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Making ‘the National Image’ of Korea: From the Shrine of the Joseon Dynasty to the National Memorial of the Republic of Korea

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Abstract: Korea tried to reconstruct its tradition as a modern nation and promote nationalism only in the 1960s, a relatively late period compared to the West. So-called “tradition-making” began by promoting the full-fledged national shrine project to commemorate historical figures in a short period. These national shrines were built in a traditional style and embodied a national image representing Korea. This study analyzed which elements of traditional Korean architecture were selectively adopted for the main hall of Hyeonchungsa, the first national shrine, and discussed how these choices were intertwined with the discourses on Korean architecture at the time by tracing their historical, cultural, and political context. Although the ‘newly invented’ national shrine functionally resembled a Confucian shrine, it favored splendid and magnificent elements on its exterior, a tendency that is well-demonstrated in the shape of its roof, the decoration of the eaves, and the elevation. This style reflects the modern perspective that regarded the roof curve as an essential feature to define the identity of Korean architecture. Additionally, it can be seen as an effort to reevaluate the architectural style of the Joseon Dynasty, which was belittled during the Japanese colonial period. In addition, these national shrines showed an attempt to reproduce the architectural form of the past with modern material—concrete—by actively referring to the drawing data derived from the actual measurement surveys of historical buildings that were carried out vigorously in the early 1960s. Although these buildings have not been valued in academia amid criticism of the political use of traditions, they played a critical role in spreading the “image of Korean tradition”.

Keywords: invention of tradition; borrowing traditional architectural style; national memorials in traditional style



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1. Introduction

Many scholars have actively raised the question of whether historical or cultural traditions and national identities are politically formed. Scholars such as Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson argue that traditions that we believe have justification are the product of intensive political initiatives in the modern period and that they have been highly influencing the public’s perspectives on tradition. Modern nation-states sought to unify the nation by unearthing ‘traditional culture’ and creating monumental places. In this process, buildings such as museums, memorials, and national cemeteries played an essential role.

‘Creating tradition’ in Korea was a relatively short-term project that continued from the late 1960s to the late 1970s, compared to other Western and East Asian countries. This project shows fairly complex aspects as it tried to achieve three goals: overcoming colonialism after independence from the Japanese Colonial period (1910–1945), attaining economic development and industrialization, and strengthening political ideology as a part of a separated country.

Established in 1948 after independence and the U.S. military rule, the Republic of Korea wanted to mark a fresh start as a nation-state, refurbishing historical sites and emphasizing

the national spirit. However, this was interrupted by the Korean War (1950–1953) and subsequent economic difficulties, so it was only feasible to execute tangible outcomes in earnest in the 1960s. The government selected historical figures to celebrate them as national heroes and designated historical places related to them as national cultural heritage to commemorate them [1].

This period was when carefully selected aspects of tradition and history of Korea were actively promoted and utilized for education nationally. Pre-modern, more than 1000 years old (Joseon, Goryeo, or Silla periods) in particular, historical figures were highlighted, and the historical places related to them were designated as historical sites, and a shrine was built to commemorate those figures [2,3]. There have been many studies that criticized these projects for appropriating tradition to establish the legitimacy of the military regime. However, there has been no research dealing with important questions such as what kinds of architectural concerns were encountered in the process and which of the various images were ‘selected’ and ‘spread’ as the representative image of ‘Korean tradition’ [4]. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the architectural elements of these shrines-form, plan, elevation, structure, material, etc.

The 1966 Hyeonchungsa Sanctuary project was the first and representative project to create a national shrine led by the government. A ‘building’ was created to commemorate the national war hero, Admiral Yi Sun-sin, and a ‘place’ was formed to hold commemorative ceremonies. This study examines the assumption that these ‘building’ and ‘place’ are not simply aligned with the political purpose of a specific regime but reflect complex aspects, such as (1) people’s attitudes toward traditions at the time and (2) effort to decolonize the country that seeks to establish national identity. In addition, this project influenced the subsequent projects of creating the historic sites of the patriotic sages (war heroes and historical figures or intellectuals). The study aims to examine the conflicts and compromises between the historical architectural style and new materials in the process of translating traditional architecture into concrete structures in the 1960s. Through design analysis of these buildings that had been under-represented in the fields of cultural heritage and architecture, this study will identify and trace the traditional image that was carefully selected and re-illuminated by such translation.

In this study, the architectural characteristics of the Hyeonchungsa National Shrine are identified in the following four categories first, and how these characteristics appear again and are transformed in other projects. First of all, the architectural typology of Hyeonchungsa is based on the Confucian-style ‘shrine’ of traditional Korean architecture. This raises very intriguing questions. Why was the shrine built: not commemorating the house where Admiral Yi Sun-sin grew up or his tomb? Why was the Confucian-style ‘shrine’ in traditional architecture chosen as the national event venue of the modern nation?

The second question concerns the form of this ‘shrine’. Its roof form is somewhat contradictory. In traditional Korean architecture, the roof is a very important element that primarily determines the structure and form of a building. There are three main types of roofs: hipped roof, hipped-and-gabled roof, and gabled roof. Traditionally, the gabled roof was used for most shrines. However, what is interesting is that the hipped-and-gabled roof was used for Hyeonchungsa shrine. Additionally, even after that, the hipped-and-gabled roof was applied to all buildings built as ‘national shrines’. Why was the conventional combination of program and roof design interrupted? Why did it not follow the defined design accurately while borrowing format and program of shrines? Were there any specific buildings that served as models for the design of these national shrines? These questions are interconnected with the public perception of traditional architecture in Korea; therefore, they have to be addressed together with other research questions dealing with national identity-building projects in architecture.

The third is the façade design. In traditional Korean architecture, the bracket part is the most prominent component of the façade design, and it is divided into two types: the method of placing the bracket sets only on the columns (*jusimpo*) and placing the bracket sets between the columns as well as on the columns (*dapo*). There must be a special reason

for selecting the more complex form of bracket sets while creating them in concrete would be trickier. Referring to the façade design and decorative elements, which images were adopted for the building to be shown to the public and for the place where the national event was held was traced. In addition, at first, traditional multi-colored *dancheong* was painted as if it were cultural heritage, but in the late 1960s, off-white *dancheong* was painted to clearly reveal a different exterior from that of the historical buildings. In what modern sense can this brightly colored *dancheong* be interpreted?

The fourth is the use of reinforced concrete structure. All the national shrines imitated the form and style of traditional architecture but thoroughly used reinforced concrete instead of wood in the use of materials. Due to the complex nature of the wooden structure, many parts are combined with the ‘joints’, and there are many small members and decorative parts, so why did they use concrete when it would be very difficult to imitate them in concrete? What kind of architectural attitude or concept did the use of the modern material of concrete stem from while following the historical wooden structure in appearance?

In this study, we will examine the Hyeonchungsa project according to the above four questions and discuss what traditions were selectively inherited in the process, and what conditions or discursive influences such selections were influenced by at the time. In addition, we will discuss the significance of Hyeonchungsa National Shrine as a prototype by examining the following 13 projects in general.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Analytic Framework

In this study, the Hyeonchungsa National Shrine commemorating Admiral Yi Sun-sin is analyzed first, and 13 national shrines commemorating the nationally significant figures built after that are compared. Table 1 shows the façades of 14 cases that are the subject of this study. They are very similar in appearance and look like historical wooden structures, but they are actually concrete buildings built in various parts of Korea from the late 1960s to the late 1970s. They are listed in chronological order from A to N.

These buildings were newly built as shrines in historic sites related to Korean historical figures from the late 1960s to the 1970s, aiming for instilling the national spirit. A series of cultural heritage projects were initiated by President Park Chung-hee (1917–1979), who seized power by a military coup in 1961 and led economic development and industrialization, appealing to nationalism during his 18-year presidency. Although these projects have been treated as important cases of invented tradition in Korea, design analysis of these buildings has never been carried out. These relics can be categorized into two main groups. The first is the relics of the wars pertinent to overcoming the national crisis, and the second was the relic of ancient sages related to Korean traditional ideology [5]. The brief records on these sites and projects are noted in a report titled “Historic Sites of Patriotic Spirit and Ancient Sages” published in 1978 [6]. This report contains 39 relics that have been repaired or refurbished, including 28 relics of overcoming national crises and 11 relics of ancient sages contributed to establish national ideology. These sites include birthplaces, graves, fortress walls, shrines, Confucian academies, temples, and so on; the related figures mainly include outstanding war heroes in history, independence activists during the Japanese colonial period, and Confucian scholars and kings with notable achievements.

Only fourteen shrines were chosen out of 39 historical sites for this study because their shrine buildings were newly constructed. Excluded from the scope are some sites where original shrine buildings were maintained with repair, as in Dosanseowon and Pyochungsa (Figure 1).

2.2. Methodology: Creating Analytic Drawings

Among the 14 cases, the research scope will be centered around the Hyeonchungsa project. Admiral Yi Sun-sin, a war hero of Korea (Joseon Dynasty period) defeating Japan multiple times in the 17th century and later venerated at Hyeonchungsa, was the most active commemorative among many historical figures. Admiral Yi Sun-sin had been very

popular with the public as a national hero during the Japanese colonial period, and he was also highlighted as a war hero after liberation, but Admiral Yi was most actively re-examined during the Park Chung-hee era. The ‘Hyunchungsa Sanctuary Project’ is the most representative of the Yi Sun-sin commemorative projects. The refurbishment of Yi Sun-sin’s shrines was carried out across the country, starting with the Hyeonchungsa restoration project. Moreover, the Yi Sun-sin commemorative projects took up the largest amount of investment in the cultural heritage sector at the time. The ‘Hyeonchungsa Project’ ultimately became a prototype that borrowed traditional architecture to create a national commemorative space. This can be confirmed through the reference of the Hyeonchungsa project as a ‘guideline’ for other projects that were formed after that [7]. By examining the physical change of the existing village and the formation of new facilities in the Hyeonchungsa project, this study aims to trace which historical building or function, architectural element, and architectural tradition including detailed design was taken into consideration in creating a national or ethnic sanctuary. Therefore, the analysis of 13 other national shrines built after the Hyeonchungsa National Shrine was conducted as well. Table 1 examines how the design of the ‘national shrine’ demonstrated at Hyeonchungsa was repeated, transformed, and applied to the remaining 13 projects.

Table 1. Comparison of Features in Different Shrines.

	Shrine	Historic Figures	Completion	No. of Front ‘kan’	Front Column Space	Roof	Bracket Type	Multi-Colored <i>Dancheong</i>
A	Hyeonchungsa, Asan	Yi Sun-sin	1967	5	Y	Hipped-and-Gabled Roof	Dapo	Y
B	Chungjangsa, Haengjusanseong, Goyang	Kwon Yul	1970	3	Y	Hipped-and-Gabled Roof	Dapo	Y
C	Jongyongsa, Chilbackuichong, Geumsan	Volunteer soldiers	1971	5	Y	Hipped-and-Gabled Roof	Dapo	Y → N (1976)
D	Yu Gwan-sun Memorial Hall, Cheonan	Yu Gwan-sun	1972	3	Y	Hipped-and-Gabled Roof	Jusimpo	Y
E	Anguksa, Nakseongdae, Seoul	Gang Gam-chan	1974	5	Y	Hipped-and-Gabled Roof	Jusimpo	Y
F	Chungjangsa, Gwangju	Kim Deok-ryeong	1975	3	Y	Hipped-and-Gabled Roof	Jusimpo	Y
G	Munseongsa, Ojukheon, Gangneung	Yulgok Yi I	1976	3	Y	Hipped-and-Gabled Roof	Jusimpo	Y
H	Chungmusa, Jeseungdang, Chungmu	Yi Sun-sin	1976	5	Y	Hipped-and-Gabled Roof	Jusimpo	N
I	Tongiljeon, Gyeongju	King Muyeol et al.	1977	5	Y	Hipped-and-Gabled Roof	Jusimpo	N
J	Sejongjeon, Yeongneung, Yeosu	King Sejong	1977	5	Y	Hipped-and-Gabled Roof	Jusimpo	N
K	Chunguisa, Yesan	Yun Bong-gil	1978	3	Y	Hipped-and-Gabled Roof	Jusimpo	N
L	Chungnyeolsa, Busan	Jeong Bal et al.	1978	5	Y	Hipped-and-Gabled Roof	Dapo	N
M	Chungnyeolsa, Chungju	Im Gyeong-up	1978	3	Y	Hipped-and-Gabled Roof	Jusimpo	N
N	Gwak Jae-woo Chungiksa, Uiryeong	Gwak Jae-woo	1978	5	Y	Hipped-and-Gabled Roof	Jusimpo	N



A. Hyeongchungsa, Asan (1967)



B. Chungjangsa, Haengjusanseong, Goyang (1970)



C. Jongyongsa, Chilbackui-chong, Geumsan (1971)



D. Yu Gwan-sun Memorial Hall, Cheonan (1972)



E. Anguksa, Nakseongdae, Seoul (1974)



F. Chungjangsa, Gwangju (1975)



G. Munseongsa, Ojukheon, Gangneung (1976)



H. Chungmusa, Jeseungdang, Chungmu (1976)



I. Tongiljeon, Gyeongju (1977)



J. Sejongjeon, Yeongneung, Yeosu (1977)



K. Chunguisa, Yesan (1978)



L. Chungnyeolsa, Busan (1978)



M. Chungnyeolsa, Chungju (1978)



N. Gwak Jae-woo Chungiksa, Uiryeong (1978)

Figure 1. Fourteen Newly Built ‘National Shrines’ with Similar Appearance.

The main features were compared for these 13 cases. (Table 1, Figure 2) As a result of comparative analysis, newly built shrines commonly had hipped-and-gabled roofs and often had a symmetrical elevation of five kan (bays). A common feature is that the front column space is open like a veranda. Wooden brackets supporting the roof—*gongpo*—were

used in all cases, but only four shrines were of the *dapo* type in which the bracket sets are consecutively placed along the façade, and the rest of the shrines were the *jusimpo* type, in which the bracket sets are placed only on the columns. Additionally, it can be seen that the colorful traditional *dancheong* was changed to *dancheong* in eggshell color after 1967.

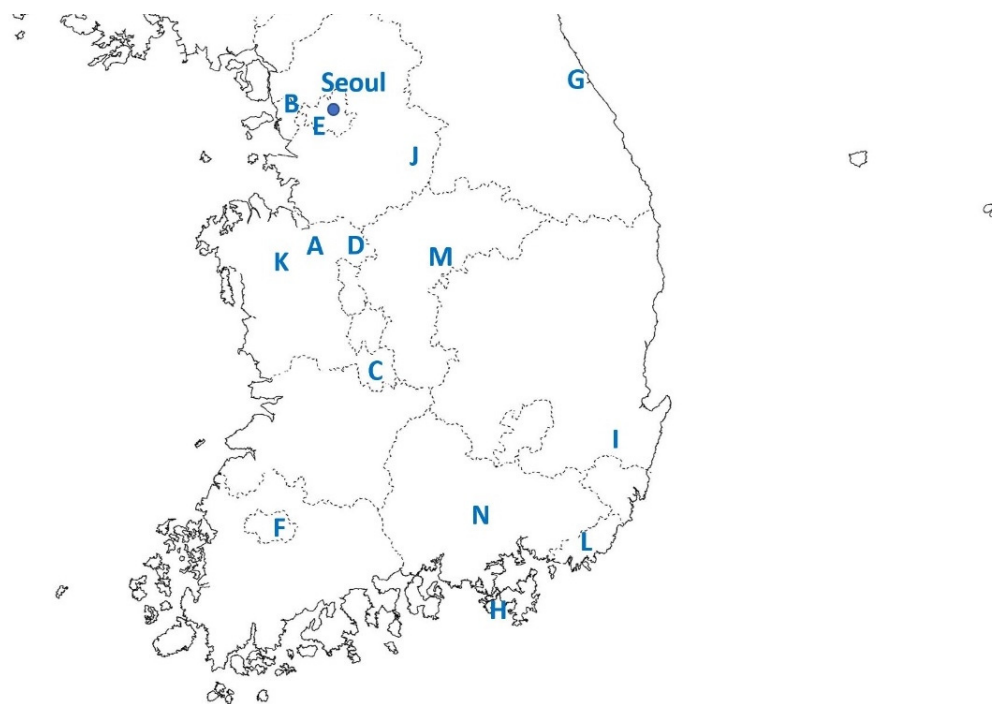


Figure 2. Locations of the Fourteen National Shrines (scattered all over the country).

Meanwhile, in order to examine the discourses at the time in the above shrines as well as Hyeonchungsa, related reports, public documents stored in the National Archives of Korea, and newspaper articles were referred to. Changes in the boundary and building composition, detailed design of buildings, and pertinent discussions in the Hyeonchungsa project were analyzed in particular.

2.3. Background and Preceding Studies

Existing studies have been conducted to critically analyze the political context in which traditional culture or cultural heritage that we have taken for granted in Korea were created or employed.

These studies are based on discourses pointing out that nationalism is a historical and artificial product that emerged after the dissolution of the preceding religions or dynasties. Historically, Anderson regarded the nation as ‘imagined communities’ and defined it as a community imagining sovereignty by sharing common characteristics such as language. Giddens argued that nationalism is an essential element in a nation-state and that nationalism is the basis for cultural homogeneity among national members. The integration of the nation-state cannot be sustained by the administrative means only, and therefore, emotional integration stemming from cultural homogeneity should form its foundation [8].

Therefore, it is very common to define and use traditional culture in nation-states, and Anderson cites European tradition-making in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as an example, arguing that such a phenomenon intensively occurs in times of rapid social change or nation building [9]. According to Smith, nationalists justify the identity of the present community and strengthen solidarity to tackle current issues by finding ‘great antiquity’ in history and appealing to the people for national unity and efforts to revive the ‘ancient golden age’ [10]. According to Mosse, nationalism and national monuments are

mobilized for modern popular ruling, and neoclassical monuments and buildings built in Europe in the 19th century and national events held there are used to recognize the nation as a single community and stabilize people being anxious in the process of industrialization by highlighting underlying symbols and traditions of the previous era [11].

Tradition-making in Korea emerged in the 1960s, a very late period compared to Europe. Nationalism in Korea, which experienced the colonial period, did not simply seek common characteristics but appeared in conjunction with the national development through post-colonialization or modernization. Contrary to what the Japanese colonialists viewed Korea as a fallen nation that had no choice but to receive colonial rule, it concealed a short history as a modern nation, highlighting a ‘half-million-year history’, emphasized national identity or the excellence of tradition. All of these efforts were made to meditate on the mindset that our nation has the potential for modernization or future development [12].

Research on Korean tradition-making mainly focuses on the ‘Park Chung-hee regime’, which put up tradition for modernization and the establishment of legitimate dictatorship and military regime. Additionally, there are many studies analyzing the peculiarities related to the competition for legitimacy in the confrontation between the two Koreas. Likewise, several studies have been conducted to study the political implications of creating national identity. Jeon Jae-ho argued that commemoration of various historical figures and the creation of space including Hyeonchungsa dilutes the government’s pro-Japanese image resulting from the 1965 Korea-Japan Agreement with Yi Sun-sin’s anti-Japanese image or rationalizes the rule of a former military president who seized power through a coup [13]. Additionally, Eun Jeong-tae analyzed the ‘cultural heritage purification project’ of the Park Chung-hee regime, saying that the historic site was a place to educate the public on ideology, and the commemorative project for Yi Sun-sin emphasized the justification of the regime and a totalitarian (*myeolsa-bong-gong*, sacrificing one’s personal interest for public good) view of the state [1]. Ahn Chang-mo saw that anti-communist ideology and tradition were used to secure the legitimacy of the regime from the late 1960s and evaluated that selective succession of limited traditions was made in this process [14].

These studies criticized the political use of tradition and pointed out that the traditional ideology emphasized by the state caused strong opposition from intellectuals, and that its significance has almost faded today.

However, the limitations of these studies are that they are mostly studies in the fields of history or political science, so they only evaluated that traditional architecture or cultural heritage were used in the times, and that they did not include a professional analysis of buildings such as which architectural traditions were selected in what era. A separate analysis of architecture is necessary because unlike the political discourse that has changed with the times, the architectural outcome has been recognized by people until today, confused with a ‘cultural heritage’ building rather than a modern monument. Similar buildings were built repeatedly in a short period of time under the initiative of the state. As popular cultural heritage, these buildings have established themselves as a representative or familiar image of tradition to the public. In addition, the peculiar feature of Korean architecture is that it does not differ significantly in the style of the times or regional characteristics. This feature has the advantage of easily creating a representative image of “traditional architecture” that many people can sympathize with, so it has a stronger impact than other traditional resources.

3. Hyeonchungsa: ‘Hybrid Design’ of National Shrine

3.1. Process of Hyeonchungsa Sanctuary Project

Venerated at Hyeonchungsa, Admiral Yi Sun-sin has been commemorated as a symbol of patriotism in Korean history in various ways pertinent to the Joseon Dynasty, the Japanese colonial period, and each period of the Republic of Korea after liberation. Hyeonchungsa was built in Admiral Yi’s hometown in 1706 after Admiral Yi’s decease as a Confucius shrine. However, the shrine was demolished, and its site only remained in the late 19th century. Yi Sun-sin was reilluminated as a national hero in the 1930s, during the

Japanese colonial period, and nationalist activists centered on the Dong-a Ilbo Newspaper collected donations to rebuild Hyeonchungsa.

The biggest turning point was its reconstruction in 1932 for Hyeonchungsa to become a significant national symbol for all people. Sympathetic public opinion was also demonstrated in the media of the period, particularly led by Dong-A Ilbo Newspaper, a nationalist newspaper run by Koreans during the colonial period. When the completion and portrait enshrinement ceremony was held on 5 June 1932, approximately 30,000 people gathered in swarms from all over the country. This Hyeonchungsa restoration movement enjoyed far-reaching power in various aspects; for instance, the serial novel and special articles about Admiral Yi, published in the Dong-A Ilbo Newspaper, was notably popular among people. While the Japanese Government-General promoted an investigation project on historical remains, Hyeonchungsa conservation project became a nationwide nationalistic movement, not led by the Japanese Government-General of Korea but Korean people [15].

Until the mid-60s, however, the Hyeonchungsa area remained as a serene rural village, and Hyeonchungsa itself was a small shrine located at the back of the village (Figure 3). Hyeonchungsa became a large-scale site as it is now due to the sanctuary project that began in 1966. In March of 1967, the Hyeonchungsa area, in size of approximately 330,000 m², was designated as Historical Site [16].

In March 1966, Chungcheongnam-do drafted a plan to transform Hyeonchungsa into a national sanctuary, and according to the Presidential order, a comprehensive plan was established in the following month. On 28 April of that year, President Park, attending the 421st Birthday Ceremony of Admiral Yi, ordered additionally to expand the boundary of the shrine and build the main hall magnificently. According to the documents of the National Archives of Korea, the presidential directives in 1966 are as shown in Table 2 [17].



Figure 3. Panoramic View of Hyeonchungsa before its Reconstruction Project in 1966 (Source: Cultural Heritage Administration).

Table 2. Details of the Presidential Directives on Hyeonchungsa in 1966.

Date	Details of the President's Order
23 April	Establish a sanctuary for Admiral Yi's Hyeonchungsa in Asan city
28 April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand the Hyeonchungsa site for more than 330,000 m² 2. Office of Cultural Properties (a former title of the Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea) to establish the Hyeonchungsa reconstruction plan 3. Construct the shrine for Admiral Yi to be magnificent (including ancillary facilities) 4. Designate the anniversary of Admiral Yi as a national holiday and legislate it as a national event 5. Demolish houses within the site and establish a national housing in the vicinity for the residents 6. Re-adjust the farmland in the site, construct roads, and plant trees

The Hyeonchungsa project was called a ‘sanctuary’ or ‘purification’ project. As indicated by the terms, ‘sanctuary’ and ‘purification’, the project at that time was carried out in a way that gave authority to tradition and negated unnecessary histories or objects.

According to the president’s order of securing the site in 1966, messy farms, barns and houses other than the head family house were demolished. A part of the village where Hyeonchungsa was located became a park as 104 buildings comprising 34 family dwellings, total 2891 m², were pulled down. Residents of the demolished housing were relocated to the National Housing Village, newly constructed in the vicinity (Figures 4 and 5) [18]. Left in the village were the Hyeonchungsa shrine, the head family house, a family shrine, two old trees, a well, and a *Jungryeo* monument gate. These elements had significance as Confucius monuments in villages of the Joseon Dynasty period, and they belong to ‘ritual space’ of the village [19]. In all surroundings, traces of a rural village completely disappeared. Likewise, the Hyeonchungsa project did not only aim for refurbishment of a cultural heritage, but also grant new national identity to an ordinary village. Such purification severed the link between Hyeonchungsa and the village and gained ground on creation of new space dedicated to commemoration.

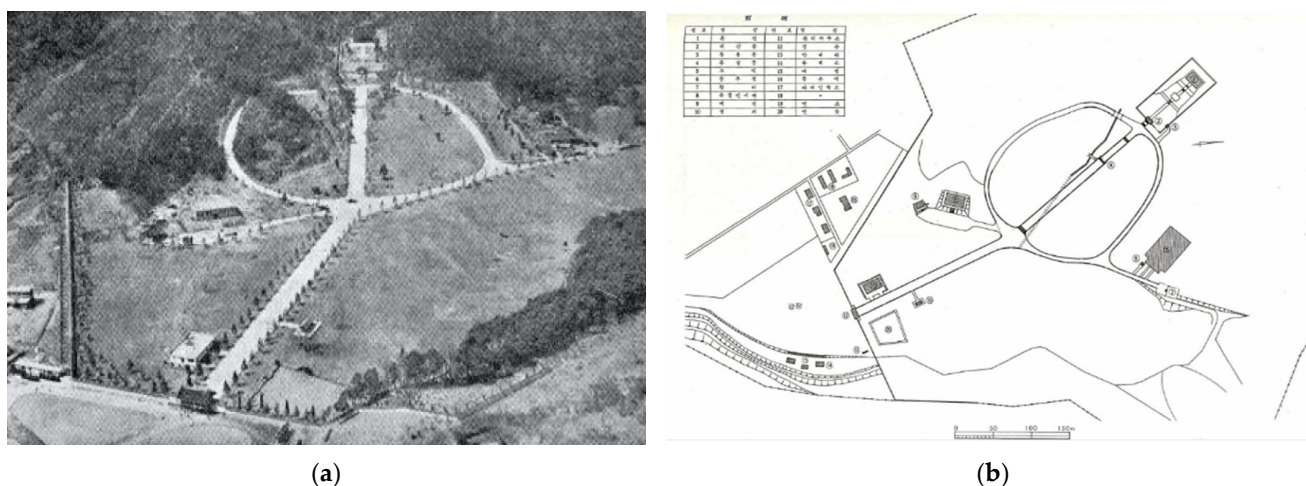


Figure 4. (a) Panoramic View of Hyeonchungsa in 1979 (Source: Kyunghyang Shinmun Newspaper) (b) Site Plan of Hyeonchungsa in 1967 (Source: Cultural Heritage Administration).



Figure 5. Aerial View of Hyeonchungsa Shrine and National Housing Village in 1968 (Source: National Archives of Korea).

3.2. Newly Constructed Main Hall of Hyeonchungsa Shrine

Although the Hyeonchungsa project claimed to be a cultural heritage repair project, it was actually a project to build a new national shrine. The existing village, streets, and farmlands were removed, and a shrine, a triple gate, and a road leading to the shrine were constructed within the main space.

The shrine area of Hyeonchungsa was the most important place not only because it was where ritual ceremonies were held during the birthday celebrations of Admiral Yi, but also because a podium was installed in front of the shrine, serving as the backdrop for the president's speech. Starting in 1963, before the 1966 sanctuary project, the president began to attend the birthday celebrations (Figure 6).

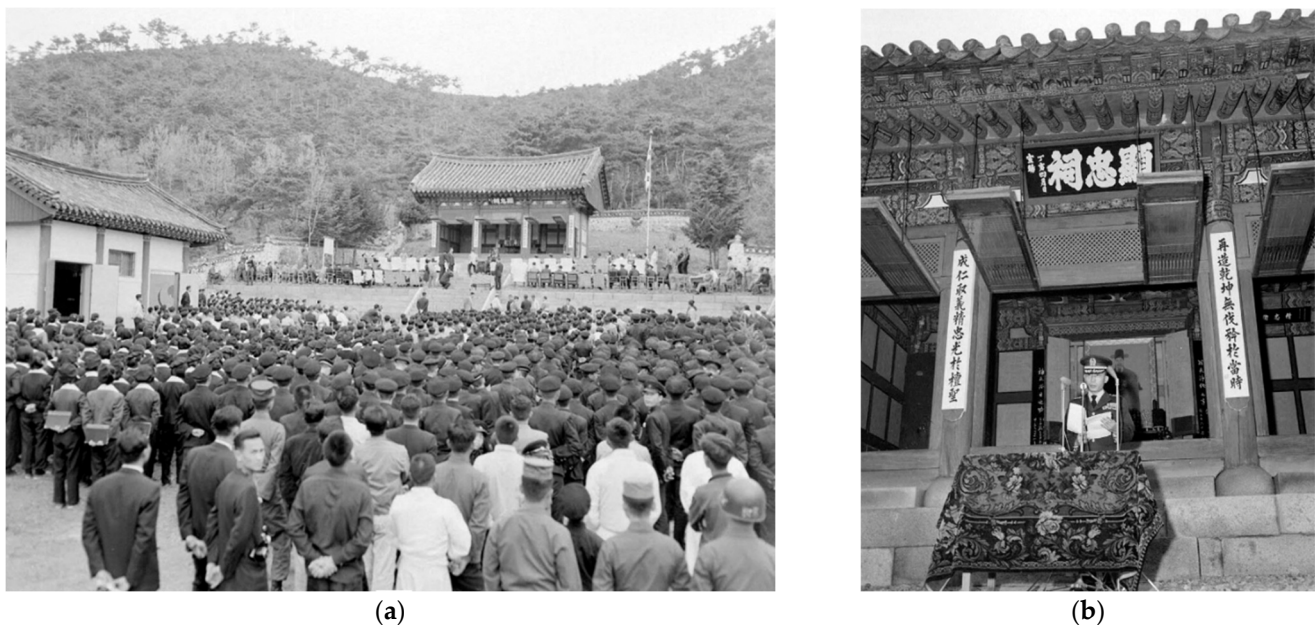


Figure 6. (a) Ritual Ceremony for Admiral Yi's birthday in 1963. (b) Acting President Park delivering a commemorative speech for the event in front of the shrine built in 1932. (Source: National Archives of Korea).

In accordance with the instructions to “build the new shrine magnificently”, construction work for the new shrine began on 4 August 1966, and was completed on 24 May 1967, the following year [20]. Kang Bong-jin (1917–2003) was in charge of the design of the shrine, and he was a cultural heritage preservation architect and a modern architect who had a lot of experience in the actual measurement project and maintenance design of cultural heritage [21]. As the shrine was newly built, an original road leading to the worship place was also widened, and a red-spiked gate in front of the shrine was rebuilt in a bigger size with concrete. Such expansion seems to be in mind to accommodate large numbers of people at national events.

Institutional efforts were also made to elevate Hyeonchungsa as a national shrine. In January 1967, Admiral Yi's birthday was designated as a legal anniversary. A new birthday rite was also created, and from 1967, the rite was held in a modified form of Confucius shrine (Munmyo)'s rites, and the minister was invited to participate as a consecrator. From 1969 onwards, the tea ceremony was held in front of the royal portraits of successive kings. Both the Munmyo ritual and the royal tea ceremony were important events in which the king participated in the Joseon Dynasty. The report published at the time (History of Asan Hyeonchungsa) notes that the ritual was newly established according to that of Munmyo, but there is no information on how the Hyeonchungsa shrine was designed [20]. In the next chapter, the architectural elements of the Hyeonchungsa shrine, including the overall

layout, plan, elevation, and structure, were analyzed, and it was attempted to trace which elements of traditional architecture are reflected in the national shrine building.

3.3. Construction of Other Shrines Based on the Prototype Hyeonchungsa

The Hyeonchungsa project became an exemplar for subsequent projects of commemorating patriotic ancient sages who contributed to national protection. Policies on the restoration of cultural heritage in Korea changed considerably since the 1970s. While “maintenance of original form” and “partial and minor repair” were emphasized in the 1960s, “comprehensive” and “active refurbishment and purification” were targeted in the 1970s. The Hyeonchungsa project was evaluated as the project marking the beginning of a rush for these “active refurbishment and purification” [22].

As “a sanctuary for the nation”, the Hyeonchungsa Reconstruction Project was financially supported by the government on a large scale. This initiative expanded the scope into many places, including the ‘Refurbishment Project of Five Great Historic Sites,’ by transforming the shrines for historical figures into national commemorative parks. While following the spatial layout of Confucian shrines which place a shrine, a road connecting to the worship place, and a triple gate along the central axis, a plaza for the public was additionally planned and a traditional-style shrine in concrete was reconstructed. As to the design of the main halls, the 13 shrines examined above are similar to Hyeonchungsa in many aspects. These projects related to the commemoration of ancient sages who contributed to national protection reached their zenith at ‘Tongiljeon Hall (Hall of Unification)’ in Gyeongju City, succeeding the precedents such as Hyeonchungsa shrine, Ojukheon House, Dosanseowon Neo-Confucian Academy, and Chilbaek Cemetery of Righteous Fighters. (Figure 1. Case I) These earlier projects showed a tendency of constructing an additional memorial hall and a shrine associated with historical figures on existing historic sites, but the Tongiljeon Hall project completed in 1977 was different. It was a completely new construction of a shrine for the ancient hero of the Silla Dynasty on a newly secured site. The shrine at the Tongiljeon Hall is a 5-kan building with a hipped-and-gabled roof. It was similar to the Hyeonchungsa shrine, but it reflected ancient wooden structure to a greater extent to show that it inherited the tradition of the ancient Silla Dynasty, not the recent Joseon Dynasty. In addition, instead of a colorful *dancheong* painting, the building was painted in eggshell color to reveal its material of concrete without disguise.

Concrete shrines, built after the Hyeonchungsa project, reflected various styles of traditional wooden structure among multi-bracket sets (*dapo*), simple-bracket sets (*jusimpo*), and bird’s wing bracket arms (*ikgong*), according to the time period each shrine had taken into account. However, common features that can be found in almost all shrines include the hipped-and-gabled roof, 5-kan (bays) width in elevation, and open front column space for ceremonies and worship space. In the case of *dancheong*, *dancheong* in eggshell color was used in Chilbaek Cemetery of Righteous Fighters in 1976, and since then, *dancheong* in eggshell color has been used instead of multi-colored *dancheong* in most shrines.

That the traditional ‘the hipped-and-gabled roof’ was also applied to the National Cemetery is compelling. The main entrance of the Military Cemetery, ‘Gate of Unknown Soldiers’, was constructed on 20 October 1954, and it was built of concrete structure with the hipped-and-gabled roof. However, it was criticized that its appearance and material were not appropriate, so it was rebuilt with wood and a gabled roof on 10 December 1963, which was before the Hyeonchungsa project. It was depicted that this new gate imitated the gate style often used for shrines, palatial main halls, or halls of Buddhist temples during the end of the Goryeo Dynasty and the early Joseon Dynasty [23].

This new gate with the gabled roof generates an impression similar to the gate of Jongmyo shrine, and it had streamlined simple-bracket (*jusimpo*) sets under the roof. In 1967, the Military Cemetery was changed as the National Cemetery, and the Gate of Unknown Soldiers was renamed ‘Hyeonchungmun Gate’, similar to Hyeonchungsa. President Park Chung-hee ordered the reconstruction of the main gate of the National Cemetery on Liberation Day in 1968, and the new Hyeonchungmun Gate was completed on

30 May of the following year [24]. It is confirmed that the *Hyeonchungmun* Gate was rebuilt in the form of hipped-and-gabled roof style with multi-bracket sets (*dapo*), and at this time, *Hyeonchungmun* Gate was also designed by Kang Bong-jin, the designer of Hyeonchungsa [25] (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Chronological Changes in the Main Entrance's Roof of Seoul National Cemetery (Photographs Taken in 1961, 1966, and 1969; source: National Archives of Korea).

4. Characteristics of Hyeonchungsa Main Hall

What were traditional elements specifically used in the design of the national shrines? When creating or re-creating a traditional image, architecture of which time periods did they refer? Among the palace architecture representing the country in the traditional period (Joseon Dynasty period), the Confucian architecture that performed national ceremonies in the Joseon Dynasty, and the most decorative and splendid Buddhist architecture, which ones were selected and combined? In this chapter, the architectural features of the main hall of Hyeonchungsa are examined in detail in the order of plan, elevation, and cross-section. In addition, their context, including what elements were borrowed and what architectural forms stem from those elements, are analyzed.

4.1. Layout and Plan Reflecting the Confucian 'Shrine'

The front façade consists of 5 bays, and the side consists of 4 bays, forming a rectangular plan as a whole (Figure 8). The most characteristic part of the plan is the southernmost row A, which is open to the outside space. This is a 'worship space', and it is the most public space for visitors to commemorate Admiral Yi Sun-sin. It seems to have been planned as the most important space to commemorate Admiral Yi to promote him as a national hero. The remaining spaces in rows B, C, and D are 'enshrining spaces' surrounded by walls and windows, and Admiral Yi's portrait is stored here. This 'enshrining space' is used only for special events and is a ceremonial and symbolic space that normally does not allow people to access. The composition of this 'worship and enshrining space' seems to be modeled after a 'Confucian shrine' (Figure 9). It is presumed that its spatial character resembles that of a Confucian shrine because the features of the memorial and ceremonies held at the Hyeonchungsa National Shrine are most similar to those of the Confucian rites. In fact, the most architecturally similar example to the main hall of Hyeonchungsa is the representative Confucian-shrine, 'Daeseongjeon Hall at Munmyo Shrine'.

Another thing that can be confirmed through the plan is the scale of the building. The old main hall was a rather simple building with three front bays and two side bays, but the newly built main hall has a scale of five bays by four bays. Although this does not seem like a big difference at first glance, this 'scale of five bays' was the largest scale that a Confucian shrine could have in Korea. During the Joseon Dynasty period, only 'Daeseongjeon hall', the highest level of worship space for Confucius, could be in that size.

On the other hand, the main hall has a front yard and is enclosed with surrounding walls as shown in Figure 10. This is a fairly common arrangement in Korean architecture to enclose the outer space around the central building, and it is also found in Buddhist temples and government buildings. The three gates were erected to protect the area of the central building, and in the case of ceremonies, it marked the hierarchy of participants. At Hyeonchungsa, students and the general public gathered at the grand plaza outside the three gates during the birthday celebration events, and the president and major guests participated in the event inside the three gates (Figure 11).

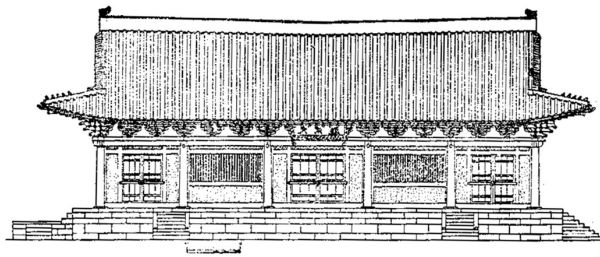
4.2. Analysis of Elevation

The most notable feature of the elevation is the shape of the roof. The roof is an important factor in determining the first impression of a building in Korean architecture. In the case of a single-story building, the roof occupies one-third to as much as half of the total height, so the overall impression of the building depends on which type of roof is applied. The type of roof used in the main hall at Hyeonchungsa corresponds to the '*paljak* roof (hipped-and-gabled roof)' among the two representative types of roofs in Korean traditional architecture (Figure 12). It has larger space under the eaves of the front and the back. Additionally, when viewed from the front, the width of the roof is larger, creating imposing and fancy atmosphere. The use of this hipped-and-gabled roof is somewhat unexpected. As explained in Section 4.1, the spatial composition of the main hall of Hyeonchungsa is similar to that of the Confucian shrine, but most of the Confucian shrines have a gabled roof instead of hipped-and-gabled roofs. In other words, it is quite interesting that although the spatial composition followed the Confucian shrine, the roof type, which is a very important factor influencing the overall impression of a building, did not follow it.

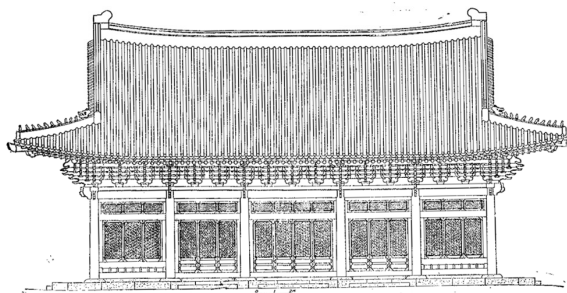
The second thing to note is the *gongpo* (bracket) part. The bracket part, which is located between the columns and the roof, not only serves as a structural support, but also decorates the building and symbolically represents the class of the building (Figure 13). The main hall of Hyeonchungsa used the brackets of a '*dapo*' type in which the bracket sets are also placed on and between the pillars, and this is the most splendid type because the bracket sets repeatedly appear on the façade of the building. In the case of Confucian shrines, frugality was often emphasized, so the bracket sets were placed only on the pillars or simply decorated with bird's wing-shaped bracket arms. Bracket sets of the *dapo* type were often used in palace architecture or Buddhist architecture. As with the hipped-and-gabled roof, there is a rare case of a '*dapo* type' used only for the enshrining space of Confucius. However, even if the bracket sets of *dapo* type were used, its splendor does not stand out very much because it is painted with monochromatic *dancheong*.

The detailed form of the bracket sets in the main hall of Hyeonchungsa is very similar to that of the Daeseongjeon Hall at Munmyo Shrine in Seoul, but *dancheong* at Hyeonchungsa is colored in a colorful way, giving it a splendid feeling completely different from that of the Daeseongjeon Hall. Therefore, it can be seen that the selection of *dapo* brackets in Hyeonchungsa was intentionally done to emphasize splendor.

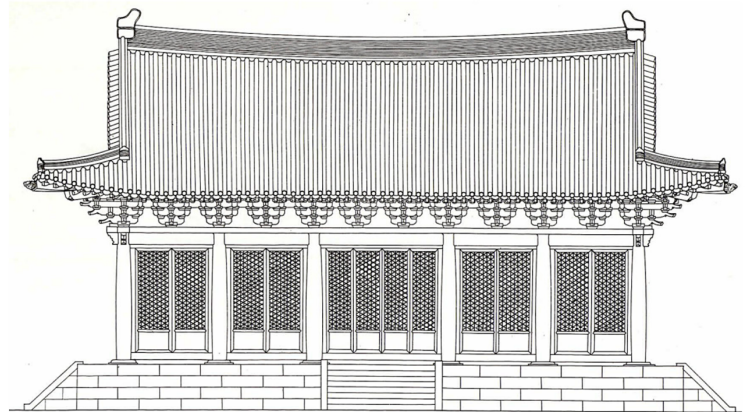
Lastly, the façade of the building is mostly composed of splendidly decorated lattice windows, which is completely different from the one used by the Daeseongjeon hall at Munmyo Shrine using simple wooden boards and lattice windows. Rather, this is reminiscent of the façade of the palace buildings or the Daeungjeon (main worship space) halls at Buddhist temples (Figure 14).

[Elevation]

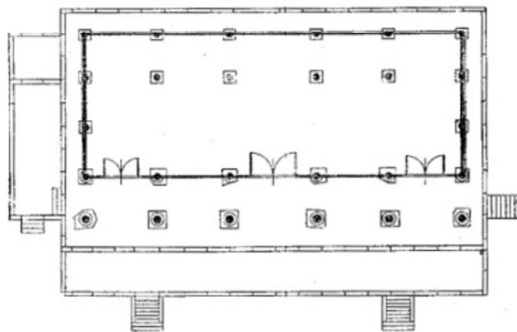
(a) Daeseongjeon Hall of Munmyo Shrine



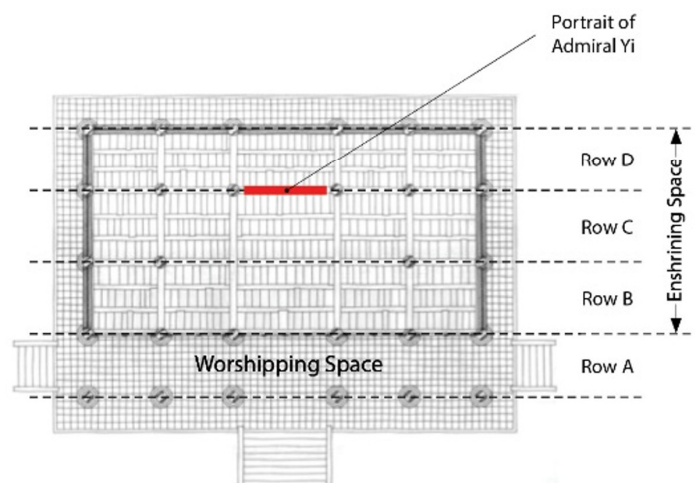
(b) Main Hall of Deoksugung Palace



(c) Hyeonchungsa Shrine

[Plan]

(a) Daeseongjeon Hall of Munmyo Shrine



(c) Hyeonchungsa Shrine

Figure 8. Comparison between the design proposal of the (c) Hyeonchungsa shrine and (a) Daeseongjeon Hall of Munmyo shrine and (b) Main Hall of Deoksugung Palace (elevation and plan, not drawn in scale) (Source: Bong-jin Kang, Cultural Heritage Administration).



(a)



(b)

Figure 9. (a) Front Column Space for Worshipping (b) Enshrining Space (source: Cultural Heritage Administration).

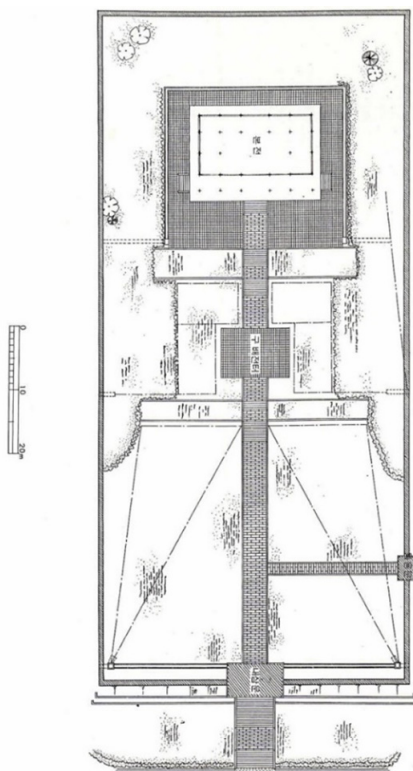


Figure 10. The Main Hall and Surrounding walls (source: Cultural Heritage Administration).

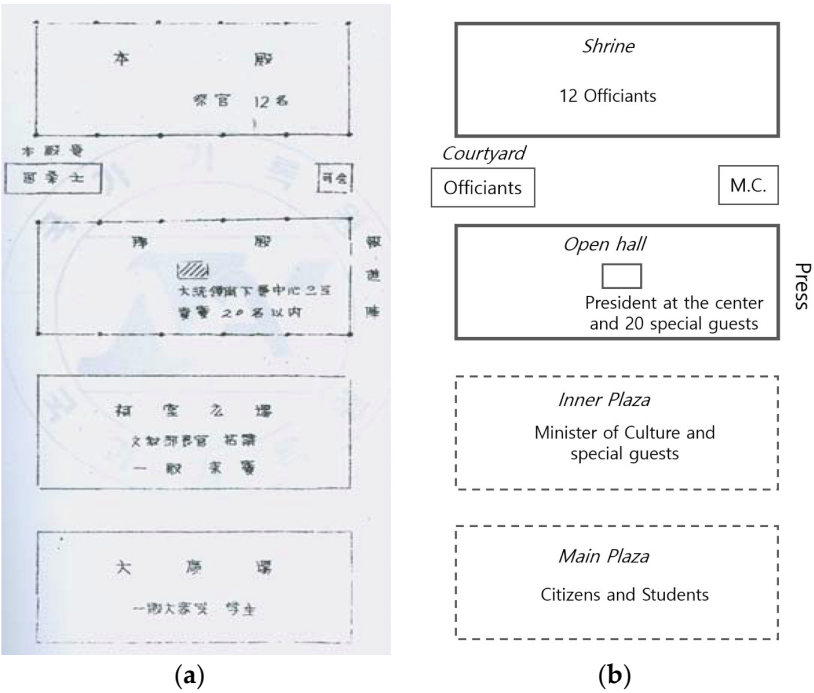


Figure 11. Organization for the Ritual Ceremony of Admiral Yi’s Birthday in 1967 ((a): diagram of the original document, National Archives of Korea) ((b): translated and drawn by the author).



Figure 12. Two Representative Types of Korean Roofs (a) Hipped-and-Gabled Roof (Daeungjeon Hall, Bulguksa Temple) (b) Gabled Roof (Previous Main Hall of Hyeonchungsa Built in 1932) (Source: Cultural Heritage Administration, Asan City).

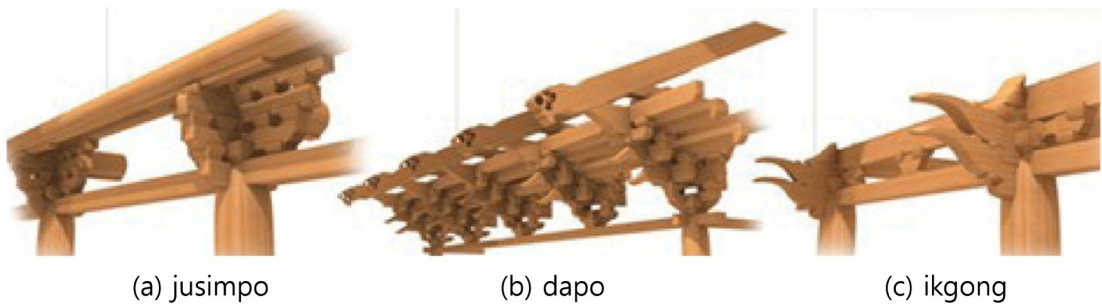


Figure 13. Types of the Gongpo (bracket): (a–c) (Source: Doopedia by Doosan Corporation).

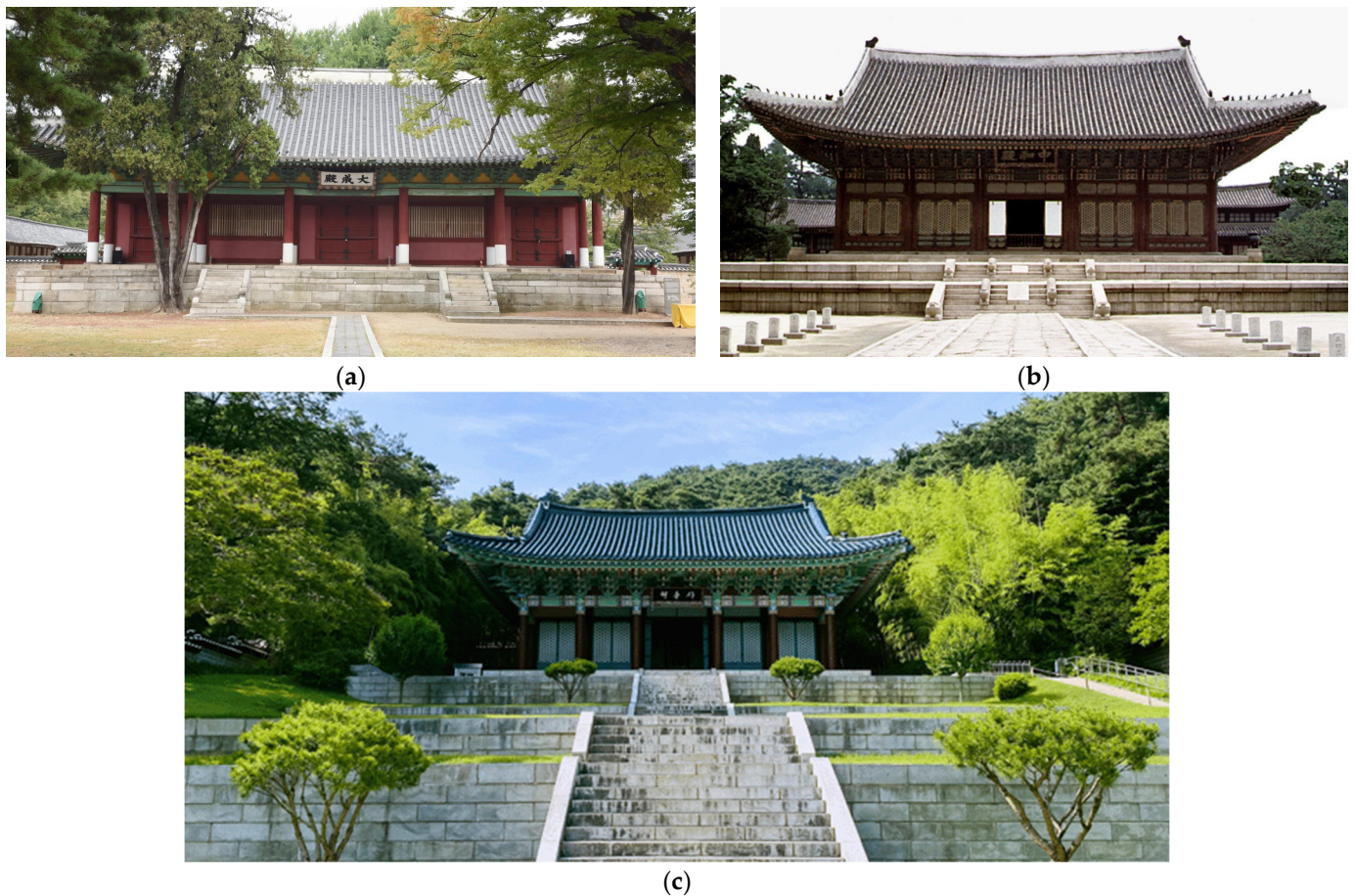


Figure 14. Comparison of Façade Design (a) Daeseongjeon Hall of Munmyo Shrine (b) Main Hall of Deoksugung Palace (c) Main Hall of Hyeonchungsa (Source: Cultural Heritage Administration).

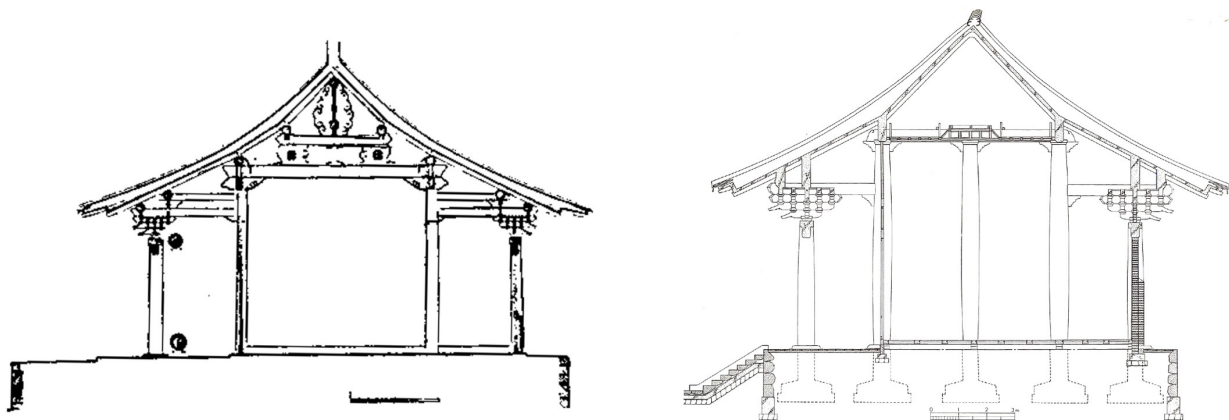
In terms of the spatial composition and function, Hyeonchungsa was modeled after the Confucian shrine, but it can be seen that the exterior did not pursue the Confucian frugality but the grandeur of the palace or the splendor of the Buddhist architecture. The National Shrine was not simply designed as the most prestigious building as a shrine, but its design selectively borrowed each characteristic of various types of high-end architecture such as palaces and temples in traditional Korean architecture. Looking at the 14 shrines built after Hyeonchungsa, *dapo* bracket type and *dancheong* are not consistently found. In some cases, *dapo* was used, but depending on the historical background of each project, the bracket type related to the time was chosen. As to *dancheong*, it is characterized by the change to simple off-white *dancheong* instead of multicolored *dancheong* since the construction of the Chilbaek Cemetery of Righteous Fighters in 1976. The background of applying such *dancheong* will be dealt with in detail in Section 5.

4.3. Analysis of Sections

The exterior of Hyeonchungsa looks like a traditional wooden building, but it is made of concrete; a cross-section of the roof reveals this clearly. Although the exterior is in the form of a hipped-and-gabled roof, many parts of the internal structure are omitted compared to the original wooden structure. In traditional wooden architecture, beams and purlins are the main structural members, and in particular, the purlins are not only members that bear the load, but they are indispensable elements in wooden construction as the number of them is even used for classifying the structural types of buildings such as 5-ryangga (having 5 purlins in the cross-section) and 7-ryangga (having 7 purlins in the cross-section). However, in the cross section of the main hall of Hyeonchungsa, important

structural members such as purlins and beams do not appear at all. Ceiling panels were installed on the interior and the roof structure was not visible from the inside, so only the visible part was treated like wood. For example, the part exposed to the outside of the wall under the eaves was rounded in a semicircular shape and treated as if it were a purlin (Figure 15).

[Section]



(a) Daeseongjeon Hall of Munmyo Shrine

(c) Hyeonchungsa Shrine

Figure 15. Comparison between Section of the Hyeonchungsa Shrine and Daeseongjeon Hall of Munmyo shrine (not drawn in scale) (Source: Bong-jin Kang, Cultural Heritage Administration).

In other words, what was important in the roof of Hyeonchungsa was “looking like traditional architecture” through the appearance of the tiled roof and the rafters of the eaves, rather than the faithful implementation of the wooden structure itself.

4.4. Sub-Conclusion

Hyeonchungsa Shrine borrowed and recombined elements from various references: its program, layout, plan, form, elevation, and structure. The overall spatial composition is close to that of a Confucian shrine in its plan, but elements of Buddhist architecture and palace architecture can also be found in the detailed parts such as the wooden baldachin.

This seems to be an attempt to create a new national monument that can show a traditional image, and at the same time, it was a building that inherited the cultural tradition but symbolically expressed the modern state with modern technology.

5. Discussion

5.1. The Birth of a National Shrine Modeled after a Confucian Shrine

As shown in Section 4, the major reference for the construction of the Hyeonchungsa National Shrine was the traditional architecture of the Confucian shrine. In this section, we will examine the reasons for the adoption of Confucian shrines and discuss the nature of the tradition-making projects from various perspectives and contexts.

First of all, the beginning of the establishment of a Confucian shrine as a national facility dates back to the Japanese colonial period, being a part of the national movement. Korean nationalists struggled to build traditional Korean shrines. Dangun (legendary founding father of ancient Korean kingdom), King Sejong, and Admiral Yi Sun-sin were mentioned as historical figures worthy of reverence. Of these, only a shrine dedicated to Admiral Yi Sun-sin was successfully built through a national fundraising campaign [26]. The outcome was the old main hall of Hyeonchungsa. Therefore, the reconstruction of Yi Sun-sin’s shrine could also be aligned with the context of the national movement during the Japanese colonial period (Figure 16) [27]. In other words, it is presumed that it would

have helped to secure the legitimacy of the Korean government established after liberation. In fact, Rhee Syngman, the first president, ordered “to devise measures to promote national unity and patriotism comparable to Japanese shrine worship” [28]. Therefore, finding the space most similar to the ritual and spatial form of a Japanese shrine in Korean tradition was crucial, and for this reason, it can be seen that the Confucian ritual and worship space were adopted. During the Joseon Dynasty period, a shrine served as a public space beyond a private commemorative space for the family as local villagers, and Confucian scholars held ancestral rites there. Therefore, Hyeonchungsa should be viewed as a modern commemorative space chosen for the tradition of public ritual spaces rather than private ceremonial spaces such as birthplace, graveyard, and family grave. Another characteristic of the national shrine is that a specific person is permanently affiliated with the shrine. It was a commemoration of a national figure on a religious level.



Figure 16. Enshrinement Ceremony for Admiral Yi Sun-sin’s Portrait at the Hyeonchungsa Shrine (source: Dong-A Ilbo, 7 June 1932).

In the name of inheriting the tradition, the rituals of the traditional era—*Munmyo Jerye*, a ritual for Confucius—were referenced, but the birthday ceremony of Admiral Yi gradually became similar to a modern public event. The ceremony was held in a traditional way, but the president and high-ranking officials participated (Figure 17). Various post-ceremony events for the public were planned, such as an archery match, students’ performance, a Korean wrestling competition, and a kendo competition. As such, the new rituals of Hyeonchungsa were a mixture of traditional ceremonies and commemorative events of the modern nation.

5.2. The Most Traditional Image of Korean Architecture

Since the main hall of Hyeonchungsa was the first project of ‘National Shrine’, it had to have a ‘Korean’ and ‘traditional’ image. As seen in Section 4.2, the main hall pursued the exterior of a traditional wooden architecture representing the nation of Korea, which inherited the Joseon Dynasty, while having the spatial form of a Confucian shrine. It was based on the plan and roof style of the *Daeseongjeon* hall at *Munmyo* shrine, the most formal among Confucian shrines. Perhaps for this reason, the main hall of Hyeonchungsa has a hipped-and-gabled roof unlike most other traditional Confucian shrines. In other words, the main reason why this roof type was used is because it was modeled on a more specific case that is ‘*Munmyo Daeseongjeon*’ rather than general ‘Confucian shrine’.



Figure 17. Celebration of Admiral Yi Sun-sin's Birthday in 1969 (source: National Archives of Korea).

In addition, it can be interpreted that the hipped-and-gabled roof, which is more formal than the gabled roof, was used to suit the status of national shrine rather than the general shrine. In the Joseon Dynasty period, most shrines had gabled roofs, but some Daeseongjeon halls (shrines for Confucius) built in the capital city or major regions by the state were built with hipped-and-gabled roofs that are of higher hierarchy.

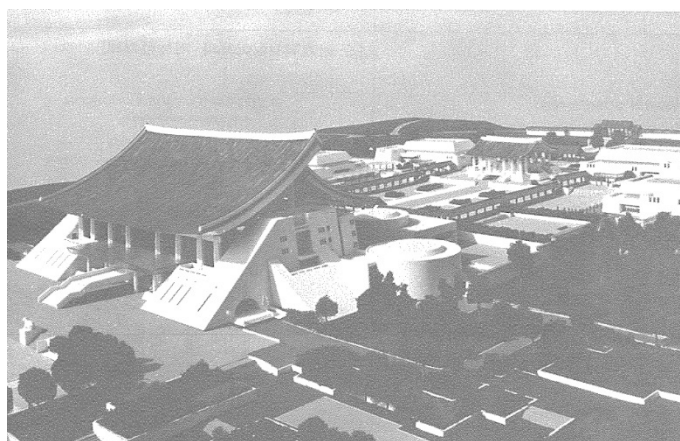
Meanwhile, the three-dimensional curved shape of the hipped-and-gabled roof has been evaluated as the unique beauty of Korean architecture by many scholars or intellectuals from the Japanese colonial period to after liberation [29,30]. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the hipped-and-gabled roof was chosen to show a representative image that can symbolize Korea through the national shrines.

There are differences in the size and decoration of the 14 national shrine buildings built after Hyeonchungsa, but they are all in the form of a hipped-and-gabled roof, and there is a tendency that this hipped-and-gabled roof is used as the stereotypical roof of the national shrine.

The controversy over the hipped-and-gabled roof or the proportion of the roof curve is not limited to architectural discussions. They have been continuously treated as characteristics of Korean architecture to the extent that it becomes a major point of contention in the discussion of the succession of the tradition in modern architecture (Figure 18). In 1967, the roof of the Buyeo National Museum, designed by architect Kim Swoo-geun, was caught up in a strife because it looked like a Japanese shrine. At this time, the steep, straight form and the appearance of concrete members that look like rafters protruding from the top of the roof were criticized for being a Japanese style [31]. Afterwards, in 1983, there was also a controversy that the design of the Independence Hall of Korea in the form of a gabled roof was Japanese style [32]. It can be seen from this case that the general public also had an empirical perception on what the shape of the Korean roof should be in Korea.



(a)



(b)

Figure 18. (a) Buyeo National Museum (doopedia) (b) Independence Hall of Korea (1983, *Korean Architects*) [33].

Meanwhile, *dancheong*, colorful painting applied on the rafters and other elements of the façade, began to be simplified to light beige or eggshell white starting from the *Chilbaek* Cemetery of Righteous Fighters in Geumsan in 1976. It is known that these changes were made under the direction of President Park Chung-hee, and in the 1970s, they were advertised as ‘creative development of traditional culture’ [34]. As the *dancheong* was simplified, the national shrines were clearly distinguished from the historical architecture, and the light beige color resembled the imagery of the white modern architecture. Regarding this change, Kim Jong-gyun (2006) saw that the five colors of *dancheong* were rejected because of its connotations of superstitious elements or shamanism, and it was also related to the discourse in the field of art that evaluated ‘white’ as the color of Korean identity [35].

In summary, the main hall was a newly created national facility designed by combining the features of the *Daeseongjeon* Hall of *Munmyo* Shrine and the palace buildings. Although the form and proportion of traditional architecture were used as the basic framework, it was not limited to any one type, and various types of architectural forms were freely mixed. As expected, the design of the main hall of Hyeonchungsa, a hodgepodge of various historical styles, was not very welcomed by the Cultural Heritage Committee at the time. On 6 July 1966, the design review subcommittee for the Hyeonchungsa was formed with a total of five members, and among them, Kim Ju-Tae and Maeng In-Jae reviewed the design [36]. They submitted the report that the material and form needed to be revised because the current design proposal of the shrine was inappropriate. The summary of their opinions is as follows.

- A. In terms of appearance and style of traditional architecture, it is desirable to take ‘Jongmyo Shrine’ as a reference in consideration of the historical context.
- B. The current design of the main hall is not related to the style of a typical Korean shrine, nor is it associated with the style of the original Hyeonchungsa shrine.
- C. Most traditional shrines have gabled roofs and should be a solemn space with minimal decoration, so the hipped-and-gabled roof and ornate wooden structure in the *dapo* style are not appropriate (The Bracket sets in the *dapo* style is a later style that becomes decorative and too delicate).

The reviewers recommended that the newly built shrine should be built of wood to match the traditional exterior, designed after the exterior of the typical shrine or the most representative national shrine, Jongmyo, and applying a gabled roof and bird’s wing bracket arms suitable for the style of the time. Their suggestions focused on the issue of how to inherit or reproduce historical legitimacy. In other words, within the existing historical context, it was rather a “stylistic restoration” method of designing a building that best matches the architectural style of the shrine and using it according to the current use.

5.3. Significance and Criticism of Traditional Style Concrete Architecture

The implementation of the traditional architecture in concrete instead of wooden structure has been controversial when Hyeonchungsa was built and even now. The reason why Hyeonchungsa was built with concrete was that it was more durable than wooden structure.

The restoration of old buildings with concrete began earlier in Japan than in Korea, and it is based on the perception that it is not only more resistant to fire than wooden buildings, but a Western-style technological advance. In Japan, concrete has been used to restore traditional architecture since the early 20th century, and it has been applied to various types of buildings such as Buddhist temples, castle, and Shinto shrines (Figure 19) [37,38].

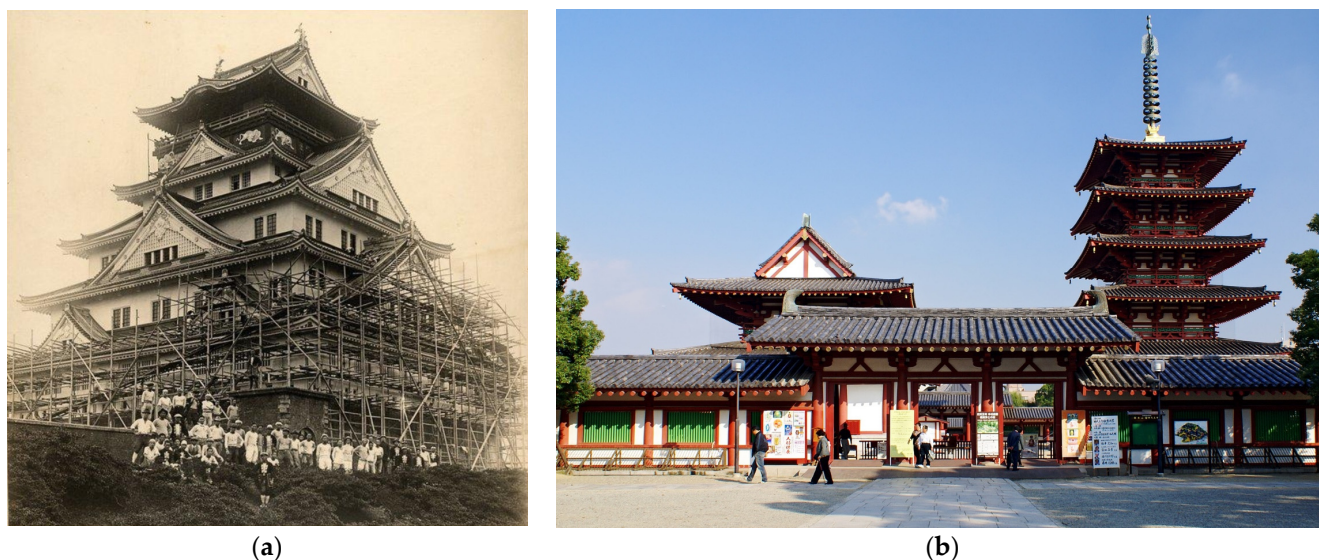


Figure 19. Reconstruction of Japanese Cultural Heritage in Concrete: (a) Osaka Castle (completed in 1931 by Obayashi Corporation) (b) Shitennoji Temple (completed in 1967).

Especially after the earthquake in San Francisco in 1906, people began to believe that wooden architecture is old-fashioned and precarious, so there even appeared some efforts to execute details of wooden architecture with concrete [39].

In Korea, too, during the war from 1950 to 1953, important buildings were destroyed by bombing or fire. This might be the primary reason for choosing concrete for the construction of the national shrines as well. The difficulty in supply and demand of timber also played a part as there was a record that the price of timber was very high due to the destruction of forests in the war and that timber for construction was dependent on imports [40]. At that time, some architects suggested the restoration of cultural heritage using concrete, citing the vulnerability of wood to fire. The concrete restoration of Gwanghwamun Gate, the main gate of Gyeongbokgung Palace, was also discussed around this time period [41].

On the other hand, other expert groups, especially architects who received modern architecture education, valued the authenticity of cultural heritage and criticized that it was inappropriate to make wooden structures with concrete. It was also criticized as President Park Chung-hee's personal preference. Since then, the restoration project of cultural heritage in the 1970s using concrete has been criticized several times as a superficial cultural heritage restoration method that overlooks the authenticity [42,43].

Despite many controversies, most of the 14 national shrine projects, including Hyeonchungsa, used concrete. However, the question of whether it is appropriate to use concrete for the refurbishment of cultural heritage was also raised in the design process of the main hall of Hyeonchungsa. It was first pointed out that concrete could not accurately represent the texture of wood. Another major criticism was that it is inappropriate to convert traditional wooden architecture into modern materials in the cultural heritage

project because the original characteristics may be distorted in texture or overall impression even if it is reproduced similarly [36].

Since then, the use of concrete in the restoration and refurbishment of cultural heritage has disappeared as concrete has gradually revealed the problem that it cannot resuscitate the authenticity of the wooden heritage and may damage existing relics. Concrete has not been used for restoration and reconstruction any more since the reconstruction project of Bulguksa Temple in 1970. Only buildings necessary for preservation of relics or new memorials such as the main hall of Hyeonchungsa were built with concrete. This modern succession method of Korean tradition, which was prominent in the 1970s, has been criticized for justifying the ‘Korean democracy’ that the dictatorship at the time had advocated.

5.4. Overcoming Colonial Historical Views and the Birth of Korean Classical Architecture

However, the reason why it is necessary to re-evaluate the Hyeonchungsa project is that the issue of ‘tradition’ or ‘inheritance of tradition’ in Korea in the 1960s and 1970s was an important issue not only among politicians but also among intellectuals, and it is still discussed even nowadays.

In the 1960s, Korean architecture history was actively written by Koreans. Previously, most of the writings on Korean architecture were written by Japanese government scholars during the Japanese colonial period. Colonial historical views often attempt to regard the architecture of the Joseon Dynasty as already declining and argue that it was inevitable to become a Japanese colony. In particular, the perspective regarding decoration-oriented approaches in the late Joseon Dynasty period as fragile and degenerate was established during the colonial period.

For example, in the Korean Architecture Survey Report, Sekino Tadashi criticized the architecture of the Joseon Dynasty that the detailed decoration was detached from the structure and became a decoration for decoration. Large-scale and highly decorative buildings, such as the main halls at palaces in particular, were reproached [44]. In addition, Yanagi Muneyoshi argued for the value of folk crafts because high-end craft had its beauty retrogressing as its complexity increases with the descent of the times, it boasts of craftsmanship, and its fragility is highlighted as time passes [45]. Therefore, it was thought that Korean beauty in architecture had to be traced back to the Goryeo Dynasty period or the Three Kingdoms period, or it was thought of as simple beauty like folk products. Even Ko Yu-seop, the first Korean who wrote a book on the history of Korean architecture during the Japanese colonial period, evaluated Joseon architecture as a subclass without originality, and he concentrated on studying stone pagodas from the Three Kingdoms period rather than wooden architecture.

However, if there is one aesthetic feature of Korean architecture that Yanagi Muneyoshi, Ko Yu-seop, and post-liberation scholars all noted, it is ‘the eaves curve of the roof’. All of them evaluated Korean architecture as beautiful, especially the curves of the hipped-and-gabled roof or its angle rafter’s curves. Therefore, the fact that the shrine of Hyeonchungsa and all the shrines thereafter have a hipped-and-gabled roof is likely a result of selecting an architectural style that needs to be inherited as ideal national image in the modern era, rather than choosing a style suitable for the shrine.

At Hyeonchungsa, several traditions were selected in a complex way. The tradition of the ritual was taken from a Confucian shrine represented by the Munmyo Shrine. However, although the basic form of the building, especially the plan, was also taken from the Munmyo shrine, the façade design was lavishly decorated like a palace hall. As a result, the appearance of Hyeonchungsa was realized more like palace architecture than a Confucian shrine, having the hipped-and-gabled roof, *dapo* bracket sets, and decorated lattice windows.

In the end, this new monument with a status that could symbolize the ‘state’ became a hybrid of shrine and palace architecture. In other words, it has the appearance of a building similar to a palace that can contain the functions of a shrine. As to the splendid

dapo bracket sets, they were not applied to all shrines, but at least at Hyeonchungsa, the *dapo* style suggested in the earlier design stage was maintained despite the criticism of many professionals. It could have been an attempt to reevaluate the architecture of the late Joseon Dynasty period, which was criticized during the colonial period.

Kang Bong-jin, who designed Hyeonchungsa, was born in 1917 during the Japanese colonization period and graduated from a university in Japan. After liberation, he majored in architecture at a Korean university again. In 1965, he became a licensed architect and a cultural heritage maintenance engineer, working in both fields of modern architecture and cultural heritage design [46]. He has been in charge of designing traditional-style buildings in concrete since the 1960s, including the Gwanghwamun gate. His design directly reflected the proportions and dimensions of existing cultural heritage. He carried out a number of cultural heritage measurement projects, obtaining the detailed drawings of historic buildings, including Munmyo shrine and palace buildings [47,48]. In his article that categorizes modern concrete architecture in a traditional style, he named it ‘classical architecture’. This ‘classical architecture’ kept the wooden building style of the past, and its structure was made of concrete to preserve and inherit Korean beauty (Figure 20). He thought that replacing the traditional wooden structure with concrete would prevent damage from fire and corrosion, allowing permanent preservation of the structure. On the other hand, in the past, the form of architecture was determined according to the building materials such as wood and brick and their structures, but it was thought that modern reinforced concrete did not have to conform to a specific architectural style because of its formative freedom [25].

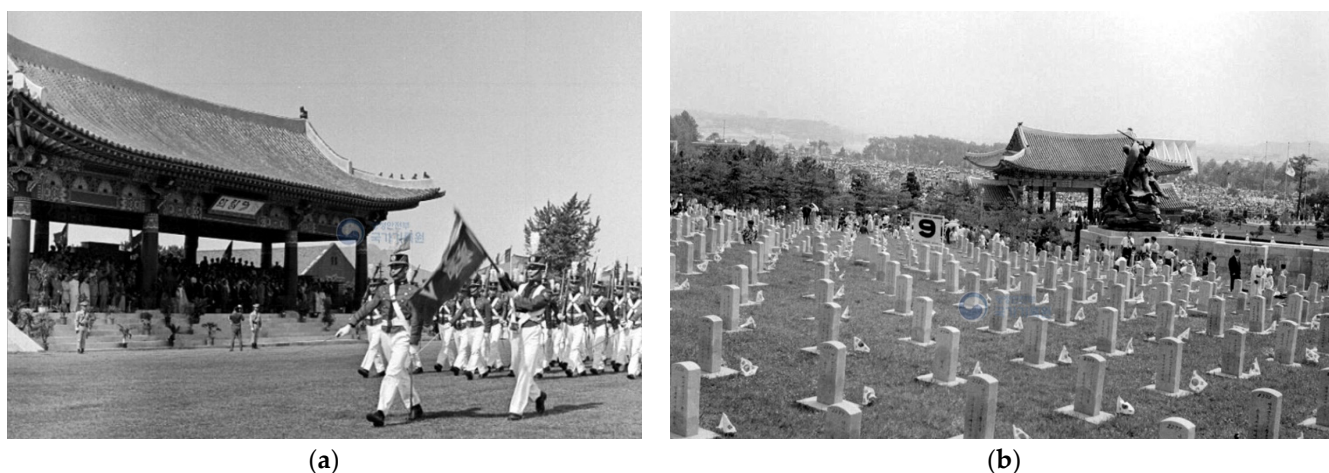


Figure 20. Examples of ‘Classical Architecture’ by Kang Bong-jin (a) Korea Military Academy–Hwarangdae (1966) (b) Hyeonchungmun Gate at Seoul National Cemetery (1969) (source: National Archives of Korea).

The hybrid use of Korean architectural styles that appeared at Hyeonchungsa was later attempted more boldly by combining several famous historical buildings in his design of the national museum (Figure 21). However, his attempt was criticized by both the cultural heritage and modern architecture circles, and it was socially criticized for the use of tradition by the military regime as well. Since then, the field of Korean architecture has maintained a very critical view of direct copying of traditional architecture.

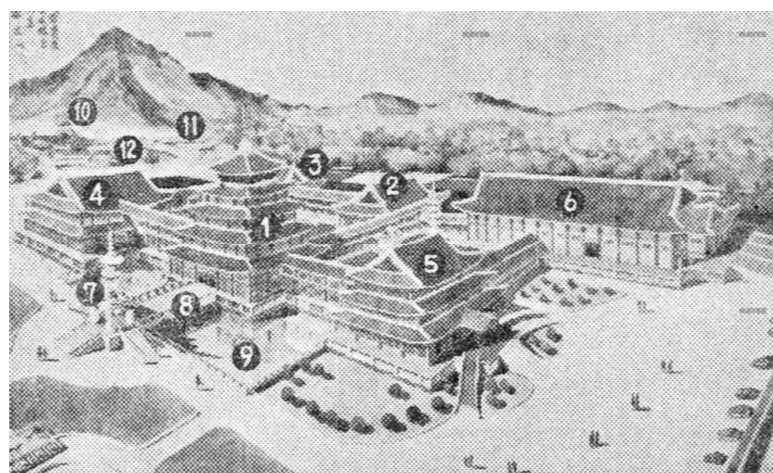


Figure 21. Perspective Drawing of the Winning Design for the National Museum (1966, Dong-A Daily News).

6. Conclusions

In the 1960s and 1970s, the military regime of Korea built national shrines whose designs borrowed traditional style architecture to commemorate historical figures, thereby instilling patriotism in the people and securing the legitimacy of the regime. While the political context was emphasized in the previous studies, the architectural characteristics of the main hall of Hyeonchungsa were intensively analyzed in this study, and through this, it was attempted to reveal that this was a ‘tradition’ created by selectively mixing various traditional styles of Korea. In addition, 13 newly built national shrines after the construction of Hyeonchungsa were reviewed. This comparative study showed that some features of Hyeonchungsa did not only appear in this one case, but it became a prototype for subsequent national shrine-making projects. Through these projects, the image of tradition was widely recognized.

Thirteen national shrines, including Hyeonchungsa, borrowed functional features of Confucian shrines, such as using worship spaces to accommodate ‘national rituals’. However, rather than strictly following one style or a specific type of architecture, they borrowed and recombined the outstanding parts of the traditional architecture of various eras and types—hipped-and-gabled roofs, bracket sets, windows, and *dancheong*. In particular, as to appearance, palace architecture and Buddhist architecture that pursue splendor and grandeur are followed rather than Confucian architecture characterized by a frugal appearance. This attitude contrasts with the restoration of cultural heritage that traces the original form and material, and it is rather similar to Western neoclassical architecture that recombines historical references according to current needs. These national shrines were built with ‘modern and new’ materials and building techniques—reinforced concrete—and from the late 1960s, ‘modern’ off-white color was preferred instead of colorful *dancheong*. As a result, the national shrines stand for modern traditional buildings with new technology applied, distinguished from the traditional wooden building. Additionally, overall volume highlighted by ‘the shape and proportion of the typical traditional roof’ is emphasized as the essence of tradition rather than ‘the color or decoration of the façade’.

After the construction of Hyeonchungsa, the hipped-and-gabled roof was solidified as a prototype, a change that reflects the views of the academia and experts equating the identity of most Korean architecture with the hipped-and-gabled roof. At the same time, ‘the public’s perception of tradition’ that must be influenced by such movements can be read from events such as the dispute over the Japanese-style gate at the Buyeo National Museum.

As pointed out in several previous studies, there has been criticism that the military regime deliberately exploited the national shrines, but their construction rather aligns with the context of the national movement during the Japanese colonial period. Therefore, it can

be evaluated as an attempt to overcome the colonial historical views formed during the Japanese colonial period. Additionally, it can be inferred from the record of Kang Bong-jin, who designed Hyeonchungsa, that the actual measurement survey and recording of historical buildings began in earnest during this period and that the design of the national shrine was actually carried out based on these data. As such, the national shrines in Korea can be called Korean neoclassical architecture—in that they tried to reveal national identity through architecture, accommodated new functions necessary for a modern state, and are based on an empirical analysis of historical architecture.

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