6” respectively. Riser also suggested replacing the 2” x 12” x R at 1200 board feet and the 8” x 8” 24’ at 4608 board feet with the 4” x 6” with 5808 board feet. Since 8” x 12” could be built up from 4” x 6” lumber, he asked to make the best use of a single and relatively small item—4” x 6” lumber—for this project.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, for the construction of Tong-Moon Middle School in Pusan, Lieutenant Riser suggested changing double 12” x 12” beams 6’ on center to a single 8” x 12” beams. The 2” x 8” for the floor joints was changed to 2” x 6”. Both 8” x 12” and 2” x 6” lumber could be made out of 4” x 6” material by combining two or cutting one in half. He also cut excessive use of plywood and hard pressed fiberboard, and modified the location of windows, columns, and trusses so as to meet its structural needs.<sup>110</sup>

Contrary to this, the engineering team supplemented the amount and size of materials, when the bill of construction materials was insufficient to carry the project presented on the architectural drawings. For example, in reviewing a Korean Task Force construction project labelled temporarily as 5203T, an engineer of the K MAG added 50 bags of cement to protect the adobe walls, and supplemented the amount of lumber.<sup>111</sup>

In spite of its tight budget, permanent structures of native stone, brick, or blocks were preferred. These masonry structures were more durable than wooden structures in the Korean climate and were less costly than reinforced concrete buildings. Reinforced concrete construction required a large amount of timber mold for casting concrete and reinforcing steel that had to be purchased in the U.S. or Japan.<sup>112</sup> Thus, reinforced concrete construction was limited for buildings taller than three stories.<sup>113</sup>

### **Engineering Units and AFAK Architects**

Engineering units in each Division played a crucial role in the AFAK program. The 65th Engineer Battalion of the 25th Infantry Division was a typical AFAK engineering hub.

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<sup>108</sup> US Military Advisory Group to the ROK, Subject: Project Request, Namchon Common School, Pusan, Korea, June 11, 1954, NM-16 204, Box 2; Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander, Allied Powers and United Nations Command, Research Group 554; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>109</sup> US Military Advisory Group to the ROK, Subject: Standard School Plan for AFAK Schools, August 31, 1954, NM-16 204, Box 2; Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander, Allied Powers and United Nations Command, Research Group 554; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>110</sup> US Military Advisory Group to the ROK, Subject: Project Request, Tong-Moon Middle School, Pusan City, June 26, 1954, NM-16 204, Box 2; Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander, Allied Powers and United Nations Command, Research Group 554; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>111</sup> US Military Advisory Group to the ROK, Subject: Armed Forces Assistance to Korea Project, June 25, 1954, NM-16 204, Box 2; Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander, Allied Powers and United Nations Command, Research Group 554; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>112</sup> In practice, less than fifty percent of the lumber that was used for concrete casting could be reclaimed. See AFAK Policy File, n.d., p.6.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

Conducting other normal army duties, the Engineer Battalion spent approximately one third of its time and equipment on AFAK. The Battalion had two main tasks: (1) drawing plans and (2) supplying construction materials. Under Captain Charles W. Barker's direction, soldiers of the Battalion's S-3 office handled the architectural and technical phase of the program as draftsmen and structural engineers. When the plans were approved, the Engineer Supply Office procured all construction materials and loaded them on trucks of division units sponsoring the AFAK projects. The loading was the end of the Engineering Battalion's task. As of July 1954, the amount of construction materials the battalion supplied for approximately 150 plans was 250,000 board feet of lumber, over 500,000 pounds of cement, and 10,000 pounds of nails.<sup>114</sup>

In these engineering units, the AFAK architects were responsible for specific architectural tasks. The AFAK architects were normally young enlisted soldiers and officers, rather than long-term career servicemen, who often continued their architectural career upon discharge. When they were drafted, many of them were an undergraduate or already had a college degree in architecture and had some experience in design or construction. Among them was American postmodern architect, Charles W. Moore, who served as lieutenant in the Army Corps of Engineers in Korea. While serving as an engineer-architect, Moore left many small schools and church buildings in Korea. In his church design in Yun Chon, for instance, he demonstrated some traces of modernist aesthetics in a typical Quonset hut with the use of local stones and painted lumber sticks (Figure 3.6). While fulfilling the general requirement for efficient and economic military structures, many AFAK projects designed by these young American architects demonstrated similar modernist aesthetics, albeit in a rather humble fashion.



Figure 3.6 Yun Chon Catholic Chapel by Charles Moore, Korea, c.1952-1954  
(source: Charles Moore Foundation)

<sup>114</sup> Cpl. Frank Krippel Jr., PIO, Hq., 25th Inf. Div., "Designing the Recovery," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (July 18, 1954), 28.

A few stories of AFAK architects were told in *The Pacific Stars & Stripes*. One of the stories introduces Corporal Eugene Perthel in the 1343rd Engineer Battalion. Perthel designed AFAK-sponsored municipal offices, warehouses, and churches. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1952 having studied the building industry. For a short period of time, he worked as a building contractor, undertaking bungalow construction.<sup>115</sup> Another article introduces 1st Lieutenant Joseph Savitsky of the 24th Engineering Group Headquarters. Savitsky was a college-trained architect and designed the Jung Wha Girls School in Seoul as an AFAK project.<sup>116</sup> Still another article introduced Sergeant Robert J. Macon, chief AFAK architect. The Immaculate Heart of Mary Girl's School in Uijongbu was sponsored by the 31st Infantry Regiment. To reduce the amount of heavy timber used, Macon replaced the traditional heavy truss with a lightweight roof design. The eaves of the butterfly roof shot upward, and it enabled a single beam to support the weight of the roof (Figure 3.7).<sup>117</sup>

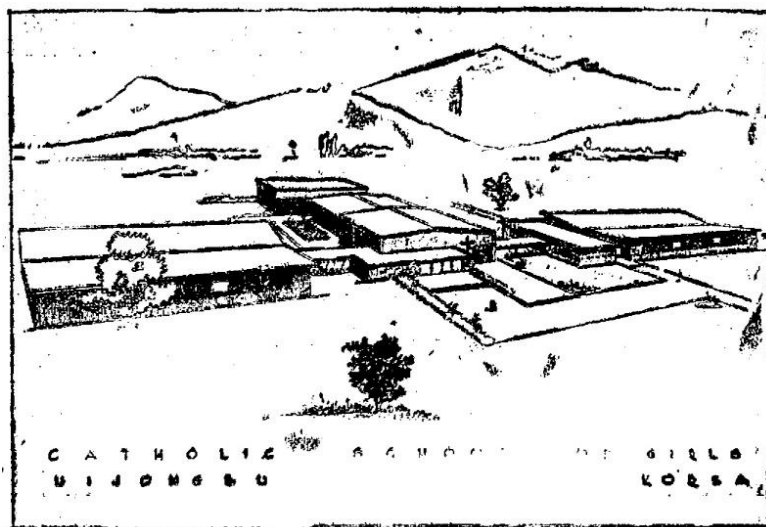


Figure 3.7 The Immaculate Heart of Mary Girl's School, Uijongbu, c.1954  
(source: *The Pacific Stars & Stripes*, September 9, 1954)

Although many AFAK architects worked in small teams, there were a few larger design teams in each major command. One of the main AFAK architectural design division was located in Pusan, Korea, in which seven AFAK architects worked for AFAK projects in Pusan area. All seven were professional architects before joining the military. Two of them were lieutenants and the other five were either Corporals or Private First Classes.<sup>118</sup> The major task of the team was to prepare architectural plans for a wide variety of AFAK projects. Final plans for each project usually took weeks or months to complete, depending on the size of the project.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>115</sup> "Soldier-Architect," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (March 5, 1954), 20.

<sup>116</sup> "AFAK Aid a Family Trait," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (March 11, 1958), 20.

<sup>117</sup> "31st Regt. Sponsors \$25,000 Girls School at Uijongbu," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (September 9, 1954), 6.

<sup>118</sup> The team consisted of 1st Lt. John T. Armstrong, 2nd Lt. Herbert G. MacDonald, Cpl. Thomas Ewald, Cpl. George W. Leonard, PFC Victor W. Bowker, PFC R. Damon Childs, and PFC Joseph Minor.

<sup>119</sup> "7 U.S. Soldiers Draw Blueprints for Pusan AFAK Construction," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (March 19, 1955), 8.

## Standard School Construction

In order to expedite projects and minimize costs, AFAK commands such as the Korean Communication Zone (KComZ) and KMAG established detailed materials lists and standard designs for a few building types. For example, a KMAG advisor, Colonel Robert R. Ellis, designed a low-cost prefabricated structure for hospital or governmental buildings. Used in the Korean Army Engineer School, his design was composed of ten parts containing 768 square feet each, and the cost per square foot was less than eighty cents.<sup>120</sup>

Among other building types, school constructions became the most standardized. School construction projects were the most common type of AFAK assistance, and thus efficient construction of schools was an important means to reduce the overall AFAK budget. Moreover, because school construction had relatively similar requirements in program and design, it could be easily standardized in a few different sizes.

Soon after the program began, a few AFAK projects managers developed standard plans. In early 1954, after a long winter, the 24th Infantry Division began construction on 30 schools in the division's area. Lieutenant Colonel Jene E. Mills was AFAK projects manager for the division. The first school was designed to become the prototype for another 30 schools in the future (Figure 3.8). The building was made of native stone walls, slate roofs, plywood, and concrete foundations. The plan was simple and modernist. The other 30 schools were planned to be built as two-, four-, five-, and six-classroom buildings depending on the community's needs. Each room measured 24 by 30 feet and cost estimates ranged \$6,000 to \$9,000 each.<sup>121</sup>

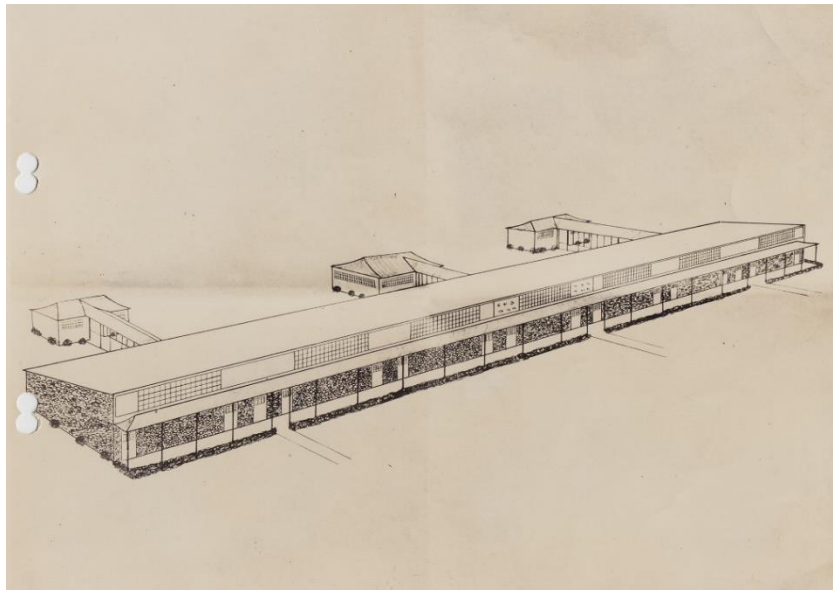


Figure 3.8 Model Korean School, designed by the 24th Division

(source: Records of United States Army, Pacific, Research Group 550; National Archives at College Park)

On September 5, 1954, through the AFAK Directive, the AFAK-Korean Standard School Plans with bill of materials were distributed to all Eighth Army commands and AFAK Task

<sup>120</sup> "Construction Streamlined," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (July 3, 1954), 5.

<sup>121</sup> "24th to Build ROK Schools," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (April 16, 1954), 7; and PIO, Armed Forces Assistance to Korea, March 1954, A1 1, Box 91; Records of United States Army, Pacific, Research Group 550; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Forces (Figure 3.9).<sup>122</sup> All AFAK school construction had to conform to the standard plans; other earlier standard school plans of each Division were rescinded. Only minor changes to these plans were authorized, usually when items on the standard bill of materials were not available at the moment.<sup>123</sup> Designed by the Eighth U.S. Army engineers, the Standard Plans provided the basic layout and design of the structure. Varying from two to six classrooms, the standard plans utilized lumber and other materials on hand to the full and minimized the use of materials in short supply. As the earlier standard school constructions, wall materials were to be furnished by the local communities. Native stone was recommended as a preferred material for walls and foundations. The priority was followed by concrete block and concrete or Landcrete brick. Wood frame was given the lowest priority. Whenever possible, imported wooden materials was restricted the use to flooring.<sup>124</sup>

Material List for One Class-room to be Furnished by AFAK				Material List for Two Class-rooms to be Furnished by AFAK					
1.	Lumber	Unit	Quantity	Cost	1.	Lumber	Unit	Quantity	Cost
	1x4x8L	bf	1686'	\$ 118.02		1x4x8L	bf	3372	\$ 236.04
	1x6x8L	"	3388'	271.04		1x4x8L	"	6776	542.08
	1x6x14'	"	30'	2.40		1x6x8L	"	60	4.80
	2x4x8L	"	825'	74.25		1x6x14'	"	1650	148.50
	2x4x12'	"	26	2.38		2x4x8L	"	53	4.77
	2x4x14'	"	20	1.80		2x4x12'	"	41	3.60
	2x6x8L	"	44	3.96		2x6x8L	"	88	7.92
	2x6x10'	"	105	9.49		2x6x10'	"	211	18.99
	2x6x12'	"	269	24.25		2x6x12'	"	539	48.51
	2x6x14'	"	396	35.64		2x6x14'	"	792	71.28
	2x8x12'	"	93	8.36		2x8x12'	"	185	16.65
	2x8x14'	"	449	44.95		2x8x14'	"	898	89.80
	2x8x16'	"	349	34.90		2x8x16'	"	698	69.80
	2x10x8L	"	399	39.90		2x10x8L	"	798	79.80
	2x10x14'	"	320	32.00		2x10x14'	"	640	64.00
	2x12x12'	"	124.0	124.00		2x12x12'	"	248.0	248.00
	4x6x16'	"	66	6.60		4x6x16'	"	132	13.20
	4x6x12'	"	32	3.52		4x8x12'	"	64	7.04
	4x8x12'	"	26	2.92		4x8x16'	"	53	5.83
	4x8x16'	"	419	96.09		4x8x12'	"	338	92.13
	8x8x16' (green)	"	188	15.13		4x8x16'	"	275	30.25
			95	9.50		8x8x16'	"	190	19.00
2.	Cement	bag	380	410.40	2.	Cement	bag	760	820.80
3.	Glass (1/8"x36"x36")	sh	40	50.00	3.	Glass (1/8"x36"x36")	sh	80	100.00
TOTAL COST				\$1,370.50	TOTAL COST				\$2,742.84
				\$1,421.50					

Figure 3.9 Material List for One and Two Classroom to Be Furnished by AFAK

(Source: Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Research Group 338; National Archives at College Park)

The largest single structure was a six classroom unit and its estimated cost was \$8,173. The new standard plans were not necessarily a cheaper alternative to the earlier standard plans, but they were better suited to their purpose. In order to fully incorporate the normal teaching requirements in Korea, the new plans required approximately \$400 worth of materials in quantity per room more than the earlier standard school plan designed, for example, by the KComZ.<sup>125</sup> For this purposes, the Eighth Army engineers had cooperated with the Korean Ministry of Education. According to the new plans, no two-story schools were permitted. Even when multi-story structures seemed necessary due to limited land, the standard plans recommended the size

<sup>122</sup> AFAK Directive No. 9, p.1, September 5, 1954, UD 1276, Box 14; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>123</sup> US Military Advisory Group, Subject: Standard School Plan for AFAK Schools.

<sup>124</sup> AFAK Directive No. 9, p.2, September 5, 1954, UD 1276, Box 14; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>125</sup> US Military Advisory Group, Subject: Standard School Plan for AFAK Schools.



of the school be reduced.<sup>126</sup> When the project requested more than six classrooms or a multi-story structure, the plan had to be revised as combinations of multiple single-story structures.<sup>127</sup> In cases when the Plans required construction materials beyond the approved bills and the local school officials could not make up the difference, the AFAK officials either eliminated the number of classrooms with the local officials' consent or transferred extra AFAK funds by cancelling other less desirable projects.

### Architecture Learned

While planning and implementing construction projects together, modern design and economic construction were transmitted to those involved in the projects, from workmen of the village to professional architects. Regarding this issue, *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* article covered the story of a young carpenter, An Lul Ho, as follows:

This material help and technical advice provided by the unit helped renew the undefinable confidence which the craftsman of Korea is again feeling through the work of AFAK. Carpenter's apprentice An Lul Ho, working on his first job of construction on a project of peace said, "I now feel that I really am beginning to build something."<sup>128</sup>

The provision of standard U.S. military construction material helped local Korean carpenters become familiar with standard, lightweight lumber. Traditionally, Korean carpenters and builders preferred to use heavy, rectangular timber. In fact, at the very beginning of the program, large timber was one of the largest allocations for materials.<sup>129</sup> The old preference had to be changed to standard materials in the U.S. building trade.<sup>130</sup>

The use of new material led to a new construction method. The light-frame truss using two-by-four lumber replaced traditional heavy frames. This change became ubiquitous everywhere AFAK projects took place all around the country. *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* article on March 5, 1954 introduces this change with an anecdote by AFAK architect Corporal Perthel, as follows:

[Phases] of Korean construction that differ sharply from American ideas. One of these is the method of building roof trusses. The Korean truss is of heavier cut lumber than the American type and is joined together without bolts or nails. The American truss is of smaller lumber and is steel-bolted into place. U.S. Army engineers confirm Perthel's opinion that much time and labor are saved by use of the American truss. The American type truss is incorporated in the Friendship School and many U.S. Army engineers insist on its use in AFAK work. The Koreans smilingly accept the change ...<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> US Military Advisory Group to the ROK, G. W. Butler, Lt. Col., Subject: Proposed AFAK Project, August 31, 1954, NM-16 204, Box 2; Records of General Headquarters, Far East Command, Supreme Commander, Allied Powers and United Nations Command, Research Group 554; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>127</sup> US Military Advisory Group, Subject: Standard School Plan for AFAK Schools.

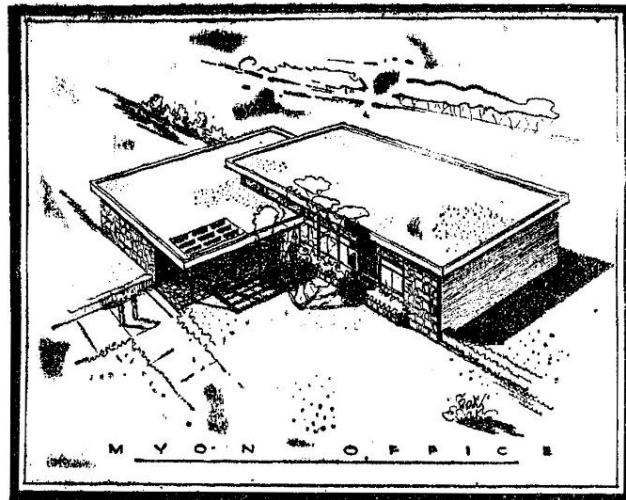
<sup>128</sup> "School Construction Stirs Spirit of ROK Workers," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (July 23, 1954), 8.

<sup>129</sup> AFAK Bulletin No. 1, p.1.

<sup>130</sup> "School Construction Stirs Spirit of ROK Workers," 8.

<sup>131</sup> "Soldier-Architect," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (March 5, 1954), 20.

A flat roof was also introduced in many AFAK projects as a way to replace the traditional heavy truss (Figure 3.10).<sup>132</sup> These new types of construction helped build structures with light and cheap materials. Previously valued skills, such as mortising large timbers without nails, became almost obsolete. New materials and new construction methods made workers familiar with a new set of skills in building lightweight trusses using standard lumber, mixing cement and sand in the proper ratio, and handling fragile glass. Seeking a new project, a large body of skilled labor was moving from town to town. In this process, they often brought a new construction techniques to other areas.



**ECONOMICAL DEPARTURE**—A new, flat roof design replacing the conventional Korean heavy truss construction will soon be introduced in the 7th Div. AFAK program to save thousands of square feet of roofing in the proposed building of three myon and 31 ri offices throughout its AFAK area of responsibility. The roof was designed by Cpl. Robert J. Macon, Rochester, N.Y., division AFAK architect.

Figure 3.10 A Proposed Design for a Small Town Office, Designed by Corporal Robert J. Macon, c. 1954  
(source: *The Pacific Stars & Stripes*, July 17, 1954)

### Conclusion: Great Success and Quick Decline

After the war, there was great demand for reconstruction in Korea and thus the response to the program was immediate and heated. The original \$15 million authorization was entirely allocated by May 1954. However, with the Eisenhower administration's overall reductions in foreign aid funds, the amount of allocated funds became smaller each year. The Department of the Army was authorized to finance an additional \$5 million and \$2 million from the Civilian Relief in Korea (CRIK) funds in 1955 and 1956 respectively to undertake more projects. The International Cooperation Administration (ICA) appropriated \$2 million and \$1 million in 1957 and 1958 for the continuation of the program.<sup>133</sup> By 1960, only \$750,000 was allocated for AFAK.<sup>134</sup> The AFAK program lasted until 1971, but it never received sufficient support from

<sup>132</sup> "Economical Departure," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (July 17, 1954), 7.

<sup>133</sup> AFAK Directive No. 18, p.1, December 3, 1956 / AFAK Directive No. 20, p.1, December 17, 1957, A1 255, Box 2203; Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Research Group 338; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>134</sup> \$15 million was allocated for 1954, \$5 million for 1955, \$2 million for 1956, \$2 million for 1957, \$1.5 million for 1958, \$1 million for 1959, \$0.75 million for 1960. See AFAK Briefing to General C. B. Magruder, CINCUNC, May 23,

Washington in the 1960s.<sup>135</sup> Half of the entire program's distributions were allocated within the first two years of operations.

Constantly dwindling funds limited the type, size, and number of projects. In 1957, approximately 75 percent of the AFAK funds were spent for school construction, and the number became 96 percent in 1960.<sup>136</sup> In terms of scale, the program could sponsor only small projects that could be completed within one building season. This reduction was partly due to Eisenhower's attempt to reduce swollen wartime military spending, but it partly came from the fact that the program achieved its goals early on. Despite its quick decline, unlike many other U.S. aid programs to Korea during the 1950s, the AFAK program was considered by many U.S. policy makers to be economically efficient and politically successful in its early days. On October 17, 1956, two years after the program's start, the Department of Defense suggested that the U.S. might consider extending the principle and procedures of the AFAK program to other parts of the world, especially to Southeast Asian countries. On a report on the feasibility of the program's extension, the AFAK program was appraised as follows:

[AFAK projects] have advanced substantially the interests of the United States. In addition to the concrete benefits that have accrued to indigenous peoples as a result of this work, a greater appreciation and understanding of the American way of life and of U.S. objectives has been achieved, and all of the Americans who have taken part have enjoyed a greater sense of participation in the effort which the United States is making to help the people of other nations to help themselves.<sup>137</sup>

The Eisenhower Administration concluded that the implementation of similar activities in other countries was not feasible elsewhere because the program required sizable personnel and equipment not available outside of South Korea.<sup>138</sup> Nevertheless, it is still undeniable that AFAK achieved significant outcomes with only a small amount of U.S. expenditure. The U.S. Army estimated that the value of all AFAK-assisted projects was more than three times what it had

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1960, UD 1276, Box 154; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>135</sup> In fiscal year 62, 63, and 64, the Military Assistance Program (MAP) provided AFAK with \$600,000, \$385,000 and \$377,000 respectively. In fiscal year 65 and 66, 75 million won (approximately \$377,000) was drawn from Public Law 480 sales. The same amount of money from Public Law 480 sales was allocated for fiscal year 67. In fiscal year 68 and 69, the MAP again funded AFAK with \$276,000 and \$120,000 respectively. The fiscal year 1969 was the final year of the AFAK construction program. For more, see *Armed Forces Assistance to Korea, 1953 to 1971*, February 15, 1972, p.2, Organizational History Files, A1, Box 340; Records of United States Army, Pacific, Research Group 550; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>136</sup> AFAK Directive No. 19, p.1, May 16, 1957, A1 255, Box 2203; Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer, Research Group 338; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; and AFAK Briefing to General C. B. Magruder, CINCUNC, May 23, 1960, UD 1276, Box 154; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>137</sup> Report: U.S. Personnel Participation in Voluntary Activities, p.1, November 29, 1956, White House Office, National Security Council Staff Papers, OCB Secretariat Series, Box 1, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>138</sup> Report: Summary of Defense Briefing on Armed Forces Assistance to Korea, October 23, 1956; Report: U.S. Personnel Participation in Voluntary Activities, November 29, 1956; Report: Draft Joint State-Defense-ICA-USIA Message with respect to U.S. Personnel Participation in Voluntary Activities, December 3, 1956; Report to the OCB on U.S. Personnel Participation in Voluntary Activities, March 11, 1957; and Subject: Participation of United States Personnel in Local Voluntary Activities, March 18, 1957, White House Office, National Security Council Staff Papers, OCB Secretariat Series, Box 1, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

invested.<sup>139</sup> By 1971 when the AFAK program was discontinued, a total of 6,695 projects had been completed. The total end value of all projects was estimated to be \$87.7 million. The AFAK material contributions was \$24.7 million (28 percent) and the Korean communities contributed another \$63 million (72 percent) on their part.<sup>140</sup>

More importantly, AFAK fully satisfied its original purposes; numerous AFAK projects established good person-to-person relations between Korean communities and U.S. military personnel, and these educational, religious, cultural, medical, and administrative buildings set a solid foundation for building a modern and democratic state in South Korea.

In postwar Korea, construction material was scarce and labor plentiful; the U.S. Army possessed abundant materials and skills. The two—cheap labor and abundant materials—complemented each other well. Because of AFAK, standard construction materials—lumber, nails, and bolts—were furnished at the local level. These materials were assembled according to simple standard designs. It provided an invaluable opportunity for Korean carpenters to learn how to build up lightweight trusses, for participating Korean builders and architects to learn how to design an economic building, and for many American AFAK architects as well to design various economic buildings in their early careers.

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<sup>139</sup> Headquarters, Far East Command, Public Information Office, Armed Forces Assistance to Korea, n.d., p.1, Organizational History Files, Box 91; Records of United States Army, Pacific, Research Group 550; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>140</sup> Armed Forces Assistance to Korea, 1953 to 1971, February 15, 1972, p.4, Organizational History Files, A1, Box 340; Records of United States Army, Pacific, Research Group 550; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

## Chapter 4. Free World, Expensive Homes: The Homes for Korea Project

*Democracy and Communism are on trial in Korea. Asia and the whole world are watching to see how the two systems will solve their problems. ... The Communists are trying to solve it with slave labor. We hope to stimulate private enterprise in Korea.*<sup>1</sup>

- James Van Fleet, 1955

In the Cold War, homes became an important vehicle to convey American values and ideologies such as individualism, democracy, liberalism, and free market capitalism. On October 10, 1955, in a luncheon meeting with the building contractors of the Los Angeles area, James Van Fleet, then chairman of the American-Korean Foundation (AKF), advocated that Korea was a testing ground for democracy and that America's private enterprise in home construction could demonstrate the strength of its system, outstripping the communists' solution. Van Fleet specifically encouraged the homebuilding industries to contribute money, materials, and their know-how to AKF's new housing development. Named the Homes for Korea project, in terms of its goals, design, and even target tenants it was different from any other housing developments assisted by the U.S. government. In Van Fleet's proposal, all units were equipped with a modern kitchen and bath, all of which were "a novelty for Korean homes" at the time.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the project was designed to be a working laboratory for Korean architects, builders, and developers to learn the whole process of making a salable house, from its design to construction to sale. This model housing complex was to demonstrate a "pattern for private home construction" in postwar Korea.<sup>3</sup>

The Homes for Korea housing project was an American private sector's endeavor to demonstrate that the free market economy could solve Korea's housing crisis better than the Soviet solution to the housing shortage. Therefore, the effectiveness of the private housing market was closely connected with the supremacy of the entire system of the "free world." This chapter discusses how U.S. officials and entrepreneurs mobilized their homebuilding industry to the ideological conflict in Korea, and how they consciously used the project in order to introduce American ideologies into Korea through the project's design features, in collaboration with Koreans. There exist many studies in which the Homes for Korea project has been noted, although rather briefly, as the first modern apartment complex in Korea.<sup>4</sup> These studies, however, tend to focus almost solely on its physical elements, omitting the project's ideological origin and its impact on subsequent housing development in South Korea.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "U.S. Held Ready to Back Korean with A-Weapons," *The Los Angeles Times* (October 11, 1955), 23.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> In most of these studies, the Homes for Korea project is being called as a rather nonpolitical name, Hyang Chon Dong Housing.

<sup>5</sup> James S. Chi, in his doctoral dissertation, discusses the activities of the American-Korean Foundation in depth, but the Homes for Korea project was omitted. For more details, see James S. Chi, *Teaching Korea: Modernization, Model Minorities, and American Internationalism in the Cold War Era* (PhD dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 2008), 146-197.

This chapter reveals that U.S. officials perceived the project primarily as an ideological instrument, and, while pursuing its ideological goals, its aim as a practical housing project was often lost. In addition, since American housing advisors from the U.S. homebuilding industry were mainly concerned with middle-class family homes that required relatively high cost of living, their model housing in South Korea also became expensive to build. Ultimately, I argue that, although the Homes for Korea officials pursued its political and practical goals simultaneously, their attempt to blend them together ended in failure.

### **Build More, Build Faster**

For both North and South Korea, housing construction was one of the most pressing tasks in their reconstruction. The primary goal for the two Koreas was to provide houses as quickly and as many as possible. The principal challenge for the housing reconstruction was a shortage of building materials. The domestic production of traditionally preferred house construction materials—lumber, cement, and bricks—was greatly diminished, and only a minor portion of imported construction materials were directed to housing construction because governmental officials of both Koreas prioritized the rehabilitation of industrial facilities, governmental buildings, and infrastructure, such as roads, communications, ports, and railways. In addition, few experts or organizations had experience in large-scale housing development. During the Japanese colonial era, Koreans barely had a chance to acquire the requisite skills, such as site preparation, standardizing design and construction, utilizing skilled and unskilled workers, and home financing programs.

In spite of much greater war damage, North Korea took the lead in the race. North Korean housing construction was significantly better in its amount and construction efficiency. The loss of housing during the war in North Korea was calculated at approximately 28,000,000 square meters (6,900 acres). In Pyongyang alone, approximately 63,600 homes were destroyed during the war.<sup>6</sup> According to several Soviet reports on postwar conditions in North Korea, 2,000,000 square meters of housing (7.1 percent) had been rebuilt by the end of 1954, and roughly 4,000,000 square meters (14.2 percent) of housing was recovered by 1956.<sup>7</sup> In this early phase, North Korean housing construction was heavily influenced by the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc allies. Two- and three-story masonry buildings in the East European style were commonly built (Figure 4.1). These traditional apartment buildings had brick walls with prominent pitched roofs and chimney stacks. The classical rhythm of the façade was broken up by an array of conventional windows with mullions. Largely influenced by Soviet communal apartments, most of this housing was the *Ssekjjiya* type.<sup>8</sup> It was a type of housing that had an entrance hall and kitchen area shared by two to four families that occupied private bedrooms, typically two. These semi-communal houses were widely adopted in order to accommodate as

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<sup>6</sup> P'yŏngyang Kŏnsŏl Chŏnsa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe [Compilation Committee of the Complete History of Pyongyang Construction], *P'yŏngyang Kŏnsŏl Chŏnsa* [The Complete History of Pyongyang Construction] (Pyongyang: Kwahak Paekkwa Sajŏn Chonghap Ch'ulp'ansa, 1997), 2: 162.

<sup>7</sup> "Memo about the Situation in the DPRK," January 17, 1955, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, AVPRF F. 0102 Op. 11 P. 65 D. 45. Translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115798> (accessed September 23, 2015); and "Information on the Situation in the DPRK," April, 1955, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, RGANI, Fond 5, Opis 28, Delo 314, listi 34-59. Obtained for NKIDP by James Person and translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114590> (accessed September 23, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> The *Ssekjjiya* type (секция, meaning 'section' in Russian) apartment units are still a popular housing layout in North Korea up today.

many families as possible with the limited resources available.<sup>9</sup> In some cases, several communal apartment buildings composed a larger block, which formed a courtyard that was utilized for a playground, Kimchi storage, and wash place. Commercial and community service facilities were often located on the ground floor.<sup>10</sup> However, these low-rise communal houses were gradually replaced by higher, more modern, and better-equipped housing. During the five-year plan period (1957-1961), four- to six-story apartment buildings became a norm (Figure 4.2). New housing blocks were built according to the modernist aesthetic, having flat roofs and strong horizontal lines.<sup>11</sup>



Figure 4.1 A Newly-Built Residential Neighborhood in Pyongyang, 1957  
(source: *North Korea Caught in Time*)



Figure 4.2 A Modern Housing Block in East Pyongyang, 1959  
(source: *Rodong Shinmun*, June 23, 1959)

<sup>9</sup> P'yöngyang Könsöl Chönsa P'yöñch'an Wiwönhoe, 2: 164-165; and Hwa-Son Ri, *Chosön Köñch'uksa* [History of Korean Architecture] (Pyongyang: Kwahak Paekkwa Sajön Chonghap Ch'ulp'ansa, 1989), 2: 126-129.

<sup>10</sup> The first example of this type was the 17th and 18th housing quarters in Pyongyang. Each of the housing block consisted of three or four three-story buildings that enclosed the inner garden. For more details, see P'yöngyang Könsöl Chönsa P'yöñch'an Wiwönhoe, 2: 171; and *Chosön Köñch'uksa*, 2: 111-112.

<sup>11</sup> *Chosön Köñch'uksa*, 2: 121, 128-129; P'yöngyang Könsöl Chönsa P'yöñch'an Wiwönhoe, 2: 251-252.

The majority of urban housing was built by the state. It was part of North Korea's policy of eliminating private enterprise. According to a Soviet report, industrial production by the private sector decreased from 15 percent in 1949 to 1.3 percent in 1955. Private capital in commerce was lowered from 46.8 percent in 1949 to 22.3 percent in 1954.<sup>12</sup> In housing construction, 39,654 state-sponsored housing units (85.7 percent) were built in Pyongyang between 1957 and 1961; only 6,632 homes (14.3 percent) were built by individuals.<sup>13</sup> North Korea's strong state leadership apparently expedited the application of new construction techniques, materials, and standard designs. For example, prefabricated houses using standard plans were much more widely adopted in North Korea than in South Korea. Beginning in 1956, several prefabricated concrete plants were built in Pyongyang and Hamhung, and standard home designs using the prefabricated concrete components began to be built.<sup>14</sup> According to the North Korean Census, the share of prefabricated houses in total housing construction had increased from 32.4 percent in 1957 to 59.3 percent in 1960.<sup>15</sup> In major North Korean cities, prefabricated methods were more widely used; by the end of 1958, prefabricated houses represented 76.4 percent of the entire housing construction in Pyongyang.<sup>16</sup> In addition, prefabricated housing construction was gradually simplified, and the number of prefabricated members per unit was greatly diminished.<sup>17</sup>

In South Korea, 600,000 homes were destroyed and that number comprised approximately 20 percent of the total number of houses of the nation.<sup>18</sup> In addition, another half million homes were severely damaged. Approximately nine million dislocated people out of 21.5 million South Korean population needed temporary shelter throughout the country.<sup>19</sup> The housing shortage in cities like Seoul was even more critical because of the influx of refugees from North Korea and devastated rural areas. Approximately four million North Korean refugees were estimated to have moved to the South during the war. Combining all these factors together, approximately 750,000 to 1,000,000 houses were needed in South Korea, plus an additional 115,000 homes annually to accommodate the population increases and natural replacement.<sup>20</sup> UN and U.S. aid agencies—most importantly, the UNKRA—presented a few types of low-cost

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<sup>12</sup> "Information on the Situation in the DPRK," April, 1955, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, RGANI, Fond 5, Opis 28, Delo 314, listi 34-59. Obtained for NKIDP by James Person and translated for NKIDP by Gary Goldberg. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/114590> (accessed September 23, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> P'yŏngyang Kŏnsŏl Chŏnsa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, 2: 243.

<sup>14</sup> *Chosŏn Kŏnch'uksa*, 2: 100.

<sup>15</sup> The proportion of prefabricated buildings in 1960 was 42.8 percent of the entire construction; for more, see Chosŏn Chungang T'ongsinsa [Korean Central News Agency], Chosŏn Chungang Yŏn'gam [North Korean Central Yearbook] (Pyongyang: Chosŏn Chungang T'ongsinsa, 1962), 194.

<sup>16</sup> In comparison, only 38 percent of industrial construction was of prefabricated structure. For more, see "A Report from Iwankow Boleslaw, Attache of the PRL Embassy, on the Five-Year Plan in North Korea," June 18, 1958, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Polish Foreign Ministry Archive. Obtained for NKIDP by Jakub Poprocki and translated for NKIDP by Maya Latynski. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111202> (accessed September 23, 2015); and P'yŏngyang Kŏnsŏl Chŏnsa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, 2: 244.

<sup>17</sup> The first prefabricated house built in 1956 consisted of 127 components, and the number of members decreased to 30-35 in 1958. For more, see *Chosŏn Kŏnch'uksa*, 2: 125.

<sup>18</sup> Sung-Soo Zchang, Seo-Hwan Lim at al., *Technological Changes in Apartment Construction, 1960-1990: The Case of KNHC Housing* (Seoul: Korea National Housing Corporation, 1995), 11.

<sup>19</sup> William Zeckendorf, "Report of the Second Mission to Korea, August 20-27, 1953," p.iii, UD 422. Box 27; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>20</sup> Carl G. Lans to Homes for Korea Executive Committee, "Interim Report on Housing in Korea," p.1, May 1, 1956, UD 1277DK, Box 4; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.



housing programs in South Korea, such as aided self-help housing programs through which the refugees or low-income families could build their own homes under the limited supervision of technicians. These attempts, however, never had significant effect on solving the housing problem largely because of poor design and construction and resulting dissatisfaction among tenants.<sup>21</sup>

South Korean housing construction differed from North Korean counterpart in essential ways. In North Korea, most of houses were publicly built and owned. Homebuyers were not a major consideration. North Korean architects and their foreign advisors sought to achieve qualitative improvements, such as sanitation and water, but those efforts were also driven predominantly by the state. Meanwhile, in South Korea, which was evolving into a capitalist society, a house was a saleable commodity. State-aided housing programs could relieve the housing shortage temporarily, but the subsidized housing projects were ideologically anathema to capitalist development. In the U.S. and ideally in other parts of the “free world,” the provision of houses essentially belonged to the domain of industry rather than the state. Therefore, besides the rapid provision of houses, housing reconstruction in the long run involved resolving the questions of who would produce, who would buy, and how construction was to be financed. The Homes for Korea project began as an answer to these questions.

### **American-Korean Foundation: A Person-to-Person Assistance**

In May 1952 when the Korean War was still in progress, the American-Korean Foundation (AKF) was established in the United States as a private, voluntary organization. In December 1952, Milton S. Eisenhower, president of Pennsylvania State University, was appointed as its first chairman. Although AKF’s aid activities were geographically limited to South Korea, its aspiration reached to the entire Asia. Milton Eisenhower announced that AKF aimed (1) to help Koreans “point the way to democracy and a better standard of living for all of Asia” and (2) to encourage American people to better understand “the vital relationship between our own nation and the Asiatic people.”<sup>22</sup> Ultimately, the AKF was established to build a “new Korea through American and Korean teamwork.”<sup>23</sup> Humanitarianism was not their single motivation. Rather, American self-interest also lay behind the establishment of the AKF. James Van Fleet, the foundation’s second chairman, clearly expressed this motivation, as follows:

To me Korea is the key to the Orient and the Orient is the key to the future peace of the world. ... Our support of Korea during this period is more than humanitarian, it is more than giving from the heart. It is giving from the “head” as well, for contributions toward the rebuilding of Korea are an investment in the future security of America and the free world.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The Korean Advisory Committee, “The Minutes of a Meeting on January 23, 1956,” p.3, January 24, 1956, in file Korean Cooperative Project Minutes (Advisory Committee), Box 82, College of Agriculture records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>22</sup> Milton S. Eisenhower, “A Message to the American People about Korea from Milton S. Eisenhower,” n.d. [c. 1953], James M. Lambie Jr. Records, Box 2, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>23</sup> “American-Korean Foundation,” *The New York Times* (April 10, 1953), 20.

<sup>24</sup> The American-Korean Foundation, “Report of the Second Mission to Korea, August 20-27, 1953,” p.iii, UD 422, Box 27; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

The AKF distinguished itself from other government-led agency, such as the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA) or the Foreign Operations Administration (FOA) in that AKF claimed itself as a person-to-person basis aid, rather than a government-to-government relationship. The AKF was not established with large endowments from governmental sources; rather, the foundation's activities were mainly dependent upon voluntary contributions from American citizens. The idea was that through the AKF ordinary American people would directly help Korea's reconstruction. Consequently, successful fund-raising was essential to the foundation, both symbolically and to its actual operation.

The AKF conducted a nationwide fundraising campaign for \$5,000,000 as their initial fund. The "Help Korea Train" best exemplified the AKF's idea of using private resources to help Korea's rehabilitation. The foundation operated three cross-country trains as a Korean relief fund campaign. Passing through fifty key American cities, the "Help Korea Train" not only collected money and supplies, but also promoted the public interest in the AKF. The idea was taken from the 1947 Friendship Train, which aimed at collecting and sending food to starving people in France and Italy. Yet, the "Help Korean Train" ran west to the Pacific, not to the Atlantic. The first "Freedom Express" train departed in 1954 from New York, followed by the second "Liberty Special" from Philadelphia and the third "Plymouth Rock Clipper" from Boston.<sup>25</sup> The 600 railroad cars, loaded up with 900,000 tons of supplies, were shipped on the AKF Mercy Ship. The relief ship arrived in Pusan, Korea on August 16, 1954.<sup>26</sup> The AKF aid goods were directly sent to designated Korean beneficiaries, not to the Korean government.

In addition, the AKF invited influential Americans to join the foundation or to help their fundraising campaigns. Due to the efforts, many American business and civic leaders were on board; the foundation's Board included Elmer H. Bobst (president of an U.S. pharmaceutical company, William Warner Company), Juan T. Trippe (founder of Pan American Airways), William G. Carr (Executive Secretary of the National Education Association), Robert C. Jackson (Executive vice president of American Cotton Manufacturers Institute), Leonard W. Mayo (Executive director of the Association for the Aid of Crippled Children), and many others. These influential figures and their associated corporations were an important source of donations, but their credibility as public figures helped the AKF to raise the fund from their respective fields and from the general public. The foundation courted prominent figures in journalism, as well, including Arthur Hays Sulzberger (publisher of *The New York Times*), Howard Rusk (associate editor of *The New York Times*), Spyros P. Skouras (president of the 20th Century Fox), and Henry Luce (publisher of *Time*, *Life*, *Fortune*, and several other major magazines). They, too, played a key role in advertising AKF activities through frequent press reports and ads, including more than one hundred *New York Times* articles.

Compared to the U.S. governmental aid programs, the person-to-person approach was financially limited in its scale, but it was a symbolically important gesture. In contrast with the Soviet assistance, the ordinary citizen's voluntary participation effectively mitigated images of the U.S. as a hegemonic empire. More importantly, direct citizen engagement with the Cold War could create a sense of "us," namely a sense of belonging to the "free world." However, in spite of its identity as private sector's aid, AKF, in fact, had strong ties with the Eisenhower Administration. Not only was the foundation's chairman, Milton S. Eisenhower, the younger brother of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, but also many key figures of the foundation were

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<sup>25</sup> Memo from Howard A. Rusk to Board of Directors, "Subject: Help Korea Train," James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 99, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

<sup>26</sup> "Drive Opened for 10 Million to Aid S. Korea," *The Chicago Daily Tribune* (June 7, 1954), B4.

military men who had been served in Korea. In September 1953, former U.S. Eighth Army commander, James Van Fleet succeeded Milton Eisenhower, who stepped down as an honorary chairman.<sup>27</sup> Around this time, Major General Charles W. Christenberry, former Deputy Chief of Staff of the Eighth Army, became the president of the AKF. President Eisenhower himself often appeared in the foundation's media campaigns.<sup>28</sup>

### **Homes for Korea Project: A Minimal, but Permanent House**

On August 20, 1953, a month after the ceasefire, a group of AKF members conducted the foundation's second mission to Korea. Unlike their first, small-size mission in March of the year, the second mission brought a team of experts in diverse fields, such as medicine, education, and housing. Among the group was William Zeckendorf, a major New York developer and president of Webb & Knapp.<sup>29</sup>

Their weeklong firsthand observation of postwar conditions in South Korea was published as a brief report.<sup>30</sup> In the report, Zeckendorf asserted the importance and urgency of helping Korea with its housing problem and proposed four principles of the future Korean housing development: it had to (1) pursue permanent construction, (2) maximize the use of local materials, (3) employ methods that expedite construction, (4) fit into Koreans' way of living. He asserted that, while it was necessary for them to improve the quality of Korean houses, he opposed radical revision of Korean housing in design and type.<sup>31</sup>

Zeckendorf maintained that, in the rural and suburban area, the housing problem could be solved primarily by the "owner-worker" labor that he referred to as "perspiration equity."<sup>32</sup> However, he argued that urban houses needed to be built as an "engineeringly-sound structure" with the use of modern materials and machines for prefabrication. He specifically pointed out that houses in urban areas had to be built using simplified construction with standardized design, using locally-available cement whenever possible. He suggested as an ideal model garden-type three-story apartment buildings. He maintained that only modest standards of "sturdy, sanitary and comfortable" houses were required at this stage, but "forethoughtfulness in the design" for expansion had to be employed from the outset in order to accommodate better modern sanitation,

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<sup>27</sup> "Gen. Van Fleet Heads American-Korea Fund," *The New York Times* (September 18, 1953), 2.

<sup>28</sup> For example, in the AKF's national-wide movie theater campaign, a short film of Eisenhower urged American people's participation to AKF. Approximately 14,000 movie theaters participated in this campaign, and by February 1955, the campaign alone raised more than one million dollar fund. On July 1953, President Eisenhower also appeared on a special television and radio show, "Give Them This Day," in which he solicited donations to support war-torn Korea. For more on Eisenhower's involvement in AFK fundraising, see "Entertaining Field Will Aid Korea Fund," *The New York Times* (July 26, 1953), 37; "Aid to South Korea Held Vital to West," *The New York Times* (February 25, 1955), 2; and Walter Ames, "Pres. Eisenhower, All Star Cast on Radio-TV for Korea Relief Fund," *The Los Angeles Times* (July 28, 1953), 18.

<sup>29</sup> In his memoir, William Zeckendorf claimed that his tour to Korea was made by request of president Eisenhower. For more, see William Zeckendorf and Edward A. McCreary, *The Autobiography of William Zeckendorf* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), 243.

<sup>30</sup> The American-Korean Foundation, "Report of the Second Mission to Korea, August 20-27, 1953," pp.11-13, 1953, UD 422, Box 27; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

cooking facilities, and lighting in the future. In addition, he said that the new housing development had to be planned with close coordination with the city's zoning requirements.<sup>33</sup>

Zeckendorf's insistence on the well-built, permanent housing reflected the long-held belief shared by many American leaders that a house was a receptacle of domestic virtue and thus needed to be well-built. Thomas Jefferson, for example, was unsatisfied with "ugly, uncomfortable, and happily more perishable" dwellings of the late eighteenth century in Virginia.<sup>34</sup> Jefferson believed that, compared to these short-lived wooden houses, stone or brick buildings would continuously improve the country, economically, aesthetically, and even morally. However, the main problem for Jefferson was that there scarcely existed model houses giving a solid idea of what a good house was.<sup>35</sup> As Gwendolyn Wright argues in her book *Building the Dream*, these model houses that ordinary American builders and families could follow—as opposed to houses regulated by law—inspired and guided people to build a place that securely contained order, self-sufficiency, and Christian belief, without undermining individual freedom.<sup>36</sup> In this sense, a good housing was an important tool for nurturing democratic citizens. These ideas continued into the middle of the twentieth century.

The Homes for Korea was not a short-term solution to Korea's housing shortage; rather, emphasis was given to what a modern home development would be like in future. It was specifically aimed to teach Koreans housing design, construction techniques, building material manufacturing, methods of improving the quality of workmanship, and a home financing system. In this regard, the improvement of Korea's living condition was important not only from a humanitarian perspective, but also because of its ideological value. To build a strong housing industry in Korea and the American private sector's involvement in the process provided an invaluable opportunity for the U.S. to battle against the growing power of communism in Asia. Van Fleet maintained that Korean homes would become the theater of America's Cold War battle against communism. Van Fleet said:

There is more Communist propaganda value in a cold wind from the North freezing the unhoused family of a Korean than there is in all the pamphlets and radio programs coming from the same direction. The benefits of the private enterprise system must be evident in the lives of those who live under it.<sup>37</sup>

The Homes for Korea provided a great opportunity, according to the AKF officials, to prove to Asian people that following America's "economic and civic ideals" would make South Korean better off than "the subjects of the Communist slave states."<sup>38</sup> In a letter to Governor Dan Thornton, Van Fleet wrote that "If we, as American citizens, can help to establish a marked

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, 1782-84, in Leland M. Roth, *America Builds: Source Documents in American Architecture and Planning* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 23.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>36</sup> Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), 74-75.

<sup>37</sup> The American-Korean Foundation, "Homes for Korea: Project of the Building Industry of America in Support of the American-Korean Foundation," Pamphlet, UD 740, Box 17; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>38</sup> "HOMES FOR KOREA": Project of the Building Industry of America in Support of the American Korean Foundation," James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 100, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

contrast between the standard of living in South and North Korea, such as exists between East and West Germany today, we will be delivering another body blow to Communism.”<sup>39</sup>

Housing conditions in South Korea fell far below modern standards. According to the 1952 UN Housing Survey done by Barton P. Jenks, neither running water nor sanitary facilities was available in most Korean houses. Especially in urban areas, most houses lacked proper light and adequate ventilation because of the high building density.<sup>40</sup> Other earlier demonstration housings in Korea aimed to assist the potential occupants to build their own houses with some technical aid, using easily-obtainable materials such as Landcrete block, earth blocks, mud, or straw. The Homes for Korea pursued an opposite technical approach to ease the housing shortage in Korea. Although it also aimed to keep the price to a minimum, the essential goal of the project was to build a model housing development that was modern, permanent, and fireproof. In addition, Homes for Korea consciously planned to make the house appropriate for Korean living, and thus referred to a model for “Enlightened “high-level” shelter” for Koreans.

Moreover, the Homes for Korea project intended to stimulate a homebuilding industry in Korea. From the perspective of Korea’s economic growth, the development of the homebuilding industry was believed to grow many related industries, such as the manufacturing of cement, steel, hardware, furniture, and many other. In so doing, it could create more employment and stabilize the Korean economy. As the program’s technical director Carl Lans pointed out, a homebuilding industry could be one of the biggest fields during the postwar recovery period and therefore the most beneficial industry to Korea’s economy and to “the perpetuation of democracy.”<sup>41</sup>

In 1955, the Homes for Korea Committee was established as a sub-committee of the foundation. William Zeckendorf and Earl Smith, president of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), were appointed as co-chairmen of the project. Van Fleet was appointed as honorary chairman and Carl G. Lans as Technical Director. Lans was formerly a director of the Construction Department and Research Institute of the NAHB.<sup>42</sup> Zeckendorf was to provide technical services to implement the project through his architectural firm, Webb & Knapp.

The AKF first envisioned a demonstration housing project of 1,000 units. The foundation contributed \$150,000 to the project to get it off the ground, but it sought to secure the maximum cooperation from members of the building industry, such as the American Institute of Architects, the National Association of Home Builders, and other building organizations. The committee appointed regional chairmen who were responsible for soliciting material, financial and technical aid at the local level from their respective regions (Figure 4.3).<sup>43</sup> The voluntary contribution was ideologically important for the project. Van Fleet made a speech at the Annual Convention of the American Institute of Architects on June 1955, saying that “what we need is help of a personal

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<sup>39</sup> Letter from James A. Van Fleet to Dan Thornton, Governor of the State of Colorado, November 3, 1953, James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 99, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

<sup>40</sup> Barton P. Jenks, “Korean Housing Survey,” August 26, 1952, p. 3-4. Records of the UN Korean Reconstruction Agency, Box 181, UN Archives.

<sup>41</sup> Carl G. Lans, “Report from Korea,” *NAHB Correlator* (February 1956), 84-85.

<sup>42</sup> “Lans to Oversee Korean Building,” *NAHB Correlator* (September 1955), 189; and “Results of Korean Project,” *Journal of Homebuilding* (March 1957), 32.

<sup>43</sup> James Van Fleet, “Homes for Korea: A Project That Seeks Help from the American Business Community,” *Journal of the American Bankers Association* (August 1955). James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 100, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

nature, as individuals and as organizations and not just through official Washington money.”<sup>44</sup> Through voluntary donation and support, the ordinary American people in the homebuilding industry were engaged in a Cold War at home.

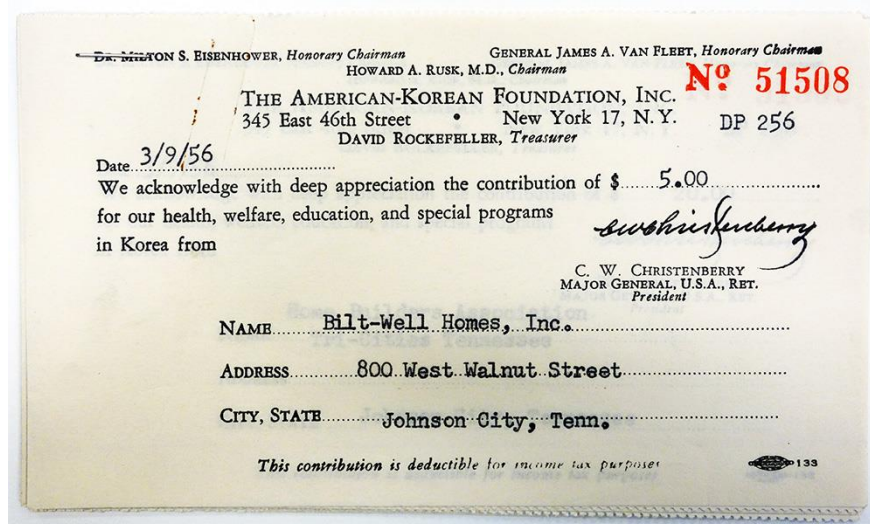


Figure 4.3 A Donation Receipt to the Homes for Korea, 1956  
 (source: James H. Quillen Papers, Archives of Appalachia)

### Americans, Koreans, and Their Collaboration

A young, Chinese-born American architect, I. M. Pei, took charge of the design of the project. Working for Zeckendorf from 1948, Pei had a wealth of experience in designing small apartment buildings on a tight budget.<sup>45</sup> Pei visited Korea on March 10, 1954, and studied the housing situations and several housing projects under way for a few days.<sup>46</sup> The following month, the foundation brought six Korean architects and engineers to Webb & Knapp’s New York office, including Myung-Koo Kang, Tuck-Ho Yoo, Geon-Yeong Lee, Suyeong Lee, Tae-Eup Kim, and Kwang-Roh Lee. Webb and Knapp provided accommodation at the old Marguery Hotel.<sup>47</sup> While staying in the U.S. for several months to a year, they made studies of housing designs and construction methods. Teamed with American architects and engineers, Koreans designed and prepared working drawings for homes that could be mass-produced for Korean families. On August 3, 1954, President Syngman Rhee visited the New York office and was shown drawings and model of their design.<sup>48</sup> In addition, two model houses were built by the National Association of Home Builders for public display: one in Washington and one in New York City (Figure 4.4).<sup>49</sup>

<sup>44</sup> The American Institute of Architects, *Proceedings of the 87th Annual Convention*, June 20-24, 1955, p.58, The American Institute of Architects Archives.

<sup>45</sup> I. M. Pei worked for William Zeckendorf from 1948 to 1960. For more, see Gero Boehm and I. M. Pei, *Conversations with I. M. Pei: Light Is the Key* (Munich: Prestel, 2000), 50; and Carter Wiseman, *I. M. Pei: A Profile in American Architecture* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 2001), 47-72.

<sup>46</sup> “U.S. Architect Will Visit Korea to Renew Korean House,” *The Dong-A Ilbo* (March 13, 1954), 2.

<sup>47</sup> William Zeckendorf and Edward A. McCreary, *The Autobiography of William Zeckendorf* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), 243.

<sup>48</sup> “News of President Rhee’s Three-Day Visit to New York,” *The Dong-A Ilbo* (August 5, 1954), 1.

<sup>49</sup> The American Institute of Architects, *Proceedings of the 87th Annual Convention*, June 20-24, 1955, p.54, the American Institute of Architects Archives.



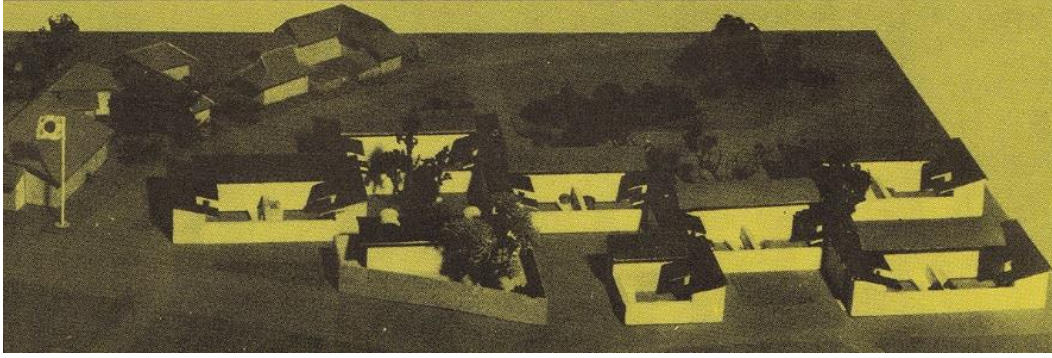


Figure 4.4 Model of Pilot Village, c. 1954.

(source: Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park)

The original plan of the design team was composed of three types of housing: single-story units, row houses, and apartment-type homes. Among them, single-story unit were similar to traditional Korean houses in its form. A great effort was given to create a sense of attractive neighborhoods; a new unit was in harmony with the existing context (Figure 4.5).<sup>50</sup> Row houses and apartment units were rather simple and modern.



Figure 4.5 Perspective Rendering of the Streetscape of the Homes for Korea Project

(source: James A. Van Fleet Papers, George C. Marshall Research Library)

The homes had to be more than just an American modern housing project. Since the project's ultimate goal was to promote the private housing market in Korea, it was important to make the house acceptable to Koreans. For this reason, the design team was required to meet

<sup>50</sup> "General Statement of "Homes for Korea" Project of the Building Industry of America in Support of the American Korean Foundation," James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 100, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

Korean needs and customs. *The Washington Post and Times Herald* article accounted for a motive for the Homes for Korea's efforts in making a Korean house, as follows: "The project was inspired at least in part by the failure of American-style projects of the armed forces started to house displaced and refugee Koreans. Tenants found them unsuited to their traditional ways of living."<sup>51</sup> In these military-sponsored housing projects, materials were furnished by the foreign aid agencies and labor was provided by military personnel. Therefore, the selling price could be lower than houses built by private enterprise, but often poorly equipped with modern amenities. Milton Eisenhower emphasized that their aid had to be conducted within the framework of Korea's living standards. Eisenhower wrote:

Communist propaganda seeks to convince the peoples of Asia that Americans are interested solely in maintaining their own living standards. We must demonstrate in Korea—where we can act now—that we are not indifferent in matters of the spirit, that we are not callous to human suffering and the degradation of the individual anywhere in the world.<sup>52</sup>

The project's respect for Korea's tradition was in line with the AKF's particular interest in the restoration and preservation of Korean culture and art. For example, as a cultural guardian, the AKF actively supported various exhibitions of American art in Korea and of Korean culture and art in the United States.<sup>53</sup> The image of helping Koreans to reconstruct not only their physical environment but also their culture and tradition provided the perfect opportunity to advertise America's 'humane' leadership against the appeal of communism.

In the Homes for Korea project, ondol floors were the most distinctive Korean characteristic. An ondol floor was a traditional Korean method of heating by which waste gasses from the kitchen stove heated up the floor while passing through a chain of narrow cavities beneath the floor until reaching a chimney at the end of the room. In a rendering drawn by Myung Koo Kang in 1954, one Korean mom and her young son were depicted in a scene of traditional living inside of the Homes for Korea house (Figure 4.6).

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<sup>51</sup> Robert C. Albrook, "Native Plans, U.S. Skill to Build Korean Homes," *The Washington Post and Times Herald* (May 17, 1955), 11.

<sup>52</sup> Milton S. Eisenhower, "A Message to the American People about Korea from Milton S. Eisenhower," n.d. [c. 1953], James M. Lambie Jr. Records, Box 2, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>53</sup> For example, in 1953, the AKF funded \$25,000 for the project to assist the preservation of the national shrines and archives of Korea that were destroyed and deteriorated during the War. The AKF also sponsored the Korean National Symphony Orchestra & Chorus and exhibitions on Korean art and craft in the U.S. Also, in 1953, the Foundation sponsored an exhibition in New York of paintings of Korea by a missionary in Korea. In July 1954, they funded Korean handicraft exhibition for the first time in the U.S. For more details, see "Programs and Projects," 1953, James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 99, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia; American-Korean Foundation, "Report of the Second Mission to Korea, August 20-27, 1953," p.24, 1953, UD 422, Box 27; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; "AKF Donates \$25,000 to the Restoration of Old Palaces," *The Dong-A Ilbo* (October 2, 1953), 2; "Paintings of Korea on Exhibit," *The New York Times* (May 14, 1953), 34; and "Introducing Korean Artworks to the U.S. – Exhibitions on Korean art and craft in New York," *The Dong-A Ilbo* (July 30, 1954), 2; "Native Korean Handcrafts Put on Display Here," *The New York Times* (Jul. 27, 1954), 13.



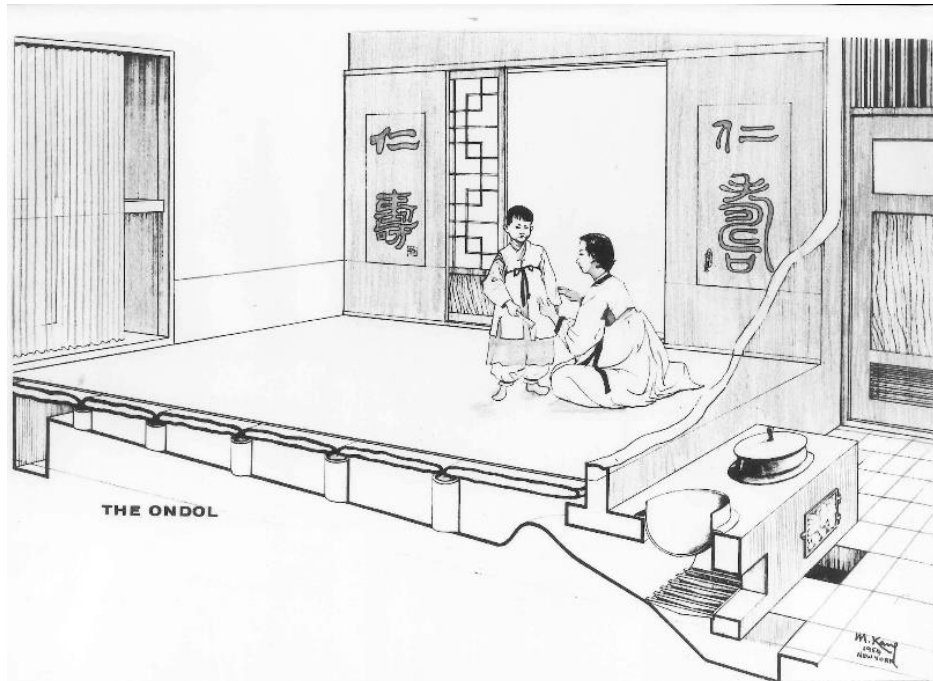


Figure 4.6 Drawing of the Ondol Radiant Floor Heating System, 1954  
 (source: James A. Van Fleet Papers, George C. Marshall Research Library)

In their original plan, all units were equipped with ondol floors. An ondol floor was a practical heating system by which Korean people got through the cold winter days, but for Koreans the ondol system was also a type of housing system that made Korean living possible. An article in the June 1957 issue of the *Architectural Record* explains: “The Koreans, who have very little furniture, continue to ‘live on the floor,’ eating their meals seated on pillows around low tables, and sleeping on bed-rolls on the floor. And the same radiant floor heating system that for centuries has made this practice comfortable has been adapted to the new homes.”<sup>54</sup>

Although the ondol system was already applied to many other housing projects, even in low-cost houses in urban areas, America’s sponsorship of traditional Korean architectural elements had great propaganda value in the United States. The image of this exotic architectural feature was widely circulated not only in the AKF’s pamphlet, but also there was a great deal of publicity surrounding this exotic architectural feature in various American newspapers, popular magazines, and architectural journals.

### **Building One Hundred Houses**

On July 1955, the Technical Director of the National Association of Home Builders, Carl G. Lans, contracted with the Homes for Korea Committee to build 100 units as a pilot program. The foundation expected that the project would be in a high demand once completed, and would yield a substantial revenue from high rents or sales. They ultimately hoped to finance the construction of an additional 1,000 houses through the sale of the first 100 houses. The South Korean Government was to furnish the project site as their contribution. In September 1955, Van Fleet and Carl Lans inspected several potential sites for the development near Seoul. The chosen site was located on a hillside near Independence Gate in Hyang Chon Dong, Seoul. The site was located only a half mile distance from both Seoul City Hall and the main palace of the Joseon

<sup>54</sup> “Native Materials, Modern Methods Build Homes for Korea,” *Architectural Record* (June 1957), 236.

(Gyeongbokgung Palace). It was President Rhee’s strong preference that the Independence Gate site was chosen; Rhee insisted that the project, located in the central area of the capital, would become a “more conspicuous example” of the future of housing development in Korea.<sup>55</sup> The site was chosen not because it was easily obtainable; rather, there was much difficulty in acquiring the site compared to alternative sites such as the area of Ehwa College and Chosun Christian University.<sup>56</sup> The area had been burned down during the war, and at the time temporary shelters for roughly 1,000 refugees stood on the site. The City of Seoul cleared out them for the construction. Ironically, the greatest housing needs existed among the refugee group and these people were forced to leave the site.

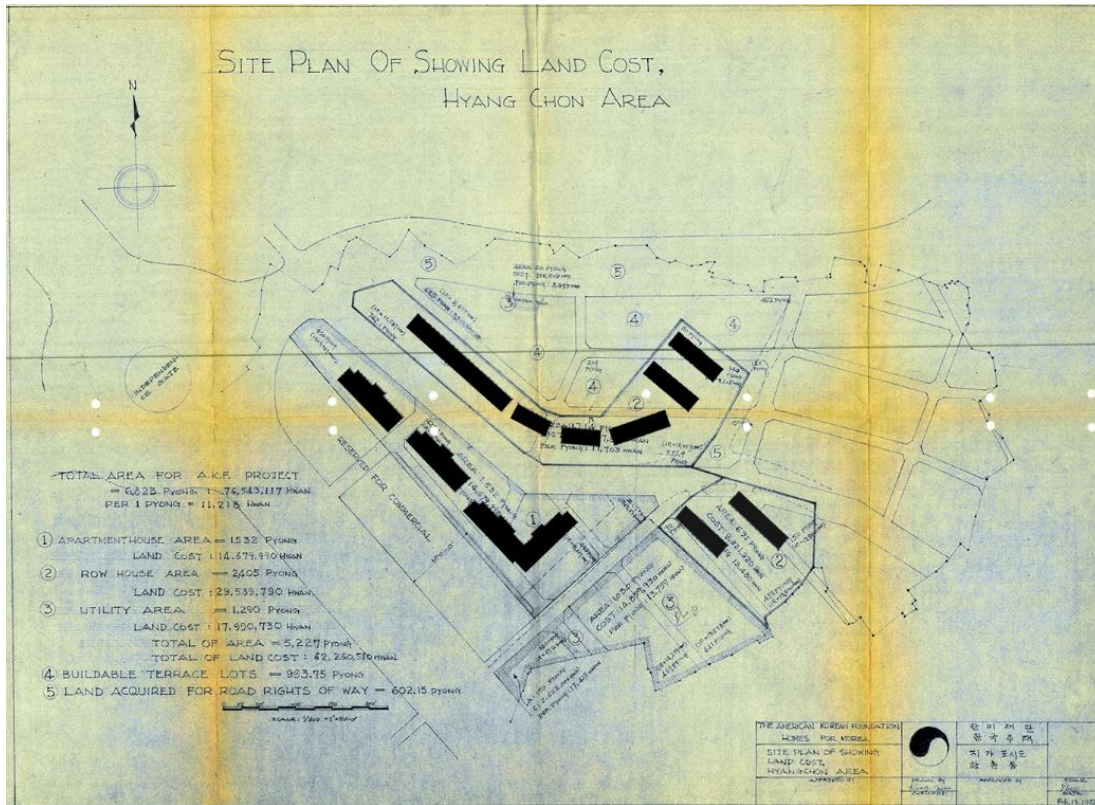


Figure 4.7 Site Plan and Land Cost of the Homes for Korea Project, Feb. 13, 1956

Building footprints were marked by the author.

(source: Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park)

The Homes for Korea project occupied an area of 5.65 acres on a 10 acre site, with 2 acres saved for future commercial development, and a parcel of 2.35 acres to be used by the City of Seoul for their own housing project of 36 units. Once the site was selected, the buildings were re-arranged accordingly (Figure 4.7). Around this time, American technicians also had to compromise with practical situations in Korea. For example, Carl Lans initially considered single-story houses and row houses as ideal living types, questioning the suitability of apartment housing. Yet, after selecting the site, he decided to build some apartment buildings, abandoning

<sup>55</sup> Prospectus for the Continuation of the Homes for Korea Program, p.1; and Carl G. Lans, Homes for Korea Field Report #4, p.1, Nov. 7, 1955; and James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 100, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

<sup>56</sup> Carl G. Lans, Homes for Korea Field Report #4 p.1, Nov. 7, 1955.

the single-story housing type.<sup>57</sup> Over time, single-story houses came to be considered undesirable in an urban setting like Seoul, especially with respect to the chosen site's high land value. By the end of 1955, single-story type houses were completely abandoned. The plan for the apartment buildings was simplified to be more economical.<sup>58</sup> The final plan consisted of 48 three-story apartment units and 52 two-story row houses. Each unit was placed in a way to provide proper light and air, and open areas were prepared for parks and landscaping.

The row house units consisted of living room, two bedrooms, kitchen, and bath. Each row house unit had a small garden plot in the front and back. Each room was accessible independently from a center hall. Party walls separated the units. Within the unit, American technology modified Korean traditions. Technicians conducted a few experiments in order to “scientifically” find the optimal thickness of the ondol stones that warmed up the entire floors with the same heat.<sup>59</sup> The “scientific” ondol was installed in the first floor bedroom of the row houses.<sup>60</sup> All apartment units were identical in size and floor plan, consisting of a living room, one bedroom, kitchen, and bath. Each building had a common stairway that reached to the corridor from which each unit was entered. Heating in the apartment units was furnished by warm air transmitted from a central steam plant. The warm air flowed through the hollow voids of the floor. This system provided radiant heating from both warm floors and ceilings, which enabled both “western and eastern” living possible (Figure 4.8).<sup>61</sup> Inside, all units were equipped with modern utilities, such as electricity, modern plumbing, showers with hot and cold water, flush toilet, and sewage disposal system, all of which were considered as luxuries by average Koreans.<sup>62</sup>

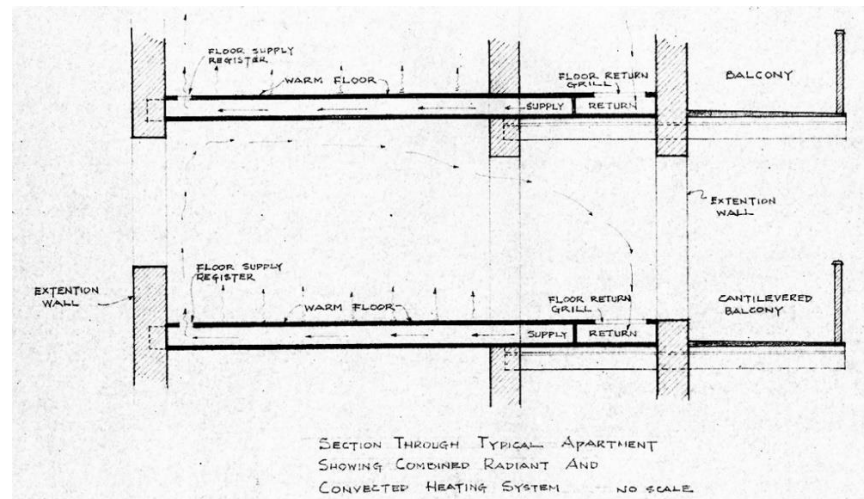


Figure 4.8 Heating System for Apartment Units, 1956  
(source: James A. Van Fleet Papers, George C. Marshall Research Library)

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Carl G. Lans, “Homes for Korea Field Report #7,” p.3, February 3, 1956, James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 100, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>61</sup> Carl G. Lans, “Report from Korea,” *NAHB Correlator* (February 1956), 84; and Carl G. Lans, “Homes for Korea Field Report #7,” p.2, February 3, 1956, James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 100, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

<sup>62</sup> “Prospectus for the Continuation of the Homes for Korea Program,” p.1.

Both row houses and apartment buildings were built of concrete filler blocks walls and floors, spanned by pre-stressed concrete beams. Developed by the Pacadar Pre-stressed Beams Corporation in Puerto Rico, the system used pre-stressed beams cast with high-strength steel wires stretched by a tension machine.<sup>63</sup> The pre-stressed construction system was considered to be an efficient and economical solution to the housing problem, because it allowed builders to eliminate the use of bulky wooden form work completely, and to reduce, according to the committee's optimistic estimation, the use of steel by 80 to 90 percent and cement by 40 to 80 percent, as compared to conventional reinforced concrete construction.<sup>64</sup>

Two 4 inch light-weight concrete blocks formed the exterior walls.<sup>65</sup> Its simple building design was an economical solution, but in its essence, it also incorporated avant-garde modernist aesthetics, with cubical forms, flat roof, and white walls without ornament (Figure 4.9).

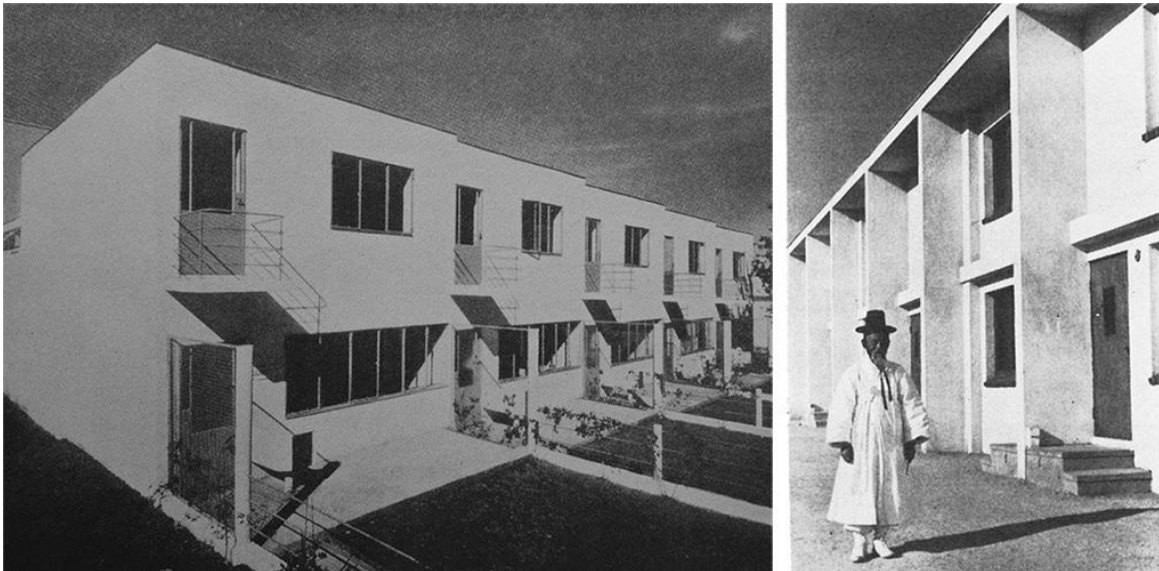


Figure 4.9 Row houses by J. J. P. Oud, at the Weissenhofsiedlung, Stuttgart, 1927 (left) and the Homes for Korea project, 1957 (Right)

(source: Hitchcock and Johnson, *The International Style* (1932) and *The Journal of Homebuilding* (March 1957))

### Homes for Korea as a Workshop

The construction of the Homes for Korea served as an on-the-job training center for many competent builders and workers who would produce quality work for the project, but who would in turn teach others.<sup>66</sup> Construction began on November 20, 1955, and its superstructure began to

<sup>63</sup> Guido Nadzo to Grant Whitman, Deputy UNC Economic Coordinator, "Subject: Report on AKF Homes for Korea Demonstration Project," Attachment B, p.2, June 19, 1956, UD 1277DK, Box ; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Besides being fire-proof, the blocks had a great thermal insulation due to a 1 inch air space in between the blocks. A single row of blocks were used for the interior partitions. For more on concrete block walls, see "Native Materials, Modern Methods Build Homes for Korea," *Architectural Records* (July 1957), 235; and Carl G. Lans, "Report from Korea," *NAHB Correlator* (February 1956), 84.

<sup>66</sup> Carl G. Lans, "Homes for Korea Field Report #4," p.3, November 7, 1955, and "Homes for Korea Field Report #5," p.2, December 9, 1955, James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 100, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

rise on March 14, 1956, a few months behind the original schedule.<sup>67</sup> Bids were taken and fourteen Korean contractors among the low bidders were chosen to build the first 100 units. By the time, most building contractors in Korea were no more than skilled artisans. As of mid-1952, there were less than ten capable general contractors in the entire nation, most of which normally possessed small staffs without having professional architects or engineers.<sup>68</sup> For these small contractors, the Homes for Korea offered a good opportunity to learn modern construction techniques. Most contractors were responsible for the construction of one building.<sup>69</sup> Some of the contractors, however, had a bigger responsibility to the project. For example, the Sam Shin Enterprise Company's main engineer, Ja-Yong Cho, had studied civil engineering at Harvard University and had three-years working experience in the United States. He was considered by many U.S. officials in Korea as one of the few well-qualified Korean engineers.<sup>70</sup> Hence, the company was commissioned to build an exceptionally large portion of the project: one apartment building, one row house building (thirteen houses), and a pre-stressed concrete plant.

In addition to the construction of 100 units, the project demanded the building of a pre-stressed concrete plant and a mill-working plant as a contribution. The Homes for Korea committee believed that the development of a homebuilding industry could only occur concurrently with the expansion of the manufacture of building materials and elements. Like housing construction, the pre-stressed concrete plant and the workshop were built not only as a production plant, but also as a manual training center to improve Korean carpenters, mechanics, and other workers' skills.<sup>71</sup> Roughly speaking, the project trained 150 to 200 workers on site.<sup>72</sup>

In order to produce the pre-stressed beams, the project built a pre-stressed concrete plant in Anyang, located on the suburb of Seoul. It was conveniently located near a railway siding, power lines and sources of sand and other aggregates.<sup>73</sup> The Pacadar Pre-stressed Beams

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<sup>67</sup> Carl G. Lans, "Homes for Korea Field Report #8," p.1, April 20, 1956, James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 100, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

<sup>68</sup> Barton P. Jenks, "Korean Housing Survey," August 26, 1952, p. 50. Records of the UN Korean Reconstruction Agency, Box 181, UN Archives.

<sup>69</sup> Four labor contractors were to build four apartment buildings: the Shin Kun Civil Engineering Company, the Sam Shin Enterprise Company, the Sam Hwa Industry Company, and the Sam Chon Construction Company. Eight labor contractors were to build eight row house buildings: the Sam Shin Enterprise Company for the Row House 1 (13 houses), the Keang Nam Enterprises for the Row House 2 (4 houses), the Tai Dong Construction Company for the Row House 3 (4 houses), the Yung Jin Construction Company for the Row House 4 (6 houses), the Seoul Engineering & Construction Company for the Row House 5 (6 houses), the E Tai Construction Company for the Row House 6 (6 houses), the West Korea Company for the Row House 7 (6 houses), and the Poong Dun Construction Company for the Row House 8 (7 houses). In addition, the Sammyung Construction Company was responsible for the plumbing of all 100 units. The contract for the electrical distribution system was made with Seoul Electric Company. For more details, see Carl G. Lans, "Homes for Korea Field Report #6," p.2, January 9, 1956 and "Homes for Korea Field Report #7," p.1-2, February 3, 1956, James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 100, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

<sup>70</sup> Carl G. Lans, "Homes for Korea Field Report #5," p.4, December 9, 1955, James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 100, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

<sup>71</sup> Prospectus for the Continuation of the Homes for Korea Program, p.1-2; and Carl G. Lans, "Report from Korea," *NAHB Correlator* (February 1956), 83.

<sup>72</sup> Carl G. Lans, "Homes for Korea Field Report #8," p.3, April 20, 1956, James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 100, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

<sup>73</sup> Guido Nadzo to Grant Whitman, Deputy UNC Economic Coordinator, "Subject: Report on AKF Homes for Korea Demonstration Project," Attachment B, p.2, June 19, 1956, UD 1277DK, Box 4; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Corporation sent its production manager to Korea for five weeks to instruct in installing and operating the facility. But, unfortunately, due to construction delays at the plant, all pre-stressed concrete beams used for the Homes for Korea project were imported from the Pacadar Corporation in Puerto Rico.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, the pre-stressed beams required a special type of steel wire manufactured in Belgium.<sup>75</sup> This multilateral experiment of combining American design, European steel, and Puerto Rican construction material was not only expensive to conduct, but also severely damaged the AKF's original premise that the project had to be done by Korean players in order to stimulate self-sufficient homebuilding industry in Korea.

While the AKF's experiment with pre-stressed concrete produced little tangible result, there were some successes in producing key building materials and building components in nearby factories and assembled on the construction site. Lightweight aggregate was an important innovation in the project. Good quality clay was plentiful in Korea, and the Homes for Korea Committee believed that it could be used as more useful, durable, and structural materials that could replace imported materials. A sintering hearth was used to manufacture lightweight aggregate in making lightweight concrete block. The normal clay mixed with a small amount of coal dust could be converted to a clinker by means of a hot flame. When ground, clinker produced lightweight aggregate and could replace sand. Concrete block using lightweight aggregate was approximately 2 to 3 cents per block more expensive than the normal block, but it had better insulation.<sup>76</sup> Using the lightweight aggregate, concrete block machines at the construction site produced blocks.

In addition, the mill-working plant was built near the site. The plant was equipped with modern wood-working machinery, blacksmith tools, and sheet metal and welding equipment. The carpenter's shop produced door frames, windows, sash, kitchen cabinets, and other building components needed for the project. It was estimated that the shop had a capacity of producing such elements for 800 to 1,000 houses annually.<sup>77</sup> Unfortunately, however, these new innovations and training programs could not save the project from disaster.

### **The Failure of Expensive Homes**

Hoping to set up a self-sustaining corporation under limited government control of South Korea, the Homes for Korea committee proposed to establish a corporation to which AKF gave the equity ownership of the project, assuming that it also accepted the project's financial obligation of \$200,000. The committee also proposed that the corporation had to obtain a loan from the Bank of Korea to pay the obligation to the committee. The corporation was expected to gain profits from the project by which the loan was to be repaid to the Bank of Korea. It would also maintain the project and continue new housing projects, as well.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Ja-Yong Cho, "A Reminiscence of 10 Years of Precast Concrete Architecture" *Köñch'uk* [Architecture] (March 1967), 12.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> "Native Materials, Modern Methods Build Homes for Korea," *Architectural Records* (July 1957), 235; Carl G. Lans, "Report from Korea," *NAHB Correlator* (February 1956), 84; and Letter from Carl G. Lans to Guido Nadzo, May 26, 1956," UD 1277DK, Box 4; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>77</sup> "Homes for Korea Project," p.4, c. 1956, UD 1276, Box 22; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>78</sup> Prospectus for the Continuation of the Homes for Korea Program, p.2-3.



In addition, the committee hoped to establish a revolving fund to issue construction loans to home builders and home mortgage funds to homebuyers.<sup>79</sup> The absence of an appropriate financing system was considered by American housing experts as the main obstacle preventing private housing developments in South Korea. A typical Korean private developer did not have enough money for a middle- or large-scale housing development. A financing program to enable them to have adequate working capital during the construction was important. Likewise, it was difficult for the average Korean homebuyers to save enough money to pay for their homes on a single payment basis. The committee proposed to establish a home mortgage financing system by which Koreans could make a small down payment and pay the balance in long-term monthly installments at a low interest rate.<sup>80</sup>

On April, 1956, the Homes for Korea committee proposed that a U.S. government aid agency, the International Cooperation Administration (ICA), take over the project and also carry out their plan of establishing the corporation and building additional 1,000 units. The project was inspected by Guido Nadzo, Chief of the Housing Division of the Office of Economic Coordinator in Korea. Nadzo acknowledged that the project contributed to the Korean housing industry through its various training programs, yet he questioned if the improved design, construction techniques, and materials could be economically feasible in other housing projects in Korea. He pointed out that these high-level techniques might not have been widely chosen by Koreans in the near future.<sup>81</sup>

More importantly, Nadzo believed that the majority of Koreans could not afford the project's high standard living, and if it only served only a small number of wealth Koreans, its goal as a demonstration project of affordable housing would fail.<sup>82</sup> Nadzo also indicated that the project's size and amenities did not serve Koreans in the upper income bracket either. Nadzo concluded that the project had failed technically and economically and thus the ICA had to reject the AKF proposal to continue the Homes for Korea project.<sup>83</sup> ICA officials also opposed its takeover because ICA officials believed that the low-income Korean family would not be able to afford housing of such high standards in the near future. The ICA maintained that its financial and technical aid had to be deployed for the projects serving lower income brackets.<sup>84</sup> President Rhee also expressed to ICA his opposition to the idea of the U.S. governmental aid agency's participation and possible extension of the Homes for Korea project, because he believed that the U.S. assistance had to be spent for Korea's economic development, rather than on large-scale

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<sup>79</sup> Carl G. Lans, "Homes for Korea Field Report #8," p.5-6, April 20, 1956, James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 100, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

<sup>80</sup> Carl G. Lans, "Report from Korea," *NAHB Correlator* (February 1956), 85.

<sup>81</sup> Guido Nadzo to Thomas L. Metsker, "Subject: AKF Homes for Korea Project," p.3, May 18, 1956, UD 1276, Box 22; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>82</sup> Guido Nadzo to Grant Whitman, Deputy UNC Economic Coordinator, "Subject: Report on AKF Homes for Korea Demonstration Project," p.5, June 19, 1956, UD 1277DK, Box 4; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>83</sup> Guido Nadzo to Thomas L. Metsker, "Subject: AKF Homes for Korea Project," p.3, May 18, 1956, UD 1276, Box 22; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>84</sup> Letter from ICA to William Zeckendorf, October 4, 1956, UD 1277DK, Box 4; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

housing projects.<sup>85</sup> C. Tylor Wood, former Economic Coordinator for the United Nations, sent a letter to William Zeckendorf to explain the U.S. government's position, as follows:

[It] seemed clear that, for some years to come at least, a very small percentage of Koreans could afford to purchase or to live in the type of housing built by the AKF. ... we could not justify using public funds to build substantial number of dwellings which would be occupied by foreign traders, other foreigners, or a few relatively wealthy Koreans.<sup>86</sup>

Such criticism undermined the propaganda value of the project and thus threatened the entire program. To make matters worse, Webb & Knapp's debt was growing by the late 1950s.<sup>87</sup> These circumstances might have damaged the biggest individual supporter of the project, Zeckendorf. With limited funds available, it became clear that the AKF was not be able to continue the project any longer and sought to discard it as soon as possible. On September 26, 1956, the Homes for Korea project was turned over to the Korean Government, with the aim of selling housing to Korean individuals (Figure 4.10).<sup>88</sup>

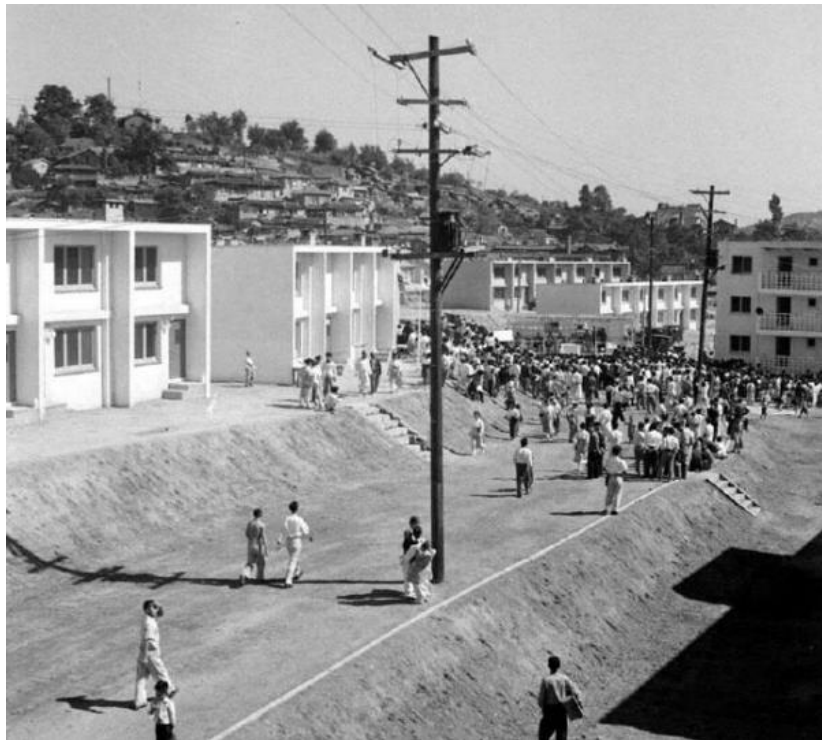


Figure 4.10 The Opening Ceremony of the Homes for Korea Project, Seoul, 1956  
(source: The National Archives of Korea)

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<sup>85</sup> Warne, "Subject: Conference with President Rhee," September 25, 1956, UD 1277DK, Box 4; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>86</sup> Letter from C. Tylor Wood to William Zeckendorf, September 19, 1956, UD 1277DK, Box 4; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>87</sup> Carter Wiseman, *I. M. Pei: A Profile in American Architecture* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 2001), 68.

<sup>88</sup> "Apartment Handover Ceremony," *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* (September 28, 1956), 3.



The houses were initially expected to cost an average of between \$800 and \$1,500 to construct, but the amenities necessary for high standard housing and the delivery of imported materials and equipment increased the cost of the project.<sup>89</sup> With freight charges and estimated land costs added, the total sum employed to implement the project was about \$800,000. The average cost per unit, including land and freight costs, was approximately \$6,350. Even without taking account of special supervisory staff, research costs, and land costs, the net construction cost per unit was over \$5,000. If the unit was rented, the average monthly rent was estimated more than the entire monthly salary of a low-income Korean.<sup>90</sup> Meanwhile, other housing projects at the time were significantly cheaper. The low-cost houses being built next to the Homes for Korea project by the Korean Housing Administration was built under \$1,500 per unit (Figure 4.11).<sup>91</sup>

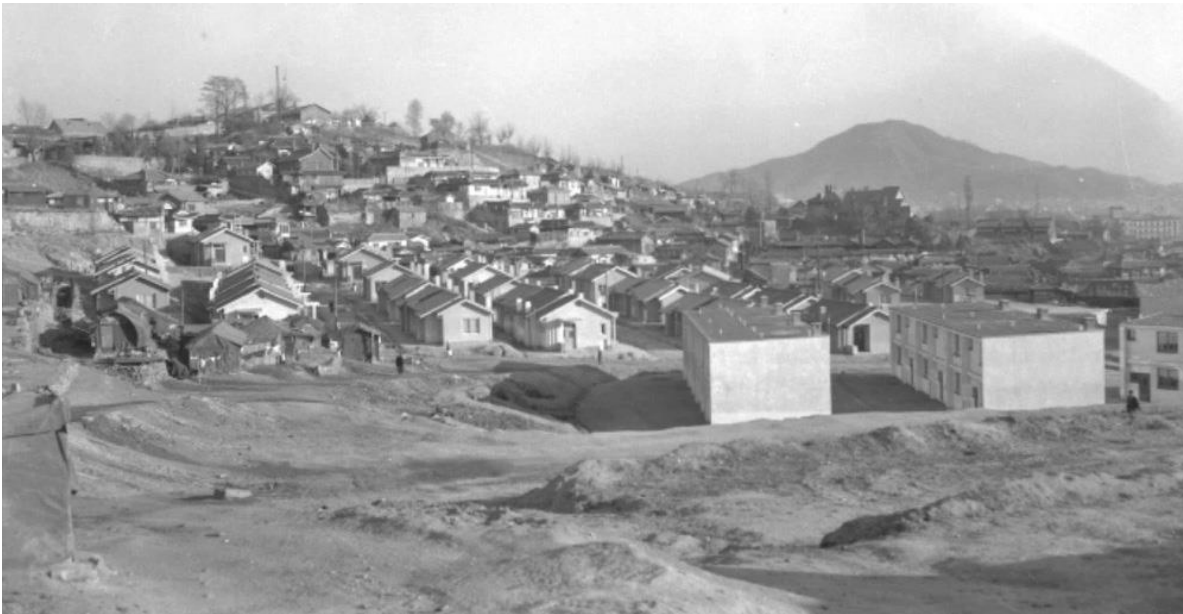


Figure 4.11 Homes for Korea Project (right) and Neighboring Single-family Houses Constructed by the City of Seoul (left), September 1, 1958 (source: Seoul Photo Archives)

A few auctions were held for selling row houses and apartment houses. Through four auctions, only 26 row houses were sold.<sup>92</sup> Korean newspapers blamed the high prices and high down payments for so many units remaining unsold.<sup>93</sup> Fifty percent down payment, approximately 800,000 hwan, made it difficult for an average Korean to afford the row house—

<sup>89</sup> "Low-cost, Model Village on Seoul Outskirts Planned," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (December 15, 1954), 6.

<sup>90</sup> At the beginning, the monthly rent was expected to be less than five dollars, yet upon completion, it had to be at least \$80 per unit. For its initially expected rent, see "Low-cost, Model Village on Seoul Outskirts Planned," *The Pacific Stars & Stripes* (December 15, 1954), 6.

<sup>91</sup> Guido Nadzo to Grant Whitman, Deputy UNC Economic Coordinator, "Subject: Report on AKF Homes for Korea Demonstration Project," p.4-5, June 19, 1956, UD 1277DK, Box 4; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>92</sup> The auctions were held on December 1st, 13th, and 22th, 1956 and January 7th, 1957.

<sup>93</sup> "Blame for Higher Price than Market Price," *The Dong-A Ilbo* (January 23, 1956), 3.

an average middle-class Korean civil servant earned 30,000 hwan per month.<sup>94</sup> The apartment units were even more difficult to sell. Through those auctions, no application for apartment unit were made because the total immediate payment was required.<sup>95</sup> The whole apartment complex stood vacant for about a year, symbolizing the failure of the project (Figure 4.12). It was September 4, 1957 when the apartment buildings were sold to three Korean developers.<sup>96</sup> The Homes for Korea project turned into houses that even middle-class families could not afford. It had set its standards impossibly high, at a level Korea would not reach for ten to fifteen years.<sup>97</sup>



Figure 4.12 The Homes for Korea Project after Completion, c. 1958

(source: Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park)

### **Social and Political Failure**

The Homes for Korea project was not an architectural failure; rather, social and political factors were the root of the problems. Judging solely from architectural point of view, the Homes for Korea project was an exceptionally well-built, well-equipped modern housing development at

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<sup>94</sup> The Hwan-Dollar exchange rate was fluctuating sharply due to the economic instability. As of December 1955, one U.S. dollar was worth roughly 850 Hwan on the open market. For more, see Carl G. Lans, "Homes for Korea Field Report #5," p.4, December 9, 1955, James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 100, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

<sup>95</sup> Joon Mo Chung, Minister of Health and Social Affairs, "Subject: Sale of the AKF Built Housing," January 7, 1957, Papers Related to Republic of Korea Ministries and the UN Organizations on Korea, The Syngman Rhee Institute.

<sup>96</sup> "Three People Monopolize AKF Apartment Buildings," *The Kyunghyang Shinmun*, (September 5, 1957), 2.

<sup>97</sup> Guido Nadzo to Grant Whitman, Deputy UNC Economic Coordinator, "Subject: Report on AKF Homes for Korea Demonstration Project," p.5, June 19, 1956, UD 1277DK, Box 4; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

the time. Albert Bert Fraleigh of the ICA in Taiwan praised the project as “an excellent model for apartment housing and future urban development in South Korea.”<sup>98</sup>

The project’s two-fold purpose—one ideological, one practical—often came into conflict with each other. Financially speaking, the Homes for Korea project was planned as the U.S. private sector’s voluntary contribution to a homebuilding industry in Korea, and therefore the funds for the Homes for Korea project were ideally to be raised by voluntary contributions from members of the U.S. homebuilding industry and manufacturers of building materials. Nevertheless, the fundraising campaign was not very successful. Contrary to the original expectation, the project was funded mainly by the AKF, Zeckendorf’s Webb & Knapp, and the U.S. governmental agency; the AKF invested approximately \$300,000; Zeckendorf donated \$150,000; and ICA supported \$150,000 worth of ocean shipment of building materials imported from the U.S. Despite several nation-wide fundraising campaigns, only approximately \$60,000 was raised from voluntary contributions, which was less than 10 percent of the entire costs for the project.<sup>99</sup> AKF officials understood this project primarily as an American anti-communist campaign, but American people in the free market were not particularly swayed by the foundation’s propaganda, prioritizing their self-interest first.

In terms of its high costs, it was essential to maximize the use of local materials in order to minimize the costs, but to demonstrate a modern housing construction the project had to employ modern construction materials that had to be imported. Although some attempts had been done to use local materials, the majority of materials, such as cement, reinforced steel, glass, plumbing fixtures, and electric wire, had to be imported from the U.S.<sup>100</sup> Carl Lans tried to justify the project’s high-level amenities and expensive unit price as follows: “It was also felt that a demonstration project should contain amenities which, while not economically feasible nor absolutely essential in the immediate future for an expanded housing program, would nevertheless illustrate what a modern home-building project might resemble some time in the future.”<sup>101</sup> Lans’ position could be justified by the project’s long-term goal, but judging by its practicality, it was inexcusable.

The use of the ondol floors and their respect of Korean traditional living were widely publicized in the media, because it was conceived as a way to distinguish the American approach from the Soviet Union’s oppressive cultural policy. However, in North Korea, which is located in a colder climate, the ondol floors were also much preferred. In 1956, by the time the Homes for Korea was being built, the first ondol floors were installed in urban houses in Pyongyang, and they became more commonly applied to higher apartment buildings over time.<sup>102</sup> Not very different from its American counterpart, the North Korean government saw their application of the ondol floors to modern apartment buildings as a nationalist victory, by comparing them with the earlier foreign assisted houses.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Albert Bert Fraleigh, “Except from Report on Housing Situation in Korea and Recommendations for OEC Housing Program,” Appendix “A” p.1, December 22, 1955, in “Homes for Korea Field Report #5,” James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 100, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

<sup>99</sup> “Prospectus for the Continuation of the Homes for Korea Program,” p.2.

<sup>100</sup> Carl G. Lans, “Report from Korea,” *NAHB Correlator* (February 1956), 84.

<sup>101</sup> Carl G. Lans to Guido Nadzo, “Subject: Report on the Housing Situation in Korea,” p.2, May 8, 1956, UD 1277DK, Box 4; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>102</sup> P’yöngyang Könsöl Chönsa P’yönch’an Wiwönhoe, 2: 164.

<sup>103</sup> *Chosön Könch’uksa*, 2: 126.

The ondol floors were largely motivated by their propaganda value, rather than their actual practicality. The overly-obsessed notion of Korean traditional living was largely based on an orientalist paradigm in which technologically advanced Americans would patronize Koreans whose nature was timeless and unchanging. While emphasizing the image of a peaceful coexistence of American technology and timeless Korean tradition, the Homes for Korea committee paid less attention to what Koreans actually wanted.

In fact, since 1945, American culture and technology had penetrated deeply into the Korean domestic sphere and there was a tendency, especially among Korean elite, to modernize along American lines. In a volume of the Korean architectural magazine *Architecture* from 1956, eight Korean elites were questioned on their favored housing type. On a question about which type of house they preferred among western, Korean, and hybrid examples, five out of eight people answered western and three hybrid style. No interviewee chose a traditional Korean house. For example, Tae Sun Kim, Mayor of Seoul, answered in the magazine that the ondol should be abandoned or renovated. He said: "Korean houses are inefficient and unscientific in plan and they are not hygienic. They are not energy-efficient either. Thus, I believe we should live in western style houses." Regarding ondol in specific, he said: "I think we should use chairs. It will make people more active, and will also prevent the negative effects of a sedentary lifestyle.... Sleeping on a bed is better. On an ondol floor, bad air comes down to the floor. It is much healthier to sleep in a bed rather than on floor."<sup>104</sup>

While the AKF advertised their activities as respecting Korean tradition, the foundation didn't even take account of Koreans' living habits, such as the optimal unit size, storage space, and amenities that were essential to Korean living. In fact, after completion, some designs of the project were reported as being unsuitable for a traditional Korean life style. For example, the size of the unit was too small for Korean families; the lack of planned storage space for fuel, rice, Kimchi and other traditional preserved foods was also a problem; and the showers installed in about three-fourths of the units were not well accepted by Koreans, tub type bathing being much preferred.<sup>105</sup>

Furthermore, the AKF's efforts to establish a revolving fund also ended in vain because of economic and legal causes. Korea's unstable economy made it almost impossible to attract private capital for long-term investments. In addition, it was almost not possible under Korean law to repossess a borrower's home even when there was a default on the mortgage. The AKF finally concluded that the establishment of home loans was impossible without legislation.<sup>106</sup>

## Conclusion

Due to its modern exterior and amenities inside, the Homes for Korea apartment was used as a popular filming location for several movies during the 1960s, including the 1963 movie *Romance Gray* (Figure 4.13). In the movie, the apartment was depicted as an almost dystopian space in which the two young concubines, Bo-young and Man-Ja, were having an affair with a middle-aged wealthy businessman and professor, respectively. The interior of an apartment was equipped with a Western-style bed, a table, and chairs, contrasted sharply with the two married

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<sup>104</sup> "What Kind of House Do You Want to Live In?" *Kõnch'uk* [Architecture] (April 1956), 70-71.

<sup>105</sup> Guido Nadzo to Grant Whitman, Deputy UNC Economic Coordinator, "Subject: Report on AKF Homes for Korea Demonstration Project," p.5, June 19, 1956, UD 1277DK, Box 4; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agency, Research Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>106</sup> Carl G. Lans, "Homes for Korea Field Report #8," p.6, April 20, 1956, James A. Van Fleet Papers, Box 100, George C. Marshall Research Library, Lexington, Virginia.

men's sedentary space at home. At the end of the movie, the lawful wives destroyed the apartment space, and two men returned home. The depiction of the Homes for Korea site as a dystopian space suggests that the project belonged to nowhere; it was as an ideal Korean home in the future, yet in reality it was expensive and socially unacceptable to Koreans.



Figure 4.13 The Interior (Left) and Exterior (Right) View of an Apartment Unit of the Home for Korea Project (source: *Romance Gray* (1963), Screen-Captured by the Author)

On the face of it, the Homes for Korea project failed rather miserably to achieve its goal. Financially speaking, the project's initial intention to be built with voluntary contributions failed. It also failed to help with Korea's housing shortage, and in fact ended up in the hands of a few wealthy developers, not average home buyers. The plan to build 1,000 additional houses was aborted. Mass housing and self-sufficiency never materialized. As propaganda, it failed, as well.

The project's true value stemmed from its architectural legacy. The Homes for Korea committee believed that the project had to be carried out by Koreans if it was to have permanent effect. Therefore, the apprenticeship program in design and construction was an essential part of the project. Through the project, valuable skills of building high-quality mass housing—such as, planning, design, material acquisition, land development, and home financing—were passed on to Korean architects, engineers, contractors, and artisans. Koreans in these fields participated at the various stages of home construction. Although not welcomed by contemporary Koreans, the Homes for Korea foresaw an architectural prototype of the upper sector of the subsequent housing development pattern in South Korea. The Homes for Korea's apartment type housing unit, not detached, single unit housing, became a norm for middle-class family until today in South Korea.

## Chapter 5. Intellectual Baptism: Educational Exchange Programs and the Rise of Pro-U.S. Architectural Elites in South Korea

*[W]hat the University is doing is educationally worth undertaking, but more than that, I hope you will agree that through this unique arrangement with Seoul National University we—and here I mean not only the University but the people of Minnesota as well—are in a quiet way making a patriotic and positive contribution in the defense of free men—that, in truth, education is a second line of defense against the encroachments of communism and the destruction of human freedoms.<sup>1</sup>*

- Malcolm M. Willey, 1957

In postwar Korea, cement and lumber, organization and expertise were not the only media with which to rebuild the country. The colleges and universities that would train scientists, engineers, doctors, and educators also became an important Cold War instrument. At a Legion Post luncheon meeting in Minneapolis, Malcolm M. Willey, vice president of the University of Minnesota promoted his university's educational exchange program as an important form of anti-communism. Professor Willey asserted that the establishment of a strong educational institution in South Korea is the principal task to make a war-torn country stronger and more independent, because the university would eventually train the country's essential personnel who would develop higher standards of living and solve problems preventing economic development.<sup>2</sup> Many U.S. officials shared the similar view that their large-scale economic assistance was only a temporary solution: Koreans had to build and develop their nation on their own. For this goal, it was essential to train Korean intellectuals equipped with modern skills and knowledge. During the 1950s, the U.S. government and private aid agencies actively launched various educational exchange programs for Korean elites, with the hope that they would become pro-U.S. intellectuals in their respective fields. In this historical context, a few Korean architectural elites seized a unique opportunity to study in the United States.

The U.S. educational model of the fifties became to South Korea what the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris was to American architectural schools at the turn of the twentieth century. From 1865, the most promising architecture students in the U.S.—such as, Richard Morris Hunt, Henry Hobson Richardson, Charles F. McKim, Louis Sullivan, Thomas Hastings, Bernard Maybeck, and John Galen Howard, just to name a few—crossed the Atlantic to study at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris. This architectural elite learned an academic, systematic approach to architecture and exercised a strong influence over American architecture through publications, buildings and design, and educational reform.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, after the Korean War, a number of architectural elites in Korea crossed the Pacific to study in U.S. architecture schools. Similar to American students at the *École*, most Koreans in U.S. universities had no intention to enter the

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<sup>1</sup> Malcolm M. Willey, "Education, Our Second Front in Korea," p.2, c. 1957, in folder Education, Our Second Front in Korea, Box 5, Office of the Vice President for Academic Administration Papers, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>3</sup> Joan Draper, "The Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Architectural Profession in the United States," in *The Architect*, edited by Spiro Kostof (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 210.

architectural profession in a foreign land and thus usually did not earn a degree.<sup>4</sup> Though their visits were short-term, the training effectively legitimized the foreign students' skills and prestigious education over their Korean trained colleagues.

There are other historical parallels, as well. When the American Civil War ended in 1865, the number of construction projects greatly increased, so there was a need for qualified architects.<sup>5</sup> Yet, architectural education in the U.S. could not meet the demand domestically. That year MIT was founded, followed by a number of architectural schools in the United States, but they barely provided appropriate architectural education and thus, few competent graduates. The *École des Beaux-Arts*' academic and systematic approach provided a good solution to their needs. As well as American graduates, French *École* graduates were brought to the U.S. to teach new architecture courses modeled on the French system in American universities.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, in postwar Korea, the demand for competent architects greatly increased and U.S. institutions provided architectural education to a few selected elites.

Nevertheless, significant differences existed between the trans-Pacific and trans-Atlantic transfers. Both models provided an intellectual and universal design method, but the specific solution was different. While Americans at the *École* studied an academic approach based on classical tradition, Koreans learned modern architecture, emphasizing originality in design. In addition, while American students studied at the *École des Beaux-Arts* at their own expense or funded by American institutions or individuals, Koreans in the 1950s were mostly funded by U.S. assistance. Hence, the American benefactors could exercise more power over Korean recipients in their training. More importantly, when the *Beaux-Arts* education was introduced to American universities, the program had to be modified to American's concerns and context. Unlike independent architectural educational institutions in Europe, architecture programs were situated in a university setting in which the program was mixed with other general subjects and the curricular system imposed by the university.<sup>7</sup> However, American education was more easily adapted to Korean soil in the postwar Korea. A four-year university system was already established by the U.S. military government officials in Korea and U.S.-educated Korean educators. Like in the U.S., most of the architecture programs in South Korea were four-year bachelor degrees established in the college of engineering, rather than as an independent, professional degree.<sup>8</sup>

U.S. educational exchange programs have become a frequent subject of Cold War studies in South Korea. Many of the studies, most notably by Dae-Shik Lim and Eun Huh, argue that the exchange programs were primarily aimed at training pro-U.S. elites, and they actually increased U.S. influence over political, academic, and cultural spheres in South Korea.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, these studies have often neglected the recipient's actual ambition for knowledge and the contributions that the programs brought to Korea. These exchange programs in the field of architecture, for example, contributed to the modernization of architectural education in South Korea, and the

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>8</sup> Hong-ik University, established in 1954, was under the college of fine arts, as exception.

<sup>9</sup> For more, see Dae-Shik Lim, "The U.S. Educational Assistance and the Formation of Pro-U.S. Elites in the 1950s," in *1950-yöndae Nam-Pukhan ūi sönt'aek kwa kulchöl* (Seoul: Yöksa Pip'yöngsa, 1998); and Eun Huh, "The U.S. Government's Educational Exchange Program and Making of Korean Elite as a Pro-American," *Journal of Studies of Korean National Movement*, No. 44 (2005), 229-265.

program recipients introduced modern construction methods and styles to Korea. Jeon-Hee Ryu and Chang-Mo Ahn, for example, document the influence of the exchange programs on South Korea's architectural education and practice, albeit rather briefly.<sup>10</sup> These studies by Korean architectural historians, however, have analyzed the changes within a limited boundary of architecture itself, and therefore do not fully incorporate the programs' larger historical context in the Cold War, the United States' intentions, and the recipients' intellectual baptism through the programs. I attempt to link the two different understandings—the United States' hegemonic intentions embedded in the exchange programs as well as their positive aspects.

This chapter discusses the recipients of the exchange programs in the field of architecture and their rise as a new architectural elite, with particular attention to the faculty exchange program between the University of Minnesota and Seoul National University (henceforth, the Minnesota Project) that had the greatest impact on architectural education in South Korea. I argue that the United States' various educational exchange programs were aimed at educating pro-U.S. architectural elites in South Korea, and went beyond mere technical assistance. While taking courses in American universities, traveling to American cities, and meeting American people, the recipients were extensively exposed to America's culture, technology, and architecture, an experience which few Koreans could enjoy at the time. The Pacific-crossing and intense experiences invited the recipients to their own intellectual baptism by which they persuaded themselves that the U.S. was the ideal society that they should emulate. Although few in number, the beneficiaries of America's educational exchange programs became the main vehicle for bringing American architectural style and technology to South Korean soil. To support this argument, I examine the returned participants' activities within and outside the educational institution—such as curriculum changes, publications on American architecture, and design projects.

### **Architectural Education in Korea Prior to 1954**

Many U.S. officials perceived the lack of architects and technicians as one of the biggest problems in South Korea's reconstruction. When a UN housing expert, Barton P. Jenks, conducted a comprehensive survey in 1952 on the postwar housing condition in South Korea, he noticed that there were few capable architects in Korea. Jenks wrote in his report that:

Judged by western standards, there are no competent architects or city planners in Korea. Nor are there more than a handful of competent civil, structural, or mechanical engineers. The reason for this state of affairs is due, undoubtedly, to the fact that the Japanese, when they ruled the country, only permitted a few Koreans to receive higher technical education in their own technical institutions. Further, even though a few architects and

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<sup>10</sup> For more, see Jeon-Hee Ryu, "Challenges of Architectural Education in Korea after Independence," *Journal of Architectural History* 4:2 (December 1995), 130-134; Chang-Mo Ahn, "The Korean War and the Reorganization of Korean Architecture," *Korean Association of Architectural History Spring Conference Proceeding* (March 2001); Chang-Mo Ahn, "Influence of American and Japanese Architecture on Building the Post-war Korean Contemporary Architecture," *Journal of the Korea Academia-Industrial Cooperation Society* 12:12 (2011), 5974-5983; also Chang-Mo Ahn, "Western Architectural Culture and Its Implantation: Foreign Aid Policies and the Reformation of the Korean Architecture," *Korean Architects* (July 2006), 70-77.



engineers were trained, the Japanese did not permit them to gain practical experience since their responsibilities were largely limited to those of draftsmen.<sup>11</sup>

The lack of professional architects was partly due to insufficient number of architectural schools in colonial Korea. The first modern institution for architectural education was a three-year program, created by the Japanese in Kyungshung Technical College in 1916. The College's Department of Architecture was one of the five departments originally established, along with Ceramics, Civil Engineering, Applied Chemistry, and Textiles and Dyeing.<sup>12</sup> However, only a handful of Koreans had been permitted to study in the school. Approximately sixty Koreans graduated from the department up to 1945; this was only 20 percent of the total graduates of the program in an era when the Japanese population in the Korean Peninsula was roughly 3 percent.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, Kyungshung Technical College's architecture program was mainly aimed at training junior technicians, rather than architects. Moreover, during the Japanese colonial era, Koreans were largely excluded from important technical and administrative positions.<sup>14</sup> Most Korean graduates worked in administrative or secondary-school teaching posts, many of which were non-architectural positions. According to Chang-Mo Ahn's study, approximately twenty Korean architects existed in colonial Korea and only ten of them worked as independent architects.<sup>15</sup>

Another important source of architectural education was Japanese vocational schools, technical colleges, or universities. These Japanese institutions usually offered better education than ones in colonial Korea, but not surprisingly Korean graduates born as second-class citizens barely had opportunities to practice architectural design in mainland Japan, especially after 1941 when the Japanese Empire entered into war with the United States.

With the surrender of the Japanese Empire in 1945, all Japanese architects and faculty members of Kyungshung Technical College returned to their homeland. The sudden departure of the Japanese caused a vacuum in architectural education and practice. The subsequent ideological division made it even harder to find competent Korean faculty, because some qualified architects fled to North Korea.<sup>16</sup> A small number of Korean architects educated in

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<sup>11</sup> Barton P. Jenks, "Korean Housing Survey," p.48, August 26, 1952, in file Korean Housing Survey, in series United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, S-0526-0181-06, United Nations Archives.

<sup>12</sup> Harold E. Babbitt, *College of Engineering, Seoul National University: Final Report of Adviser in Engineering* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1961), Ch.1, p.1. Box 64, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>13</sup> The exact number of Korean graduates varies depending on scholars; Jeon-Hee Ryu argues that 61 Korean students graduated architecture program of Kyungshung Technical College, but Chang-Mo Ahn claims 63 in his study. For more, see Jeon-Hee Ryu, "Challenges of Architectural Education in Korea after Independence," *Journal of Architectural History* 4:2 (December 1995), 132; and Chang-Mo Ahn, "The Korean War and the Reorganization of Korean Architecture," *Korean Association of Architectural History Spring Conference Proceeding* (March 2001), n. pag.

<sup>14</sup> David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 121.

<sup>15</sup> Chang-Mo Ahn, "A Study on Kyungshung Institute of Engineering and Architectural Education," *Journal of the Architectural Institute of Korea: Planning*, 14:6 (June 1998), 40.

<sup>16</sup> Martin Bronfenbrenner, *Academic Encounter: The American University in Japan and Korea* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), 171.

mainland Japan returned to Korea—some to South Korea, others to North Korea, but the numbers and competence of architects on both sides were not nearly enough.

South of the 38 Parallel, the U.S. Military Government in Korea reorganized the Japanese educational system. One of the main tasks was the establishment of Seoul National University as the highest institution of learning in South Korea. On August 22, 1946, the U.S. Military Government issued the Ordinance No. 102 through which it amalgamated the former Keijo Imperial University and several separate public colleges located in different parts of Seoul and nearby areas, including Kyung Sung Technical College, into a single national institution, Seoul National University.<sup>17</sup> Harry B. Ansted, a U.S. Army chaplain, was appointed as the first president of the university. The newly-established national university comprised nine colleges—College of Agriculture, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Law, Education, Commerce, Medicine, Dentistry, Fine Arts, and Engineering—and a graduate school. The Department of Architecture was established under the College of Engineering.<sup>18</sup>

Architectural education in South Korea came under the influence of the U.S. educational system with the opening of Seoul National University in 1946. A three-year architectural program in Kyung Sung Technical College, mainly teaching vocationally-oriented courses, was changed to a four-year bachelor's degree program in Seoul National University. In addition, the American, credit-based school system replaced the old grade-based system in Kyung Sung Technical College.<sup>19</sup> The biggest challenge in building a new architecture school was to find competent Korean faculty members to develop and teach specific courses.

Along with Seoul National University, prominent private colleges during the colonial period were also developed as four-year universities—Bosung College into Korea University, Yonhi College into Yonhi University, and Ewha Haktang into Ewha Womans University. Yet, these universities did not develop architecture programs at this time. The first and only private architectural school in South Korea before the Korean War was Dong-A Engineering Institute. Established in 1939, the Institute was a two-year program and produced only a small number of graduates because of the war and the subsequent closure by the Japanese. The school renamed itself the Engineering Institute for National Foundation (later, Hanyang University) and was developed as a four-year engineering college in 1948. The Institution's architecture program established a curriculum that followed the one in Seoul National University and the same faculty members often taught in both universities.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> "Bulletin of Seoul National University," p.1, June 1956, in folder ICA, Contract 1955/56 – 1956/57, Box 62, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>18</sup> Along with Architecture were Civil Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Metallic Engineering, Mining Engineering, Naval Architecture and Aeronautical Engineering, Tele-Communication Engineering and Textile Engineering. For more, see "Bulletin of Seoul National University," p.11, June 1956, in folder ICA, Contract 1955/56 – 1956/57, Box 62, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>19</sup> Söul Taehakkyo 50-Yönsa P'yönc'h'an Wiwönhoe [Compilation Committee of a History of 50 Years of Seoul National University], *Söul Taehakkyo 50-Yönsa, 1946-1996* [A History of 50 Years of Seoul National University, 1946-1996] (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1996), 2:169.

<sup>20</sup> Jeon-Hee Ryu, "A Study on the Formation & Characteristics of Collegiate Education of Architecture in Korea from 1945 to 1961," *Journal of Architectural History* 2:1 (June 1933), 100.

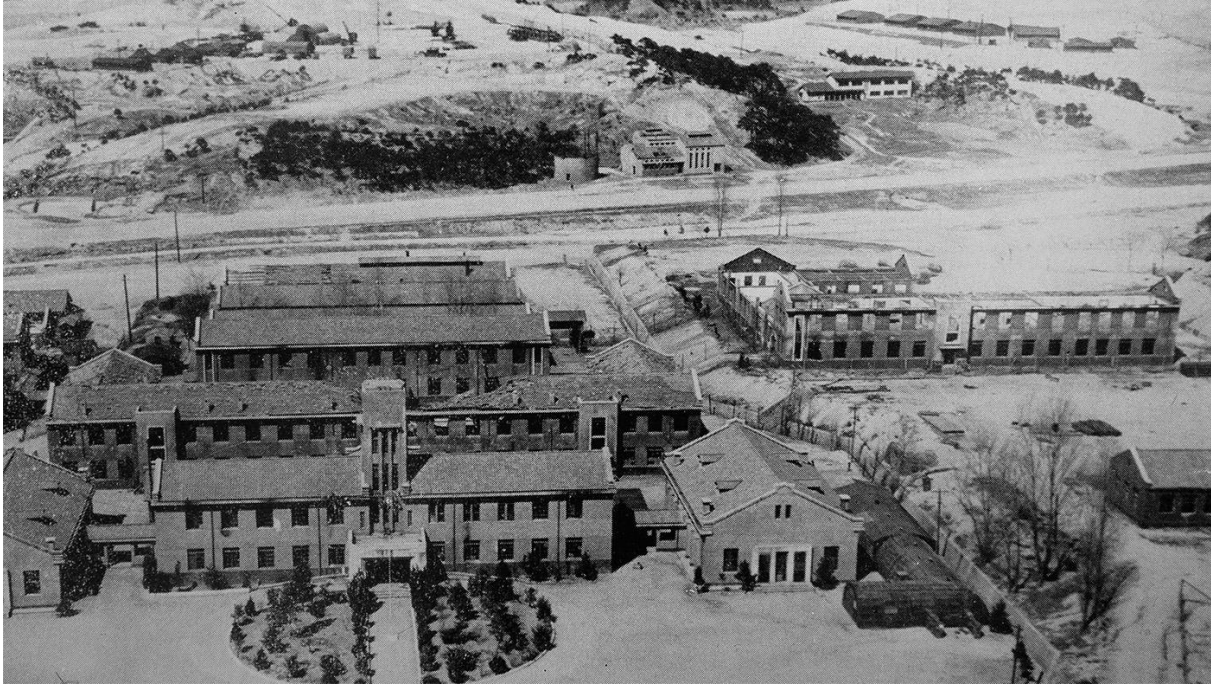


Figure 5.1 SNU Engineering College Buildings Showing War Damage.

Note that the U.S. Quonset Hut Units Were Installed Next to the Existing Structure.

(Source: Information Files Collection, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities)

The Korean War made the educational environment even bleaker. Although the exact numbers are not known, many experienced architects, including five faculty members who previously taught architecture at Seoul National University, fled for ideological reasons or were kidnapped to North Korea. Others, died during the war.<sup>21</sup> In addition, many engineering buildings were damaged or used during the war as barracks and headquarters by UN forces (Figure 5.1). Most of the equipment and books were burned or sacked during North Korea's occupation of Seoul.<sup>22</sup>

From 1952 when the fighting came to a lull, many universities began to be established—mostly national universities—and existing colleges were developed into four-year universities. By 1955, nine universities offered architecture programs.<sup>23</sup> However, the establishment of new architecture schools, without recruiting competent faculty and securing proper equipment, led to poor educational conditions. The educational situation in all architecture schools around 1954 was even worse than when architecture programs were first established in 1946.

<sup>21</sup> Four faculty—Chang-Hyun Yeom, Myon-sik Kim, Ui-Geun Hwang, Sang-Cheon Kang—of Department of Architecture at Seoul National University moved to North Korea during the Korean War, and one faculty—Han-Cheol Kim—died. For more, see Chang-Mo Ahn, “Western Architectural Culture and Its Implantation – Foreign Aid Policies and the Reformation of the Korean Architecture,” *Korean Architects* (July 2006), 70.

<sup>22</sup> Bronfenbrenner, *Academic Encounter*, 171.

<sup>23</sup> Chonnam National University, Chung-Goo University and Chungnam National University were found in 1952, Chosun University and Pusan National University in 1953, Hong-Ik University in 1954, and Dong-A University in 1955. For more, see Jeon-Hee Ryu, “A Study on the Formation & Characteristics of Collegiate Education of Architecture in Korea from 1945 to 1961,” *Journal of Architectural History* 2:1 (June 1933), 101-102.

## Rebuilding Architectural Education in North Korea

Unlike in most other areas of nation-building, North Korea lagged behind its southern competitor in higher education. During the colonial era, key educational and administrative institutions were located in Seoul, and so were most leading architects and technicians. For long-term development, North Koreans had to establish new educational institutions. In 1946, Kim Il-Sung University was founded in Pyongyang as North Korea's first and most prestigious university. Utilizing a few available Japanese-educated architects and graduates of Kyung Sung Technical College, North Koreans established an architectural program in the university. Its architecture program, along with other engineering programs, was separated in 1948 and formed into Pyongyang University of Technology (later, Kim Chaek University of Technology), which served as North Korea's highest education institution in architecture.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, North Koreans were trained abroad through educational exchange programs, especially when the country's higher education was still in its infancy. Shortly after occupying the northern part of Korea in 1945, the Soviets initiated large-scale educational exchange programs by which many promising North Korean students were sent and trained in the Soviet Union. In 1952 when the war was still on, the program was expanded to include training in other "advanced" communist countries.<sup>25</sup> During the 1950s, the Soviet Union and East Bloc countries provided technical training to thousands of North Koreans, and more than ten thousand North Korea students studied in universities in communist countries.<sup>26</sup>

Although the exact number of North Korean students is not clear, many leading North Korean architects and urban planners reportedly studied in various communist countries. Many among them were sent to universities in the Soviet Union. In general, the better students in the evaluation process were sent to Soviet universities, and the rest were sent to universities in East Germany and other communist countries. For example, North Korea's most important architect and urban planner during the postwar period, Jung-Hee Kim, studied at the Moscow Architectural Institute from 1947 until 1952, when he left for Pyongyang's reconstruction. After returning, he became responsible for a number of key urban design projects, including his Pyongyang Master Plan. Another two leading North Korean architects in the postwar period, Hyung Lee and Sun-Gyeong Shin also studied in the Soviet Union, at the Ural Industrial Institute in Sverdlovsk. Unlike South Korean architects who were mostly sent to the U.S., North Koreans studied in other parts of the communist world as well. Jun-Seop Lim, a graduate of the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, played an important role after his return.<sup>27</sup> Yeong-Seong Kim graduated in 1959 from the Faculty of Architecture at Czech Technical University in Prague, and worked as a leading structural engineer in North Korea.<sup>28</sup> In addition, in 1952, Dong-Sam Shin was sent to the Technical University Dresden, East Germany, to study architecture. Shin's ability to speak German allowed him to participate in East Germany's reconstruction project in Hamhung as an interpreter between 1954 and 1956.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> In 1951, Pyongyang University of Technology changed its name to Kim Chaek University of Technology, memorializing a North Korean war hero during the Korean War.

<sup>25</sup> Dong-Sam Shin, *Shin Dong-Sam Collection: North Korea after Korean War* (Seoul: Nunbit, 2013), 469-475.

<sup>26</sup> Charles K. Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950-1992* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 63.

<sup>27</sup> Yeong-Seong Kim, "North Korean Architectural Styles," *Könc'h'uk* [Architecture], 37:4 (July 1993), 57-65.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Returning to East Germany, Dong-Sam Shin continued his study in architecture at Dresden; yet, he defected to West Germany in 1959. For more, see Dong-Sam Shin, *Shin Dong-Sam Collection: North Korea after Korean War* (Seoul: Nunbit, 2013).

These students who obtained a foreign education played leading roles during the 1950s in bringing in advanced building technology, especially prefabricated construction methods and socialist realism to North Korea. However, from the 1960s when North Korea developed its own nationalist vision of socialism, the Juche (Self-Reliance) Ideology, foreign education's prestigious label soon became a target of criticism for being dogmatic or toadyish.<sup>30</sup> The number of North Korean students studying abroad and its merit decreased significantly in the 1960s. Since then, most promising architecture students were trained at the state-sponsored institutions, most notably, Kim Chaek University of Technology.

### **U.S. Educational Exchange Programs to South Korea in the 1950s**

In the south, a few international exchange programs were launched by the United States. Since the end of World War II, an imagined community of the “free world” linked the most technologically advanced country in the world—the United States—and its less developed allies. Educational exchange programs were actively used as a means to bridge the gap. The Fulbright Act of 1946 and the U.S. Informational and Educational Exchange Act of 1948 (Smith-Mundt Act) laid the groundwork for the exchange of knowledge and skills among “free” nations, mainly between the U.S. and its allies. Many of the programs started in European countries, but as the Cold War battlefield expanded to African, Latin American, and Asian countries in the 1950s, the scope of educational exchange programs expanded to these developing countries. In these developing countries, various training programs were aimed to expedite economic development and social progress so that they become stronger economic partners of the United States.

U.S. educational assistance to South Korea started in late 1945 under the U.S. military government. The United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA) and the Foreign Operations Administration (FOA) and private aid agencies, such as the American-Korean Foundation, provided their own educational aid programs. Along with the provisions of necessary buildings, equipment, and books, overseas training was an important part of U.S. educational aid programs.<sup>31</sup>

Beginning with the U.S. military government, especially after 1954, a large number of judicial officers, bureaucrats, military officers, journalists, scholars, and technicians were sent to the U.S. and other technologically “advanced” countries to acquire skills and knowledge in their respective fields. The study abroad programs mainly began in 1955. By 1960, approximately 1,700 Koreans were trained overseas, reaching its peak in 1958 and 1959.<sup>32</sup> The UNKRA scholarships, for example, sent vocational school teachers majoring in engineering, fisheries, and navigation for studying abroad.<sup>33</sup> Also, the U.S. State Department invited leading Korean scholars to the U.S.<sup>34</sup> During the 1950s, most of the participants (86 percent) were sent to the U.S., 12 percent to the Philippines, 8 percent to Taiwan, and a small number of the participants

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<sup>30</sup> Yeong-Seong Kim, “North Korean Architectural Styles,” *Kōnch'uk* [Architecture], 37:4 (July 1993), 63.

<sup>31</sup> The Ministry of Education, Korea and the United States Operations Mission to Korea, “Report on Survey of National Higher Education in the Republic of Korea,” p.iv, May 1960, Box 64, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>32</sup> 17 participants were sent in 1954, 160 in 1955, 185 in 1956, 312 in 1957, 367 in 1958, 364 in 1959, and 292 in 1960. For more, see *Participant directory, 1954-1970* (Seoul: Korean-American Technical Cooperation Association, 1970), n. pag.

<sup>33</sup> The Office of Public Information in Korea, “Korean Report Volume IV: Reports from the Cabinet Ministries of the Republic of Korea for 1955,” p.47, July 1956, Box 64, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

to various other countries, such as Vietnam, Japan, Thailand, Pakistan, Switzerland, West Germany, Denmark, France, and the U.K.<sup>35</sup> Prior to the U.S. exchange programs, only a small number of technicians were trained in the U.S. For example, out of 115 Korean students studying abroad in 1950 and 1951, 60 percent were studying humanities and social sciences and 30 percent studied theology. Only 10 percent were science and engineering students, which did not reflect the actual required areas of expertise.<sup>36</sup> In postwar Korea, technicians and engineers were most urgently needed, and therefore educational exchange programs supported by the South Korean or U.S. government often focused on the technical fields such as engineering, medicine, and agriculture.

The exchange programs provided relatively short-term training, rather than longer degree programs; 31 percent of the training was shorter than six months in duration, 35 percent was between six and twelve months, and 30 percent between one and two years.<sup>37</sup> A long degree program, which would keep participants away too long, could create a temporary vacuum in skilled human resources. Also, shorter-term training could increase the number of participants who could be trained.

Most of the training was practical, rather than academic; that is, the participants were trained through in-service training, apprenticeships, observation-type programs, as well as enrollment as a special student taking selected courses.<sup>38</sup> The ICA did not usually fund training for individuals whose primary interest was to acquire their formal degree in academic institutions.<sup>39</sup> Forty-five percent of the participants were trained in universities, but the people who enrolled as regular students totaled only 16 percent and those who received academic degrees totaled only 8 percent.<sup>40</sup> At this time, many Korean students who finished degree programs tended to stay in the foreign country.<sup>41</sup> For both the U.S. and Korean government, it was crucial to make sure that the recipients returned to Korea after training. Prior to departure for study, the participants had to sign a statement that they would return to Korea upon completion of study. The Korean government recalled the students when they sought to obtain permanent residence in the foreign country.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Technical Training Branch, USOM/Korea, *Evaluation Survey of the ROK/U.S. Participant Training Program, 1955-1960* (Seoul : USOM/Korea, 1962), 12; Retrieved from [http://www.nl.go.kr/nl/search/bookdetail/online.jsp?contents\\_id=CNTS-00053793653#](http://www.nl.go.kr/nl/search/bookdetail/online.jsp?contents_id=CNTS-00053793653#) (accessed December 18, 2015). Originally from Records of the U.S. Information Agency, Record Group 306; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>36</sup> "How Many Students are Abroad?" *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* (January 26, 1952), 2.

<sup>37</sup> Technical Training Branch, USOM/Korea, *Evaluation Survey of the ROK/U.S. Participant Training Program, 1955-1960* (Seoul: USOM/Korea, 1962), 11.

<sup>38</sup> The International Cooperation Administration, "ICA Participant Training Policy," p.4, January 3, 1957, in file Minutes of Meetings with Korean Advisory Committee, 1953-1957, Box 16, Gaylord W. Anderson Papers, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>40</sup> Technical Training Branch, USOM/Korea, *Evaluation Survey of the ROK/U.S. Participant Training Program, 1955-1960* (Seoul: USOM/Korea, 1962), 13-15.

<sup>41</sup> Keyes Beech, "Thousands of Korean Come Here, Few Return," *The Minneapolis Star* (May 6, 1960), 10A. In file U.S. ICA (SNU Cooperative Project), 1954-62, Box 1, Scrapbook Collection, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>42</sup> "Regulations Governing Korean Students Studying Abroad (To take effect as of April 17, 1958), p.1, c. 1958, in file Foreign Students – Korea, Box 24, Graduate School Papers, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

It is important to understand that the primary goal of the exchange programs was to benefit the country, not the individuals. The ICA clarified the goal of the exchange programs as follows: “ICA training is not aimed primarily at the improvement of the individual participant per se, but rather at improving his country through equipping him with certain skills and knowledge which can be put to immediate use upon the participant’s return.”<sup>43</sup>

The recipients of the program were selected by Korean government officials, sometimes in consultation with the ICA’s United States Operations Mission to Korea (USOM/Korea).<sup>44</sup> The applicant had to have appropriate training or experience in the relevant fields for which the education would be provided.<sup>45</sup> For U.S. officials, it was much more effective and quick-acting to assist promising Korean elites who were already in an important position from which they were be able to exercise power right after the training, rather than young students whose academic, economic, or political success seemed uncertain and distant. Accordingly, a great number of the participants were in their thirties (53 percent) and forties (20 percent). The participants under twenty-nine were only 21 percent.<sup>46</sup> The participants were mainly leading elites in South Korea. Eighty-three percent of them were from Seoul, and 90 percent were college graduates or students—most of them studied in Korea, but 19 percent previously studied in Japan, and 1.7 percent in the U.S.<sup>47</sup> A great portion of the program participants (89 percent) were government employees—either in the Korean government (46 percent) or national institutions (43 percent), including national universities.<sup>48</sup>

In short, ICA wanted to support the participants who were already qualified, rather than making them qualified in a short period of time.<sup>49</sup> Unlike other forms of U.S. educational assistance that mainly targeted at the grass-roots level on a nation-wide basis, the U.S. assistance to higher education targeted a few elite individuals and top universities. In the 1950s, most aid money was given to national universities. Seoul National University received 78 percent of the total funds, and Korea and Yonsei Universities received 90 percent of funds allocated to private universities.<sup>50</sup> The Korean government and U.S. officials expected that these better institutions would play a leading role in national educational reform.

### University Contracts

One of the important exchange programs was through university contracts, or institutional affiliations between Korean and American universities. Beginning in 1951 under the Truman administration, the U.S. government aid agency began a number of university contracts, under which U.S. universities and technical institutions developed a mutual affiliation with universities in “free world” nations. Sponsored by FOA, university contracts aimed at developing educational services similar in type and quality to American ones in allied nations through close

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<sup>43</sup> International Cooperation Administration, “ICA Participant Training Policy,” p.5, January 3, 1957, in file Minutes of Meetings with Korean Advisory Committee, 1953-1957, Box 16, Gaylord W. Anderson Papers, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10.

<sup>46</sup> Technical Training Branch, USOM/Korea, *Evaluation Survey of the ROK/U.S. Participant Training Program, 1955-1960* (Seoul: USOM/Korea, 1962), 1.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>49</sup> International Cooperation Administration, “ICA Participant Training Policy,” p.5.

<sup>50</sup> Jin Geum Han, “A Study in Technical Assistance Training Program of U.S. Aid Agency in 1950s,” *Han'guk Saron [The Korean History]*, Vol 56 (2010), 461.

university-to-university relationship.<sup>51</sup> Beyond the technical goals, FOA perceived the U.S. universities, as its policy states, as appropriate institutions to “interpret the ideals and aspirations which bind together the peoples of the free world.”<sup>52</sup>

The host American university usually assumed responsibility for assisting the overseas institutions in terms of curriculum, teaching methods, research improvement, extension of facilities and laboratories, and faculty exchanges.<sup>53</sup> University contracts typically focused on technical fields relating to the country’s economic development, such as agriculture, engineering, home economics, education, public health, public administration, and business management.<sup>54</sup> Humanities, social sciences, and basic sciences that required a long-term investment were not usually supported. The duration of each university contract was usually for a three-year period, but was often extended.<sup>55</sup>

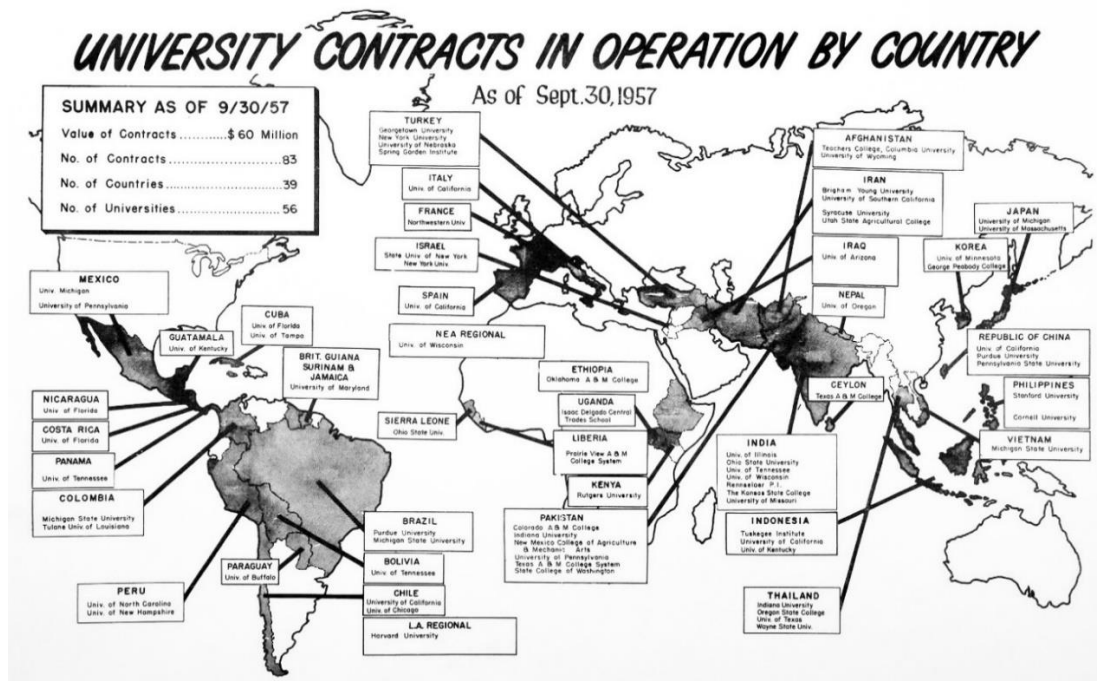


Figure 5.2 U.S. Universities Contracts in Operation by Country, as of September, 1957. (Source: College of Agriculture Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities)

As of December 31, 1956, 54 U.S. universities and institutions participated in the program. Eighty contracts assisted 34 foreign countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as additional 4 regional contracts (Figure 5.2).<sup>56</sup> The U.S. aid agency, the FOA (later, the ICA), had been almost always the main organization that initiated and funded each contract, not

<sup>51</sup> “Basic FOA Policy on University Contracts,” p.1, c. 1955, in file Korea: Basic FOA Policy on University Contracts, 1955, Box 82, College of Agriculture records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>53</sup> Bronfenbrenner, *Academic Encounter*, 173.

<sup>54</sup> “Basic FOA Policy on University Contracts,” p.1, c. 1955.

<sup>55</sup> International Cooperation Administration, *Technical Cooperation through American Universities* (Washington D.C.: Office of Public Reports, 1957), 1. In file Korea: Bulletins, Pamphlets, 1956-58, Box 81, College of Agriculture records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-40.



individual institutions or universities.<sup>57</sup> The total U.S. spending of all contracts was approximately \$50 million by 1956.<sup>58</sup>

In South Korea, approximately 16 percent of the recipients of overseas training program were financed by the university contracts.<sup>59</sup> Specifically, George Peabody College for Teachers in Tennessee assisted library science and teacher training at Yonsei University and Kwangju Normal School, Washington University in St. Louis aided Korea and Yonsei Universities in business administration, and the University of Minnesota to Seoul National University in fields of agriculture, engineering, medicine, nursing, and later public administration.<sup>60</sup>

### **The Minnesota Project**

The Minnesota Project was the largest single university contract to Asian countries. From 1954 through 1958, the U.S. government spent \$5,451,000 for the project, and the Korean government supplemented \$2,650,000.<sup>61</sup> On July 15, 1954, a contract was made between the U.S. FOA and South Korean government to help strengthen and modernize Seoul National University, the nation's highest most prestigious educational institution.<sup>62</sup> On September 28, 1954, FOA, U.S. federal aid agency made a contract with the University of Minnesota.<sup>63</sup> The University of Minnesota was chosen in this contract because the University had strong programs in all three supporting fields—agriculture, engineering, and medicine. Also, according to Martin Bronfenbrenner who taught at the University of Minnesota between 1959 and 1962, the university's involvement in the contract was partly because of the Minnesota administration's close contacts with FOA head, Harold E. Stassen, a University's alumnus and former Governor of Minnesota.<sup>64</sup>

Arthur E. Schneider, professor of forestry, was appointed as the chief advisor in Seoul. Schneider had intimate knowledge of Korea while serving a forestry advisor to the U.S. military government in Korea between 1947 and 1948. Professors Tracy F. Tyler, Athelstan Spilhaus, and

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<sup>57</sup> Bronfenbrenner, *Academic Encounter*, 164.

<sup>58</sup> International Cooperation Administration, *Technical Cooperation through American Universities* (Washington D.C.: Office of Public Reports, 1957), 2.

<sup>59</sup> Technical Training Branch, USOM/Korea, *Evaluation Survey of the ROK/U.S. Participant Training Program, 1955-1960* (Seoul: USOM/Korea, 1962), 10.

<sup>60</sup> The Ministry of Education, Korea and the United States Operations Mission to Korea, "Report on Survey of National Higher Education in the Republic of Korea," p.iv-v, May 1960, Box 64, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>61</sup> Söul Taehakkyo 50-Yönsa P'yöñch'an Wiwöñhoe [Compilation Committee of a History of 50 Years of Seoul National University], *Söul Taehakkyo 50-Yönsa, 1946-1996* [A History of 50 Years of Seoul National University, 1946-1996] (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1996), 1:93.

<sup>62</sup> "Contract between the Government of the United States of America and the University of Minnesota," p.1, c.1954, in folder ICA, Contract 1953/54 – 1954/55, Box 62, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>63</sup> Harold E. Babbitt, *College of Engineering, Seoul National University: Final Report of Adviser in Engineering* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1961), Ch.1, p.4. Box 64, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>64</sup> Bronfenbrenner, *Academic Encounter*, 173; also for Professor Bronfenbrenner's biography, see Michel Beaud and Gilles Dostaler, *Economic Thought Since Keynes: A History and Dictionary of Major Economists* (London: Routledge, 1995), 188-189.

C. E. Lund served as campus coordinators in the University of Minnesota.<sup>65</sup> The FOA initially financed a total of \$1,800,000 over a three-year period, in the fields of engineering, agriculture, nursing, and the medical sciences—a public administration program was added to the contract in 1957 when the program was renewed.<sup>66</sup> The University of Minnesota’s College of Agriculture, Forestry, Home Economics and Veterinary Medicine, School of the Medical Sciences, and the Institute of Technology sponsored the project.

The Minnesota Project’s activities for Seoul National University involved three categories of efforts: (1) the modernization of curriculum and teaching methods through faculty exchanges, (2) the procurement of new books and journals in library and laboratory equipment, and (3) the rehabilitation and new construction of buildings and plants.<sup>67</sup>

The project was a two-way approach. University of Minnesota faculty members were sent to Seoul for three to six months to give advice on the curriculum, teaching methods, and facilities. In addition, selected Korean faculty members visited the University of Minnesota to bring up-to-date knowledge and teaching methods back to their home university. Senior faculty members of each college in Seoul National University, mostly department heads, were sent on primarily observation tours from six months to one year, and younger faculty were to spend one to three years studying at the University of Minnesota as special students.<sup>68</sup> They were to bring new subjects and teaching techniques to Seoul National University.



Figure 5.3 Newly-Constructed Buildings (Left) and the Old Building (Right), SNU Engineering Campus, Seoul  
(Source: Arthur E. Schneider Papers, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities)

In 1957, the Minnesota contract was extended to include public administration and veterinary medicine, and renewed until 1961. By 1961, the total U.S. spending was approximately \$6.4 million, of which \$3.6 was allocated for a faculty exchange program and

<sup>65</sup> University of Minnesota News Service, “Minnesota ‘U’ Forester to Aid in Rehabilitating Seoul University in Korea,” October 20, 1954, in folder ICA, Korean Advisory Committee, Box 64, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities; and Bronfenbrenner, *Academic Encounter*, 173.

<sup>66</sup> University of Minnesota News Service, “Staff Returning Home—‘U’ Rebuilding Project at Korean University Comes to Close,” p.1, June 26, 1962, in folder Advisory Korean Project Committee, Box 1, Office of the Vice President for Academic Administration Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>67</sup> Arthur E. Schneider, “Prof. Schneider Gives U Staff a Report from Korea,” *The Minnesotan* (March 1955), 5. In file Clippings, 1955, Box 1, Arthur E. Schneider papers, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>68</sup> Bev Mindrum, “Seoul—Minnesota’s Adopted Sister,” *The Ivory Tower*, Vol. 58, No. 128 (April 15, 1957), 5. In file Korea: Photograph; Historical Facts, Clippings, 1954-57, Box 81, College of Agriculture records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

\$2.8 was for the purchase of equipment. In addition, \$2.9 million in U.S. aid money and \$6.9 million worth of Korean currency from the Korean government was spent for the rehabilitation and construction of new buildings (Figure 5.3).<sup>69</sup>

The Minnesota Project ended on June 30, 1961. By that time, 169 faculty members from Seoul National University, among which 64 from the Engineering College, were sent to the University of Minnesota, and in a few instances to other institutions.<sup>70</sup> Among them, 35 participants (32.5 percent) earned Master's degrees and 11 Koreans (6.5 percent) received their Ph.D. degrees through the program.<sup>71</sup> In late 1955, five faculty members from the University of Minnesota were sent to Seoul for several months, advising the corresponding departments with regard to curriculum, operations, and equipment. Among them was Carl Graffunder, lecturer in the University's School of Architecture. His activities in South Korea would be instrumental in the understanding of how U.S. educators affected architectural education in South Korea.

### **Carl Graffunder in Seoul**

Graffunder was a Minneapolis architect and then lecturer at the University of Minnesota, teaching building technology since 1948. Graffunder received his Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Minnesota in 1942 and Master's degree at Harvard University in 1948. When Graffunder studied at Harvard, its architectural program was primarily led by German émigré architects such as Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer, and was arguably the most important institution for architectural education in the United States. Both Graffunder's academic background and his design and construction experience as a practicing architect made him an appropriate candidate for this assignment.

Carl Graffunder was the only lecturer among twelve Minnesota faculty members who were ever sent to Seoul—eight were professors and three were associate professors.<sup>72</sup> Graffunder voluntarily participated in this exchange program, presumably wanting to follow the footsteps of one of his mentors, Antonin Raymond. Raymond was a leading modern architect who was particularly famed for his Japanese-inspired design and practicing as an architect in Japan during the interwar years. Graffunder, in his letter expressing his interest in participating in the program, stated that his interest in East Asia and its architecture had primarily arisen from his experience working for Antonin Raymond's New York office as chief draftsman from 1946 to 1947. He wrote: "In my opinion the work in Korea would involve both academic and practical aspects. I

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<sup>69</sup> University of Minnesota News Service, "Staff Returning Home—'U' Rebuilding Project at Korean University Comes to Close," p.2, June 26, 1962, in folder Advisory Korean Project Committee, Box 1, Office of the Vice President for Academic Administration Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>70</sup> Harold E. Babbitt, *College of Engineering, Seoul National University: Final Report of Adviser in Engineering* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1961), Ch.1, p.4-5. Box 64, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>71</sup> Tracy F. Tyler, "Academic Achievement in an Alien Land," *The Minnesota Journal of Education* (November 1961), 18. In file U.S. ICA (SNU Cooperative Project), 1954-62, Box 1, Scrapbook Collection, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>72</sup> Harold E. Babbitt, *College of Engineering, Seoul National University: Final Report of Adviser in Engineering* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1961), Table 13-1. Box 64, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

have a deep respect for the Oriental people and for their architecture and would be very pleased if I could contribute in any way toward the solution of their problems.”<sup>73</sup>

He visited Korea for three months, from September 9 to December 12, 1955. At Seoul National University, he advised on the improvement of the curriculum and teaching methods, and recommended the necessary equipment for architectural education.<sup>74</sup> First of all, he examined physical space for drafting rooms, laboratories, and library for the Department of Architecture. According to his report, the lack of equipment made it almost impossible to teach many architectural courses, except for lecture-based classes. He proposed to purchase drafting room equipment, shop equipment for concrete testing and other experimental construction work, as well as additional books, periodicals and slides.<sup>75</sup> Most of his suggestions were soon realized. Based on his suggestions, the department received drafting instruments, wood-working machinery, manual computing devices, photographic and projector equipment for taking and presenting pictures of architecture.<sup>76</sup> Also, approximately \$1,650 worth of architectural books and journals were purchased by 1961.<sup>77</sup> Compared to other engineering departments, architecture does not require expensive equipment; in fact, less than one percent of the total funds was distributed to the Department of Architecture, the second lowest number after Mathematics.<sup>78</sup> However, it was a valuable addition to the department. For example, in the 1950s, American books and architectural magazine were one of the most important mediums for architecture students in South Korea to encounter modern architecture. According to a memoir of Young-Bae An who studied architecture at Seoul National University in the 1950s, unlike European journals, American architectural magazines, such as *Architectural Record* and *Architectural Forum*, were readily available.<sup>79</sup> It may not be wrong to say that the Minnesota Project, at least in part, contributed to making them an easily accessible reference.

One of Graffunder’s main tasks in Seoul was to develop new courses and reinforce existing courses on design and building construction so that the curriculum could be in line with modern architectural practice. He pointed out that the education in Seoul National University covered the technical aspects of construction quite well, but the students received little education

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<sup>73</sup> Letter from Carl Graffunder to Athelstan Spilhaus, Dean of the Institute of Technology, October 27, 1954, in folder ICA, Korean Advisory Committee, Box 64, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>74</sup> “Architect Accepts U.N. Job in Korea,” *The Minneapolis Star* (September 9 and 10, 1955). In file U.S. ICA (SNU Cooperative Project), 1954-62, Box 1, Scrapbook Collection, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>75</sup> Carl Graffunder, “The Architectural Engineering Department of the College of Engineering of Seoul National University of Korea: A Report by Carl Graffunder,” p.3, December 1, 1955, Box 65, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>76</sup> Harold E. Babbitt, *College of Engineering, Seoul National University: Final Report of Adviser in Engineering* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1961), Ch.8, p.1. Box 64, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, Table 7-1, p.4.

<sup>78</sup> As of June 1, 1961, excluding cost of procurement, shipment, and insurance, \$6,845 was spent for the Department of Architecture. It was only 0.58 percent of the total sum of approximately 1.18 million dollar spent for the school of engineering. For more, see Harold E. Babbitt, *College of Engineering, Seoul National University: Final Report of Adviser in Engineering* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1961), Table 9-3. Box 64, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>79</sup> Young-Bae An, interviewed by Hyungmin Pai and Dongsun Woo, et al., *Ahn Young-Bae Kusulchip* [Oral History: An Young-Bae] (Seoul: Mati Books, 2013), 86.

in “creative architectural design and planning.”<sup>80</sup> Although the department offered a few design courses on the subjects, the architecture program in Seoul National University almost entirely run by lectures, due to the insufficient equipment and faculty’s lack of teaching experience.<sup>81</sup> He diagnosed the current design courses as being “improperly organized” to handle contemporary planning problems.<sup>82</sup> According to Graffunder, a design studio had to provide various realistic planning and design exercises to develop the student’s ability to solve the problem in designing buildings. Each student was expected to develop an individual, practical design solution, under the assistance of a capable design instructor. In order to secure enough time for design studio, he proposed to rearrange the lecture courses into the morning hours, leaving the entire afternoon for design studios.<sup>83</sup>

Newly-arrived equipment solved the material aspects of the problem, but his suggestions on design courses were inherently related to lack of competent, full-time faculty. When Graffunder came to Korea in 1955, the faculty of the architecture program in Seoul National University was composed of one full professor, one associate professor, one assistant professor, and a few part-time instructors and lectures. Part-time faculty were paid little and typically held teaching positions in other universities. Few competent Korean architects were attracted to the part-time teaching position.<sup>84</sup> In his report, Graffunder also expressed that there was little “group spirit” among faculty member because the faculty members, who had their own offices in other places, appeared in school—which was located on the outskirts of Seoul—only during lectures and left afterwards. He thought that this practice made the faculty not readily available to students and hindered the integrated operation of the department and the building of student loyalty to the department.<sup>85</sup> The main solution to solve this problem was to train the existing faculty and hire new competent faculty.

### **Three Korean Educators in the Twin Cities**

The Minnesota Project aimed to send a sufficient number of faculty members to the U.S., while maintaining enough professors in Korea to continue the normal education.<sup>86</sup> During the winter quarter of 1956, 44 faculty members of Seoul National University were sent to the U.S. to study at the University of Minnesota, three of whom were from the department of architecture. Part of the goal of their visit was to study how the courses, particularly design studios, were organized and operated in a U.S. university.

When the three Korean faculty members visited the Twin Cities, the University of Minnesota was one of the important regional educational institutions offering architectural education to students, not only in Minnesota, but also from other neighboring states in which no

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<sup>80</sup> Carl Graffunder, “A Report by Carl Graffunder,” p.2.

<sup>81</sup> The Korean Advisory Committee, “The Minutes of a Meeting on January 23, 1956,” p.3, January 24, 1956, in file Korean Cooperative Project Minutes (Advisory Committee), Box 82, College of Agriculture records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>82</sup> Carl Graffunder, “A Report by Carl Graffunder,” p.5.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>84</sup> Harold E. Babbitt, *College of Engineering, Seoul National University: Final Report of Adviser in Engineering* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1961), Ch.6, p.3. Box 64, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>85</sup> Carl Graffunder, “A Report by Carl Graffunder,” p.2.

<sup>86</sup> Harold E. Babbitt, *College of Engineering, Seoul National University: Final Report of Adviser in Engineering* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1961), Ch.6, p.1. Box 64, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

accredited architecture program existed. These included Wisconsin, North Dakota, and South Dakota. As of 1954, approximately 170 students were enrolled in the School of Architecture.<sup>87</sup> The program was headed by Ralph E. Rapson, who assumed the responsibility as the head from September 1954. Before coming to Minnesota, Rapson had taught architecture and city planning at Massachusetts Institute of Technology since 1946.<sup>88</sup> Rapson was also a nationally known architect who was particularly famous for the design of many U.S. embassies in Europe.<sup>89</sup> Besides Rapson, the program consisted of three professors (Robert G. Cerny, Winston A. Close, Harlan E. McClure), two associate professors (Donald C. Heath, Walter K. Vivrett), two assistant professors (Robert L. Bliss, Howard F. Koeper), and three lecturers (W. Brooks Cavin, Carl Graffunder, and Norman Nagle).<sup>90</sup> Largely influenced by Rapson, the curriculum stressed modernist design.

The three Korean participants—Hi-Choon Kim, Jung-Soo Kim, and Chung-Sup Yoon—were in different stages of their careers and followed different paths. In 1956, Hi-Choon Kim visited the U.S. for six months between September 17, 1956 and March 8, 1957. He was 40 years old and the most senior of the three. He was one of the leading Koreans architects and then Director of the Korean Institute of Architects. He graduated from Kyongsung Technical College in 1937. From 1948 to 1952, he worked as Chief Engineer at Continental Building & Industry Company in Seoul. He was an assistant professor at Seoul National University, lecturing on the history of architecture and teaching design courses.<sup>91</sup> Like other senior faculty members, his visit was primarily devoted to observation of departmental procedures and consultations with the Minnesota faculty. Although Hi-Choon Kim did not actually take courses for credit, he audited a few courses. According to his later memoir, he devoted his time primarily to the study of architectural history.<sup>92</sup> He audited two architectural history courses—“History of Architecture” and “European and American Architecture, 1775-1850.”<sup>93</sup> Returning to Korea, he began to offer a new architectural history course, “Contemporary Architecture.”

The second participant was Jung-Soo Kim. Kim stayed in the U.S. for 13 months, between August 8, 1956 and July 19, 1957. Then lecturer in the Department of Architecture, Kim was also a graduate of Kyongsung Technical College, and previously worked for the U.S.

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<sup>87</sup> “School of Architecture Report to Institute of Technology Faculty,” p.13, June 1, 1954, in file Administration, School of Architecture, 1953-54, Box 3, School of Architecture papers, University of Minnesota Archives, Twin Cities.

<sup>88</sup> “New U Architecture School Head Named,” *The St. Paul Dispatch* (April 9, 1954). In file School of Architecture, 1950-64, 68, Box 6, University Relations Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>89</sup> Ralph Rapson’s design commissions for overseas embassies and consulates include U.S. embassy office buildings in Stockholm and Copenhagen, U.S. embassy staff apartments in Neuilly and Boulogne, France, and U.S. consulate and apartments in Le Havre, France, as well as unbuilt U.S. embassy projects for Athens, Oslo, and the Hague. For more, see “Staff Resume: Ralph Rapson,” n.d., in file Ralph Rapson, Information Files Collection, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>90</sup> University of Minnesota, *Bulletin of the University of Minnesota, Institute of Technology, 1955-1957* (1955), 7. University of Minnesota. Retrieved from the University of Minnesota Digital. <http://purl.umn.edu/92254> (accessed December 13, 2015).

<sup>91</sup> In 1956, he taught “History of Architecture,” “Planning of Building,” and “Supervising of Building Design” at Seoul National University. For more, see “FOA Biographical Data, Hi-Choon Kim,” p.2, c. 1955, in file Engineering Students from Korea, 1955-1957, Box 1, Clyde H. Bailey papers, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>92</sup> Hi-Choon Kim, *Essays in Celebration of the 70th Birthday of Professor Woogok Hi-Choon Kim* (Seoul: Editing Committee of Essays, 1985), 81.

<sup>93</sup> “Note on Hi-Choon Kim,” n.d., in file Engineering Students from Korea, 1955-1957, Box 1, Clyde H. Bailey papers, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

military government and the UNKRA Housing Division. When sent to the U.S., Kim was only 36 years old, but one of the most experienced architects in Korea. Kim audited more than twenty courses over three quarters, but his primary interest was design courses. He took two nine-unit architectural design courses for credit. In addition, he audited diverse courses from art, civil engineering and mechanical engineering as well.<sup>94</sup> As an experienced, practicing architect, Kim was more interested in gaining hands-on experience of construction and architectural materials, rather than simply taking design courses. According to Kim's diary, he visited many factories and plants for building materials, such as the Anderson aluminum window factory, the Reynolds aluminum plant for building parts, and various other plants for furniture, bricks, cast stone plant, and Vermiculite; in fact, upon returning to Korea, Kim patented Vermiculite. He also visited Minneapolis architectural firms run by the Minnesota faculty, such as Robert G. Cerny's office and construction sites.<sup>95</sup>

The Minnesota Project supported the training of not just the current faculty, but also prospective faculty members. The youngest of the three, Chung-Sup Yoon, was 25 years old. Unlike other two senior members, Yoon was more academically inclined, especially towards urban planning. Yoon was a graduate of Seoul National University and finished in 1956 his Master's thesis on residential neighborhood planning, which was the first Master's thesis of the department. He stayed for a year in the U.S., from August 10, 1956 to August 9, 1957. Yoon participated in this project as a teaching assistant of the department. Like Jung-Soo Kim, Yoon audited or took more than twenty courses, but he more actively took the courses for credit—two courses every quarter. Many of the courses were on city planning, including "Planning Techniques," "Planning," and two "City Planning" courses.<sup>96</sup>

Their experience in the University of Minnesota influenced their careers as educators and architects. But the university was not the only source of the influence on them; traveling across the U.S. was another important experience for the Korean participants.

### **American Grand Tour**

Not every overseas training participant could conduct a tour. According to a survey, approximately half of the participants (48 percent) were able to travel within the United States.<sup>97</sup> However, based on the participants' records and memoirs, most of the participants in architecture conducted trips to American cities, individually or as an official part of the training. All Minnesota Project participants conducted observation tours to American cities or European countries, usually after their training at Minnesota. According to their administrative records, Hi-Choon Kim and Jung-Soo Kim individually traveled to the eastern U.S. and European countries roughly for six weeks after their training. Chung-Sup Yoon also traveled to Chicago, New York,

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<sup>94</sup> Outside of architecture, Jung-Soo Kim audited Principles of Pictorial Design and Commercial Design from Department of Art, Design in Steel, Elementary Structural Design, Structural Laboratory, Reinforced Concrete Design, Foundations, and Prestressed Reinforced Concrete from Civil Engineering, and Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Laboratory from Mechanical Engineering. For more, see "Note on Jung-Soo Kim," n.d., in file Engineering Students from Korea, 1955-1957, Box 1, Clyde H. Bailey papers, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>95</sup> Won-Seok Jang, *The Technology and Stylistic Expression of the Jounge-Su Kim, A Korean Architect's Work* (PhD dissertation, Yonsei University, 2006), 11, 97.

<sup>96</sup> "Note on Chung-Sup Yoon," n.d., in file Engineering Students from Korea, 1955-1957, Box 1, Clyde H. Bailey papers, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>97</sup> Technical Training Branch, USOM/Korea, *Evaluation Survey of the ROK/U.S. Participant Training Program, 1955-1960* (Seoul : USOM/Korea, 1962), 13.

Boston, and Washington, D.C. for about ten days. The tour was an important part of the training, especially to participants from architecture.

A tour taken by Jang-Sup Yun, a recipient of another overseas training program, shows several important characteristics of the observation tours conducted by the Korean participants. Yun was a lecturer at Seoul National University since 1956, but at the same time worked for the USOM Housing Section. Yun originally began his training in MIT with the sponsorship of ICA, and extended his training by one additional year with which he obtained his Master's degree there. He was in the U.S., between December 25, 1957 and September 1959 and was able to travel for over three months, from June 7 to September 19, 1958. The emphasis of his summer trip was to examine low-cost housing projects in various parts of the United States, including New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Miami, Tuskegee, Detroit, Chicago, Madison, and Puerto Rico. In these places, he studied not only housing projects, but also almost always visited the offices of planning commissions and housing authorities.<sup>98</sup> Often under the guidance of local authorities, Yun visited many low-cost housing developments in both the private and public sectors, such as the two Levittowns in Pennsylvania and New York, aided self-help housing in Tuskegee, Alabama, and several public housing projects.<sup>99</sup> Upon observing construction sites of housing projects in New York, he wrote in a report to ICA that “[t]he methods of construction were very simple and functional, and the speed was so fast that it was unbelievable to me. The methods of construction should be introduced into Korea.”<sup>100</sup>

The largest part of his itinerary was devoted to a trip to Puerto Rico. Yun visited Puerto Rico from July 21 to August 22. It seemed that the USOM Housing Division urged him to visit this under-developed territory to which the U.S. modernization efforts were being tested. Yet, for him, this one-month-long trip to a less-developed U.S. territory was a less notable part of his trip. In his ICA report, he wrote that: “I do not think it will be worthwhile to stay here for a whole month in this island.”<sup>101</sup> His Puerto Rico visit was almost entirely devoted to observation tours of low-cost housing projects and related agencies.<sup>102</sup> He seemed to have mixed feelings about these economically efficient, but aesthetically less-appealing, construction projects. For example, after observing several public housing projects constructed by the International Basic Economy Corporation (IBEC) Housing Company, he wrote that:

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<sup>98</sup> The institutions Jang-Sup Yun visited included the New York City Housing Authority, Philadelphia Planning Commission, Cement block manufacturer in Philadelphia, Atlanta Planning Commission, Metropolitan Planning Commission in Atlanta, and Atlanta Housing Authority, City Planning Commission of Detroit, Department of Planning in Chicago, and the Federal Housing Administration, Public Housing Administration, Redevelopment Land Agency, and American institute of Planning in Washington, D.C. For more on his itinerary, see Jang-Sup Yun, “ICA Participant Report,” on June 30, July 31, and September 1, 1958; in File Participants: Reports; UD 1277DK, Box 4; Records of the U.S. Foreign Assistance Agencies, 1948-1961, Record Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>99</sup> Jang-Sup Yun reported that he visited Levittown in New Jersey, but it is perhaps a misidentification of Levittown in New York. For more, see Jang-Sup Yoon, “ICA Participant Report,” p.3, June 30, 1958.

<sup>100</sup> Jang-Sup Yoon, “ICA Participant Report,” p.1, June 30, 1958.

<sup>101</sup> Jang-Sup Yun, “ICA Participant Report,” p.2, July 31, 1958.

<sup>102</sup> In Puerto Rico, Jang-Sup Yun observed several aided self-help housing, public housing, and community development projects. And, Yoon also visited Puerto Rico Housing Authority, Puerto Rico Planning Board, Puerto Rico aqueduct and Sewer Authority, Department of Agriculture and Commerce, and Social Programs Administration. For more, see Jang-Sup Yun, “ICA Participant Report,” on July 31, and September 1, 1958.



In some extent several Public Housing Projects are much better than those in Continent of America. Especially economical planning, management, and Administration on Housing program are excellent. But I cannot completely agree with the aspect of architectural design. The highly mechanized construction methods by which IBEC Housing Co. built homes in the scheme of mass production was amazing thing to me. But I think we can not adopt just same methods in Korea. The method of concrete precast construction which they will gave me some promising suggestion to apply.<sup>103</sup>

A campus tour was almost always a popular element of Korean participants' itineraries in this period. Jang-Sup Yun also made a tour of a great number of major American universities, such as Columbia University, Princeton University, Yale University, University of Pennsylvania, University of Michigan, University of Miami, Georgia Institute of Technology, Illinois Institute of Technology, and others.<sup>104</sup>

Yun also visited a number of modern buildings in the U.S., such as Lever House, the UN Headquarters, and General Motors Technical Center in Michigan, to name a few. He also visited America's most famous architectural offices, such as Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, I.M Pei office, Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, and a few other smaller offices. More importantly, he had a valuable opportunity to talk with a few leading architects and scholars in the U.S., such as Louis Khan, I. M. Pei, Oscar Stonorov, Edmund Bacon, and Frank Lloyd Wright.<sup>105</sup> It must have been a thrilling experience for a young architecture student to meet the pioneers of the twentieth century architecture. One example of this was his meeting with Frank Lloyd Wright. In his ICA report, Yun wrote that: the "most important event in the trip was the visit [to] Taliesin where Mr. Frank Lloyd Wright and his followers have been developing the philosophy of organic architecture."<sup>106</sup> It was Yoon's second time seeing Wright in person, after Wright's lecture at MIT's Kresge Auditorium in May 1958. Throughout his long career, he frequently recalled the thrill of the experience vividly.<sup>107</sup>

Most Korean participants at this time were not fluent in English, and thus it was difficult for them to follow courses being taught in English. In fact, many Korean participants preferred travelling outside, rather than taking courses in classrooms. Athelstan Spilhaus, Dean of the Institute of Technology of the University of Minnesota, even pointed out that the participants' preference for tours over studying regular courses was a problem.<sup>108</sup> As a scholar, Spilhaus and other Minnesota professors believed that touring was not as beneficial as regular courses. However, the U.S. officials often included an extensive tour schedule in the participant's itinerary, believing that the more the participants know about American people and culture, the more likely they are to accept American ideas as well. Thus, the U.S. aid agencies funded the participants' trip and arranged a visit with related governmental institutions and private

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<sup>103</sup> Note that the above quote was taken from his original English writing, not the author's translation. For more, see Jang-Sup Yun, "ICA Participant Report," p.1, September 1, 1958.

<sup>104</sup> Jang-Sup Yun, "ICA Participant Report," on June 30, July 31, and September 1, 1958.

<sup>105</sup> Jang-Sup Yun, interviewed by Jae-Ock Yoon and Soon-Young Jung, at al., "Interview of Honorary President, Yun Jang-Sup," *Könch'uk* [Architecture], 52:6 (June 2008), 98-99.

<sup>106</sup> Jang-Sup Yun, "ICA Participant Report," p.1, October 1, 1958.

<sup>107</sup> Jang-Sup Yun, interviewed by Jae-Ock Yoon and Soon-Young Jung, at al., "Interview of Honorary President, Yun Jang-Sup," *Könch'uk* [Architecture], 52:6 (June 2008), 99.

<sup>108</sup> Letter from Athelstan Spilhaus, Dean of the Institute of Technology, to Tracy F. Tyler, p.1, September 12, 1955, in file Korea: Advisory Committee, SNU of Korea Cooperative Project, 1954-1956, Box 82, College of Agriculture records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

corporations. Without the U.S. official's assistance, the meetings with leading American architects would have been much more difficult, if not impossible.

### **Making Human Ties with the United States**

American educational exchange programs in the 1950s were an important means to nurture strong ties between South Korea and the United States, especially among elites. Tracy Tyler, the Minnesota program coordinator, wrote that the program participants who were brought to the U.S. were expected to become "friends of the U.S. and missionaries of the American way."<sup>109</sup> G. Huntington Damon of the United States Information Service (USIS) in Korea underlined the significance of the U.S. efforts to send elite Koreans to the U.S. for training, as follows:

America's foreign policy interest in these students is real. We desire a democratic, economically-viable Korea with strong American ties. To this end we are, among other measure, sending many Koreans to the United States for short periods of from three months to, in exceptional cases, two years.<sup>110</sup>

In a country with a limited number of intellectuals, a small elite group was particularly influential among their colleagues, in their respective fields, and in society in general. The culturally and intellectually "converted" Korean elites developed and reproduced U.S. values on their own without further intervention from the United States. Moreover, the educational programs were favored over military and economic assistance by the U.S. officials because they were less vulnerable to the charge of being hegemonic over Koreans.

South Korea's dependence on the U.S., combined with previously limited educational opportunity given to the Koreans during Japanese rule, made training programs to the U.S. an ideal educational opportunity. However, due to the geographical distance and linguistic difference between the U.S. and Korea, studying in the U.S. was difficult and costly. Even for those who had sufficient funds to cover expenses, it was difficult to study in the U.S. because the South Korean government limited the total number of students studying abroad during the 1950s as a means to limit capital outflows. Any student who intended to study abroad had to be granted permission by President Syngman Rhee. These factors combined to limit access to overseas training programs to a privileged few. Even if most educational programs were short-term, non-degree programs, the experience was valuable.

According to a USOM/Korea survey, 81 percent of the returned trainees thought that the overseas training experience was one of the most significant activities in their life. The main reasons were because of the new ideas and methods they learned (29 percent), educational experience (16 percent), being effective in the work (15 percent), the better understanding of the visiting country (13 percent).<sup>111</sup> Also, 83 percent of the program's recipients actually used the

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<sup>109</sup> Tracy F. Tyler, "Academic Achievement in an Alien Land," *The Minnesota Journal of Education* (November 1961), 18. In file U.S. ICA (SNU Cooperative Project), 1954-62, Box 1, Scrapbook Collection, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>110</sup> G. Huntington Damon, Public Affairs Officer, USIS to the Department of State, Washington, "Subject: Korean Students in the United States," p.1, August 16, 1960; in file Korea, Education, Students; Entry UD 422, Box 148; Korea Subject Files, 1950-1961, Record Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>111</sup> Technical Training Branch, USOM/Korea, *Evaluation Survey of the ROK/U.S. Participant Training Program, 1955-1960* (Seoul: USOM/Korea, 1962), 42.

skills and knowledge they learned from the overseas training program after the training.<sup>112</sup> It might not be wrong to guess that the participants felt gratitude to Americans for the opportunities and economic supports they received.

Their source of learning was not limited to program-related experiences, but also their observation of people and ways of life was influential. Interestingly, most participants (92 percent) experienced America's social life in private homes while visiting the U.S.<sup>113</sup> Many returned participants from the U.S. continued their contacts with American people and culture in Korea. Many participants (81 percent) continued to correspond with academic or business acquaintances in the U.S. after their return. After their return, many of them watched Hollywood movies (95 percent), read American books (91 percent) and American magazines (90 percent), listen to the Voice of America (83 percent) and to the U.S. military radio (80 percent), and had American civilian friends in Korea (72 percent).<sup>114</sup>

An unseen but no less powerful mechanism of Americanization was English itself. During the Japanese colonial era, Japanese was the only official language: use of the Korean language was prohibited in many professional spheres for over three decades and it prevented the Korean language from developing its own technical terms. After Independence in 1945, the use of Japanese was banned, but Korean did not successfully replace it. Another foreign language, English, often filled the vacancy. Studying in the U.S. was valuable in that it provided an opportunity to learn English. However, it was not an easy task, especially for senior participants. Many Korean participants who visited the U.S. had less English proficiency than most other international students. For example, upon arrival almost all Korean participants to the Minnesota Project barely had passable English skills to undertake graduate work in the university.<sup>115</sup> A large portion of the trainees (77 percent) received English instruction either prior to departure or in the United States.<sup>116</sup> The University of Minnesota, for example, offered an intensive English program to the participants for five and one-half week before the beginning of their training in the university.<sup>117</sup> An English class, of course, was not only intended to improve the participants' English skills, but was also an important means of Americanization.<sup>118</sup> In English classes, the trainees had a chance to learn American culture, technology, and political system. The program included a tour of the Twin Cities, including the Minneapolis Star and Tribune, the Minnesota State Fair.<sup>119</sup> Also, the trainees were invited to an American home. They watched a number of

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>115</sup> Harold B. Allen, Professor of English at University of Minnesota, "A Report Concerning the Special Intensive Program in the English Language Given at the University of Minnesota for Thirty Faculty Members from Seoul National University of Korea, August 13 to September 24, 1956," p.11-12, October, 1956, in file Korea: English Instruction, including Reports, 1955-1960, Box 81, College of Agriculture records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>116</sup> Technical Training Branch, USOM/Korea, *Evaluation Survey of the ROK/U.S. Participant Training Program, 1955-1960* (Seoul: USOM/Korea, 1962), 28.

<sup>117</sup> The English program provided English instruction five hours a day for five days a week for five and an half weeks, between August 13 and September 24, 1956. For more, see Harold B. Allen, Professor of English at University of Minnesota, "A Report Concerning the Special Intensive Program in the English Language Given at the University of Minnesota for Thirty Faculty Members from Seoul National University of Korea, August 13 to September 24, 1956," p.1, October, 1956.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 4.

documentary films that showed various aspects of the United States; some of the films dealt with the American built environment, such as “Building America’s Houses,” “TVA (The Tennessee Valley Authority),” and “The American Road.”<sup>120</sup>

The participants seemed to have a great interest in a foreign environment. Harold B. Allen, director of English instruction, witnessed in his report their desire to experience American culture as follows:

[A]n agreement was made with the owner of the Gopherland Café, a Chinese restaurant adjoining the campus, to serve an oriental lunch each class day in a dining room which was reserved for the Koreans. ... [T]his arrangement was discontinued for the final two weeks after one-half of the group expressed the desire to begin eating in an American cafeteria in order to become accustomed to a more typically American type of public dining.<sup>121</sup>

A keen interest of the U.S. officials in the participants’ cultural and linguistic acquisition was probably in part based on assumptions of cultural superiority, but it more specifically reflected their view on the trainees. The participating Korean faculty members were among the most competent intellectuals; however, for U.S officials, the significance of the Korean participants stemmed not from their academic achievement, but from their promising future upon their return to Korea. The Minnesota coordinator, Tracy F. Tyler, clearly expressed his perception of the Korean participants as follows:

Faculty members from Seoul National University may not be the outstanding scholars and scientists from Korea but are the most promising of the present faculty members in their individual departments and are those whose further training will contribute most at this time to the upgrading and strengthening of Seoul National University.<sup>122</sup>

As expected by U.S. officials, upon returning to Korea, they became an important link connecting the U.S. and South Korea, teaching a new generation of architecture students, publishing articles and books on American architecture, and introducing modern construction techniques and architectural style.

### **Overseas Trainees as a Power Elite and Educational Reform**

After the Liberation in 1945, and especially after the Korean War, Koreans educated in the U.S. emerged as a new power elite.<sup>123</sup> Many Korean leaders, including President Syngman Rhee, his secretary Ki-Poong Lee, Vice President John Myon Chang, and many ministers, were educated in American universities during the Japanese colonial period. Beginning from the 1950s, U.S.-educated architectural elites played leading roles as professor-architects.

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>122</sup> Letter from Tracy F. Tyler to J. Russell Andrus, University Contract Coordinator, “Re: Permission to Employ College Level Advisers,” p.2, January 19, 1956, in file Korea: Advisory Committee, SNU of Korea Cooperative Project, 1954-1956, Box 82, College of Agriculture records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>123</sup> For more on the power elite theory, see C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

In Seoul National University, faculty was gradually filled with people who had studied in the U.S., largely owing to the Minnesota Project. By 1961, approximately 80 percent of full-time faculty members of the school of engineering had either earned a degree or were trained in the U.S.<sup>124</sup> A few faculty in other fields were trained in other “free world” countries, such as Japan, West Germany, and the U.K., but all faculty members in the department of architecture were trained in the United States.

In addition to three trainees at the University of Minnesota, the head of the department, Professor Kyun Sang Lee—who was a graduate of Kyung Sung Technical College and the only Korean faculty member at the school during the colonial period—studied public housing and city planning in the U.S., from March 17, 1954 to August 30, 1955, sponsored by the U.S. State Department.<sup>125</sup> In the late 1950s, Seoul National University increased appointments by two in the faculty of the department of architecture; Jang-Sup Yun returned from MIT and joined the faculty, and Kwang-Roh Lee, who was trained in Webb & Knapp’s New York office for the Homes for Korea project, also became the faculty of the department of architecture. The only non-U.S. trained faculty at this time, Hyung Kul Kim, also studied later in the sixties, sponsored by the United Nations Technical Assistance Board.<sup>126</sup> As of September 1, 1959, the Department of Architecture consisted of two full professors (Kyun-Sang Lee, Hyung-Kul Kim), one associate professor (Hi-Chun Kim), two assistant professors (Kwang-Roh Lee, Jong-Soo Kim), and two instructors on faculty track (Jang-Sup Yun, Chung-Sup Yoon).<sup>127</sup>

The experience in the United States was slowly changing architectural education in Korea. U.S. architectural education, especially its well-organized curriculum and design studio instruction, served as a suitable and easy-to-follow model for existing and newly-founded architecture programs in South Korea, primarily by the trainees sent to the United States. The American institutions provided modern architectural education to a few Korean architectural elites through a formal education and practice, and the education also served as a prototype worth emulating in South Korea.

The returning and newly arrived faculty made few minor changes to the curriculum. They strengthened history and design courses. For example, the 1959 curriculum of Seoul National University added a new four-unit architectural history course, “Contemporary Architecture,” in the senior year, in addition to the existing history course “History of Architecture.” “Building Practice” was also newly added to the senior year. The existing “Illumination and Color” was reinforced and divided into two separate courses—“Form and Color” and “Architectural Illumination.”<sup>128</sup> Around 1959, approximately one third of the total units were devoted to the

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<sup>124</sup> Harold E. Babbitt, *College of Engineering, Seoul National University: Final Report of Adviser in Engineering* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1961), Ch.6, p.2. Box 64, Central Files Records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>125</sup> Söul Taehakkyo 50-Yönsa P’yöñch’an Wiwöñhoe [Compilation Committee of a History of 50 Years of Seoul National University], *Söul Taehakkyo 50-Yönsa, 1946-1996* [A History of 50 Years of Seoul National University, 1946-1996] (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1996), 2:170.

<sup>126</sup> Hyung Kul Kim, “Naüi Yennal Iyagi [My Old Story],” *Köñch’uk* [Architecture], 39:3 (March 1995), 11.

<sup>127</sup> *Bulletin of College of Engineering, Seoul National University, 1959-1960* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 1959), 4; Entry P 186, Box 17; ICA Far East Operations, Project Case Files, 1948-1961, Record Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>128</sup> For courses offering in 1955, see “List of Subjects in College of Engineering, Seoul National University,” c.1955, in file Working File, Korea, 1955, Box 1, Clyde H. Bailey papers, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities; for the new curriculum in 1959, see *Bulletin of College of Engineering, Seoul National University, 1959-1960* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 1959), 16-17.

liberal arts and scientific studies. The freshman year was common to all other engineering students, devoting to the liberal arts and scientific studies.<sup>129</sup> In the sophomore year, the students continued taking the general subjects, but began to take architectural design courses as well as drawing and other subjects.<sup>130</sup> In the third and fourth years, most architectural courses were taught, such as structure, construction, design, urban planning, building code, history of architecture, and others.<sup>131</sup>

The reform could be seen in other newly-established architecture programs, in which faculty returning from overseas training led the changes. In 1961, Jung-Soo Kim moved to a private university, Yonsei University. Jung-Deok Lee, finished his Master degree from the University of Washington, joined the faculty of a newly-established architecture program at Korea University in 1964. Myung-Koo Kang, returning from Webb & Knapp, began to teach at Hong-Ik University and became an assistant professor in 1961. Graduated from Waseda University, Japan in 1940, Kang visited the U.S. between 1954 and 1955 and visited many major American universities. In his later interview in 1983, he testified about the influence of his campus tour on his teaching methods and courses offering at Hong-Ik University, as follows: “I visited Harvard, IIT, and such, observing how American students studied [architecture]. It was different from how we learned in Japan. I passed the methods on to Hong-Ik University. ... We first adopted modeling and drawing techniques.”<sup>132</sup> Nevertheless, a tendency toward practicality was prevalent in universities in postwar Korea. Most architectural education continued to emphasize structure and construction, mostly under the College of Engineering.

### **Professor-Architects**

Once they returned from the U.S., participants actively circulated American culture and technology, which were inherently interconnected in the U.S., in both professional and private spheres. According to a survey conducted by the U.S. aid agency in Korea, many participants (84 percent) reproduced their training experience in the U.S. through various mediums; some passed on what they learned from the program through lectures or formal training (48 percent), or books, articles, or other publications (47 percent). A great number of participants circulated their

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<sup>129</sup> The general subjects in the freshman years included Gymnastics, Korean, English, German, Introduction to Philosophy, Calculus & Analytical Geometry, Physics, Physics Laboratory, General Chemistry, Analytical Chemistry Laboratory, and Fundamental Drawing. For more, see *Bulletin of College of Engineering, Seoul National University, 1959-1960* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 1959), 15; Entry P 186, Box 17; ICA Far East Operations, Project Case Files, 1948-1961, Record Group 469; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>130</sup> Architecture courses in the sophomore year included Theory of Structure, Building Materials, Solar Angels & Architectural Acoustics, Free Hand Drawing, and Architectural Design. For more, see *Bulletin of College of Engineering, Seoul National University, 1959-1960* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 1959), 16-17.

<sup>131</sup> The courses covered in the junior year included Free Hand Drawing, Building Construction, Reinforced Concrete Construction, Architectural Planning, Form and Color, History of Architecture, Theory of Structures, Sculpture, Electrical Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering, and Architectural Design. The senior year was devoted to advanced structural and architectural design courses, including Architectural Design, Theory of Structure, Building Construction, Engineering Economics, Building Equipment, Building Practice, Contemporary Architecture, Building Code, Surveying, Architectural Illumination, and City Planning. For more, see *Bulletin of College of Engineering, Seoul National University, 1959-1960* (Seoul: Seoul National University, 1959), 16-17.

<sup>132</sup> Myung-Koo Kang, interviewed by Jung-Dong Kim, “Conversation with the Doyen: Myung Koo Kang,” *Köñch'ukka [Architect]* (Jan / Feb, 1983), 3-8.

personal experiences abroad; some wrote articles on it (64 percent), some gave informal talks (62 percent), some showed slides on their experience (60 percent).<sup>133</sup>

Besides formal lectures in universities, returned professors actively published articles and books on American architecture. The scholastic standards in Korea were incomparably lower than the Western counterparts at this time. The role of Korean intellectuals was not to produce state-of-the-art knowledge, but to introduce and bring in skills and knowledge from more advanced Western countries. Oftentimes articles from *Architectural Forum* and *Architectural Record* were translated and published in Korean architectural journals, such as *Kö̃nch'uk* (Architecture) and *Kö̃nch'ukka* (Architect). The program participants wrote many books and articles on American architecture and city planning. Hi-Choon Kim, for example, published articles on American Architectural History and Walter Gropius.<sup>134</sup> Chung-Sup Yoon, another Minnesota trainee, published many articles on city planning of various Western countries, including the United States.<sup>135</sup> Jang-Sup Yun, returning from MIT, wrote an article on Frank Lloyd Wright, and also wrote one of the first books on the history of Western architecture.<sup>136</sup>

The trainees, however, did not consciously work for the sake of the United States. Rather, it was beneficial for them to produce such publications because the knowledge they were reproducing was an important part of their legitimacy as an architectural elite.

Voluntary Americanization also can be seen in their design works. In the 1950s, most of faculty members of architectural program actively worked outside the school as practicing architects. For example, a recipient of the Minnesota Project, professor Hi-Choon Kim of Seoul National University, was head of a prominent architectural firm, Sinkö̃nch'uk Munhwa Yö̃n'guso (Laboratory of New Architectural Culture). In the first project after his return in 1957 at Seoul National University's College of Agriculture in Suwon, he showed his modernist design aesthetic.

When Korean participants visited American universities and design firms, modern architecture in the U.S. was so diversified that no single trend could represent American architecture. In fact, while the Korean participants studied at the University of Minnesota, they could experience various architectural trends, by attending lectures by a visionary architect—Buckminster Fuller—and Frank Lloyd Wright and by visiting an exhibition of a leading International Style architect, Minoru Yamasaki.<sup>137</sup> The multiple, even conflicting, strands of modern architecture provided different varieties of architectural experiences to the participants, and thus all trainees had their own trajectories of influence.

The career of one of the leading professor-architects, Jung-Soo Kim provides an instance of how an overseas training program made a specific impact on the trainee. Kim sought modern design from this early works. When Kim studied architecture at Kyung Sung Technical College, Art Deco and the International Style—the architectural styles that contemporarily flourished in

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<sup>133</sup> Technical Training Branch, USOM/Korea, *Evaluation Survey of the ROK/U.S. Participant Training Program, 1955-1960* (Seoul: USOM/Korea, 1962), 58.

<sup>134</sup> Hi-Choon Kim, "Backgrounds of American Architectural History," *Korean Architects*, 3:7 (1968), 30-36; and Hi-Choon Kim, "Walter Gropius and the International Style," *Korean Architects*, No. 123 (1979), 28-32.

<sup>135</sup> Chung-Sup Yoon, "City Planning of Various Counties," *Land Planning*, 3:2 (September 1968), 9-10; Chung-Sup Yoon, "Urban Renewal in Philadelphia," *Land Planning*, 3:4 (December 1968), 20-29; and Chung-Sup Yoon, "Glimpse into the Recent City Planning Projects," *Land Planning*, 5:1 (1970), 15-17.

<sup>136</sup> Jang-Sup Yun, "A Brief Review of Frank Lloyd Wright: His Life, Ideas, and Works," *Kö̃nch'uk* [Architecture], 6:2 (October 1961), 4-6; Jang-Sup Yun, *History of Western Architecture* (Seoul: Mun-Un Dang, 1962).

<sup>137</sup> Won-Seok Jang, *The Technology and Stylistic Expression of the Joung-Su Kim, A Korean Architect's Work* (PhD dissertation, Yonsei University, 2006), 12.

the U.S.—became in favor among architecture students in colonial Korea. In his graduation work in 1941, Kim demonstrated the modern ambience of his design. Although it had some resemblance to neoclassical colonial architecture, his design had a distinctive Art Deco feel in its straight lines and rectilinear and bold geometric shapes (Figure 5.4). Around the time when he graduated, a very small handful of buildings of the styles were built in times of war and thus “architect” barely existed as a job option. Luckily, he managed to find a position as a technical manager in the Japanese Colonial Government in Korea. After Korea’s independence, he worked for the U.S. military government in Korea and the UNKRA Housing Division. These experiences working in the governmental and administrative agencies probably developed his propensity towards functional and logical design in his later career.

In 1953, he established with Chun-Seung Lee his architectural firm, Chonghap Kōnch'uk (Associated Engineers & Architects). By the time he was sent to Minnesota, the firm had become one of the most prominent and largest architectural design firms in South Korea, but he had a clear motivation to learn architectural practice and education as a student in the United States. In his application for the training, he stated that his objective was “to study architectural design, to observe western styles or methods of architectural engineering and building, and to learn U.S. methods in technological education.”<sup>138</sup>



Figure 5.4 Graduation Work of Jung-Soo Kim, 1941  
(Source: *Chōsen to kenchiku*, 20:5, 1941)

Emphasizing the technological and practical aspects of architecture, he was impressed by American technological superiority and the aesthetic expression of American architecture. For example, upon returning from the U.S., he used aluminum curtain walls as his design signature. Jung-Soo Kim brought home detailed drawings for curtain walls from architectural firms he visited in Minneapolis. These drawings became an important reference for his hospital building design in 1958.<sup>139</sup> In his design of St. Mary Hospital in Seoul, he first used aluminum curtain walls for the first time in South Korea (Figure 5.5 and 5.6).<sup>140</sup> Because there were no factory manufacturing standard panels in South Korea, each frame was manually hammered to make

<sup>138</sup> “FOA Biographical Data, Jong Soo Kim,” p.1, c. 1956, in file Engineering Students from Korea, 1955-1957, Box 1, Clyde H. Bailey papers, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

<sup>139</sup> Won-Seok Jang, *The Technology and Stylistic Expression of the Jung-Su Kim, A Korean Architect’s Work* (PhD dissertation, Yonsei University, 2006), 70, 107.

<sup>140</sup> “St. Mary Hospital, Nine-Story with Modern Medical Equipment, Will Be Completed in Two Years,” *The Kyunghyang Shinmun* (August 12, 1958), 3.



each frame.<sup>141</sup> Indeed, his use of industrial materials in a traditional artisanal mode revealed a typical irony of modern architecture. This irony demonstrated that Kim and probably other leading architects in South Korea reached the stage in which an ideology of efficiency was expressed in aesthetic terms rather than simply serving functional responsibilities.

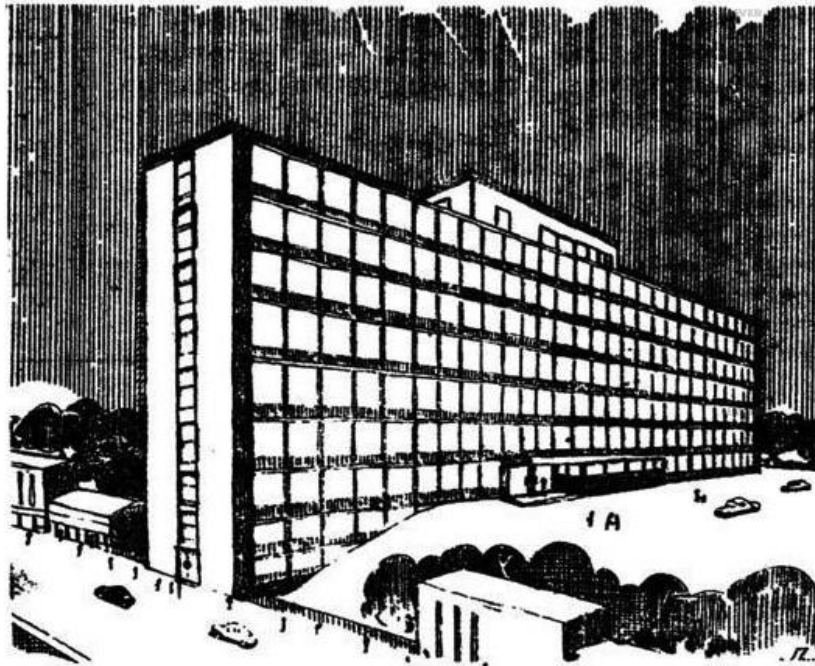


Figure 5.5 St. Mary Hospital by Jung-Soo Kim, Seoul, 1958  
(Source: *The Kyunghyang Shinmun*, NAVER News Library)

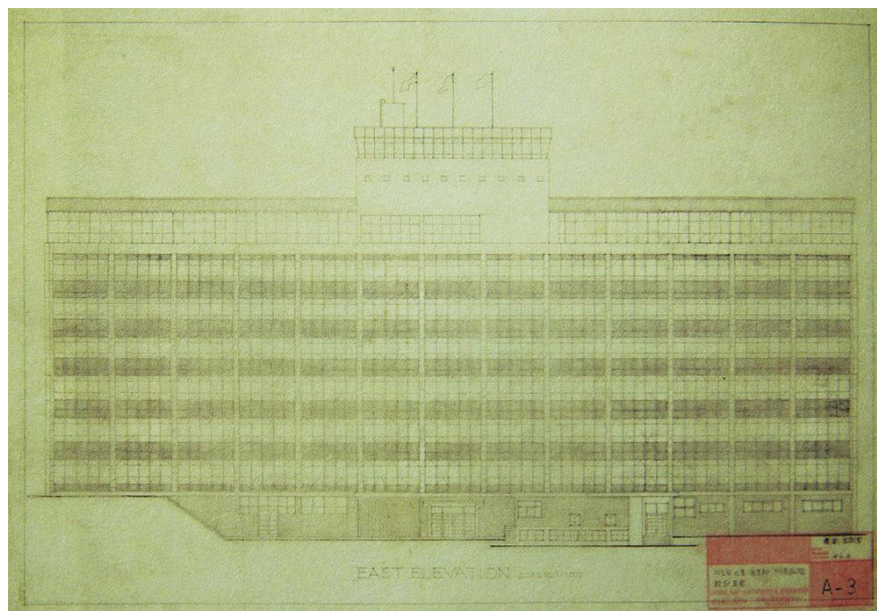


Figure 5.6 East Elevation Drawing of St. Mary Hospital by Jung-Soo Kim, Seoul, 1958  
(Source: *The Works of Architect Jung-Soo Kim*)

<sup>141</sup> Won-Seok Jang, *The Technology and Stylistic Expression of the Jung-Su Kim, A Korean Architect's Work* (PhD dissertation, Yonsei University, 2006), 68.

Kim's successful career as a professor-architect was in part because the training program had selected an already promising candidate, but it was also strengthened by their being able to be joined the "favored circle" preferred by Americans. For example, the returned participants often received opportunities to participate in the projects sponsored by U.S. aid agencies. According to a USOM/Korea survey, only about a quarter of the program participants (28 percent) had previously worked for USOM-assisted projects prior to the training, but almost three quarters of them (73 percent) carried out U.S.-assisted projects shortly after their return.<sup>142</sup>

During the 1950s, many of the important construction projects were, at least in part, sponsored by U.S. government or private aid money. In these projects, the returned trainees were favored by American officials because they had relatively good English skill and were accustomed to working with American agencies and co-workers. When a U.S. construction company or American personnel were involved in a construction project, English was used as an official language for relevant documents and drawings. It is not surprising that the American agencies and individuals preferred to work with Koreans with whom they could easily communicate in English (Figure 5.7).

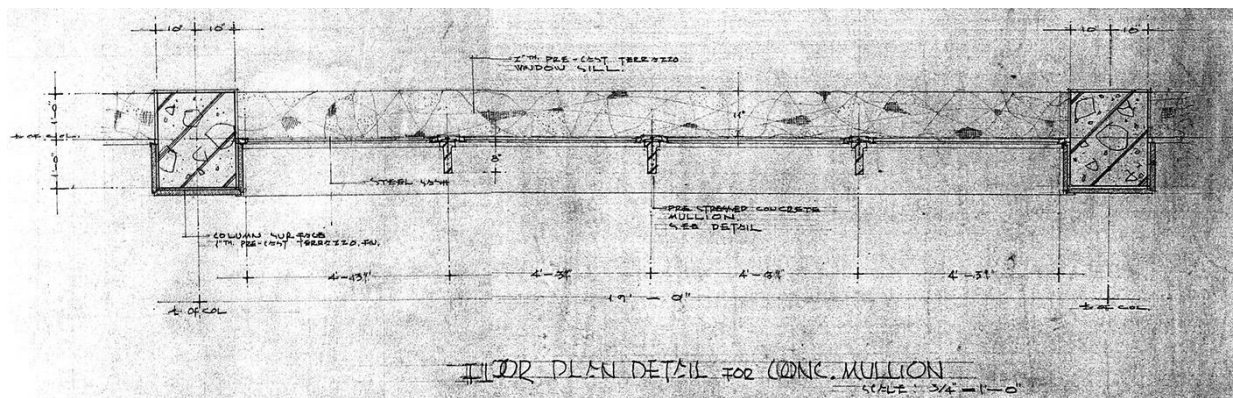


Figure 5.7 Concrete Mullion Detail for YMCA, Seoul, by Jong-Soo Kim, c.1960  
(Source: *The Technology and Stylistic Expression of the Jung-Su Kim*)

### Conclusion: Americanization by Education

During the 1950s, while the U.S. was sending a massive amount of materials and great numbers of American experts and advisors to Korea, a few elite Koreans crossed the Pacific in the reverse direction. Not only did their cultural and intellectual encounters with the U.S. provide invaluable opportunities for the trainees to learn specialized knowledge, but the experiences also facilitated their emergence as pro-U.S. elites in architectural education and practice. The Koreans who studied or trained in technologically "advanced" countries, mostly in the U.S., were better trained and more knowledgeable than their colleagues. While introducing new ideas and methods, they exercised influence over students, colleagues, and the built environment in South Korea. In this process, American architecture was used as an important reference for modern architecture. For example, Jung-Soo Kim, a recipient of the Minnesota Project, clearly expressed his firm conviction of the need to imitate American architecture in his 1960 writing. He wrote in a rather harsh tone as follows:

<sup>142</sup> Technical Training Branch, USOM/Korea, *Evaluation Survey of the ROK/U.S. Participant Training Program, 1955-1960* (Seoul: USOM/Korea, 1962), 67.

Korea's national architecture is too meager, compared to the International Style; therefore, our urgent task is to imitate the style. Even if we set aside originality and such things and devote all our energies on this task, it is distant from reaching the international level. I do not mean to copy a way of living; rather, we have to primarily emulate such things like construction methods. Giving concrete construction as an example, you cannot help being astonished by looking at how wonderfully Americans in the [Korean] Government Building are handling now.<sup>143</sup>

Cost-wise, technical assistance to South Korea was marginal to the United States. For example, in 1958 when the U.S. overseas training programs reached its peak, the total dollar amount spent for technical assistance was \$5.6 million, which was only about 2.5 percent of the total U.S. foreign assistance to South Korea.<sup>144</sup> However, compared to other aid programs conducted by U.S. military units, private sector, and a collaborative effort with other "free world" nations, the impact of the educational exchange programs were long-lasting, internal, and thus more powerful. Beginning from the 1960s, the U.S. economic assistance was constantly decreased and U.S.-aided construction projects had dwindled significantly in number and scale. Yet, Korean's "voluntary" process of Americanization by education was strengthened, because it was the mechanism that could work for their own benefit. Even when U.S. training programs were diminished in the 1960s, Korean students' own aspiration to study abroad continued. In fact, the number of students studying abroad increased and they have continued to bring a new ideas and methods from the U.S. to South Korea.

The training programs were effective also because they influenced South Koreans in a positive fashion. For the returned Korean, the short experience became an important part of their legitimacy as an architectural elite. The reproduction of the knowledge they gained from the valuable experience was beneficial to themselves. Accordingly, they actively and voluntarily brought in modern building technologies and aesthetic style, and pass the knowledge onto a new generation of architects.

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<sup>143</sup> *The Technology and Stylistic Expression of the Joung-Su Kim*, 129; originally from *Conversation about Modern Architecture*, 1960.

<sup>144</sup> Speech by William E. Warne, Office of the Economic Coordinator for Korea, "The Place of Technical Assistance in an Economic Development Program," p.7, January, 1958, in file Korea: Advisory Committee, SNU of Korea Cooperative Project, 1957-1958, Box 82, College of Agriculture records, University Archives, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

## Conclusion

This dissertation was undertaken to explore how architecture was used in the construction of U.S. hegemony in South Korea. It demonstrated that Americans' intention was neither completely humanitarian nor purely coercive. Few Americans came to Korea to act as agents of an American empire. Many American missionaries, for instance, devoted their lives in a foreign land to taking care of the neediest people and to building schools and hospitals for the local people who otherwise could not afford such services. Similarly, when assuming the task of improving housing conditions in Korea, most American advisors were not in purposeful pursuit of extending U.S. interests in the country. Nevertheless, it is difficult to deny that the wind of "manifest destiny" was blowing behind their backs.<sup>1</sup> Building tens of thousands of utilitarian structures for schools and hospitals, scientifically modifying Korean homes, and facilitating the formation of an elite in Korea was closely aligned with America's attempt to impose American-style democracy, free market capitalism, and ultimately the "American way of life" on Koreans. Though not as obvious, homes, schools, and government buildings were no less important than the U.S. Army bases in the task of helping defend democracy in South Korea. In this regard, lightweight wooden frame or pre-stressed concrete beams, American-style kitchens, and even Quonset Huts served as Cold War instruments fulfilling the same philosophical goal as an atomic bomb.

This study has also sought to explain several important currents that shaped modern architecture in South Korea. The project's immense scale, relatively limited funds, and shortage of building materials and construction experts led to the construction of numerous small, utilitarian structures nationwide. This large-scale nation-building project invited a variety of foreign advisors from different backgrounds, each of whom made a unique contribution to the development of modern architecture in South Korea. In addition to the greatest contributor—the United States—many other "free world" allies also participated in the forms of various organizations. The aid agencies' participation varied in size and type, ranging from large governmental agencies and military troops to private builders and educators. Also, many different types of construction materials were introduced during this time. In the early phase of the reconstruction period, compressed earth blocks were frequently produced on-site, but the most typical types of materials used for the construction projects were cement, lumber, steel, and glass that were largely imported from overseas. Due to several newly-constructed modern building material plants, a growing portion of materials could be supplied domestically, although never in sufficient quantity, in the 1950s.

Working with foreign advisors and experts as a team, Koreans had an opportunity to learn new construction methods and building designs. For most Korean builders and architects, whose previous experiences were geographically bound and temporally limited, newly-deployed construction technology and materials—and, most importantly, direct contact with foreign advisors—created the experience of spatial and temporal simultaneity. Nationwide construction projects, especially with the aid of the U.S. military troops, resulted in similar structures across the country, ranging from Scandinavian hospitals to U.S. military Quonset huts. People in local areas shared similar cultural, educational, and other various modern experiences with people in Seoul, and even in other parts of the world, simultaneously. Once completed, new schools,

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<sup>1</sup> For more on Manifest Destiny, see Bruce Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); and Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995).

hospitals, and churches further became the nexus between the local and the central state as well as the outer world.

On numerous construction sites, Korean artisans, craftsmen, and laborers familiarized themselves with efficient and modern building methods, such as reinforced concrete, lightweight timber frames, and pre-stressed concrete beams. The intense experience of building large numbers of simple and practical structures provided an opportunity for Koreans to accept the tenets of modern architecture in a short period of time. Recognizing American influence as a means of helping their careers, Korean builders and architects interiorized the experience; thus the experience affected them on a fundamental level. Korean builders and construction contractors who worked with the U.S. Army Engineers or American construction companies gradually accustomed themselves to the ideas of scientific management, cost savings, and standardization. Many Koreans who had previously lacked opportunities in architectural design also began to grow as architects during this reconstruction period by working with foreign architects and construction firms. The Korean recipients of various educational exchange programs to American universities and institutions became an elite group who would teach the next generation of architects. These various actors jointly contributed to the birth of modern architecture in South Korea. A modern design by a Korean architect could only be properly realized by skilled workers and building contractors who had prior experience working with American architects or construction firms in the U.S.-aided construction projects.

This dissertation limited its time frame to the short term of eight years between 1953 and 1960. It was a deliberate choice to focus on the specific time period in which a new *Zeitgeist* was born—one that lay between fear and hope; destruction and prosperity; and suppression and freedom. Yet, this narrow range of focus had limitations. Focusing on key U.S. assistance programs and representative cases of each, this study did not fully reflect a wide variety of architectural activities of the time. The construction activities by some U.S. assistance agencies, such as the United Nations Civil Assistance Corps Korea or the United States International Cooperation Administration, were rather briefly discussed, but they were no less significant than ones that were examined in more detail in this study, such as the projects carried out by the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency and the Armed Forces Assistance Program to Korea. Moreover, this analysis did not fully unpack all aspects of the aid programs and their construction projects. The goal, instead, was to highlight the hegemonic nature of U.S. foreign aid programs and their impact on architecture in South Korea, rather than the programs themselves. Thus, it was an intentional omission as well as a practical compromise to serve the purpose of this dissertation. However, a wide spectrum of activities within each aid program would be an important follow-up research subject.

The primary focus of this dissertation was the reconstruction projects from the end of the Korean War in 1953. Although the situations of earlier times were occasionally introduced, this study paid limited attention to two important preceding historical periods: the Japanese colonial period (1910 – 1945) and the U.S. military government period (1945–1948). The Japanese colonial legacy in Korea endured throughout the postwar years. During the 1950s, many Korean architects, builders, and artisans were more familiar with architectural practices that they had experienced during the Japanese colonial era. Also, before the Korean War, U.S. influence began with its occupation of South Korea in 1945. Although few actual construction projects were undertaken by the U.S. military government during this transitional period, some important changes began to appear in architectural education and practice. Thus, many key Korean actors

involved in construction projects of the 1950s were educated and began their career in the colonial era; they often worked with American Army engineers and civilian advisors under the U.S. military government. The ways in which they modified or abandoned their accustomed architectural practice to accommodate new building technologies would be another important research subject on its own.

Beginning from the late 1950s, and especially in the 1960s, the political situations in and around the Korean Peninsula were rapidly changing. Globally, the Cold War entered a new phase. In this period, the symbolic importance of the Korean Peninsula to both the communists and the “free world” was rapidly diminishing, and so was foreign aid money. The diminished foreign assistance in turn meant less dependence on the outside world. During the 1960s, nationalism was used as an important political instrument in both North and South Korea, and architecture mirrored this change.

In North Korea, the economic assistance from other communist bloc countries declined from the late 1950s and dramatically decreased in the early 1960s.<sup>2</sup> The reduced foreign aid was in part because reconstruction had accomplished the initial objectives. Between 1954 and 1960, the proportion of foreign aid in North Korea’s total revenue dropped from 33.4 percent to 2.6 percent.<sup>3</sup> Industrial production in 1960 rose about 6.4 times compared to 1949, the year before the Korean War.<sup>4</sup> By the year 1960, most parts of key North Korean cities had recovered from the war damage. In fact, North Korean cities grew bigger than during the pre-war years. In the late 1960s, more than 40 percent of the North Korean population lived in cities, which was increased from 17.7 percent in December 1953.<sup>5</sup> Chinese Army General Ra Se-kjon described in his report the great success of North Korea’s postwar urban reconstruction. He witnessed in 1960 that: “the cities of Pyongyang, Wonsan, Hamheung, Cheongjin etc. have been rebuilt as new modern cities. High-rises are lined up next to each other, the streets are clean, orderly, and beautiful. They are filled with people. ... People would not believe in such miracles if they had not seen them with their own eyes.”<sup>6</sup> More importantly, however, the communist world lost most of its initial impetus around this time. After the death of Stalin, the leadership of the Soviet Union in East Asia was considerably weakened. North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung developed his own nationalist, socio-political ideology Juche, often translated as self-reliance, with which North Korea eliminated foreign influences from its domestic politics. Architecture reflected North Korea’s emerging nationalism. The Stalinist neoclassical style that was essentially foreign in nature no longer seemed adequate. Instead, the traditional Korean roof often topped many major architectural projects of the 1960s, such as the Pyongyang Grand Theater (1960), the Okryugwan Restaurant in Pyongyang (1960), and the Kaesong Children’s Palace (1961) (Figure 6.1).

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<sup>2</sup> Charles K. Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950-1992* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 64.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>4</sup> “Excerpts from 'Nodong Sinmun,' 13 December 1960,” December 13, 1960, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, PolA AA, MfAA, A 6980. Obtained and translated by Bernd Schaefer. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113712> (accessed September 23, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Chosŏn Chungang T'ongsinsa [Korean Central News Agency], Chosŏn Chungang Yŏn'gam [North Korean Central Yearbook] (Pyongyang: Chosŏn Chungang T'ongsinsa, 1962), 321.

<sup>6</sup> “Excerpts from 'Nodong Sinmun,' 13 December 1960.”





Figure 6.1 The Taedongmun Theater, 1955 (left) and the Pyongyang Grand Theater, 1960 (Right)  
 Note how different the roof of the Pyongyang Grand Theater was from one of the Taedongmun Theater.  
 (source: *East German Architect Russel's North Korean Reminiscences* (left)  
 and *Complete History of Pyongyang Construction* (right))

Meanwhile, South Korea also recovered considerably from war damage, but its economic development was progressing slowly, lagging far behind its northern counterpart. By the 1960, South Korean economy still heavily relied on the U.S. assistance. For many U.S. officials, unending aid to South Korea was not only a big financial burden, but it also damaged their claim that the U.S. provided a development model superior to the Soviet model.<sup>7</sup> Beginning from Eisenhower's second term, and especially under the incoming John F. Kennedy administration, the United States not only decreased the size of its foreign aid to Korea, but also changed the grant-type aid to development loans. Moreover, South Korea was no longer the primary focus of U.S. foreign policy. The Kennedy administration's major concerns were directed toward other global conflicts in Cuba, Berlin, and Vietnam.

In terms of domestic politics, South Korea underwent several major political turnovers in the 1960s. In April 1960, following nationwide popular protests, President Syngman Rhee resigned from his twelve-year presidency. But, peace did not last long. The succeeding parliamentary government was overthrown in May 1961 by a military coup under another strongman, General Chung-Hee Park, who ruled South Korea until his assassination in 1980. Concerned about social and political unrest in South Korea, the Kennedy administration quickly recognized Park's military regime. Under this strong leadership, South Korea could begin its rapid economic growth. Not unlike in North Korea, South Korea's diminished economic dependence on the United States coincided with nationalistic trends in society at large. Architecture was no exception. During the 1950s, most Korean architects and builders did not have sufficient opportunities to situate the new architectural culture in its historical and architectural contexts. Various forms of self-reflection arose from some leading Korean architects as early as the 1960s. They created modernist buildings inspired by traditional Korean architectural motifs (Figure 6.2). It did not mean that Korean architects of the 1960s viewed American influence as a completely negative factor. Rather, "Western" architecture began to be more consciously fused, blended, and integrated with the existing architectural traditions through the process of denial, conflict, or confirmation.

<sup>7</sup> David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 151.

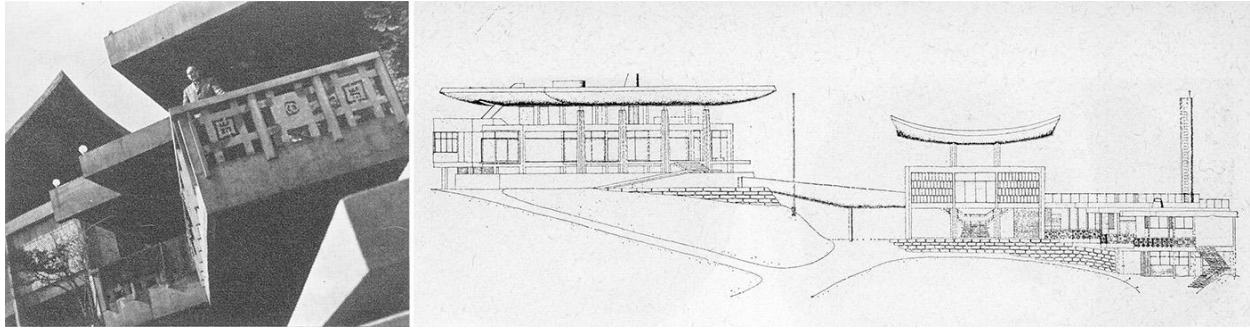


Figure 6.2 The French Embassy by Joong-Up Kim, Seoul, 1965  
(source: *Architectural Design* Vol.36 (August 1966))

This dissertation barely dealt with the stylistic development of architecture. Architecture of the 1950s in South Korea did not have consistent aesthetic principles. Efficiency was its style. Similar to the nineteenth-century situations in Europe and the U.S., modern architecture in postwar Korea was largely driven by new modern construction materials and methods, rather than artistic ideas that had not yet caught up with technical innovations in construction.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, because of the shortage of materials and skilled workforce, most American advisors did not stick to using specific materials or architectural forms. Paradoxically, the experience of freedom from specific architectural styles provided a greater spatial and temporal spectrum for Korean architects. Thus they developed their own stylistic expressions.

Along with the benefits, this period also left unfavorable legacies in South Korean architecture. In the process of simple and speedy construction, construction experts and Korean society in general developed an architectural culture of not fully valuing creative ideas that might impede the quick pace of the design process as well as subsequent construction. Despite continued efforts, the architectural culture of South Korea still remains largely under the strong influence of construction companies, rather than architects. During the eight years we have discussed, the characteristics of Korean modern architecture began to take shape and they still linger. In this regard, this dissertation offered a history of the present that highlighted contemporary architectural practice and education in South Korea.

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<sup>8</sup> Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 24-25.



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