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Introduction

The brilliant hangul-pixel-clad pavilion in Shanghai World Expo 2010 marked one of the most memorable performances by the Republic of Korea in world's fairs, impressing visitors with the distinctive architecture of Korean culture and modernity (fig. 1). Hangul originates from Korea's final dynasty of Joseon (1392-1897, also transcribed as Chosun) at the peak of classical Korean culture. The colorful pixels on the arches and periphery evoked the vibrant colors of the palette in traditional painting and *hanbok*. The monochromaticity on the metal facade, along with the simplicity in hangul's geometrical shapes, gave tradition a modern makeover. The universality of colors and shapes resonated with visitors from across the globe and expressively conveyed a vision of the nation's culture to Korean audiences on-site or at home. Overshadowing the “simple debut” of its North Korean counterpart, the more eye-catching “hangul pavilion” was referred to as the “Korean pavilion” in English media to present the Korean spectacle to a wider audience.¹

The hangul pavilion's brilliance, however, belies the tortuous path that Korea had taken in world's fairs since the late nineteenth century. The first three decades since Korea's first involvement in exposition in 1893 seemed to portend a different story from the impressively unique performance in 2010. When its isolationist policy crumbled, Korea's cultural identities began to consolidate as it concerned the differentiation from China and Japan. The consolidation of nationalism at the cost of other nation-states embodies the process of “negative ethnicity.”²

¹ In English, North Korea and South Korea are usually distinguished by the prefixes “North” and “South,” so the shared ethnicity and cultural heritage of the once-united countries is implied. Shanghai Expo of 2010 was North Korea's first-ever participation in the world's fair. North Korean pavilion branded itself as the “Paradise for People” with a focus on branding the nation as an ideal and peaceful land for common people's living. Jiang Weiwei 蒋韡薇, “159 *Nianhou*, *chaoxian shouci canjia chibohui*” 159年后, 朝鲜首次参加世博会” [“After 159 Years, North Korea Participates in its First World Expo”], *China Youth Daily* 中国青年报, (May 1, 2010).

² Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 66–67.

This characterizes the cultural discourse in East Asian early modernity.³ Overcoming challenges in this process ought to consolidate a distinct culture that could be materialized into visual productions, but Korea confronted the lingering presence of China and Japan followed by Japanese colonial rule. The examination of early Korean expositions reveals the international and colonial visions of the nation-state. The implications in the images from these events contributed to the understanding of cultural fluidity of and manipulations on Korean visual culture before its later rise of nationalism and economy, beyond the studies of literature. In this paper, I will discuss visual culture from Korea's early involvement in international and domestic expositions from the 1890s to 1920s. The time period encapsulates a stream of crucial moments in Korean history before the division: the fall of the Joseon Dynasty, the short-lived Korean Empire, and the first half of colonial rule of Japan in the Korean Peninsula. Arts and architectures discussed in this paper reveal the struggles in seeking a collective vision of Korean aesthetics in the formative stages of Korean nationalism in its early modernity.

History and Context

The word “dynasty” implies the olden days of classicism. The Joseon Dynasty exerted pivotal influence on the modern interpretation of the classical, or traditional, arts and literature of the Korean Peninsula. Through a series of military triumphs over the Mongolian and Japanese raiders and revered Confucianism, Joseon Dynasty succeeded the Buddhist Goryeo Dynasty (918–1392) under the leadership of Yi Songgye (1335-1408, r. 1392-1398). Opposition to Buddhism had been embedded in the Chinese tradition of Confucian practices, which made the change in Korea's state religion a propaganda message to distinguish Joseon from Goryeo. While

³ J. P. Park, *A New Middle Kingdom: Painting and Cultural Politics in Late Chosŏn Korea (1700–1850)* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018), 10.

the new state ethics fueled the literati culture and proliferation of secular artworks such as porcelain and genre paintings, the transition between the two dynasties did not impact the bureaucratic and economic structures in Korea.⁴ Joseon maintained its substantial diplomatic relations only with neighboring China and Japan. In fact, Korea had minimum direct contact with outside countries with the exceptions of the *Imjin* War (1592-1598) and punitive raids from Manchuria (1627 and 1638) in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. A reflexive act, isolationism became increasingly endorsed by the Joseon court to suit the increasing inward-looking world order dictated by Imperial China. While people of the Joseon kingdom were caught by surprise on either frontier, the impotent leadership during the instances of foreign invasions marred the reign of King Seonjo (1552-1608, r. 1567–1608) and King Injo (1595-1649, r. 1623–1649). Seonjo opted for suppression of its animosity towards imperial Japan while Injo's cursory diplomatic agenda led to the subordination of Korea to Qing China after Ming. Lamenting on Korea's impotence, leading intellect Yi Seongjo recognizes that his nation should circumvent articulation of its national presence in East Asia in order to cope with threats from the country of Wa and Ming China and to avoid material and economic loss.⁵

The prolonged isolationist policy made Korea seem stuck in the past even compared to China and Japan at the time. This earned the Korean Peninsula an international tabloid name — “hermit kingdom” (also referred to as “hermit nation”). William Elliot Griffis coined the term and predicted that Korea “awaits some gallant Perry of the future” in his 1882 book *Corea: The Hermit Nation*.⁶ Adrian Buzo concluded two other factors that shaped the hermit Joseon. The first was the prevailing xenophobia in the society rooted in small but countless foreign

⁴ John B. Duncan, *The Origins of the Choson Dynasty*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 250-252.

⁵ Yi Songjo, “Waegukki” (“On Japan”), in *Chongmuk tangjip* (Collected Works of Yi Songjo), Vol. 7, cited in Han Myung-Gi, “A study of research trends in Korea on the Japanese invasion of Korea in 1592 (Imjin War),” *International Journal of Korean History* 18, no. 2 (2013): 1-29.

⁶ William Elliot Griffis, *Corea, the Hermit Nation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 10.

interferences.⁷ Direct interaction with nations outside East Asia was rare. Hedrick Hamel's published journal during his thirteen years as a captive in Joseon presents one of the earliest first-hand descriptions of the hermit kingdom to the world. The text contains the first record of interaction with Korean court and commoners by Westerners. Hamel's morphological investigation briefly brought Korea to global attention and reiterated the reclusion and stultification of the hermit kingdom.⁸ The shipwreck that brought Hendrick Hamel to Korea was among many incidents of interaction with the West. In fact, the hermit attitude of indifference notwithstanding, close borders did not stagnate Joseon's absorption of new technology. Korea had expanded its world view from China, and the instances of confrontations with European merchants on the peninsula instilled a global awareness of the court and people of Joseon Dynasty. Created as early as in 1402, the *Map of Integrated Lands and Regions of Historical Countries and Capitals*, or *Kangnido* (혼일강리역대국도지도) demonstrates knowledge of European and African continents roughly a century before the "discovery" of America.⁹ Kangnido is now the earliest world map created and preserved in East Asia.¹⁰ Cartographers of Kangnido Yi Hoe and Kwon Kun took Chinese place-names from Zhu Siben's *Guang Yu Tu* (廣輿圖) and the international dimensions from Li Zemin's lost *Shengjiao Guangbei Tu* (聲教廣被圖).¹¹ The eclecticism and accuracy of the Korean map therefore highlight the deliberation in closing its borders to the world to sustain the Joseon kingdom, which granted the dynasty's longevity of 500 years. Tokugawa Japan's adoption of a similar policy to discontinue

⁷ Adrian Buzo, *The Making of Modern Korea*, (Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 7-8.

⁸ Moon-Ja Kim, "A study on the Namakshin in Chosun dynasty-Focused on Relation to 'Hamel'," *Journal of Fashion Business* 7, no. 2 (2003): 82-96.

⁹ Gari Ledyard, "The Kangnido: A Korean World Map, 1402," in *Circa 1492: art in the age of exploration*, ed. Jean Michel Massing, Luís de Albuquerque, Jonathan Brown, JJ Martín González, Richard Kagan, Ezio Bassani, J. Michael Rogers et al, (Yale University Press, 1991), 329-32.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

non-Chinese foreign contact was another disincentive for Joseon to open its borders.¹² On the other hand, the lack of contact with the world ensured the longevity of the Joseon dynasty and provided cultural homogeneity throughout the period.

Insoo Cho argues that state Confucianism promulgated “a code of social ethics” in all aspects of royal and common lives.¹³ The earlier form of Confucianism in Korea was a replica of Chinese Confucianism from Han and Tang China which shared philosophical values with Daoism and Buddhism. The adoption of Confucianism by the following Joseon dynasty was a pragmatic measure to legitimize King Taejo’s authority on par with that of previous kings and to resolve internal dissent after the transitional gap between Goryeo and Joseon dynasty. Later in China’s Song and Ming Dynasty, Neo-Confucianism emerged from skepticism towards authority and literature as an approach to education among Southern Song elites.¹⁴ Zhu Xi published the six-volume Song dynasty anthology *Elementary Learning* (*C. xiaoxue*) with his apprentice Liu Qingzhi to teach ethics and the values of reasonings. The anthology became a crucial text in the Neo-Confucianist curriculum for its emphasis on filial piety and community life.¹⁵ The latter refers to a sense of responsibility to enlighten and build a worldly society rooted in Mencius’s teaching.¹⁶ The synoptic yet vehement pedagogy implies the values of rationalism and oppositions to Buddhist mysticism that was embraced by earlier Confucianism. *Elementary Learning* was adopted in primary and public education in Japan and Korea when Neo-Confucianism blossomed outside China. In Korea, the evolved form of Confucianism was

¹² Adrian Buzo, *The Making of Modern Korea*, (Taylor & Francis, 2016), 6-7.

¹³ Insoo Cho, “Confucianism and the Art of the Joseon Dynasty,” in *Treasures from Korea: Arts and Culture of the Joseon Dynasty, 1392-1910*, ed. Hyunsoo Woo, (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2014), 1-3.

¹⁴ William T. de Bary, *Neo-Confucian Education: The formative stage*, Vol. 9, (Oakland: University of California Press, 1989), 4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 219.

¹⁶ Yu refers to Yiyin’s words from in “On Boyi, Paragon of Withdrawal” (天之生斯民也，使先知覺後知，使先覺覺後覺。予，天民之先覺者也；予將以此道覺此民也)。Yu Yingshi 余英时, *Shi Yu Zhongguo Wenhua* [Scholars and Chinese Culture] (士与中国文化), (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 2003).

introduced by the last century Goryeo dynasty by scholar An Hyang and was adopted as the state religion in 1392 following Ming China.¹⁷ The new religious faith joined rationality with the values of purity and individual extinction, which contributed to the proliferation of stationery items, stoic wooden furniture in the literati's residence, and white porcelain.¹⁸

Korea remained a recluse until the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The 1876 Treaty of Kanghwa terminated sinocentrism and isolationism in Korea through forged amity with Japan. As Korea began to make its presence in the eyes of colonial powers, the lingering interference by Qing China and swarming colonial pressure from Japan and Western countries hastened Joseon's modernization progress in the final decades of the Joseon dynasty. King Gojong of the time looked at Japan as a radical yet advisable template for modernization. After five years of Meiji Restoration from 1868 to 1873, the country had transitioned smoothly from isolationism to early modernization that connoted westernization. To emulate the Iwakura Mission in which Japanese intellectuals were sent to study abroad in America and Europe, King Gojong dispatched Korean Courtiers' Observation Mission to Japan in 1881. The majority of Korean courtiers refrained from viewing Japan as a completely viable template for Korean modernization and followed the line of "Eastern Morality and Western Skills" (中学为体, 西学为用) popularized in China.¹⁹ Under this reasoning, the mission set off with limited objectives focusing on technological borrowing. The Korean courtiers examined the industrial facilities, interviewed envoys representing bureaus and ministries, and translated Japanese texts into classical Chinese.²⁰ The mission also included socialization with noted reformers. Although this

¹⁷ William T. de Bary, *Neo-Confucian education: The formative stage*, Vol. 9, (Oakland: University of California Press, 1989), 4.

¹⁸ Insoo Cho, "Confucianism and the Art of the Joseon Dynasty," in *Treasures from Korea: Arts and Culture of the Joseon Dynasty, 1392-1910*, ed. Hyunsoo Woo (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2014), 4-6.

¹⁹ Donghyun Huh and Vladimir Tikhonov, "The Korean Courtiers' Observation Mission's Views on Meiji Japan and Projects of Modern State Building," *Korean Studies* 29 (2005): 30.

²⁰ Donghyun Huh and Vladimir Tikhonov, "The Korean Courtiers' Observation Mission's Views on Meiji Japan and Projects of Modern State Building," *Korean Studies* 29 (2005): 36.

journey to Japan did not produce widely published texts as did the Iwakura Mission, handwritten reports from the 1881 mission were used as blueprints for the imminent Kabo Reformation.²¹

According to Donghyun Huh's analysis on the Korean Observation Mission, crucial takeaways from these accounts for Gojong's modernization agenda were that Korea has to "secure its own position in the international system of nation-states" and emulate more advanced nation-states "while claiming to be 'culturally original.'"²² Japan's process of modernization embodied this dual process of emulation and sustaining originality. The active borrowing from Western technology and infrastructure was juxtaposed with the revival of more ancient traditions. Under this reasoning, the new concept of exposition was hypostatized as a crucial project to modernize Korea. The first record of the sino-Korean term for exposition *pangnamhoe* (博覽會) first appeared in the written accounts from the 1881 mission. Therefore, the interpretation of exposition by Gojong and his courtiers referenced the Empire of Japan under the 1868 Meiji Reformation, which conflated the meaning of the term with modernization progress and cultural revival.²³ The epistemology of *pangnamhoe* provided a vehement incentive for King Gojong to seize the opportunity to participate in the 1893 Chicago World Columbian Exposition and the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle. In the two events, Korea experimented with the practice of exposition to vocalize its imperial presence and sovereignty on the international stage. Scholar Pak Cho-yang specified in his official report from the 1881 mission that the *pangnamhoe* was held in and followed the system of Britain, the United States, France and Austria," the main

²¹ Ibid., 30.

²² Ibid., 33.

²³ Tae-woong Kim, "Industrial Exhibitions ('Gongjinghoe') and the Political Propaganda of Japanese Imperialism in the 1910s," *International Journal of Korean History* 3 (2002): 181.

colonial powers in Europe.²⁴ To King Gojong's courts, attendance at *pangnamhoe* must have been the desired setting to showcase and educate the Western nations on the Korean culture.

From “A Toy-like” Stall²⁵ to Palace of “Far-East Beauty”²⁶

The earliest Korean “pavilions” at the World's Exposition marked the earliest appearance of Korean architecture in the modern West, and the 1893 Chicago World Columbian Exposition was its very first.²⁷ The fair took place in the latter part of the year from May 1st to December 30th of the year and occupied the 600 acres of Frederick Law Olmsted's Jackson Park to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's voyage to the New World. An American celebration held in America, the expo revealed in the growth prospects of the U.S., and its colonial associates joined to show off their own industrial and colonial optimism. The exposition comprised buildings and arrangements in the park (fig. 2). Surrounding the palace of art galleries that exhibited fine arts stood buildings of foreign countries and installations dedicated to 44 states of the U.S. on the north side of the park. Themed buildings of genres of technology or liberal arts occupied a majority area, a midway Plaisance extended westward providing recreational infrastructures to the audience.

In the intricate space of exhibition-oriented buildings, Korea was embodied by an open, tiled, wooden stall (fig. 3). It stood among the buildings and sites of Great Britain, Germany,

²⁴ Pak Chong-yang, “Pangmulguk kakkyuch'ik” [The Regulations for the Museum Department], in *Ilbon nongsangmusŏng shich'algi* [The Report on the the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce in Japan] (日本農商務省視察記), vol 1 (1881), cited in Young-Sin Park, “The Choson Industrial Exposition of 1915,” (PhD diss., State University of New York at Binghamton, 2019), 38.

²⁵ Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The book of the fair: An historical and descriptive presentation of the world's science, art, and industry, as viewed through the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893*, vol. 1, (Bounty Books, 1894), 219.

²⁶ *Le petite journal* (Paris: Librairie Illustrée, 1900), 315, cited in Mee-yoo Kwon, “1900 Korean Pavilion in Paris Expo [Disclised],” *Expo 2012 Yeosu Korea* online, December 23, 2011, <https://2012expo.wordpress.com/2011/12/23/1900-korean-pavilion-in-paris-expo-disclised/>.

²⁷ Hyon-Sob Kim, “The Appearance of Korean Architecture in the Modern West,” *arq: Architectural Research Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (2010): 351-353.

Norway, and Austria and of colonies such as Colombia, Ecuador, and Haiti (fig. 4). Despite the petite scale of the Korean booth, it demonstrates deliberation in encapsulating the visions of Korea. The booth took formal inspiration from *hanok*, Korean residential architects of the Joseon period. Timber for the columns and frieze-like structure and tiles for roofing was common in the literati and elite dwellings, in comparison to commoners' houses with "thatched roofs, earthen walls and wooden beams."²⁸ Therefore, the construction materials imply an attempt to demonstrate propriety and upper-class architectural standards to suit the international occasion. Hyung-eun Kim's article from the *Korea JoongAng Daily* concludes that Korea's exhibits in the booth consisted mainly of furniture and handicraft goods.²⁹ This includes tables, folding screens, palanquins, and ceramics which represents the objects in *sarangbang* (사랑방, C. 舍廊房), men's quarters where studies and leisures of literati take place. The ostensible position of the palanquin almost outside the booth reenacts the preparation for an upper-classman's mount for a day trip, which further testifies a curatorial decision to construct an upper-class residence.

Although the hodgepodge of traditional objects would ring a bell to any Korean audience, the resemblance or reference could not have resonated with the majority of American and European audiences. The Columbian exposition took place a decade before the first wave of Korean immigration into the U.S., known as the "old immigration period" from 1903 to 1949.³⁰ The signage of the Joseon–United States Treaty of 1882 brought a small number of Korean immigrants—mostly students and politicians—until shiploads of Korean arrived in Hawaii and later in the continental U.S. to work on sugar plantations and to escape from famine and political

²⁸ Jieheerah Yun, "Rethinking vernacular architecture: the case of Hanoks in South Korea," *The Journal of Architecture* 19, no. 1 (2014): 108-127.

²⁹ Kim Hyung-eun, "Headed for Expo 2012? Road to Yeosu begins at the 1893 Chicago fair," *Korea JoongAng Daily* online, July 2, 2012, <https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/2012/07/02/features/Headed-for-Expo-2012-Road-to-Yeosu-begins-at-the-1893-Chicago-fair/2955445.html>.

³⁰ Pyonggap Min, "Koreans' immigration to the US: History and contemporary trends," *New York: The Research Center for Korean Community Queens College of CUNY* (2011), 2.

climates.³¹ Therefore, the perceptions of the Korean booth at the 1893 exposition were divided into either curious fascination or cold-shoulders among non-Korean audiences. A sizable number of visitors had approached the booth with genuine interests in the former hermit kingdom.

Chicago Daily News noted that after responding to repeated questions by the visitors, the staff at the booth produced a sign with facts about Korea.³² The sign informed its viewers that “‘Korea’ and ‘Corea’ are both correct, but the former are preferred;” “Korea is not a part of China;” and “Korean do not speak Japanese or Chinese.”³³ The objects inside the booth also fascinated the audience with an unparalleled visual culture of East Asia. In Martha Finley’s children’s fiction *Elsie at the World’s Fair*, descriptions of the protagonists’ visit to the fair are strewn throughout the story. A delicate account of the objects in the Korean booth provides an insight into its content:

Banners and lanterns, and bronze table and dinner set for one person, a cupboard with dishes, a fire pot and tools, boots and shoes of leather, wood, and straw; a kite and reel, a board on which is played a game resembling chess, white and blue vases, and a very old cannon used in the American attack on Korean forts in the seventies.³⁴

The narrative provided by Finley resembles a playful sneak peek into an exotic house with quotidian objects and an eccentric collection of antique weapons. While this experience was shared by those who enjoyed brief exotic excursions at the booth, most others left with nonchalance or even contempt. Entrepreneur John Cockerill recalls in his article "Scenes from the Hermit Kingdom" that the exhibits were King Gojong’s hastily collected combination of “Corean junk.”³⁵ Hubert Howe Bancroft criticized the Korean booth as “a toy-like pavilion” in the face of grand palaces and enlightening infrastructures of other countries and recognized the

³¹ Pyonggap Min, "Koreans' immigration to the US: History and contemporary trends," *New York: The Research Center for Korean Community Queens College of CUNY* (2011), 2.

³² *The Chicago record's history of the World's Fair*, (Chicago: Chicago Daily News, Inc. 1893), 223-25.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Martha Finley, *Elsie at the World's Fair*, (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1894), 146-147.

³⁵ John Cockerill, "Scenes from the Hermit Kingdom," *New York Herald*, (1895), 7.

limited knowledge of Korea held by the public.³⁶ Sparked interests or unimpressed indifference, either perception highlighted the lack of technological sophistication in Korea's presentations in the exposition. Pak proposed that the confusingly eclectic and ordinary exhibits that the Joseon reformists selected were due to the intermingled epistemology between the concepts of "exposition" and "museum" in the Korean language.³⁷ Both terms were introduced by the Korean delegates from the 1881 mission. Because exposition and museum contributed to the promotion of industrialization in Japan, the two concepts were absorbed in Gojong's modernization agenda without deliberate differentiation.³⁸ This led to the eclectic curation for Korea's first participation in the World's Exposition. In comparison to the grand architectural pavilions, the Korean booth embodied a great resemblance to curio shops which fed into Chinoiserie and Japonisme craze in Europe and America. This reminiscence implied cheapness, far from being progressive.

Korea's international debut diverged from Gojong's ambitious expectations to keep up with its East Asian neighbors China and Japan in the discourse of modernization. China was decently represented through a tea house, villages, and theatre owing to Chinese Chicagoans. In fact, the Qing government rejected the offer for an array of laws and acts against China after the First and Second Opium War (1839-42; 1856-60): the 1875 Page Law, 1882 Chinese Exclusion Law, Scott Act of 1888, and Geary Act of 1892. However, sizable Chinese communities had formed before the passage of these exclusion laws. To the Chinese Chicagoan, the fair was an opportunity to represent China "correctly" in order to gain recognition from American society.³⁹

³⁶ Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The book of the fair: An historical and descriptive presentation of the world's science, art, and industry, as viewed through the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893*, vol. 1, (Bounty Books, 1894), 219.

³⁷ Pak Chong-yang, "Pangmulguk kakkyuch'ik" [The Regulations for the Museum Department], in *Ilbon nongsangmusong shich'algi* [The Report on the the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce in Japan] (日本農商務省視察記), vol 1 (1881), cited in Young-Sin Park, "The Choson Industrial Exposition of 1915" (PhD diss., State University of New York at Binghamton, 2019), 35-36.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Yuki Ooi, "'China' on Display at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893: Faces of Modernization in the Contact Zone," in *From Early Tang Court Debates to China's Peaceful Rise*, ed. Assandri Friederike and Martins Dora, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 60.

The exquisite culinary adventurism offered in Chinese villages in the Midway Plaisance further domesticated Chinese presence in Anglo-American daily lives in addition to the residues of chinoiserie aesthetics.⁴⁰ Modeled after the Phoenix Hall of Byōdō-in in Uji, the Japanese Phoenix Pavilion also elevated the renown of the nation (fig. 5). The fascinating architecture demonstrates the ability to preserve and produce artistic and cultural heritage, and the versatile presentations in the categories of fine arts, technology, and agriculture conveyed Japan's industrial prowess to the world.⁴¹ The Phoenix Pavilion was gifted to the City of Chicago as a politically-charged emblem of amity between Japan and the U.S.. In stark contrast, Korea lacked its own fine arts gallery or pavilion. Jackson Park did not see the flag of Joseon among all others, even though it exerted the presence of Korea at the booth. The Korean booth vanished as Joseon's debut in the world's exposition concluded with regrets. Like Japan enduring the wave of colonialism in East Asia, its Phoenix Pavillion stood as one of the relics of the Colombian Exposition with architectures of other European nations in Jackson Park before they were destroyed from a fire caused by vandalism in 1946. The positive feedback to the Phoenix Pavilion largely owed to the amount of funds and elaborate architectural plans that exceeded any other foreign participants in the fair.⁴² The long-stood Japonisme aesthetics and the rising industrial power also granted knowledge of Japan among the audience and expectations. The performance-driven architectural design reenacted the iconic element from the magnificent villa of Byodo-in for great aesthetic impacts. To King Gojong's court, the erect Phoenix Pavilion

⁴⁰ Grace Krause, "A Cup of Real Chinese Tea: Culinary Adventurism and the Contact Zone at the World's Columbian Exposition, 1893," *Graduate Journal of Food Studies* online, Vol. 5, No.1.

⁴¹ Robert J. Karr, "The Garden of the Phoenix: The 120th Anniversary of the Japanese Garden in Chicago," *The Journal of the North American Japanese Garden Association* (2013): 10-11.

⁴² Mishima Masahiro 三島雅博, "1893 Nen shikago mangokuhaku ni okeru hooden no kennsetsu ikisatsu ni tsuite" (On the Construction of the Hooden for the Chicago Exposition in 1893) [1893年シカゴ万国博における鳳凰殿の建設経緯について], *The Architectural Institute of Japan's Journal of Architecture and Planning* 429 [日本建築学会計画系論文報告集 429], (1991): 151-163.

strengthened the status of Japan as Korea's model of modernization as the absent Qing government crumbled.

Following the Columbian Exposition, disagreement between the Qing China and the Empire of Japan on their footholds in the Korean Peninsula sparked the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95). The military of the Qing government had been debilitated from the domestic turmoil and resorted to pleading for a peace process marked by the Treaty of Shimonoseki. The treaty superseded the 1871 Sino-Japanese Friendship and Trade Treaty and restored nominal independence of Joseon Korea from the tributary system to facilitate forthcoming annexation. Chinese administration initially led by Yuan Shikai (1856-1916) gradually retreated from the peninsula, (fig. 6).⁴³ This rationalized the installation of Japanese administration headed by Inoue Kaoru and the growing foothold of Japanese government in Korean peninsula. Despite the alternating occupation, the Treaty of Shimonoseki still spurred Gojong's proclamation of the Korean Empire (1897-1910) that closed up the dynastic history.⁴⁴ Daniel Kane concludes that the decade of empire Korea was "an interim of relative peace and haphazard modernization" that upheld its national integrity.⁴⁵

Under a new sense of self-perceived independence, Gojong soon seized the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris (April 15 to November 12). The exposition came timely as the young empire needed to rebrand its new image and to recondition the previous "toy-like" impression of the falling Joseon kingdom. The incipient twentieth century coincided with the new phase of Korean history. Korea's participation in the Exposition Universelle was determined by Gojong in a private exchange with the French Consul to Korea Hippolyte Frandin at the

⁴³ Michael J. Seth, *A history of Korea: From antiquity to the present*, (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers: 2010), 241-52.

⁴⁴ Keith Pratt and Richard Rutt, *Korea: A Historical and Cultural Dictionary*, (Routledge, 2013), 194.

⁴⁵ Daniel Kane, "Display at Empire's End: Korea's Participation in the 1900 Paris Universal Exposition," *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 4, no. 2 (2004): 41.

Columbian Exposition, and an official invitation to the exposition was received in 1896.⁴⁶ In the following year, consul Victor Collin de Plancy urged Korean Foreign Ministry to dispatch a Korean commissioner to Paris to guarantee a position for the Korean pavilion.⁴⁷ Gojong sent Min Yong-hwan, the cousin of his deceased consort, to Paris under time pressure who filled Korea in the remaining position (fig. 7).⁴⁸ The location was covert, on Avenue Suffren off the Champs de Mars where the exposition took place. Perhaps, the difficulty in navigating two blocks away from the main portion of the fair, many official guides omitted the Korean Pavilion on the directional guide.⁴⁹

Standing in the outskirts of the fairgrounds, the Korean Pavilion still fascinated its occasional visitors, including the pioneer in Korean studies, Maurice Courant (fig. 8). Courant took a detour to the Korean Pavilion during his visit. His book *Souvenir de Séoul, Corée* opens with a remark on the isolation of the pavilion of the hermit kingdom but noted that it was worth a visit.⁵⁰ Publications including *Le Petit Journal* and *L'Exposition de Paris* also provided positive comments on the Korean Pavilion. The architecture was especially acknowledged for its “far-East beauty.”⁵¹ According to an illustration from the issue of *Le Petit Journal* on December 16th of 1900, the wooden pavilion was vibrantly painted in red and green, antithesis to the monochrome architectures of Hausmann’s Paris (fig. 9). A flight of stairs protruding from the masonry led to the wooden construction that was guarded by fully painted fences in the round. Compared with the frugal booth in the 1893 exposition, the Korean Pavilion referenced the

⁴⁶ Daniel Kane, "Display at Empire's End: Korea's Participation in the 1900 Paris Universal Exposition," *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 4, no. 2 (2004): 50-51.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 59.

⁵⁰ Maurice Courant, *Souvenir de Séoul, Corée* (1900: impr. de la Photo-couleur, Paris) ii-53. Chapter I.

⁵¹ *Le petit journal* (Paris: Librairie Illustrée, 1900), cited in Mee-yoo Kwon, “1900 Korean Pavilion in Paris Expo [Disclised],” *Expo 2012 Yeosu Korea* online, December 23, 2011, <https://2012expo.wordpress.com/2011/12/23/1900-korean-pavilion-in-paris-expo-disclised/>.

Geunjeongjeon, the Royal Audience Hall at the Gyeongbokgung, and preserved all elements of a standard palace construction (fig. 10). The pavilion itself has two-tiered roofs finished with tiles, and floral attributes extend upward on the joints of the eaves. Four sides are fully walled with alternating columns and windows. The building complies with the architectural framework of traditional palaces in East Asia concluded by Hyun Jung Lee and Young Soon Park.⁵² One instance of divergence from Lee and Park's model of Korean palaces was the intense colors of the pavilion against the greyness of the surrounding, far from the "harmonious colors with nature."⁵³ Regardless, the strikingly vibrant aesthetics presented a shining contrast with industrialism and with the image from the infamous curio-booth of Korea. The fully walled pavilion housed a larger and more varied inventory of exhibits to international audiences. The collection included objects from the royal archive, contributions from Frenchmen who lived in Korea, and samples of natural resources such as edible algae, coal, golds, and manufactured goods.⁵⁴ The article in *L'Exposition de Paris* specified that the Korean grains among the samples exemplified export goods to Japan.⁵⁵ This highlighted information indicates the Korean Empire's sufficient natural resources beyond supplying its domestic demands. The Korean Pavilion preserved the palanquin among its exhibits and reenacted the outing of an elite male in Korea to the audience with an additional mannequin in male garbs, an active response to orientalist anticipations (fig. 11). The variety of exhibits advertised the abundance of resources and painted a cheerful impression of Korean civilization, which produced promising feedback. If the Korean

⁵² Hyun Jung Lee and Young Soon Park, "A Comparative Study on Pattern in Traditional Palaces of Korea, China and Japan," (2004), *Futureground - DRS International Conference 2004*, ed. J. Redmond, D. Durling, and A. de Bono (Melbourne: 2004), 17-21.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ *Le petite journal* (Paris: Librairie Illustrée, 1900), 315, cited in Daniel Kane, "Display at Empire's End: Korea's Participation in the 1900 Paris Universal Exposition," *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 4, no. 2 (2004): 59.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

booth at the 1893 Columbian Exposition resembled a curio-shop to the international audience, the Korean pavilion must have evoked the image of a royal palace.

The design of the Korean pavilion referred to the approach in the construction of the Phoenix Pavilion in 1893. The Korean Pavilion followed a similar ideology to the successful Japanese Pavilion at Chicago. Japan's presentation in 1893 was based on favorable factors for success: opportune time, geographic advantage, and a strong cohort of designers. Japonisme had established knowledge and acknowledgment of Japan as a rich visual and cultural reserve, and Japan also became one of the colonial powers after westernization and modernization. This explained the allotment of an idyllic site on a sizable island for the Japanese Pavilion. A wooded island and a wooden palace-shaped museum of Japanese artifacts resemble the features of the country Japan.⁵⁶ The location also situated Japan in the center of the pavilions of other countries, elevating the image of Japan to the audience.⁵⁷ The building itself embodied the collective effort of American and Japanese architects. Masamichi Kuru, a student of the British architect Josian Condor, led the group, and the appointment of Kuru was a metaphor for Japan's partaking in the international stage and the preservation of traditions. Regardless, the Phoenix Pavilion was a skillful facsimile of the Ho-o-den. The construction lasted from June 1890 to March 1893, which guaranteed sufficiency in materializing the design with deliberation. Korea emulated Japan's previous approach as much as the conditions allowed, despite the haste experienced by Korean delegations prior to the opening of the 1900 Exposition. According to Jin and Park, the architectural committee of designers and officials to the Korean Pavilion joined seven

⁵⁶ "What the Japanese Propose to Do," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (December 5, 1891), 8, cited in Robert J. Karr, "The Garden of the Phoenix: The 120th Anniversary of the Japanese Garden in Chicago," *The Journal of the North American Japanese Garden Association* (2013): 8-11.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 10.

Frenchmen led by Baron Delort de Deon and eight Korean led by Min Yong-chan.⁵⁸ Min did not assume leadership of the committee partially due to the generous funds that the French officials offered to compensate the deficit of Korean Empire as well as Deon's extravagant vision for the Korean Pavilion.⁵⁹ The earliest project plan for Korean Pavilion by Deon was drafted in June 1899 (fig. 12). Deon's design embodies a strong reminiscence of European chinoiserie in an extensive two-winged palace featuring layers of tiled roof which greatly diverged from the consistent Neo-Confucian aesthetics of practicality and frugality in Korean architecture.⁶⁰ The prototype was overturned following Deon's death in November, and as a result, patron C. H. Mimerel commissioned the project and recommended Eugene Ferret, who designed the Saigon Theater in Indochina.⁶¹ Because of the extreme time deficit, the Korean government hastily approved the change to resume the construction left by Deon. Ferret simplified the Deon's ambitiously creative design to one single pavilion based on an extant architecture in order to guarantee the completion of the pavilion. Ferret's approach then transited Deon's "simulation" of the far-East aesthetics to Baudrillardian "simulacra." The two are distinguished by the presence of a referent: "simulation" evokes the referents which are the longstanding Chinoiserie and Japonisme, whereas "simulacra" precedes and replaces the original architectures in the Korean peninsula.⁶² Albeit the questionable authenticity in the representation, both designs of Deon and Ferret demonstrate sincere concern in promulgating the brand of Korea. The resulting architecture projected a profiled but impressive vision of aesthetic and cultural integrity in a

⁵⁸ Kyung-Don Jin and Mi-Na Park, "A Study on the Construction Process and Design Characteristics of Korean Pavilion in Paris 1900 Exposition Universelle in Korean Modern Architecture," *Korean Institute of Interior Design Journal* 17, no. 3, (2008): 7.

⁵⁹ Daniel Kane, "Display at Empire's End: Korea's Participation in the 1900 Paris Universal Exposition," *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 4, no. 2, (2004): 57.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 56-58.

⁶² Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, translated by Sheila Glaser, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, , 1994), 1-2.

festival of the world ruled and ordered by the most powerful empires. The acquiescence of Gojong's government testified Korea's primary objective to upgrade the international impression of Korea more than anything in the early days of Korean Empire. In fact, the assistance of French capitalists enabled the emulation process and compensated for the lack of experience and funds for the World's Exposition.

Meanwhile, political climate and anti-Chinese sentiment among Korean people disqualified China from "the suitable foreign protector and model to follow" as it had been in the two nation-states' tributary relation.⁶³ *Le Petit Journal*, the same newspaper that commissioned engravings of the pavilions in the exposition, had articulated the declined impression of China in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The humiliating print *China: the Cake of Kings and of Emperors* published the year before the exposition adequately summarized the diplomatic status of the Chinese government and simultaneously juxtaposed Japan with Western colonial powers (fig. 6). Thus, Japan had been the most "obvious model" for Gojong, now Emperor Gwangmu, since 1893.⁶⁴ Following Japan's footsteps, the fairly authentic architecture with enough cultural accuracy and splendor did enhance the image of Korea in the international scene. It took Gojong's court the first experience in the *pangnamghoe* to grasp the concept that pavilions were microcosmic representations of the nations and cultures. Kuitert summarizes the purposes of the participating nations in expositions as following:

to reinforce, or even create national identity, promote national unity, and institutionalize art, crafts, industries, and wealth in such a manner as to become belonging to the nation, never hesitating to include messages on wealth required by colonial conquest.⁶⁵

Therefore, handing over the directorship for the 1900 Korean Pavilion was a rational act because the perception of the final presentation among Euro-American audiences outweighed the

⁶³ Keith Pratt and Richard Rutt, *Korea: A historical and cultural dictionary*, (Routledge: 2013), 194.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Wybe Kuitert, "On World Expos and East Asia-Introduction," *Hwangyeongnonchong* 60 [환경논총 60], (2017): 4.

agency-held process. The first two Korean pavilions carried stronger political and commercial implications rather than that of cultural and architectural.⁶⁶ To Korea's debut to the world, the symbolic significance of the architecture surpasses the fundamental functions of the architect. Italian semiotician Umberto Eco defined the former as the primary function and the latter as the secondary function of architecture.⁶⁷ The creation of the first two Korean Pavilions reversed the natural succession of the two functions. The first participation in the exposition was an unreserved presentation of Korean visual cultures, while the second attempt embodied greater deliberation to impress and received positive affirmation on Korea as a sovereign nation-state. The implications of the architectures overshadowed the impressions of the piecemeal exhibits inside in both pavilions—the primary accomplishment was differentiating Korea from China and Japan or from chinoiserie and Japonaiserie. These earliest pavilions focused on constructing architectures to fully communicate the sovereignty of Korea from its dynastic kingdom to empire. However, an empire without leading technology or colonies was not quite an empire to endure the rally of global exploration.

Impediments in Two Phases: Colonial Representations of Korean Tradition

In Courant's recount of the 1900 Exposition Universelle, he noted that it had taken Japan 25 years to enter the "European concert" from the inception of the Japanese pavilion while the new Korea was barely five years old.⁶⁸ From the leap taken by the second Korean Pavilion, Courant envisioned a strong impetus to develop in an accelerated discourse similar to that of Japan.⁶⁹

However, that Japan would soon transform itself fully into a colonial giant from the "soothing

⁶⁶ Hyon-Sob Kim, "The appearance of Korean architecture in the modern West," *arq: Architectural Research Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (2010): 358.

⁶⁷ Umberto Eco, "Function and sign: The semiotics of architecture," *Signs, Symbols and Architecture by Broadbent* 11 (1980).

⁶⁸ Maurice Courant, *Souvenir de Séoul, Corée*, (Paris: Hachette Livre, 1900) ii-53, Chapter I.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

presence” in curio shops was not evident then.⁷⁰ The practicality of Japan as a role model in modernization decreased as the exponentially increasing threat that Japan had imposed on Korea became more imminent after the 1900 Exposition Universelle. At the inception of the Korean Empire, Gojong’s attempts to ally with Russia to counter Japan were met with the orchestrated assassination of Queen Min by Inoue.⁷¹ Victorious Japan from Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) became the first Asian nation to defeat Western colonial power and claimed Korean Empire as a protectorate state to facilitate its colonial agenda towards mainland Asia. The short-lived Korean Empire struggled to maintain its independence as it fell as Japan’s protectorate in 1905. With the Japanese annexation in 1910, Korea struggled to uphold national integrity during 35 years as a colony of Japan. Japan resolved the weak feudal government by installing powerful offices in *Keijō-fu* (京城府), which was the name of the Japanese administrative district in Korea corresponding with the present-day Seoul. Japanese government ushered in the lukewarm progress of industrialization since Gwangmu Reformation.⁷²

The colonial rule of the Empire of Japan demonstrated the translation of the infamous Western tradition of colonialism into a Japanese version. The formal colonization of Korea had been rationalized since the nascent phase of its happening just like numerous precedents of colonial practices. Upon military threats and direct bodily harm, Gojong signed the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1905 to recognize the suzerainty of Japan, which outlawed the presence of Korea without Japan’s representation from international law.⁷³ Emperor Gojong and his missionaries appealed to the Second International Conference of Peace at The Hague in 1907 yet were

⁷⁰ A metaphor from Scholtz, Amelia. "The Giant in the Curio Shop: Unpacking the Cabinet in Kipling's Letters from Japan." *Pacific Coast Philology* 42, no. 2 (2007): 199-216. Accessed January 22, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25474233>.

⁷¹ Keith Pratt and Richard Rutt, *Korea: A historical and cultural dictionary*, (Routledge: 2013), 227-28.

⁷² Todd A. Henry, *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese rule and the politics of public space in colonial Korea, 1910–1945*, vol. 12, (Univ of California Press, 2016), 91.

⁷³ Alexis Dudden, *Japan's colonization of Korea: discourse and power*, (University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 7.

shunned by the delegates from forty-three participating nations with one exception of Russia.⁷⁴ A digression from Courant's sanguine outlook of the hermit kingdom, Korea's search for its own vision of national identity halted soon after the Exposition Universelle. The extirpation of Korea's presence outweighed the devastation from the diminishment of its budding international renown. Despite the blatant progress of Japan's imperialism, the majority of the leading powers acquiesced to its takeover. Michel-Rolph Trouillot attributes such phenomenon to the extensive history of colonialism that had pruned any attempt to subvert the hegemony, which deemed Gojong's appeal unthinkable.⁷⁵ The colony Korea resorted to subordinate to the near-monarchy led by Japanese Governor-General appointed by the Emperor of Japan. The imperial subjugation thus facilitated Japan's colonial dominance over the Korean Peninsula and deprived Korea's agency in representing itself to the world.

The inhibition of outward expression was among the first steps in the colonial agenda to establish its legitimacy and present some moral rationale in the eyes of other nations.⁷⁶ After the signage of the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty of 1910, the Japanese administration in *Keijo* operated as an absolute-monarchy on the colony. The office led by Terauchi Masatake (1910-16) and then Hasegawa Yoshimichi (1916-23) in the first decade forged an extensive project of Japanization through all forms of transmission of knowledge. The politics in the 1910s had been characterized as "government by the military" (*budan seiji* 武断政治) relying heavily on violence and restrictions.⁷⁷ Korean opponents to colonial rule were subjected to prosecution and torture by brute force.⁷⁸ Publications and speech in Korean-language were strictly prohibited to

⁷⁴ Alexis Dudden, *Japan's colonization of Korea: discourse and power*, (University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 7-9.

⁷⁵ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the past: Power and the production of history*, (Beacon Press: 1995), 93.

⁷⁶ Margaret Kohn and Kavita Reddy, "Colonialism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (2006), https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/colonialism/?fbclid=IwAR10jpgfTWIU5LEG3JgFnPA3308-81_cMXg3bScbrzX26exDn3ZiaiLPkSQ.

⁷⁷ Chae-on Kang, *Shintei Chōsen kindaiishi*, (Heibonsha: 1986), 202.

⁷⁸ Michael E. Robinson, *Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History*, (University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 38.

prevent sedition against the colonial agency.⁷⁹ In the following year of annexation, the Japanese government enacted the Educational Ordinance to diminish Korean patriotism by downgrading Korean institutions to non-degree-granting schools.⁸⁰ Schools and universities during early colonial rule taught the Japanese language and Korean traditions in direct comparison to Japanese modernity and exposed young Korean citizens to modern urbanity through teaching usage of machinery and vehicles from industrialized Japan.⁸¹ Similar to the transition between Goryeo and Joseon Dynasty, Shintoism penetrated the academic curriculum from elementary to university education to replace Joseon's legacy of Confucianism.⁸² Through the adoption of Shintoism, educational institutions preached the divinity of Japanese emperors and the Japanese-style of social stratification.⁸³ The colonial curriculum legitimized the conformity to the hierarchy established by Japan, which cultivated an ultranationalist devotion towards the Empire of Japan among Korean citizens. During the radical Japanization processes, Korea operated as an "enclave economy" to provide natural and human resources to solely benefit the Japanese Empire.⁸⁴ The considerable economic growth from the accelerated industrialization had little impact on the well-being of the citizens.⁸⁵ However, the pervasive cult of loyalty towards high powers, including the Japanese Emperor, numbed the collective spirits of the Korean public during the early colonial period.

⁷⁹ During the first decade of colonial rule *Taikan Mainichi Shinpo* (大韓毎日新報) remained as the only newspaper printed in Korean-language as it was owned by British journalist Ernest Bethel. Bethel's press expressed an outward antagonistic attitude towards Japanese colonialism. Japanese Residency-General sued Bethel to the British Supreme Court for China and Korea in Seoul in 1908, and he was sent to detention in Shanghai.

⁸⁰ Jeong-Kyu Lee, "Japanese Higher Education Policy in Korea (1910—1945)," *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 10 (2002): 4.

⁸¹ Byung-Nak Song and Augustin KS Song, *The rise of the Korean economy*, (Oxford University Press, 1997), 46.

⁸² Jeong-Kyu Lee, "Japanese Higher Education Policy in Korea (1910—1945)," *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 10 (2002): 2-3.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸⁴ Byung-Nak Song and Augustin KS Song, *The Rise of the Korean Economy*, (Oxford University Press, 1997), 43.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

In the unprecedented phase of modernization, the Joseon Industrial Exposition of 1915 took place to celebrate the fifth anniversary of colonial rule in September and October of that year.⁸⁶ The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations in 1851 at the Crystal Palace in London had established the tradition to showcase possessions of colonies and reinforce capitalist mindsets.⁸⁷ Such expositions opened forums to exhibit the exotic objects and to educate the countrymen from the colonial powers of their possessions.⁸⁸ As a new colonial power, Japan reversed the format to disseminate and justify its colonial rule to its colony. A group of Japanese and Korean businessmen formed the Gyeongseong Sponsoring Organization (*keijō kyōsankai* 京城協贊会) which sought to support and organize the exposition. While the association provided the bulk of the funding, The Government-General and the royal family of Chosun were also major benefactors.⁸⁹ The grounds of the royal Gyeongbokgung Palace welcomed the Korean public and some international audiences to renew their knowledge of Imperial Japan as well as Korea under its occupation (fig. 13). Extant and provisional buildings housed exhibits that represented the capitalistic and industrial progress of Korea under the new government.⁹⁰ The Japanese government and support committees of the event mobilized students and public attendance to the fair.⁹¹ The fair occupied the entire palace complex and was the first modern spectacle that provided a ground to inculcate administrative improvement to a large number of Korean citizens through materialization and direct presentation of the achievement made possible during the Japanese occupation.⁹² To include the younger demographics in the fair, a

⁸⁶ Joseon Industrial Exposition of 1915: Korean: 조선물산공진회, Japanese: 始政五年記念朝鮮物産共進会, abbreviated as 朝鮮物産共進 (Gongjinghoe).

⁸⁷ Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: a nation on display*, (Yale University Press, 1999), 101-102.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ 李泰文. "1915年「朝鮮物産共進会」の構成と内容." 慶應義塾大学日吉紀要 言語・文化・コミュニケーション 30 (2003): 25-61.

⁹⁰ Hong Kal, *Aesthetic constructions of Korean nationalism: Spectacle, politics and history*, (Routledge, 2011), 1-3.

⁹¹ Tae-woong Kim, "Industrial Exhibitions ('Gongjinghoe') and the Political Propaganda of Japanese Imperialism in the 1910s," *International Journal of Korean History* 3 (2002): 198.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 179-180.

“Children’s Kingdom” was included among an array of exhibition halls.⁹³ At the same time, the comprehensiveness in industrial achievement and resources among the exhibits served as a convincing advertisement of Korea’s development. The demonstration of Korea’s potential in industrialization also served to encourage capitalists to invest in industries in Korea.⁹⁴ To fuel the trend of colonial tourism, arts and crafts were sold as vernacular products at the fairground to non-Korean visitors.⁹⁵ To any group of visitors, the scale of the event and especially the choice of the site conveyed robust colonial statements. Japanese government’s celebration of its colonial success in the face of the royal administrative center embodied a spectacle of irony—the diminished legitimacy of Gojong’s government juxtaposed with Japan’s role in industrializing and civilizing Korea.

To increase visitors to the event, the exposition committee dedicated over 10% of the total expense to printing expenses on newspaper articles, information booklets, posters, and souvenir postcards.⁹⁶ The official poster and postcard feature the same pictorial elements while the poster only differs for its size and inclusion of the title and date (figs. 14-15). A female figure wears a hanbok, boasting vibrant colors of yellow, red, green, and blue. A headdress *jokduri* (족두리) decorated with elaborate cloisonné completes her ceremonial costume. Her fluid long sleeves emphasize her gesture that directs the attention to the scenes of the fairground. The dancer’s arm extends to the top register where an idyllic scene of tiled-roof palaces sitting above a pond unfolds within the frame of autumn leaves. On the bottom register, visitors in traditional and modern clothing scattered in front of an extensive architectural structure in western styles.

⁹³ Katsuhiko Yamaji, *Kindai Nihon no shokuminchi hakurankai*, (Tokyo: Fukyosha, 2008), 140.

⁹⁴ Tae-woong Kim, "Industrial Exhibitions ('Gongjinghoe') and the Political Propaganda of Japanese Imperialism in the 1910s," *International Journal of Korean History* 3 (2002): 183-89.

⁹⁵ 정지희. "근대 공예품에 대한 인식 전환과 유행." *강좌 미술사* 55 (2020): 197.

⁹⁶ Tae-woong Kim, "Industrial Exhibitions ('Gongjinghoe') and the Political Propaganda of Japanese Imperialism in the 1910s," *International Journal of Korean History* 3 (2002): 196.

Topped with the motif of English daisies, the crowded scene stands as a subsequence to the vision of traditional Korea which emphasizes the prosperity realized through modernization. Such juxtaposition conveys that Japanese government enlightened Korea and provided its industrial prosperity without violently depriving Korean tradition. Although this image presents Korea as the protagonist, the juxtaposition of past and modernity constructed the binary relationship of dynastic rule and colonial rule of Korea. The contrast of modern Korea under Japanese rule and old dynastic Korea was a recurring motif throughout the event, in its official images and in the physical fairgrounds. The Korean audience thus were given the two as separate options and a hint of the “better choice” from learning the superiority of Japan's modern civilization. In fact, the inventory of exhibits produced in Korea demonstrated little changes from those in the pavilion at 1900 Exposition Universelle. The notion of progress still concentrated on agricultural prosperity, and rice was again promoted as exports to Japan.⁹⁷ The majority of the “industrial” aspects at the exposition was demonstrated through products and machinery made in Japan.⁹⁸ The exposition then integrated the disproportionate inventories to serve its objective in establishing binary. Upon fully immersed in the contrast between the underdeveloped past and modernity, the associations between power and progress, and Japan and its government was implied.

The notions of power and progress are twofold, considering both Korean and international perspectives. Norman Owen concludes that “political power is expressed primarily as national autonomy and secondarily as domination, the ability to influence others.”⁹⁹ Japan’s assertive autonomy as a rising imperial power was evident to the world, regardless of the

⁹⁷ Tae-woong Kim, "Industrial Exhibitions ('Gongjinhoe') and the Political Propaganda of Japanese Imperialism in the 1910s," *International Journal of Korean History* 3 (2002): 191.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 199.

⁹⁹ Norman G. Owen, *Prosperity without progress: Manila hemp and material life in the colonial Philippines*, (Univ of California Press, 1984), 242.

knowledge of the event. The fact that the Government-General took a leading role in curating a massive-scale exposition on Korea emphasized Japan's colonial power. This was blatantly printed on the visual material from the exposition as boasts and threats in the face of former Chosun royalty. On the other hand, the notion of progress in the Chosun Exposition embodied the legacy of Crystal Palace. The fair was a colonial gesture through granting Korean audience freedom to navigate the once-privileged palace to witness the extravaganza of progressive technologies made possible by Japanese government. This accomplished more than winning over Korean citizens and driving industrialization in the colony. From a global perspective, the success in reconditioning the face and heart of Joseon's legacy heightened Japan's imperial authority confronting other empires.

The 1915 Industrial Exposition prompted self-directed internalization of colonial theories and numbed the sensitivity to Korean national identity. However, the successful propaganda was held during the peak of the *budan seiji* as the general-government was soon threatened by a diaspora of the earliest patriotic protests.¹⁰⁰ Among the crusades, the famous student-led *Sam-il* (3-1) Movement in 1919 was inspired by Woodrow Wilson's proclamation on national self-determination at the Paris Peace Conference the year before.¹⁰¹ The sweeping anti-Japanese sentiment concluded the first phase of early colonial rule that was characterized by violence and radical japanization. Immediately following the outbursts, Saito Makoto (1919-27 and 1927-1939) succeeded Hasegawa and implemented a series of culture-centered policies under the banner of "government by the culture" (*bunka seiji* 文化政治).¹⁰² This new administration distinguished itself from the *budan seiji* of 1910s by reducing institutional discrimination with

¹⁰⁰ Dolf-Alexander Neuhaus, "'Awakening Asia': Korean Student Activists in Japan, The Asia Kunglun, and Asian Solidarity, 1910–1923." *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 6, no. 2 (2017): 617.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 615-622.

¹⁰² Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 4.

Japan and introducing patience into violent rulership.¹⁰³ The immediate changes included partial removal of restrictions on press, speech, and congregation and permissions of instructions in Korean languages.¹⁰⁴ The Government-General published the book *The New Administration in Chosen* in 1921 to specify the envisioned reforms under Saito's office. A similar reappraisal was taking place simultaneously in Taiwan as Japanese colonialism entered another new decade. However, cultural politics paved the way for a new mode of narrative manipulation that reduced the image of Korea to that of the "hermit kingdom."¹⁰⁵

Instead of subjecting Korea, colonial policy in the 1920s was promulgated through the idealization of Korea. The cultural revival cultivated a self-perceived image of Korea as an idyllic state before modernization brought forth by Japan. The coexistence of Japanese modernity and Korean traditions under the new administration of greater benevolence tellingly illustrated the joined relationship between the colonizer and colonized states. The colonial government envisioned the peninsula's return to "primitive and repellent" customs would induce submission to the Imperial power.¹⁰⁶ The agency of narrative on Korean culture and heritage then was then transferred to the hands of Japan. Regardless, the colonial administration remained stable and was able to control many local and regional popular upheavals during this time. Upon Saito's return to Korea from the Geneva Naval Conference in 1929, Saito governed the remainder of his tenure from the just-finished building of Japanese General-Government located south of the Gyeongbokgung complex (fig. 16). The construction began in 1916, and it obstructed the inner view of the place complex from the southern gate by its modern, international-style form (fig. 17). Looking over the former royal court of Joseon, this modern

¹⁰³ Chae-on Kang, *Shintei Chōsen kindaiishi*, (Heibonsha, 1986), 202.

¹⁰⁴ Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 4.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Andrew Jonah Grajdanzev, *Modern Korea*, (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1944), 61.

architecture manifested the prosperity of colonial rule and the feeble state of Korean nationalism. In the mounting spirit upon the radiant building, the Chosun Exhibition of 1929 was held in September of that year to embrace the tenth anniversary of the colonial government and to recapitulate the Japan-Korea amity under Saito's policy. The event once again opened the forbidden palace complex to Korean citizens and turned it into a distinctively Korean fairground to greet the current colonial officials and celebrate the coexistence of Korea and Japan. If the 1915 Industrial Exposition was deemed a tumultuous program to indoctrinate, the 1929 Chosun Exposition subtly imbued the colonial logic through finely curated visual experience. Promoting itself through these images, Chosun Exposition avoided the aggressive and direct messages to discriminate between Japan and Korea and sought to convey benevolence and harmony.

The recurring choice on the site could have normalized Japan's takeover of the royal court, but the Chosun Exposition differed from its precedent in that it was a rally to hype Korean's contentment and a scheme of civic assimilation in disguise. The event was held on a more massive-scale compared to 1915, extending beyond the former palace walls. The fundings of the event could be attributed to support from the new Showa Emperor's endorsement of expositions upon his recent accession.¹⁰⁷ A wealth of advertisement and peripheral materials for the exposition included "brochures, illustrations, pamphlets, picture postcards."¹⁰⁸ Among these printed materials, three posters announce the date and location of the event and recognize the sponsor, General-Government, and Gyeongseong Sponsoring Organization. Besides the homogeneous texts, the three posters present different illustrations of the fairground in vertical and horizontal formats (figs. 18-20). One of the vertical posters features a pie graph divided in quarters against serene black. information on one diagonal and imagery of the other (fig. 18). In

¹⁰⁷ Ishikawa Atsuko in "Common people involved with the Chosun Expo, as seen from visual records." *On World Expos and East Asia*, (2017), 60-61.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 60.

the bottom right, a dotted fish swims from a free-flowing plant towards a snake that climbs skywards along a white flagpole, from which a wing spreads open. The assemblage pertains to the realms of the ocean, land, and sky, yielding allusion to naval, land, and air forces that the exposition intended to show off. The constructivist rendering of the fairground's gate in white and grey stands before and against the bright red silhouette of a Korean palace on the other diagonal. The curious juxtaposition of nature and architecture includes the realms of an ambitious proclaims achievements and harmony in colonized Korea. Compared to this poster, the other two embed the textual elements in fuller illustrations occupying the entire space on the paper, but the motif of different architectural forms is shared among all three. Another poster of the event shows the Gyeonghoeru Pavilion through the autumn leaves while the silhouette of the new General Government building blends into the sky (fig. 19). The bright-colored poster catches the viewers' eyes with a finch on a branch adorned in the foreground, creating an idyllic atmosphere in the space before the international-style building that enters abruptly. The vertical poster that contains an illustration in an arched frame also emphasizes the juxtaposition between General Government building and a Korean pavilion by compressing it within mountains and flora (fig. 20). The architectural details were reduced to the minimum for recognizing the feature of the government building and an average Korean architecture. In fact, there was not an individual pavilion around Japan's building. The grandiose building of the General Government confronted the Street of Six Ministries (where then demolished Gwanghwamun Gate was supposed to be) on the south and the long Heungnyemun Gate inside the complex (fig. 21). The previous poster points to an extant pavilion in the complex through the iconic perforated halls with square columns, but the red-tiled pavilion here stands as a cursory reference to Korea's unmodernized past. The poster showcases to great extent the contrasts of the colonized and

colonist, anonymity and specificity, outdated and modern. Indeed, this was the only poster featured along with naturalistic illustrations of the exposition according to Ishikawa's observation on the souvenir postcards set from the event from the archive of Nomura Kogei Co.Ltd.¹⁰⁹

The posters reveal this objective by their repeated motifs of contrasting architectures in idyllic settings. Korea is distinguished with red colors on the pavilions while Japanese buildings are depicted in white or earth-toned yellow. Distinctions in forms and colors carry a metaphor of what Kikuchi Yuko terms the "Oriental Orientalism."¹¹⁰ Kikuchi defines this phenomenon as Japan's version of Orientalism from the Occident: it is a dual process of Japanization and exotification of Korea from Japan-centric multiculturalism in Asia from which Japan dissociates itself.¹¹¹ Japan has experienced a similar near-primitivist assessment through Japonisme and digested its gist to suppress anti-colonial nationalism in Korean Peninsula through idyllic representations of Korea in advertisements and events. A striking resemblance (illustration of such Oriental Orientalism) can be found between these images from the Chosun Exposition and the exquisite landscape in Kawase Hasui's woodblock prints. A prolific artist, Kawase Hasui (1883-1957) contributed to the *Shin-hanga* ("new prints") movement which upheld the collaborative workshop process of the ukiyo-e production while subtly integrating techniques from Western art in the nostalgic images of Japanese culture. The landscape imagery of the posters espoused a compositional approach similar contemporaneous works of Hasui, such as *Kencho Temple, Kamakura* (created before publication in 1933), and *Spring Dusk at Toshō Shrine, Ueno* (created before posthumous publication in 1948) (figs. 22-23). The vegetations in

¹⁰⁹ Ishikawa Atsuko, "Common people involved with the Chosun Expo, as seen from visual records." *On World Expos and East Asia*, (2017), 60.

¹¹⁰ Yuko Kikuchi, *Japanese modernisation and Mingei theory: Cultural nationalism and oriental orientalism*, (Psychology Press, 2004), 126-140.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

the corner of the front serve as framing devices that accentuate the idealized landscape of timeless tranquility. Kawase avoided the more common images of aggressively nationalistic in Japan and opted for “the peaceful endurance” in landscape free from traces of industrialization and militarism.¹¹² Visual materials from the exposition of *bunka seiji*, on the other hand, demonstrated Korea and Japan could coexist peacefully in aesthetic and colonial contexts.

In Saito’s administration of greater benevolence, the popular will was satisfied through the revival of culture and language. The lenient administration sought to encourage Korean acquiescence through promoting Korea’s pastoral image before modernity, which was respected by the Empire of Japan. However, this did not change the absolute power of the General-Government on Korean Peninsula and its centripetal submission to the Empire of Japan. The reconstructed power-relation between the colony and colonizer was meant to be digested and form a new collective expectation towards Korea’s future with modernization progress under sustained Japan’s rule. In other words, the two expositions in colonial Korea served to rationalize different colonial logics favored by Japanese empire for Korean audiences. The events and their visual materials resulted in setbacks to the later rise of nationalism as well as the consolidation of a faithful image or symbol of Korea. The effects of such propaganda align with Foucault’s argument on self-disciplining that socialized people internalize messages and discipline from the ruling government.¹¹³ In the case of colonial Korea, manipulation of visual culture in the two massive-scale expositions provided sources of power for the authority in controlling the colonized population. The exposition presented a microcosmic image of colonized Korea for the audience to consume and relish as they found entertainment in the fairground. As numerous visitors internalized this power relation between the authority and subjects, or the colonizer and

¹¹² Kendall H Brown, "Out of the Dark Valley: Japanese Woodblock Prints and War, 1937-1945," *Impressions*, no. 23 (2001): 82.

¹¹³ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (Pantheon Books, 1978), 214-15.

the colony, the cultural intervention of this nation-wide event went beyond the fairground to further thwart Korean people's rebellious nationalism.

Conclusion: Transferred Agency of Narratives in Korea's Identity in Visual Culture

Directorships in expositions enable effective image management among their respective audience—early Korean expositions attest to this. The visual culture in this study reveals a segment journey in Korea's experience of exposition from the 1890s through the 1920s. From ventures in international venues as Joseon to Japan's colonial manipulations of its visual culture, Korea's identity in its visual culture grew and paused in its nascent phase. The first Korean Pavilion overcame the contemptuous remarks from its European audience since Joseon's debut and brought a new spectacle of Oriental beauty. Just as the former hermit kingdom relished the first taste of positive reception from the world, Japan demolished the newly-established and still-feeble international position of Korea just as it did the Gwanghwamun Gate. Japan became the mainland for the peninsula and represented Korea on international occasions. The outspoken American radio personality David Brudnoy commented that Japanese colonial rule in Korean Peninsula was a "concrete, grand-scale experiment" on politics and vernacular culture.¹¹⁴ As Japan implemented phased political policies, Korean renewed their perceptions of their own state in two stages. In the first decade of *budan seiji*, the colonial rule aimed for extensive japanization. The second ten years and on modeled primitivism and orientalism from western colonial history by construing the colony as "an exotic other" in Japan-centric multiculturalism.¹¹⁵ The manipulative play on vernacular traditions conveyed Japan's mercy through a contrast with the previous decade while promoting the transformation of a nostalgia of

¹¹⁴ David Brudnoy, "Japan's Experiment in Korea," *Monumenta Nipponica* 25, no. 1/2 (1970): 191.

¹¹⁵ Yuko Kikuchi, *Japanese modernisation and Mingei theory: Cultural nationalism and oriental orientalism*, (Psychology Press, 2004), 126-140.

traditions into an odd patriotic vision to fit the colonial logic. Both the Industrial Exposition and the Chosun Exposition confiscated the agency in Korean cultural narratives. The blurred division between authenticity and appropriation belied the need to resist colonialism and regain agency in creating one's identity. The derivative of Orientalism in Korea was an especially powerful impediment to the formation of collective visions of its tradition and history.

However, a continuous process of othering for self-distinction can be reconstructed from Korea's experience in expositions, by itself or by the colonial government. Korean visual culture was repeatedly presented with a clear distinction from China and Japan—and even from Chinoiserie and Japonisme in the late Joseon period and early colonial era. Japanese rule failed to numb Korean nationalism and overturned orientalism with heart-felt pride in traditional culture and hard-earned liberation.¹¹⁶ The close examination of the images that represented the representation of Korea from the 1890s to the 1920s reveals more than the pathways and obstacles to the cultural achievements of the Republic of Korea. It also supports that visual identity is a malleable and breathing concept in the changing dynamics of power. Especially in the involved years amid the fall of Joseon and during the colonial era, the awareness of ethnic nationalism and its own visual culture was awakening on the Korean Peninsula. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to call for discretion on the agency of narratives and targeted audience in future studies on Korea's visual culture of early modernity.

¹¹⁶ Adrian Buzo, *The Making of Modern Korea*, (Taylor & Francis, 2016), 6-7.

Figures

Figure 1. *Shanghai Expo 2010 Korean Pavilion*, May 07, 2010, photograph, Universal Images Group.



Figure 2. Rand McNally & Co., Standard Guide Map of the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago, 1893, ink on paper, the New York Public Library Digital Collections.

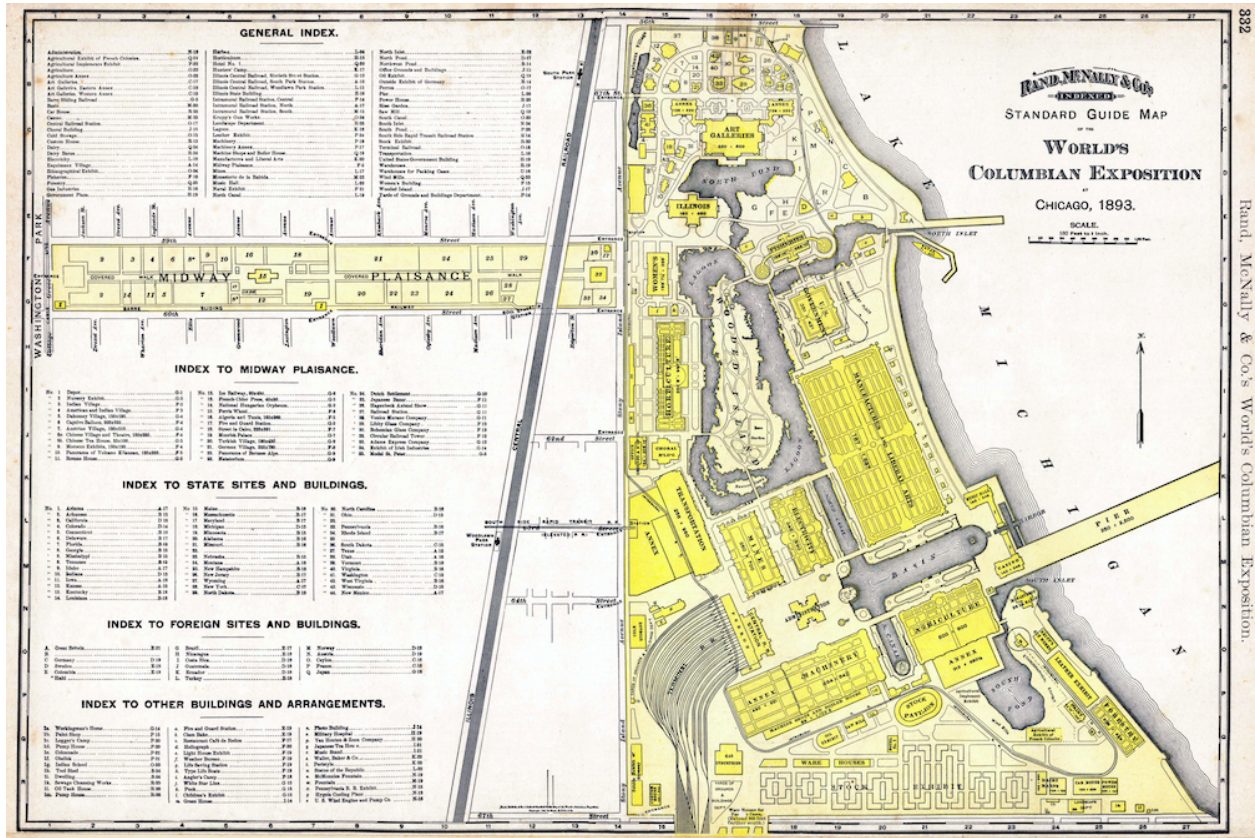


Figure 3. Photograph of Korean pavilion in 1893 Columbian Exposition, 1893, photograph.



Figure 4. Detailed view of Standard Guide Map of the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago with author's mark on the area where the Korean booth was positioned. Rand McNally & Co., Standard Guide Map of the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago, 1893, ink on paper, the New York Public Library Digital Collections.

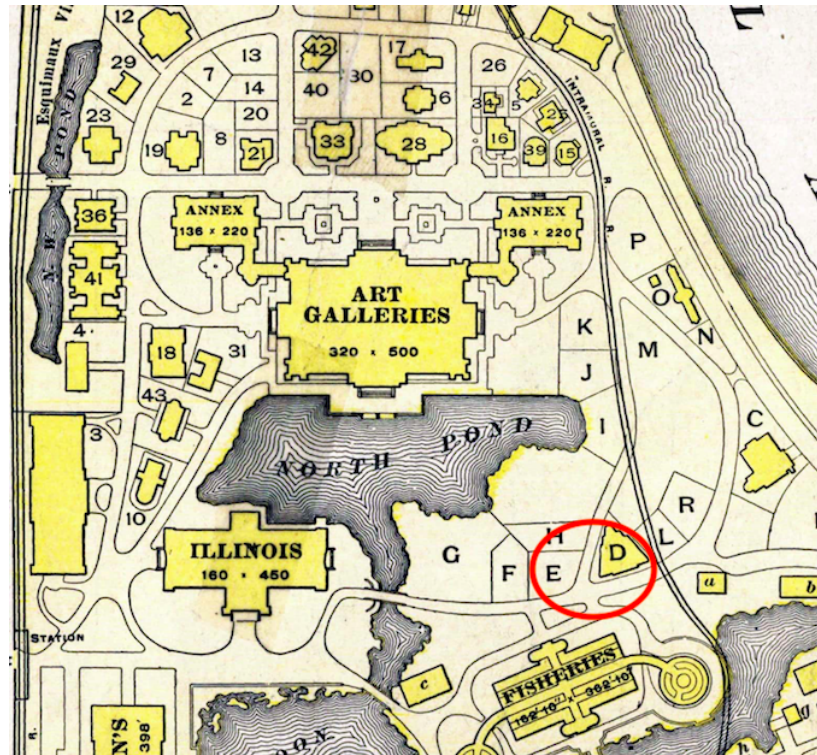


Figure 5. Photograph of the Japanese pavilion Ho-o-den, World's Columbian Exposition 1893, photograph.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Japanese_pavillion_Ho-o-den_01,_World%27s_Columbian_Exposition_1893.jpg



Figure 6. Henri Meyer (illustrator), P. H. G. V. Michel, (engraver), *En Chine - Le gâteau des Rois et... des Empereurs* in *Le Petit Journal*, Jan. 16th, 1898, ink on paper, Library on Congress.



Figure 7. P. Bineteau, *Exposition universelle de 1900: plan général*, 1900, lithograph, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

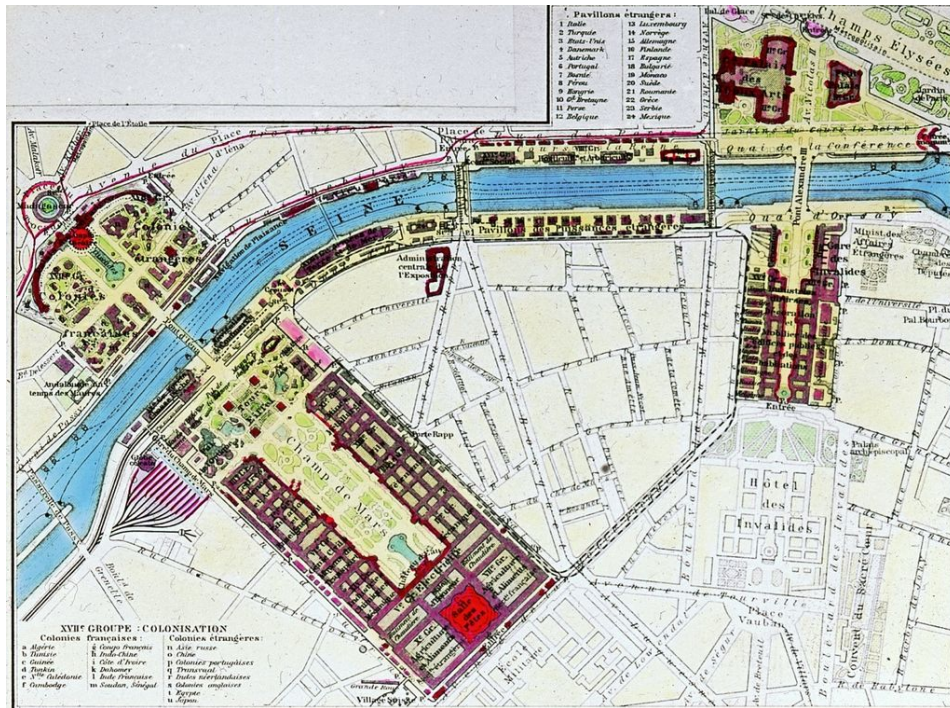


Figure 8. Photograph of Korean Pavilion, 1900 Paris Exposition, 1900, photograph, Choengju Early Printing Museum.



Figure 9. *The Korean pavilion at the Universal Exhibition of 1900, Paris, 1900*, in *Le Petit Journal* (Paris: January 01, 1900), print media, Hulton Archive, 22.6 x 31 cm.



Figure 10. Geunjeongjeon (Throne Hall) of the Gyeongbokgung Palace, built in 1395, northern Seoul, South Korea,

<https://www.gettyimages.fi/detail/photo/geunjeongjeon-of-the-gyeongbokgung-palace-seoul-royalty-free-image/1068424740>.



Figure 11. Photograph of the interior of the Korean pavilion at the Universal Exposition in 1900, 1900, Seoul Museum of History.



Figure 12. Baron Alphonse Leopold Marie Delort de Gleon, *Section Coreenne: Avant Project*, 1899, ink of paper.

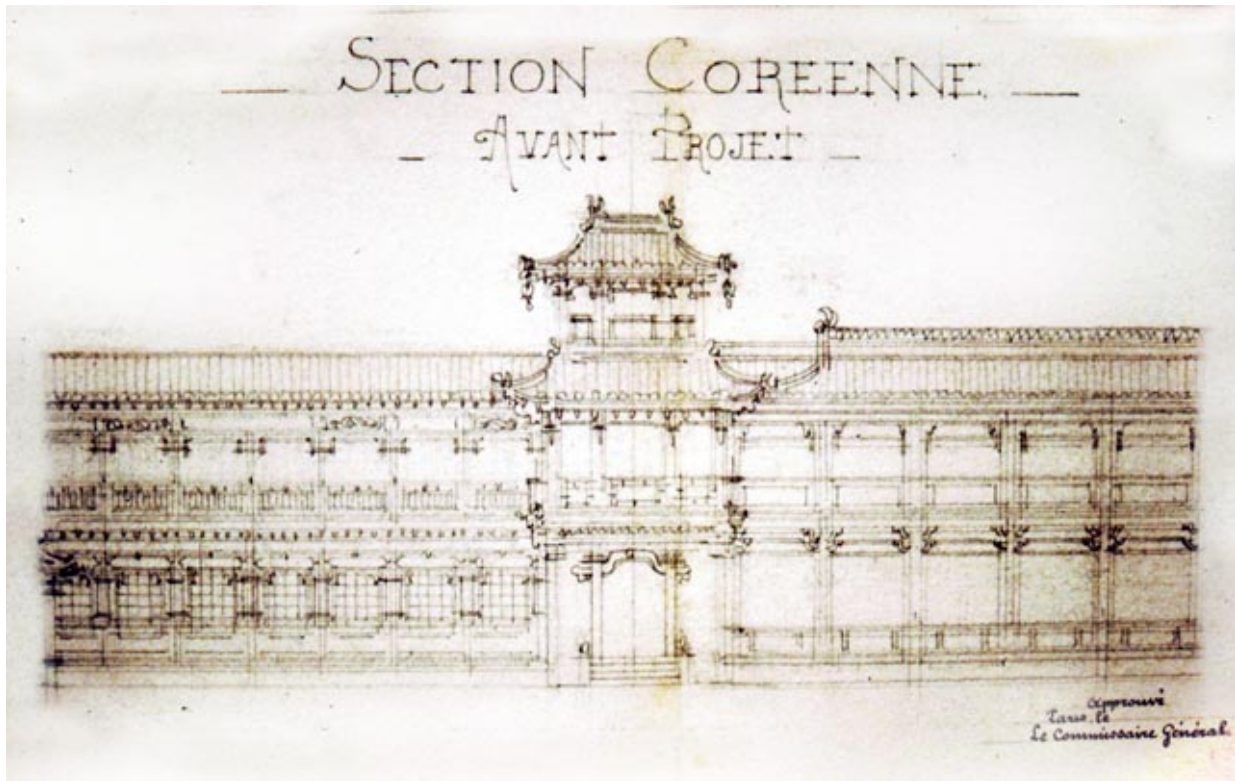


Figure 13. Panoramic Map of 1915 Chosun Industrial Exposition, Official Guidebook of 1915 Chosun Industrial Exposition, 1915, print media.



Figure 14. Postcard Commemorative from the 1915 Joseon Industrial Exhibition.



Figure 15. The Official Poster of the 1915 Exposition, 内国勸業博覧会事務報告, 1915.



Figure 16. Photograph of the General-Government building, 1993.



Figure 17. Georg De Lalande and Nomura Ichiro, Japanese General Government Building, 1916-1926 (demolished 1995-1996), Seoul, South Korea.



Figure 18. Keijō Kyōsankai, Poster of Chosun Exposition, 1929, International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 19. Keijō Kyōsankai, Poster of Chosun Exposition, 1929, International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 20. Keijō Kyōsankai, Poster of Chosun Exposition, 1929, International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Kyoto, Japan.

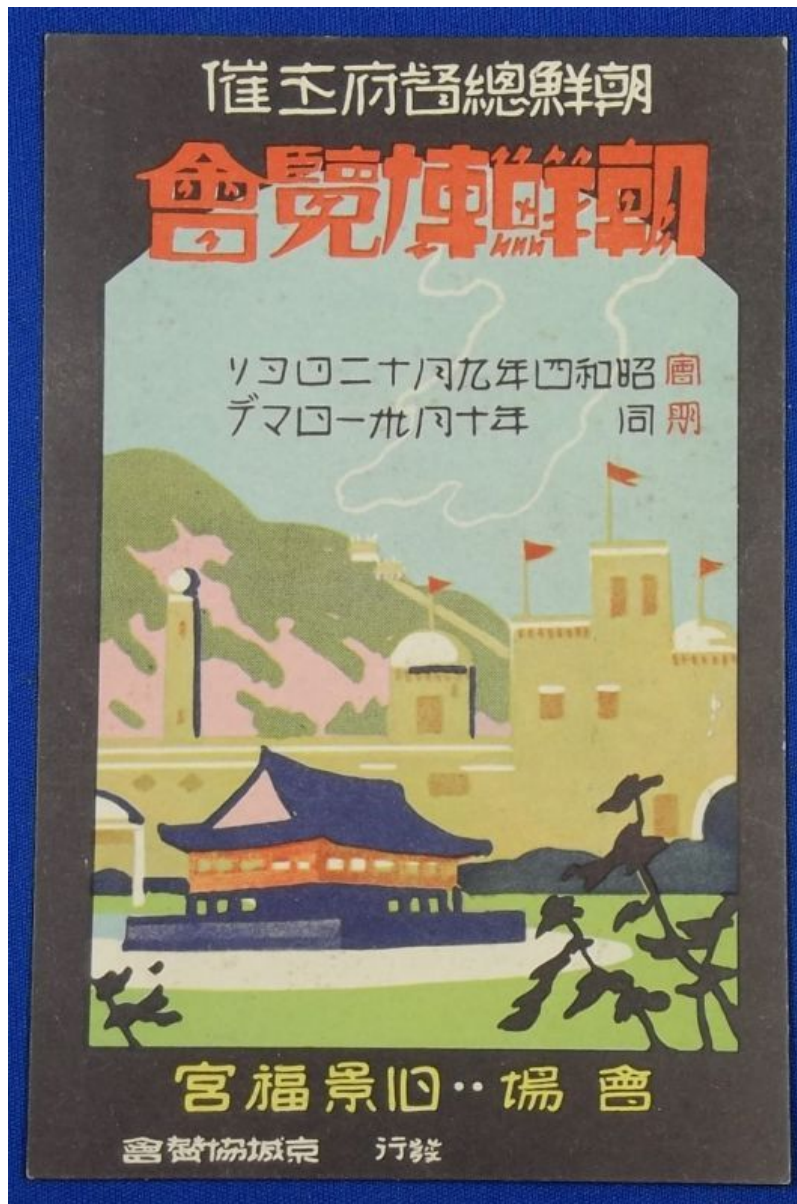
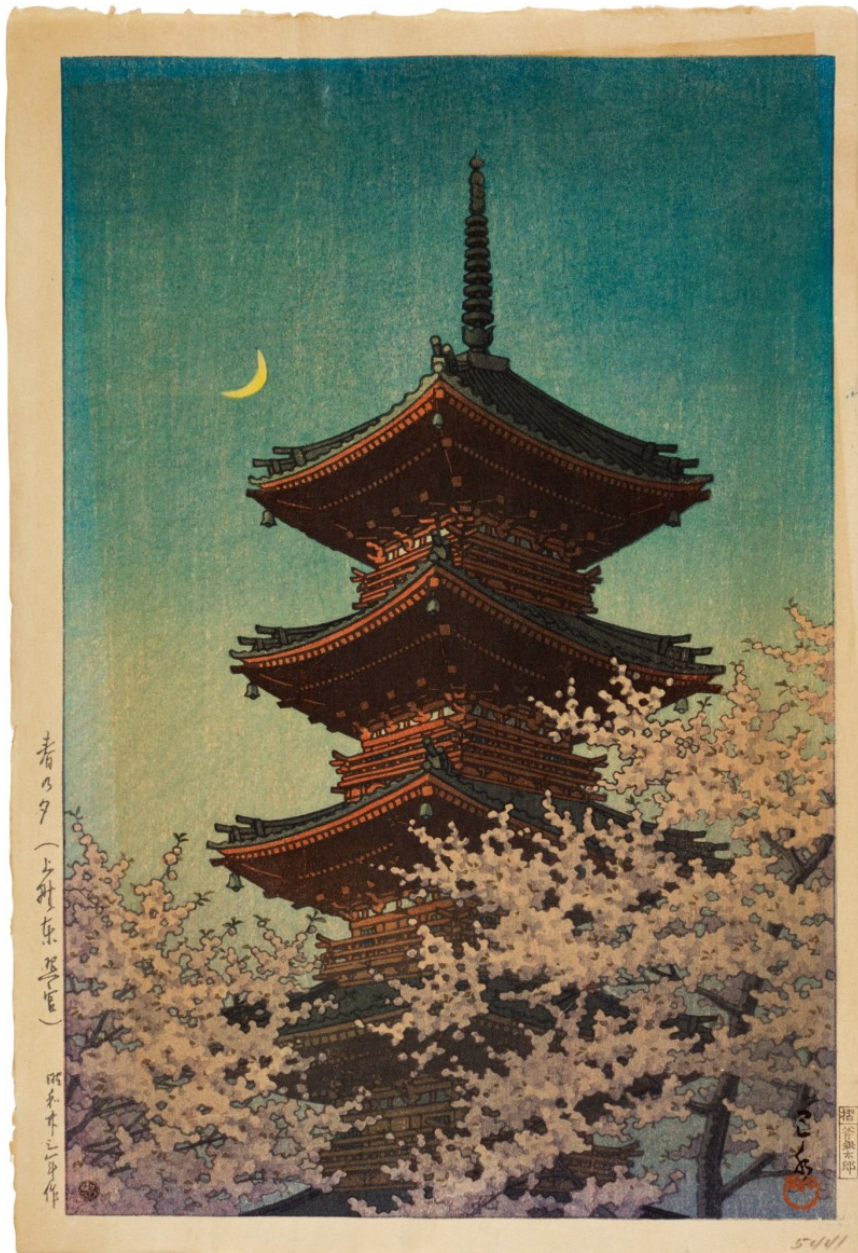


Figure 21. Heungnyemun Gate (흥례문) in Gyeongbokgung Palace, Seoul, South Korea.



Figure 23. Kawase Hasui, *Spring Dusk at Toshō Shrine, Ueno*, signed *Hasui*, Kawase seal, printer's seal Ono Gintaro, published by Watanabe Shozaburo, 5mm seal, posthumous 1948.



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