

MASTER THESIS

*Dealing with difficult heritage in Seoul (South Korea):  
The case study of Japanese General Government Building*

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## ABSTRACT

The case concerning demolition of the Japanese General Government Building in Seoul, South Korea, from the Japanese colonialism has been discussed since Korea's liberation in 1945, but the building had been used for many functions during that time frame. This building was finally demolished during the period 1995 to 1997, despite the national (pro-conservation group) and international (Japanese scholars and journalists) protestations.

This research analysed newspaper articles to study the conflict between pro-demolition and pro-conservation groups in the newspapers to see how, and why the conflict proceeded.

Korean newspaper archives were used to search four newspapers (Dong-A, Han-Gyeo-Re, Kyeong-Hyang, and Mae-Il-Kyeong-Je) from the time period of 1991 to 1998, using the keyword 'Japanese General Government Building'. The collected data was analysed with qualitative methodology to understand the conflicts in the newspapers.

This analysis revealed three reasons put forward by the pro-conservation, Memorial and Educational Value, Art and Use Value, and Economic Value and, two reasons of pro-demolition, the Memorial Obstacle and Socio-cultural obstacle (Feng-shui as spiritual obstacle). Most reasons for pro-conservation and pro-demolition groups were classic arguments relating to other difficult heritage buildings, however, two different reasons are pertinent to this particular case: First, the government did not present any *practical reasons* to destroy the building. Further, the building's dismantling cost and the construction of a new museum, which consumed a large portion of the national budget, but it appeared to be totally emotional. Second, Feng-Shui was presented as one of the main reasons for destroying the building. This socio-cultural element has always been a fundamental and strong belief system in Korea.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

When the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designates a place or building as a World Heritage Site, it traditionally is considered a beautiful human achievement. Recently, this international institution has begun to designate and publicize sites of the most tragic events in human history (genocides, massacres, slavery, totalitarian regimes, etc.) as heritage sites. Additionally with the increase in tourism research and visitor numbers for those particular sites, the question of “difficult heritage” has been given more attention from both scholars and heritage management authorities (Logan and Reeves, 2009). If UNESCO’s recognition of these sites of dreadful memory is a way to pave a path towards peace and reconciliation<sup>1</sup>, then there can sometimes be social resistance and acceptance conflicts within national and local communities regarding the difficult heritage. In their book “Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with ‘Difficult Heritage’”, Logan and Reeves (2009) give many cases of colonial heritage conflicts – when colonialism represents a painful and/or shameful episode in the national or local community’s history – where communities, government agencies and heritage professionals are torn between two choices; remember and conserve these buildings or forget and potentially destroy them.

This research aims at the question of colonial heritage in South Korea, related to the Japanese colonial era. South Korea is an excellent case study to understand these issues for the following

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1. UNESCO has proceeding of Hangzhou International Congress in 2013 on their website (<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/hangzhou-congress/peace-and-reconciliation/>, 2013) the discussion was made with the theme of peace and reconciliation. Also, UNESCO made a manual for teachers and named the manual as “Heritage for peace and reconciliation” ([http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/pdf/Heritage\\_for\\_Peace\\_and\\_Reconciliation.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/pdf/Heritage_for_Peace_and_Reconciliation.pdf), 2015).

two reasons. First, the Japanese colonial era is not only painful history, but also shameful history for South Korea; one of the most revisionary countries in Asia. The idea that South Korea describes the Japanese colonial era as “Humiliation” is peculiar. The rapid urban growth and deindustrialization have caused South Korea to discuss the value of some urban heritage buildings. There are some groups who want to remove colonial heritage buildings as “painful and shameful history”, while others try to preserve it as “modern heritage” with its historical, cultural and architectural values. The latter group, mainly composed of experts and professionals such as historians, architects, town-planners, landscape architects, etc., adhere to an international movement like the international committee for *Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighborhoods of the Modern Movement* (DOCOMOMO). This international institute dedicates resources to save modern heritage sites that suffer from lack of recognition. Some masterpieces have even been destroyed in many countries around the world, mainly because modern heritage buildings were not considered to be elements of heritage. Activists, as well as DOCOMOMO have tried to save modern heritage buildings and sites from destruction and disfigurement in order to bring their significance to the attention of the public and authorities, and to identify and promote their conservation and reuse as contemporary needs. However, most colonial heritage buildings have already been demolished due to the complicated situation in South Korea. The economic and political changes in Seoul, the capital of South Korea, preclude the preservation of colonial heritage buildings. The government is the primary leader for the demolition of colonial heritage buildings.

Lastly, there are not many studies about South Korean colonial heritage. There are some pieces of literature which determine the importance of difficult heritage in some countries however they are mostly focused on Nazi related heritage (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996; Burstrom and

Gelderblom, 2011; Macdonald, 2006, 2009, 2010; Knudsen, 2010). Logan and Reeves (2009) show some examples of Asian countries such as Taiwan, Philippines, Vietnam, etc., but not South Korea. Moreover, there are many scholars who studied South Korean economic development or painful history in Japan, but there is no information about the situation of their colonial heritage buildings. Many valuable heritage buildings are demolished because of the negative emotional attachment surrounding these buildings. The case of “Japanese General Government Building (Also known as Chosun-Chongdok-Bu building)” is the most appropriate example about the conflict surrounding colonial heritage buildings in South Korea. This building was demolished in 1995 as a part of the 50th Liberation Day celebration in South Korea regardless of the national and international protests by the Japanese and some South Koreans.

## **1.2 Research Question**

There are not many studies about South Korean colonial heritage. The literature on difficult heritage focused mainly on European cases (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1996; Burstrom and Gelderblom, 2011; Macdonald, 2006, 2009, 2010; Knudsen, 2010). Logan and Reeves (2009) showed some examples of Asian countries (Taiwan, Philippines, Vietnam, etc.), but not of South Korea. On the other hand, there are many scholars who studied South Korean economic development or painful history from Japan. However, there is no information about its colonial heritage building situation even though many heritage buildings are demolished because of the negative attachment surrounding these buildings.

The case of “Japanese General Government building” (Hereafter, JGGB) is the most emblematic example of colonial heritage conflict in South Korea. This case has been discussed since Korea’s liberation in 1945. In the earlier time period, this building was too large to

deconstruct so it was used for other functions. However, there was rapid economic growth in the 1970s as well as the discussion about demolition since the 1980s. This building was finally demolished from 1995 to 1997, regardless of the national and international protestations (Japanese scholars and some South Korean people) and cost of demolition (because of its size).

This case had a huge impact on collective memory. Until these days, many Korean scholars still publish their articles about the regret of this loss of heritage. Before exposing the chequered history of this building, we provide a brief idea of Japanese colonialism in Korea that can explain the reticence of the Korean people to any artefacts that symbolize this period.

Overall, the research questions of this research are:

1. Why JGGB has been controversial?
2. What were the arguments surrounding JGGB in South Korea?

### **1.3 Aims & Objectives**

The aim of this research is to analyze these local and international conflicts about difficult heritage. Precisely, the objective of the research is:

- Understand the conflict (1991-1998) on the JGGB, between pro-conservation groups and pro-demolition groups, with the historic background for the description.
- Find the arguments and values that the two different groups give to this colonial heritage building from the analysis of this research.

## **1.4 Methodology**

For this research, fundamentally qualitative analysis was used. First, the literature and documents of heritage related policies were reviewed. There is some literature within this research, however more detailed documentation and literature about conflicts on colonial heritage. In this literature analysis, the different case studies from European colonies and Taiwan (another Japanese colony with similar urban development) illustrate examples of conflict surrounding difficult heritage. An assumption is that definition conflicts are caused by memorial obstacles. Second, newspaper data was collected for the qualitative methodology. The online archive was used to search the conflicts on the specific cases in South Korea. In our case, we found it more appropriate to the nature of our research, which sinks into the symbolic representations around difficult heritage. As a result, we expect the upshot that conflicts are caused by memorial obstacles between pro-demolition groups and pro-conservation groups. This research is essential to the study on the South Korean colonial experience along with the importance of preservation of these modern heritage buildings.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Cultural Heritage**

Before starting the discussion about the conflicts surrounding colonial heritage buildings, it is important to briefly define the meaning of cultural heritage. The word “Heritage” can be defined as material and monumental forms of old which have a consensual view from the past and the present. The term “Cultural Heritage” is defined as a material and spiritual resource which provides the history and is often expressed as both intangible and tangible (ICOMOS, 2002). These concepts are wide ranged producing the value systems, traditions and lifestyles. The conception of heritage

has been developed as the themes of memory, performance, identity, intangibility, dissonance and place (Smith, 2006). Heritage makes a person or people's identity stronger due to their relation with material aspects of the past. Harvey (2001) notes that history is more in depth with its heritage or material from the past. Therefore, cultural heritage values are significant for conservation decision-making. It is recognised that values may compete and change over time, whereas heritage may have different meanings for different stakeholders.

There are many different kinds of values that have been proposed by various scholars and organizations. The first values of cultural physical heritage (buildings) have been defined by Alois Riegl (1903; 1982) in his essay entitled "The modern cult of monuments: Its Character and Its Origin" as the different values of a monument. These values are often cited as the first formulation of value-based preservation and the start of the modern approach to monuments (Lamprakos, 2014). According to Riegl (1903; 1982). There are two categories of values; the *commemorative values* and the *contemporary values*:

#### **a) Commemorative values**

There are three different commemorative values; Age Value, Historical Value and International Commemorative Value:

- Age-Value: concerns the appreciation of the dated appearance, including its degradations (damage, imperfection, dissolution of their forms and colors, erosion, etc.). This value is based only on degradation like antique ruins. Usually any human intervention is refused (anti-restoration).
- Historical Value: appreciation of the work which corresponds to a particular time in development of an area of human creation. The estimation does not include damages from

natural agents. Usually it takes human intervention (conservation) to stop the progress of these damages.

- Intentional Commemorative Value: aims to preserve an ancient building and do anything to keep it present and alive in the consciousness of future generations. The objective is to assure immortality, the eternal present, and the sustainability of its original state. The action of natural agents, which opposes the realization of this requirement, must be tackled with energy and its effects continually countered (restoration).

#### **b) Contemporary values**

There are values of monuments that is not based on the commemorative values. The present-day values (also known as contemporary values) satisfies sensory or intellectual needs as value of practical use and artistic value.

- Use-Value: concerns the utility and ability of a building to be maintained without any danger of the life or health as practical considerations. This value may occur in the destruction of a monument if there is the conflict with Age-value. Historical value makes flexible about this use-value.
- Art Value: concerns the aesthetic dimension, the visual qualities and the design. To be appreciated, it has to be conformed to the beauty canons of the moment when the art value is assessed. Art value could be newness-value or relative art-value.

After the classic values by Riegl, there are some scholars who add other values. For example, in their book, Noppen and Morisset (1997) add new values that reflect a more post-modern sensitivity towards heritage:

- Position Value: concerns the significance of a building in its spatial context (urban versus rural contexts). For example, a farm of the 19th century, alone in the middle of an industrial area, offers less potential for tourism, than a house in an urban area.
- Material Value: the degree of physical integrity of the building, but also its degree of authenticity. The object can have greater heritage value if it has stayed in good condition with few changes from the original design. This value of authenticity, which gives the uniqueness of the building environment, became more important in Western societies as a reaction to the big damage done to historic centers caused by Urban Renewal in the 1950s-60s (Zukin, 1989; Wang, 1999; Smith, 2006).

The needs to compete with other global cities increased, cities started to pursue highlighting their uniqueness and establishment of special place identity. Giving the place identity, authenticity or having historic value is somehow related to each other.

The slow awareness of cultural value of modern heritage buildings becomes appreciation of its unique landscape into the consideration of some authorities as public place (Jansen-Verbeke, 1999). Then, cultural value of modern heritage buildings and the management of them made a cultural zone in the old areas in cities which involved their conservation. Mengüşoğlu and Boyacıoğlu (2013) contend that ‘historic buildings themselves contribute to the attractiveness, distinctiveness and identity of places.’ It is generally known that cultural value is an essential part in urban revitalization or urbanization. Therefore, the perspective for recent heritage buildings is changed. Evidence from previous studies suggests that communities sometimes take hold of tourism as a potential source of development, although we neglected the economic value (Alonso et al., 2010).

The heritage buildings from recent years are important resources in this context. In the recent period, another important value is: the Economic Value. It is related to authenticity which is experienced among major cities who survived from the decline. It could be city branding by travelling in the cities to generate money from the tourism industry and to create jobs. Thus heritage has become an important economic resource and urban development tool with a boom in tourism and a collective interest for cultural heritage. To avoid duplications of major cities and to make planning process with local people, authenticity character is important in every city.

Table 1. *Heritage values typologies proposed by scholars and organizations. Source: Mason (2002).*

Reigl (1902)	Lipe (1984)	Burra Charter (1998)	Frey (1997)	English Heritage (1997)
Age	Economic	Aesthetic	Monetary	Cultural
Historical	Aesthetic	Historic	Option	Educational and academic
Commemorative	Associative-symbolic	Scientific	Existence	Economic
Use	Informational	Social (including spiritual, political, national, other cultural)	Bequest	Resource
Newness			Prestige	Recreational
			Educational	Aesthetic

However, these values are held by the experts who professionally understand the historical value and know how heritage should be preserved. But social values have been brought by stakeholders or citizens (Mason, 2002). Therefore, recently, the concept of heritage has developed and expanded. And the new groups have connected the heritage experts and its identification. There were different definition of “values” among the citizens, professionals from other fields, stakeholders and heritage experts. The democratization of conservation decision-making and the

essential public participation have made challenges of sharing decision-making power and collaboration for the conservation professionals. The conservation policies and decisions could weaken the authority of conservation professionals and make their responsibility abdicated. However, some of them hold differing views that actual decision-making power will be not democratized but the process of value elicitation will be included. Therefore, the recognition of the values makes people contribute to heritage.

The heritage conflicts inform us that the heritage values are contingent, not objectively given (Mason, 2002). The concept of heritage values is intrinsic and the values of heritage are produced out of the interaction of an artifact and its contexts so its values can only be understood with contexts of society, history and space. Therefore, heritage is socially constructed and balances between intrinsic values (unchanging and universal) and extrinsic values because the heritage could be demolished if it unbalanced. Conservation professionals thus need to rethink about the kind of research to support conservation.

## **2.2 Heritage Conflicts**

Cultural heritage is generally defined as a legacy of physical artifacts and intangibles from a group or society. They generally have special meaning within group memory that is transmitted throughout future generations. This act of transmission, which involves selection, is important for the identity of the group: recognizing individuality in a set of elements that shape common heritage allows people to identify themselves as unique, while still being a part of a society. The heritage is, in this way, a “social cement” (Melé, 2005). The value of monuments or buildings is not an intrinsic quality, but a given value. The value to accord is not always consensual between many social groups (Citizens, authorities, scholars, private actors, etc.) who can diverge in terms of

representation and appreciation of the heritage. In this case, the question of preservation (why and how) can create conflicts between them. For Melé (2005:51), the heritage conflicts have to be “considered as special moments of argument, justification, expression of positions, discussions, power related buildings on the terms and impacts of public actions”. The heritage action (preservation versus destruction) is the result of compromises, which are built usually after conflicts and controversies. In the literature (Melé, 2005; Gravari-Barbas and Veschambre, 2003), we can identify many forms of conflicts surrounding heritage buildings: conflicts of appropriation and definition, conflicts related to the heritage action (restoration, enhancement) and conflict of management<sup>2</sup>. The most relevant conflict to this study is the first type, and will be discussed in detail below.

There are conflicts on appropriation or definition. The act of transmission of heritage involves a selection process. The public or collective action chooses which artifacts are to be kept, and identifies buildings that need investment in terms of rehabilitation. Some items are valued and others are not, which usually leaves them condemned to demolition, leaving place for other urban investments. Competition between different groups who have different interests (politicians, businessmen, representatives of tourist interest, local scholars, residents, etc.) can take a place.

Recent history is full of examples where a population was mobilized to save old and underestimated buildings from disappearing, due to vandalism, urban renewal or other urban planning projects (Béghain, 1997; Réau, 1994). This kind of conflict is seen as a political conflict

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2. Conflicts on heritage action concern usually the type of architectural treatment to apply to the building: preservation only or with restoration? And in the last case, which type of restoration (more conform to the original style of the building versus more creative)? The conflict can also be arise around the question of ownerships and the responsibility of management (which institution -international agencies, government, municipal, associations- is responsible of the maintenance and its costs).

by researchers because of the struggle and power game between antagonist groups who use different strategies and instrumentalize the heritage to serve their own interests. With the enlargement of the heritage field, some new conflicts appear based on what to conserve (Saez and Glaverec, 2002). Many local associations get mobilized to defend buildings that are seen as in “danger”, abandoned, or “small heritage” that is not recognized by the official or the “Authorized heritage discourse” (Smith, 2006). The recognition of conflicts or elements of heritage inform us on how social groups appropriate the heritage directly or symbolically.

In any case, the result is always a symbolic domination and imposition of one social group (its norms and representation of heritage) on other groups. Gravari-Barbas and Veschambre (2003) have shown, in their research, that heritage becomes valuable when certain "groups managed to impose as standards, through their claims and interventions". In most situations, the disadvantaged or dominated social group does not have access to the heritage recognition in the same way as those of the privileged/dominant groups (Gravari-Barbas, 2004; Veschambre, 2000, 2002; Garat, 2000; Amougou, 2002). The conflict can arise on international scale. Several researchers, like Ouallet (2003), show how the Western conception of heritage (content in UNESCO heritage description) can be in contradiction with another countries' conception, who have a different vision of transmission of the relations between history and territory. The western conception emphasizes the importance of the authenticity of the “substance”, while in some contexts, like African, Arab, or Asian countries, the most important value is the architectural skill, gestures and culture. Tensions appear when the states of those countries disagree with the definition and treatment that the international agencies propose/or impose to their local heritage. For some authors, the concept of "global heritage" as a common good of humanity, is just an "attempt to appropriate, privatization

from those who enact the standards, in a neoliberal ideological context" (Delbos cited by Garat, Gravari-Barbas, and Veschambre 2001: 36).

### 2.3 Difficult Heritage

In the conflicts on appropriation or definition, we can find “difficult heritage” or “dissonant heritage”, like colonial heritage (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996; Logan and Reeves, 2009; Macdonald, 2010). Every society has painful or shamed places from history. In their book “Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with 'Difficult Heritage’”, Logan and Reeves (2009) define four types of “difficult heritage”: massacre and genocide sites; wartime internment sites; civil and political prisons and places of benevolent internment. The heritage from the colonial era ranges over all types of difficult heritage of Logan and Reeves (like the colonial heritage in Java that is included under Wartime internment sites). Over these obvious examples, Auschwitz camp sites and colonial heritage in Java, some modern heritage buildings in South Korea are difficult heritage.

Recently, UNESCO has begun to reveal and inscribe some sites of the most tragic events of human history (genocides, massacres, slavery, totalitarian regimes, etc.)<sup>3</sup>. We notice that visitation and interest in these sites have been growing drastically in the last decades, creating a new kind of tourism, called “dark tourism” (Foley and Lennon, 1996; 2000). In some cases, a dramatic upsurge of visitors can put serious strains on the fragile infrastructure of the site. It is the case of Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland who got a record of 1.53 million visitors in 2014 (up from less than

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3. UNESCO painful heritage list: Auschwitz-Birkenau- Poland (date of inscription: 1970), Hiroshima Peace Memorial-Japan [Genbaku Dome] (date of inscription: 1996), Gorée Island in Senegal (date of inscription: 1978), The Morne Cultural Landscape-Maurice (date of inscription: 2008) and Robben Island- South Africa (date of inscription: 1999).

500,000 in 2000) and more than 1 million in the first seven months of the year 2015<sup>4</sup>. Those popular sites may even be threatened with the “spectacle treatment” that tourism actors operate to capitalize on tragic events. However, those sites still have educational and commemorative value for victims and others who can use these sites to come to terms with their past experiences (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1996).

If UNESCO’s recognition of these sites of dreadful memory is a way to pave a path towards peace and reconciliation, then there can sometimes be social resistance and acceptance conflicts within national and local communities regarding the difficult heritage. They are the vestiges of a painful or shamed episode of local history that they want to forget.

There is a case in Romania that, like many former communist European countries, has no desire to commemorate or to face their communist past for, “...the physical legacy of Ceausescu’s rule is an unwelcome reminder of a period of history which Romania is attempting to forget” (Light, 2000:148). That explains why, “after the 1998 revolution, statues of all communist leaders were torn down and streets were renamed” (Yuill, 2003:36). However, those artifacts from communist nations are immediate interest to tourists. After the fall of communism in Romania in 1990, the country saw a 67% increase in tourism: “Independent travelers took the opportunity to see for themselves the site and sights of Eastern Europe’s most violent revolution, while travel companies hastily arranged packages for visitors wanting to see the locations associated with the collapse of communism” (Light, 2000:148).

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4. Gruberm Ruth Ellen, “Auschwitz ‘showers’ highlight challenge of Holocaust tourism. The well-being of visitors and the integrity of the historical commemoration is a difficult balance for emotionally charged WWII sites.” The Times of Israel, 10 September 2015 : <http://www.timesofisrael.com/auschwitz-showers-highlight-challenge-of-holocaust-tourism/>

This “heritage dissonance” between the local people and the tourism industry can also arise when the local authorities have to deal with those sites (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1996). According to Foote (1997), when a site experiences a tragic or violent event, one of four outcomes results: sanctification, designation, rectification, or obliteration. In their book “Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with 'Difficult Heritage’”, Logan and Reeves (2009) give many cases of painful colonial heritage conflicts, where government agencies and heritage professionals face an ethical dilemma, and are torn between two choices: remember and conserve these buildings (designation, sanctification) or forget them and destroy them (obliteration). But those choices are often controversial and can face social resistance. The conflicts and struggles usually occur surrounding the definition/meaning as well as what type of treatment to give to those sites.

Generally, there are two antagonist approaches around this question: the pro-demolition approach and the pro- preservation approach (Depagne, 2011). There could be a middle ground after the conflict of two approaches to mediate the two sides.

- The pro-demolition approach

There are two types of obstacles to be preserved for heritage: Practical obstacle and Memorial obstacle.

First, there is practical obstacles which mean heritage is an obstacle on practical aspects. Most prominently, heritage -and especially the recent heritage that is often underestimated compared to the ancient heritage- can be seen as an obstacle to urban development. The reasons for demolition are numerous in the development process. Economic factors or real estate logic are weak in general as the evidence for preservation. These threats are highly associated to the economic profit for the stakeholders. Moreover, its aesthetic value or historical value is usually in contradiction with the

“Authorized heritage discourse” (Smith, 2006) which makes its preservation’s justification difficult.

Second, the preservation of heritage can face a memorial obstacle. The heritage place could role as a ‘container of experience’ and its ‘intrinsic memorability’ and the memory is remained because of its meaning (Han, 2013; Casey, 1987). Seen as a symbol of the painful memory, the victims (and relatives) want to avoid remembering, as well as refuse the shaping or reviving of this memory. As Foote (1997:95) emphasizes, most people would prefer to move beyond this episode because “(...) further memorialization would only prolong painful memories”. The assaulter wants to avoid keeping the memory of its shameful behavior.

- The pro-conservation approach

According to Depagne (2011), there are four reasons that the pro-conservation usually present: Memorial/Educational value, Art Value, Use value and Economic value.

First, the heritage as a part of memory or history so it has obligation of remembrance. It’s considered important because it helps not only making justice to victims of these regimes, but also a way to educate future generations (memorial and educational values).

Second, these are seen as a part of the contemporary (or modern) architectural and urban achievements that have to be recognized for their structural/aesthetic qualities (art-value), and for their ability of reconversion (use-value). These concepts are based on the definitions of values by Riegl (1903; 1982).

Last, preservation is seen as a good way to promote tourism and boost the local economy (economic value). There is a concept, “Dark tourism” – The linkage between Policies for preservation and Economical value and it represents tourism type for the difficult heritage. For

example, the increased number of people who visit the Auschwitz camp every year and want to know what exactly happened on the ground. It seems dark tourism is commodification of modern heritage buildings. However, it is necessary to get over the less economic value and to remember the tragic history. Even the visitors' motives and strategies are different to their position; victims, perpetrators and others (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 1990), there is obvious educational value. In addition, the painful or shameful history is important to keep the national identity for the victims and perpetrators.

### 3. CASE STUDY

#### 3.1 Japanese colonialism in Korea

In order to gain insight within a case of difficult heritage, it is imperative to know the surrounding historic background. The case entitled “Japanese General Government Building” is highly interlinked with Japanese colonialism, as its title indicates.



*Figure 1.* The location of Seoul, South Korea's capital. Source: VANK (2015).

The concept of colonialism has been of great interest to political theorists. They attempt to understand the concept as both a social and political phenomenon. It was a necessary step to become developed capitalist countries and most studies were about European colonialism such as French colonialism and British colonialism. The first step when thinking about colonialism is to view the modernization of Europe and the development of other countries grouped into colonies. After some decades, the racism and fascism were a major part of the twentieth century's colonialism study with international multi-disciplinary studies and "Colonialism" is embedded in the never forgotten past and is commonly used within education in Western countries (Cooper, 2005). Cooper (2005) states that unbounding colonialism occurred from the 1490s to the 1970s on an international scale. Therefore, the specific situation of colonialism differs with each individual colony and colonial policy. For example, the ideology and process of British colonialism differed with the French, German, or Portuguese (Ching, 2001). As outlined above, there are many countries that have experienced some form of colonialism in history. Some scholars find that the case of Japanese colonialism has shown unique features among the colonialist's countries (Henry, 2005; Ching, 2001). In order to understand these unique features, it is necessary to view the compelling history regarding the relationship between Korea and Japan, and the way in which Korea became a 'colony' of Japan. The short history explanation is the summary of the first chapter "Development of Nationalism: Korea" from Chen's book "Japanese colonialism in Korea and Formosa: a comparison of its effects upon the development of nationalism (1968)".

The relationship records between Korea and Japan date back to the third century, a time where Korea was divided into three kingdoms. One kingdom, Baek-Je, located in the southwest part of the peninsula had a close cooperative relationship with Japan to struggle with the other two kingdoms. Another kingdom, Silla, was in an alliance with China, who finally unified the three

kingdoms in the year 668 in order to drive the Japanese off the peninsula. From the year 668 until the sixteenth century, during the next two dynasties (Ko-Ryeo and Cho-Seon), Japanese pirates frequently attacked the coastal areas of the peninsula and although a small exchange existed, there was never a particular diplomatic relationship between Japan and old countries of Korea.

In 1592, Korea was attacked by Japan. Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the chief advisor of Japan used this conflict as a gateway to attack China (Ming Emperor). The war between Korea-China and Japan continued until the death of Hideyoshi in 1598. In 1609, the relations between Korea and Japan became more friendly, after the mediation of the Daimyo (suzerain) of Tsushima with an agreement. They agreed to exchange missions when they have national events of importance and this became their national custom until the end of eighteenth century. This mutual exchange was terminated due to the financial situation in Korea resulting from their relations with China. Nonetheless, a small amount of trade occurred through the same route between Korea and Japan until 1876.

In the late nineteenth century, Japan attempted to restore diplomatic relations with Korea, however Regent, Dae-Won-Gun Heung-Seon, rejected the attempt. The regent of Korea was stubborn in the policy of isolation from all Western countries<sup>5</sup>, while Japan had accepted the civilization of Western countries. Due to the the Meiji Restoration<sup>6</sup>, Japan became empire, the late industrializer and colonizer, and started planning expansion into Korea.

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5. A French expedition occupied an island in 1866 and American warships attacked some forts in 1871 but Korea did not open the door.

6. Meiji restoration, in Japanese history, the political revolution in 1868 that brought the final demise of the Tokugawa military government and, at least nominally, returned control of the country to direct imperial rule under the emperor Meiji. This restoration came to be identified with the subsequent era of major political, economic, and social change that brought about the modernization and Westernization of the country (Britannica, 2015)

In 1875, a Japanese ship was fired upon while close to Seoul, by Korean shore batteries resulting in the Japanese firing in retaliation, destroying the fort. The Japanese Government attempted to force Korea into treaty relations. The Korean Government signed the Treaty of Amity with Japan due to the pressure put on them by Japan. This was the first treaty with Westernized principles signed of Korea. The opening of ports in Japan had important effects on Korea. A political party in Korea (Independence party, which was formed by reformists) started the first step towards modernization with Queen Min's support. Queen Min was the leader of the pro-reformation party. Dae-Won-Gun, the leader of the conservative party and Queen Min, the leader of the reformation party were in contraposition with each other and were dragged into Japan's interference. The queen wanted to use the Japanese military to reform the military system in Korea however the Korean military attacked the Japanese officers, due to the perceived threat that they would be replaced by a new army. Following this, Dae-Won-Gun and his conservative party took the place of the current Korean government. During this time frame, the Chinese Government sent their army to reassert its vassal state, which was accomplished by the Treaty of Amity in 1876, when the Queen and her political party gained leadership of Korean Government. The reformists announced several reform programs with the Japanese garrison but again, the Chinese army moved against them. This complicated situation continued until the year 1884. Finally, Japan and China signed a treaty at Tientsin to remove both of their militaries from Korea in 1885.

In 1894, the Dong-Hak Rebellion, a mass movement of peasants, was happening in Korea. The Dong-Hak (direct translation meaning "Eastern Learning") is a type of religion which developed into the anti-foreign movement. The people went against any other countries than Korea, especially Japan. When Korea opened its ports to Japan, Korean grain, particularly rice and soy beans, was overwhelmingly distributed to Japan however Japanese methods of taking the grain

had become ruthless. The Dong-Hak Rebellion had a huge impact on the government. The movement had spread all over Korea and the anti-Japanese sentiment spread along with it. Eventually, the Korean government asked for military support from China and Japan, however the Korean Government successfully suppressed the rebellion without much help from the support. One problem that resulted from this call for support was that the two armies stayed in Korea despite the Korean Government's asking. The Japanese army seized Gyeong-Bok Palace and attacked the Chinese army resulting in the Sino-Japanese war beginning in Korea. Japan ended up successfully winning this war. The second Dong-Hak Rebellion occurred during this time against Japan but it was eventually suppressed by the Japanese army.

Immediately following the war, Japan forced reformation in Korea. They wanted the Korean people to support the pro-Japanese Government of Queen Min and her clan, without any interference from China. This is referred to as the Gabo Reformation. The reformation created the basis of modernization, however there was no reformation in the military system or the land planning system which was under pressure by Japanese army.

Queen Min changed the diplomatic route to Russia because Japan had previously given up the Yo-Dong peninsula to China. This change triggered a conflict between Japan and Russia resulting in Queen Min being killed by the Japanese army. The Russo-Japanese war started between Japan and Russia in 1904 with Japan winning the war in 1905. During the war, Japan forced an agreement on the Korean Government causing them to accept Japanese financial and diplomatic advisors (the First Korean-Japanese pact). After the war, Japan made Korea sign the second Korean-Japanese pact without the Premier Han Kyo-Sol or the Emperor Go-Jong, also known as the Protectorate Treaty in 1905. This treaty removed the diplomatic right of Korea, allowing Japan to install the Japanese Resident-General. Emperor Go-Jong, the husband of Queen Min, opposed the treaty and

sent secret emissaries to Hague to request help, but his mission failed and Emperor Gojong was forced to abdicate the throne. The Korean people rebelled against Japan however the rebellion was quickly suppressed by the Japanese government. Then many small and big agreements and affairs with Japan made Korea incapable. On August 22, 1910, the Treaty of Annexation was finally signed, ending the Yi dynasty of the Cho-Seon era, which begun in 1392. The colonial era continued until 1945 when the Second World War ended with Japan declaring unconditional surrender.

As mentioned before, there are many countries who suffered through the colonial era however Japanese colonialism is different in many ways to other countries'. In Ching's book "Becoming Japanese" (2001), the author outlines the uniqueness of Japanese colonialism and its homologues. First, most European countries expanded to other continents in order to colonize, however Japan's territorial expansion is limited to the Asian continent. Second, Japanese colonization showed ethnic and cultural affinities between the colonizers and the colonized. Third, Japanese colonization is distinguished by the desire to transform the people under its rule of future citizens, by forcing cultural assimilation (education system was totally based on Japanese language; restriction of the local languages and dialects; adoption of Japanese names; encouragement to wear Japanese cloths and to observe the Japanese religious rites). Indeed, the colonizers were not content to only exploit the resources of the conquered territories.



Figure 2. The Japanese empire (1870-1945). Source: Encyclopedia Britannica.

It is still argued that Japan assisted in the economic development for the colonies. For example, there has been argument between some scholars about Korean development (Haggard et al, 1997; Kohli, 1997). Kohli (1994) claims that Korean economic development was based on Japanese colonialism but Haggard et al (1997) disagrees because South Korean economic development happened in the 1970s. However, overarching the debate, Japan's "War crimes" created the dark history of Korea (Soh, 2008). Korea has deeply suffered from colonial treatment: economic exploitation (extraction of natural resources such as minerals); expropriation of Korean farms; exploitation of the local workforce (slavery); the cultural assimilation policy; sexual slavery of

young women during the Second World War; depredation of antique items (Chung, 1971; Mcnamara, 1986; Soh, 2008; Kirk, 2015; Kotler, 2015). This treatment, that is still lively within collective memory, explains the Korean people's negative attachment to Japan, and the reason as to why they refer to this particular period as "Humiliation".

### **3.2 Difficult Heritage from Colonialism in Other Countries**

As seen in some examples from the introduction, there are many difficult heritage sites around the world. Japanese colonial heritage is the heart of the debate in South Korea but this was caused by more than the Japanese cruel methods of colonialism. To see the difference in the sentiment toward Japan, Taiwan, who has also suffered from Japanese colonialism, is a good example. Taiwan and Korea were two of most important and largest colonies of Japanese imperialism. (See Table 2.)

However, the attitudes of both countries toward Japan have differences according to past literature (Cai, 2009; Mcnamara, 1986; Chen, 1968.). Mcnamara (1986) claims that both countries are influenced by China and had been ruled by Japan with similar policies and period. But there were fundamental differences between Korea and Taiwan.

First, Korea and Taiwan had different historic background. Korea was previously united by race and language from the Cho-Seon Dynasty for over than 500 years before the Japanese imperial period while Taiwan had been Dutch colonization in the seventeenth century and an undeveloped

wilderness with an aboriginal population<sup>7</sup>. Also, Taiwan's Chinese administration was replaced by the Japanese administration<sup>8</sup>.

Table 2. *The colonies of Japanese Imperialism.*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Territory(km<sup>2</sup>)</b>
Korea	1910-1945	22,899,000	220,769
Taiwan	1895-1945	5,212,000	35,961
Karafuto (Russia, Sakhalin)	1905-1945	332,000	36,090
Kwantung territories (Part of China)	1905-1945	1,134,000	3,461
South Pacific Mandate	1914-1945	113,000	2,149

Source. From "Visions of Ryukyu: Early-Modern Thought and Politics." by Gregory Smits, 1999, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

Second, the timing of annexation was after the starting point of modernization in Korea while Japan was attempting to assist in the Taiwanese modernization. The Taiwanese ports were opened to foreign trade by the early 1860s but the situation of economic development was lacked because of the financial organs and currency system. This situation made the modest accomplishments

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7. When Korea was invaded by Japan in 1592, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who attacked Korea, sent an envoy to Taiwan asking the sovereignty to send tribute to Japan so the envoy was sent back to Japan. Also, there was no Chinese settlements on the island at the time (Huang, 2005).

8. Especially the Chinese administration was incomplete; according to Mcnamara (1986), the Chinese administration on the island tried to develop the island in the years prior to 1895, but the success was minor.

under the Japanese administration appear significant. Conversely, Korea peninsula was still independent at the time of the development of economy and a growing foreign trade in grains.

Lastly, the two countries were geographically different. The Japanese military strategy surrounding Korea had more importance as Korea is the peninsula to attack the continent of Asia. Therefore, Japan had more motive to control the Korean people and resources versus the Taiwanese. Vladivostok, Peking, and Tokyo were not far distant from Seoul while the island of Taiwan was twelve hundred miles south of Japan.

As a result, both countries treat the history as a painful era but Taiwanese tend to have less negative attachment to Japan because of the reasons above.

The case study is about the JGGB in this research but there are some modern heritage buildings which were already demolished under urban development. For example, the first department store of Korea, Hwashin Department Store<sup>9</sup>, was destroyed in 1986 even though the building was very meaningful as the first established department by Korean in Japanese colonial era. Now it has changed to a landmark building in the district however the modern heritage aspect of the building has been forgotten. When the JGGB was demolished despite all of the debates, President Kim's approval rating was over 90% afterwards. There is controversy surrounding the demolition of modern heritage buildings until now due to the difficult nature of these decisions. However, the Seodaemun Prison and Old Seoul station are well preserved as museums. Therefore, it seemed as if the Korean people began to realize the importance of preserving modern heritage buildings as time goes by.

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9. The original building was wooden-made building in the late 19 century but the building was almost disappeared because of a big fire in 1935. The new building was constructed as the biggest building that was planned by a Korean, Heung-Sik Park in 1937.

However, as a 70 years Independent Day ceremony in 2015, a modern heritage building was destroyed. The South Korean government explained that the building did not have enough value to be preserved. But still the demolition was for independent day ceremony and the building was from the colonial era. Some newspapers already started the discourse about the building. Likewise, colonial heritage buildings tend to be controversial in South Korea.

Recently, Japanese modern heritage buildings are listed in UNESCO world heritage as a starting point of modern era in Japan. However, one of the sites, “Aerial view of the Hashima coal mine” (Hearafter, Hashima mine), is criticized from scholars and Korean government. Japanese government suggested to UNESCO that the island is valuable in specific period which is from 1860 to 1910. However, there is painful history for Korean people from 1910. Japanese government wanted to ignore making Hashima mine a beautiful heritage site. But it was warned by ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) and now Japanese government plans to add the full history as a footnote. From this political debate between Japanese government and Korean government, modern heritage buildings are attracted South Korean population’s attention.

On the other hand, the Taiwanese people still preserve the former place of Japanese Government General building as the current Office of the President of the Republic of China. In 1895, Taiwan and the Pescadores became the colony of Japanese Imperialism. It switched from Qing Dynasty (China) to Japan and the new rulers soon began making plans, including the Japanese General Government Building. The architectural design came from two contests and the style was a mix of traditional European styles, Renaissance, Baroque and neo-Classical. The construction began in 1912 and was completed in 1919. During the Second World War, the building was destroyed but was not repaired even after liberation in 1945 until 1947. The Taiwan Provincial Government started the restoration at this time and finished it in 1948. In 1949, the

building became the home of the southeast military affairs office and it became the Office of the President in 1950. This building suffered like the case of the JGGB in Seoul, but it remained as a restored building since 1948 and is used as a tourist attraction.



*Figure 3.* Presidential building today. Source: Website of Office of the President in Republic of China (<http://media.president.gov.tw/ImageViewer.aspx?hl=en-US&CID=115>)

There are many heritage buildings in Taipei including the National Museum of Taiwan and the Land Bank (Former Nippon Kangyo Bank). The Land Bank building remains and functions in its original intent. This building was torn down due to road construction however has since been restored. Additionally, many Japanese's shinto shrines were demolished but still, little remains.

Not only can Taiwan be compared to Korea. There are still many countries who have suffered through the colonial era and each country has many heritage buildings from this era. However, each building has a different historic context about nationality, time, usage and even style, so Taiwan was used as a comparison. According to Lee and Han, young Taiwanese people enjoy the Japanese culture and life and they can resolve or deny conflict from the past unlike Korea.

Therefore, the modern heritage buildings can easily be the target to overcome the vestiges of Japanese imperialism in Korea, and this is a different phenomenon with Taiwanese modern heritage buildings.



*Figure 4.* Land Bank Building in Taipei. Source: Tainan City Guide Blog (<https://tainancity.wordpress.com/2010/03/05/old-nippon-kangyo-bank-land-bank/>)

### **3.3 Japanese General Government building**

This research is focus on the conflict surrounding difficult heritage in South Korea with the case of the Japanese General Government Building (Hereafter, JGGB). As the Japanese General Government was the central role in the Japanese Imperialism, the building was perceived as a symbol of Japanese Imperialism. Before discussing the main research, it is important to first understand the background of the JGGB.

- Architectural research and planning by Japanese Government : 1912-1916

In 1910, Japanese Imperialism legislate a system to control Korean land with the law called 'Control system of the Japanese General Government'. The first Japanese General (1910-1916), Terauchi Masatake, used the old building as Japanese Residency-General building in Nam-San (Nam Mountain). Although he used this building, Terauchi planned a new building to follow the control system in front of Gyeongbok Palace, the main royal palace of the Joseon dynasty built in 1395. Its purpose for being built was to secure more working space for the Japanese Government.

Kaori (2003) says its location was chosen according to Chinese "feng shui", known as geomancy, because the Japanese government wanted to threaten the extinction of the imperial line. Seoul is one of the earliest planned cities in the world and the choice of location for the site of the palace was influenced by the feng shui (Son, 1973). This traditional concept is derived from the relationship between human beings and the surrounding environment. Even if it is controversial to believe in this concept, the imperial line from the royal palace functioned as a "mental" axis. Therefore, the destruction of the imperial line affected to erect the symbol of the authority and achievement of Japanese colonialism (Han, 2013). The plan was not met by consensus, even among the Japanese people. Some scholars criticized that the demolition of Gyeong-Bok Palace was inappropriate. However, despite some criticism, the Japanese proceeded to start the planning process of a new building for the Japanese Government-General. It was not only the JGGB, there were several traditional buildings demolished such as; the Pyongyang temple which was in a heritage building site dating back to the Goguryeo Era (37BC-668). According to the Figure 5, the

layout plan of an official residence and Gyeong-Bok Palace in 1916, the JGGB is in the centre of map with all parts of the Gyeong-Bok palace removed.

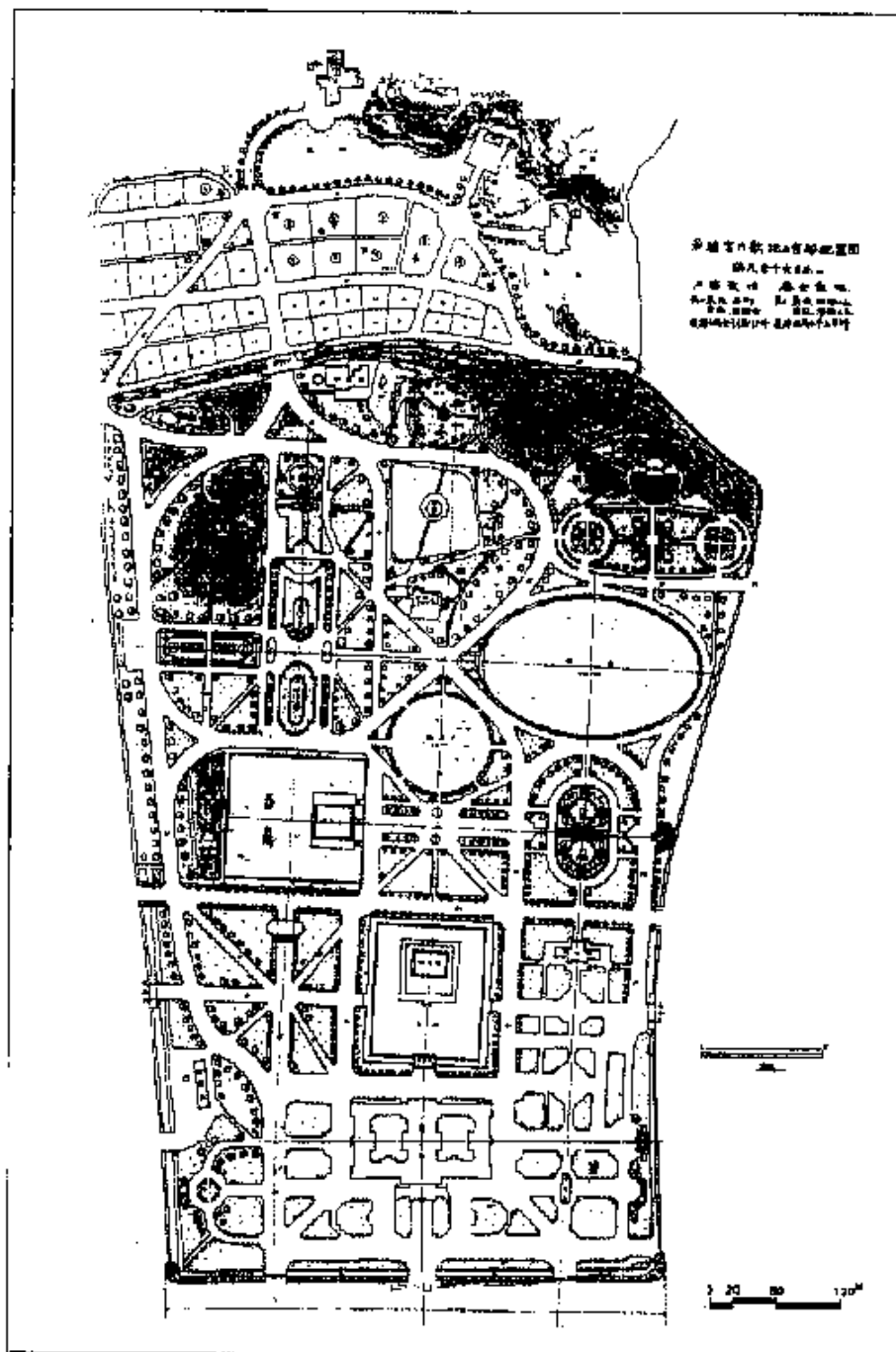


Figure 5. The layout plan of an official residence and Gyeong-Bok Palace in 1916. Source: The survey report of JGGB, Ministry of Culture-Sports, 1997.

The Architectural plan was started in 1912 by a German architect, Georg de Lalande (1872-1914), who was based in Tokyo, Japan. He was the architect for other stone buildings that showed the ‘Neo-Renaissance’ style, in Seoul. This Western style was popular in Europe and had been just introduced in Japan a few years prior. He died in the year of 1914 following completion of the initial sketch. The rest of the design process was eventually finished by Japanese Architects following his death. The building was designed to visualize symmetrical order and balance as the first drawing of Georg (Kim, 1997).

- Construction: 1916-1926

The colonial administration started the construction of the Japanese General Government building (referred to as the Japanese Government-General building of Chosun), in 1916 and completed the project in 1926. Architect Nomura (the head designer of the Taiwanese JGGB) and seven other Korean Architects participated in the construction.



*Figure 6.* The construction site of JGGB in unknown year. Source: National Archives of Korea (<http://theme.archives.go.kr/next/koreaOfRecord/joseonChong.do>)

It was a five-story structure made up of reinforced concrete. It was composed of an underground floor, three main floors and a domed roof totaling fifty-six meters in height. The material was mostly from Korea including 9.4 tonnes of larch, granite and marble. The finishing decorations and crafts were the best qualities of the JGGB. This building was the largest in Modern Architecture at the time and was a symbol of Japanese dignity. The architectural style was classified as a “Neo-Renaissance style” instead of the traditional Japanese “Edo-period style” or the local “Cho-Seon” period style (Kaori, 2003).

The construction was stopped twice. The first time was because of the Independent Movement in 1919 and second time was due to another Independent Movement in 1926. The construction was planned to be completed eight years earlier, but the construction finally finished in 1926, after ten years of construction began. The Japanese General Government was able to enforce hard scheduling during the difficult times and was finally able to hold a ceremony for the completion on the 1st of October, 1926.

- Japanese General Government building : 1926-1945

After the completion of JGGB, the Japanese General Government started on the creation of a baseball park and a tennis court near the building, inside of Gyeong-Bok Palace in 1927. A garden was made in front of the JGGB with Japanese trees and stone crafts. Additionally, the space of Gyeong-Bok palace was used for various events and exhibitions with the purpose showcasing the ‘pride of Japan’ (Son, 1996).





*Figure 8.* Japanese General Government building in front of Gyeongbok Palace. Source: Choi (2006).

- The reconversion period : 1945-1982

After Korea's liberation in 1945, the US government used this building as their military headquarters, entitled "Capital Hall". The Korean Government was established in 1948, and the former JGGB was renamed "White house" at that time.

This building was subject to controversy from the first South Korean government. However, in the previous time period, this building was too large to deconstruct and the poor economic situation within South Korea didn't allow for its demolition. The first President, Seung-Man Lee also called for the demolition of JGGB because this building was a symbol of the Japanese colonial era and the US Army Military Government in Korea, during the Korean War. The pro-demolition opinion was viewed as idealism, while the pro-conservation opinion was seen as realism. Therefore, the JGGB remained an important role for the Korean Government.



*Figure 9.* Capital Hall in 1945. Source: National Archives of Korea (<http://theme.archives.go.kr/next/koreaOfRecord/joseonChong.do>)

During the Korean War, North Korea occupied this building as its government office until the South Korean government retook it in 1950. The North Korean government held it for just ninety days. During this time, the building was destroyed because the North Korean Army set fire to the building. There was no recovery or investigation after the war, as the current President Lee started using the remaining outdoor space as an outdoor music hall. On May 16, 1961, Major General Chung-hee Park brought himself into power under a military coup d'état by reason of cleaning up the disorganized mess created by the Second Republic (President Myon Chang, 1960-1961). Park became the third president of South Korea in 1963 and his government restored the building and used it as the Seoul central office from 1962 to 1982.



*Figure 10.* Repairing the inside of Capital Hall in 1962. Source: National Archives of Korea (<http://theme.archives.go.kr/next/koreaOfRecord/joseonChong.do>)

- Remodeling for the National Museum of Korea : 1982-1986

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of May, 1981, President Jeon gave instruction to move the National Museum of Korea to the Capital Hall (JGGB). In March of 1982, the Korean Government announced a moving plan to the people of Korea, and the project begun. However, in August of 1982, the pro-demolition group, called again for the demolition of the JGGB however the Minister of Government Administration, Chan-Geung Park, stated “There is no reason to demolish Capitall Hall. When the National Museum of Korea is opened, the second floor will be the exhibit hall of Japanese Colonial Era and will alert the public to the atrocities of Japanese Imperialism.” Also, the National Museum

of Korea held a public hearing and where they derived a conclusion as to how to preserve the JGGB.

The discussion about the demolition of the Japanese General Government building restarted later on. The battle was between the pro-demolition side (Korean government and the South Korean people who wanted to “clean up” the shameful vestiges of Japanese imperialism) and pro-conservation side (Japanese journalists and citizens, and Korean scholars who considered this building as an architectural achievement).



Figure 11. Article about pro and anti-demolition battle in South Korea. Source: Park (1990).

The building had become the main repository for the state’s national treasure and opened as the National Museum of Korea from the 21st day of August in 1986 (Han, 2013). From this day, the National Museum of Korea opened for public viewing.

- The controversial period :1991-1998

The conflict between preservation and demolition peaked in the 1990s. In January of 1991, South Korea's minister of culture, Lee O-young, announced the demolition of this building in order to recover the imperial line of the Gyeongbok Palace (Kim, 1990). In June of the same year, many Japanese people asked for the re-examination of the demolition plan from the South Korean government. Even with the Japanese call for re-examination, President Young-Sam Kim directed to demolish it in order to recover "national spirit" in 1993. In 1994, the conflict between the pro-demolition side and the pro-conservation side climaxed.



*Figure 12.* Japanese General Government Building's demolition ceremony on the 50th Independence Movement Day in 1995 in South Korea. Source: Ahn (1995).

Finally, on the fifteenth of liberation day in 1995 (Ahn, 1995), the Korean government started the demolition work on the Japanese General Government building and finished it in 1996. This event had a big impact on the collective conscience and created some awareness surrounding the

controversy. Some Japanese and Korean scholars regret that they could not block the demolition efforts and many still publish articles pertaining to the regret and blame surrounding the demolition in 1996.

### **3.4 Cultural Policy and the Institutional Change in South Korea**

The problematic history of the JGGB was about the public debate to destroy the building. In 1990, President Tae-Woo Roh's administration initiated a plan to restore Gyeong-Bok Palace (Ministry of Culture-Sports of Korea, 1997). This plan was continued on to the next president. This president was Yeong-Sam Kim. He was the end of the military regimes and the beginning of civilian government in South Korea.

President Kim's government (1993-1997) was a radical departure from longstanding policy because the potential of the cultural industries to contribute to economic growth was recognised by globalization (Yoon, 1999; Park and Joo, 2002; Kim, 2006; Kwon, 2014). The government of President Kim conducted a campaign with the slogan "Creation of the New Korea" to improve the status of Korea in globalization (Young, 1995; 1996; 1997; Yim, 2002). The Korean government also adopted some economic reformations to draw foreign investors in this context (Chang, 1993), but the cultural industries and tourism were the main cultural policy objectives (Yim, 2002). Kim's government emphasized the economic importance of culture and the arts. The "new five-year plan for promoting cultural development" (1993), "the master plan for cultural welfare" (1996), and "the cultural vision 2000" (1997) all highlight the policy objectives (Ministry of Culture and Sports, 1993; 1996; 1997).

Additionally, the globalization policy reshaped the cultural policy towards the enhancement of international cultural exchange. The Korean government introduced the local autonomy system

in 1995 (It was centralized authoritarian rule before), the cultural identity of each region has been significant in a global society. In 1997, the government of President Kim established legal guidelines regarding cooperation between socio-cultural programs to promote this cultural policy (Yim, 2002). Therefore, this cultural policy of President Kim's government promoted the cultural industry and devised a number of long-term cultural industry plans by the Ministry of Culture.

One of the new cultural policies is the "Rectifying history [Yeok-Sa Ba-Ro-Se-Wu-Ki]" Movement. In 1993, President Kim was elected and expressed his aim to rectify history of the Japanese colonial era and the military regimes which can be referred to as the Korean Modern era. This is the reason why the JGGB became such a big issue and some newspaper articles express how he ordered to demolish the JGGB (Dong-A Newspaper, 1993; Han-Gyeo-Re Newspaper, 1993; Kyeong-Hyang Newspaper, 1993).

The President Kim's speech shows the meaning like below:

[Rectifying history] is the try to rectify the wrong past and to set the future right. This is same as [Rectifying Korea]. This is what I pursued since I became a President. In this fiftieth year of Independence, the demolition of JGGB started for rectifying history and revitalizing the national spirit and energy [Min-Jok-Jeong-Ki]. I appreciate for your continued support of the [Rectifying history]. Our next generation could have better future when we endure this moment to clear the immorality and injustice with the truth....I will complete this task of [Rectifying history] with the Korean people for [Rebuilding Korea]<sup>10</sup>.

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10. President Kim's announcement in 1996. Source: Han, J. (2013). Japan in the public culture of South Korea, 1945-2000s. P. Morris, N. Shimazu, & E.Vickers (Eds), *Imagining Japan in Post-War East Asia: Identity Politics, Schooling and Popular Culture*, Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon, 106-126.

- Other difficult heritage in Seoul, South Korea

After the demolition of JGGB, there was constant discussion about the preservation of modern heritage buildings. It was 70<sup>th</sup> Independence Day of South Korea on 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2015 and there was again the ceremony for the 70<sup>th</sup> year with a demolition of difficult heritage. Hwang (2015) criticised the haste demolition process without enough time discussion on Dong-A newspaper. The articles show that the current Mayor of Seoul, Won-Sun Park, planned to demolish this building because the building “blocked the flow of national energy”. The deconstruction costs 4 billion won (around 4 million US dollar) and there was consideration of the safety of the neighbor buildings. However, the Mayor Park requested to make the dismantling event as the ceremony of 70<sup>th</sup> year of liberation so the relevant department should have found the solution to remove the building on time. Finally, this building is demolished on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August 2015, and the exhibition mall is quickly built on the site (Kim, 2015).

It seems a similar situation is ongoing in South Korea. In the International Conference on East Asian Architectural Culture (EAAC), there were many scholars who talked about the danger of missing Modern Architecture with the example of JGGB.

The consensus between demolition and preservation might be achievable if at least there is participative. However, the debates surrounding the JGGB’s demolition and in all the complexity, it seems like this is continuous challenge for contemporary Korean society.

- Institutional Change in South Korea

As mentioned above, modern heritage buildings (including some recent difficult heritage buildings) are considered as parts of cultural heritage goods and public goods. However, they have been demolished in the capitalist society of many other countries besides South Korea. In this case,

the reason why the buildings are demolished is because public goods cannot make a profit for the private owners over the value (Navrud and Ready, 2002). In other words, the private owners decide to destroy or change the place for their useful value if there are not supportive benefits for them. The situation is seen in the literature on North America but also happened in South Korea. Therefore, the government tried to preserve these heritage buildings with a system for the private owners.

There is a law for modern heritage buildings which is the initiation of the cultural heritage registration system (Hereafter, registration system). Since 2001, registration system is enforced by the Cultural Heritage Protection Law. There were many studies to preserve and use modern heritage buildings from 1990s so the buildings needed the legal protection to be preserved. When they are registered in the list of cultural heritage, the owner has benefits like tax benefit, subsidy and technical advice to preserve (Cultural Heritage Administration, 2007).

The registration system about modern heritage buildings consisted of seven clauses in one chapter. It is the fifth chapter of the Cultural Properties Protection Law from fifty-third clause to fifty-ninth clause. In the law, valuable cultural asset which is not designated cultural asset can be registered from the evaluation by Cultural Properties Committee. The law gives contents about the management and report of any change. However, not any one clause forces to preserve cultural assets. The law said exactly “The owner should try to preserve the asset.”

In short, South Korea started to preserve the modern heritage by the law from 2001 but the law is only for registered heritage by the owner. Also, it is not as strong as designated cultural asset which is including less controversial heritage buildings.

Studies about modern heritage buildings is increasing in South Korea. First, registration system is considered as uncompleted legal support for the modern heritage buildings. Registration

system aimed at protection of modern heritage including notification and advice. However, the range of objects is not as strict as designated cultural asset by the Cultural Properties Protection Law. According to Kim (2006), registration system has no legal protection so the system cannot prevent the demolition of modern heritage buildings. There was an example Former Education Building of United Church of Canada and Former Stock Exchange Market. Both of them have similar situation but one is preserved and the other is demolished. Former Education Building of United Church of Canada was published on newspaper and a government institution managed to prove the value of the building. On the other hand, Former Stock Exchange Market was demolished in process of registration. The difference between two cases is assertive action of the government institution.

Then, why is the government's action important? Architectural or cultural value is always uncertain. There is not certain measurement to show the values in detail. However, sometimes a significant number of people approve the values of buildings when the public announces it. The Former Education Building of United Church of Canada is one of the examples. The institute suggested to research the historical value and the architectural value.

Therefore, Kim (2006) assumes that government initiated policies are important in South Korea. However, this registration system was introduced in addition to the existing system and implicated from other countries. The encouragement may not be strong so many registered modern heritage buildings are biased towards public goods such as public schools, public buildings and religious buildings.

Second, there are studies on the role of South Korean government. South Korean government initiated redevelopment system makes the value of modern heritage buildings ignored. South Korea is one of the countries that are economically improved in a short time. Because of the rapid

urban growth from 1970s to 2000s, now the urban redevelopment became an issue to improve urban infrastructure. The redevelopment projects have usually focused on physical improvement with whole demolition method. In other words, the government institutes try to induce the redevelopment in old districts. Then the residents see that real estate price is increasing in the areas. In the benefits of redevelopment, modern heritage buildings are just old buildings to get the chance of redevelopment. Therefore, there is a lack of attention on the modern heritage buildings in urban redevelopment. Especially, modern heritage buildings are usually not treated as heritage buildings so many of them are already decrepit and finally demolished. As Nam (2011)'s comparative case study on urban revitalization, Korean projects focus on feasibility. Therefore, the government cannot play the public role as the economic logic is the first one for residents.

The role of government has already been changing in South Korea. Some projects are suggested to make the modern heritage buildings as tourism places. Therefore, the places are usually planned as cultural initiatives. The creation of cultural values may not be the best way to preserve modern heritage buildings. But, it is necessary to make economic viability for later preservation of modern heritage buildings (Cho and Shin, 2014). The protection of governments by the law, the system or projects could be strong preservation methods.

As a result, registration system seems the preservation of modern heritage is selective. Therefore, if the heritage's economic value is not higher than demolition, the preservation is rarely possible because of the redevelopment situation in South Korea. The high volume of urban area and rapid revitalization projects cause more loss of modern heritage buildings in South Korea. Therefore, whether modern heritage buildings are preserved or demolished tends to depend on the government's attention and the position in South Korea.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Newspapers analysis

In terms of methodology, we chose the newspapers analysis because it is more appropriate for the nature of our research, which is related to the reasons of the heritage conflict in Korea. Urban conflicts (which include heritage conflicts) have a large visibility in media coverage, especially in the press. This is why many researchers see the press as an excellent source of information when analyzing conflicting activity (Olzak, 1989; Lipsky, 1968; McCarthy et al., 1996; Koopmans and Rucht, 1999; Trudelle et al., 2006), despite the inherent bias (sensationalism, etc.). By attracting the attention of a wide audience on conflicting events, the press plays a crucial role in highlighting the underlying issues and the discourses of the actors involved in the conflict.

Several researchers in human geography use two complementary protocols in media analysis: the quantitative and the qualitative approaches (Janelle and Millward, 1976; Ley and Mercer, 1980; Olzak, 1989; Villeneuve and Côté, 1994; Koopmans and Rucht, 1999; Gilbert and Brosseau, 2002). However, because of the limitations surrounding this master thesis, our research only focalized on the qualitative approach. Essentially inductive, this approach is very appropriate for the researches that sink into socio-symbolic representations, like our research which aims to understand the antagonist visions surrounding the difficult heritage (the deep meaning and signification behind the pro and anti-demolition visions). In our study, we privileged the “content analysis”. This type of analysis - that applies to a diversity of data (the textual, visual or sound resources) - is one the most popular qualitative methodologies used in social and human sciences. It's usually depicted as an intellectual effort of understanding “human communication”, which swings between two poles: the rigorous objectivity and the interpretation (Krippendorff, 1980; Harwood and Garry, 2003; Graneheim and Lundman, 2004; Elo and Kyngas, 2008; Krippendorff, 2013). The researcher has

to try to minimize the potential cognitive and cultural biases in order to ensure the objectivity of its research. Content analysis is generally organized into four chronological phases: the constitution of the corpus, the analysis, the classification and the interpretation.

## 4.2 Methodological Process

- Constitution of the corpus :

The first step is the selection of the type of resources (textual, visual and sounds). In our case, in order to collect newspaper articles, we used the online archives of South Korea. There are some websites that offer electronic newspapers but a widely generalized source is “Naver News Library”. It is provided by the NAVER Corporation which is a well-known web portal company in South Korea. This archive has the most articles by four newspaper companies: Kyeong-Hyang, Dong-A, Mae-Il-Kyeong-Je and Han-Gyeo-Re<sup>11</sup>. The website offers newspaper articles from 1920 to 1999 from these four newspaper companies. The keyword search “Japanese General Government Building” was used to find relatable newspaper articles. Then, we limited the time range starting in the time when its demolition was officially announced (1991) to the two years after the demolition (1998). We retained the newspapers, journals (editorials, columns), letters to the editor and opinion pieces. The newspaper articles that are not pertinent were removed from the corpus during the next step.

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11. There are about 47 companies are included in Korean Association of Newspapers in South Korea. However, the four newspaper companies are well known newspapers from each political perspective for the fairness of the information.

Table 3. *The number of articles with the keyword “Japanese General Government Building”.*

Article Number
Title of Article (Korean and English)
Date
Name of Newspaper
Location of Article in Newspaper (Category)
Type of Articles: Article/Picture/Column/Interview
Author
Relation with the topic –demolition of JGGB
Sources: Scholar/The public/Government/Others
Existence of Opinions: Yes/No
Pro/Con
Brief Description

In addition, protocols were used to make basic data for this research. Altheide and Schneider (2013) mention that a qualitative document analysis tends to find the relations with the research objectives or questions from the documents. However, the relationship tends to be measured ambiguously. Therefore, the protocols are compulsory steps to obtain theoretically identified information. Researchers can keep its objectivity by the protocol-aided document analysis.

In fact, the protocols are constructed through operational definitions of concepts to obtain quantitative data for purposes of measurement (Krippendorff, 1980). However, the result was limited for the research’s question. The qualitative materials can be used for other questions and inquiries later (Altheide and Schneider, 2013). Therefore, the simple protocols which are sorting methods for newspaper data from old sets helped collect qualitative materials. The protocols are

presented in the Table 3. These protocols helped in the sorting of the newspaper data in coming steps.

- Analysis :

The second step is the analysis, which is used to better understand the resources (read and reread them) and try to capture their apparent message. In our case, the reading was manual. The Table 4 shows the amount of total articles from the archives. The total number is 546 from the four newspapers from 1991 to 1998.

Table 4. *The number of articles with the keyword “Japanese General Government Building”.*

Time Newspaper	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Dong-A	12	12	34	16	55	43	22	7	201
Han-Gyeo-Re	18	3	30	12	41	30	7	2	143
Kyeong-Hyang	6	8	26	17	55	25	7	6	150
Mae-Il-Kyeong-Je	2	1	6	4	23	5	10	1	52
Total	38	24	96	49	174	103	46	2014	546

First, it is important to remove the extraneous articles for the first reading. As the keyword is “JGGB”, there are some articles that are showing the building as an example of other difficult heritage examples. In this research, the conflicts are limited to only the JGGB, so the other articles are removed. Additionally, there are articles about the restoration project of Gyeong-Bok Palace, which is a bigger project of the demolition of the JGGB, but this is removed as there is generally no information about conflicts and demolition itself. There are some articles that are written about the National Museum of Korea which was the last function of the JGGB. There are articles about;

the moving problem of the museum, Modern history of Korea about the usage of JGGB, the attitude toward Japan and Japanese vetiges, the background of novels, a timecapsule under the JGGB, other foreign countries' examples et cetera. The result of classification is Table 5.

Table 5. *The number of articles related to the demolition of Japanese General Government Building.*

Newspaper \ Time	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Dong-A	7	5	19	16	33	21	7	1	109
Han-Gyeo-Re	10	1	22	12	23	14	1	0	83
Kyeong-Hyang	4	4	21	17	34	8	3	1	92
Mae-II-Kyeong-Je	1	0	4	4	18	0	3	0	30
Total	22	10	66	49	108	43	14	2	314

Table 6. *The number of articles that are shown the opinions about demolition of Japanese General Government Building.*

Newspaper \ Time	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Dong-A	6	5	12	1	11	12	2	0	49
Han-Gyeo-Re	7	1	10	4	13	4	0	0	39
Kyeong-Hyang	2	4	12	6	19	4	0	0	47
Mae-II-Kyeong-Je	1	0	2	0	3	0	3	0	9
Total	2007	10	2029	2005	2041	2016	5	0	10113

Second, the rest of the articles are sorted by the existence of opinions. There are articles that show only information of the demolition event itself, the history of JGGB until the demolition, the method used to destroy the building and more. Again, this research's question is about the conflicts

so the information could only be used as references for the background study. Therefore, the sorted result as the existence of opinions is at the Table 6. The total 144 articles were used in the next step.

- Classification by themes :

After the previous step, we conducted a manual classification of our articles by the thematic categories that are related to our principal subject. For that, we needed to identify the main themes and put them in relation with the different actors and the production context of the article (ex: source, author and date).

The different actors are divided to four categories: Scholars, The public, Government, and others (Journalists, Politicians, other professionals and so forth).

The content of each article is coded into three categories. Generally, when dealing with difficult heritage, as above literatures, there are two groups; the pro-conservation and pro-demolition. In this research, the debates and arguments can be grouped into the two types of arguments. However, there were opinions to mediate the two groups by suggesting new ideas for the JGGB. Some articles show both opinions, with two people's claims so the total numbers for the quantitative result is different than the total amount of articles. In this context, the three categories are:

- 1) Pro-conservation opinions
- 2) Pro-demolition opinions
- 3) Other opinions

- Interpretation

Once representative themes have been identified from the first reading of the corpus, we analyzed the discourse of the two groups of actors which are connected to them. At this point, our analysis of discourse was only a semantic analysis: the analysis that concerns only the meaning of the text, excluding the linguistic structure (syntactic and morphological aspects of the text). In this last step, the found results (different arguments of pro and anti-demolition) were put in relation with the concepts presented in the literature (heritage values, memorial obstacles, etc.), which allowed us to verify if it is a classic case or a case having particularities.

## 5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### 5.1 General observations

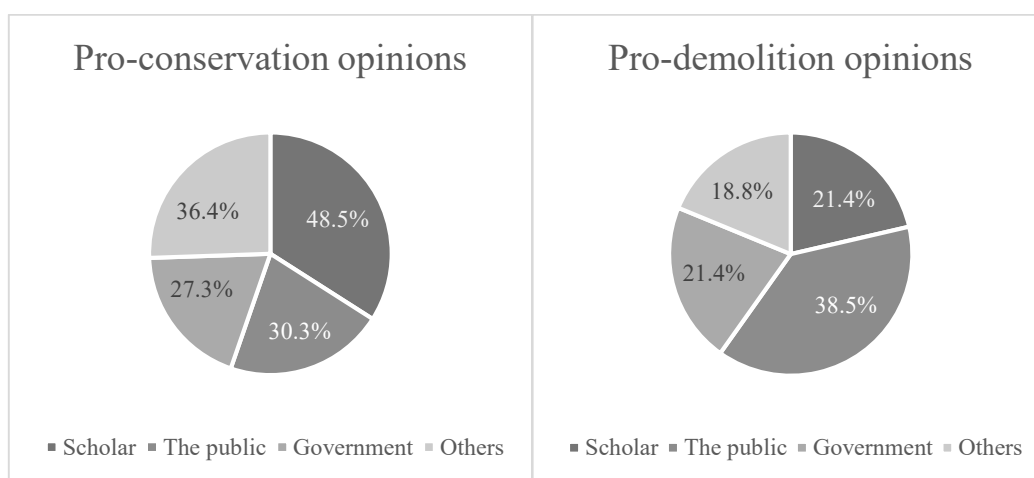
144 articles of differing opinions were analysed. 70% were in favour of demolition, 28% were pro-conservation, and only 2% had different opinions (see Table 7).

Table 7: *The total articles and proportion in each type of opinions about demolition of JGGB, from 1991 to 1997.*

<b>Categories \ Time</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Pro-conservation</b>	7 (41.2%)	4 (40.0%)	9 (22.5%)	8 (50.0%)	11 (23.9%)	4 (19.1%)	1 (20.0%)	44 (28.4%)
<b>Pro-demolition</b>	8 (47.1%)	6 (60.0%)	31 (77.5%)	7 (43.8%)	34 (73.9%)	17 (81.0%)	4 (80.0%)	107 (69.0%)
<b>Other opinions</b>	2 (11.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (6.3%)	1 (2.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (2.6%)
<b>Total</b>	17 (100.0%)	10 (100.0%)	40 (100.0%)	16 (100.0%)	46 (100.0%)	21 (100.0%)	5 (100.0%)	155 (100.0%)

The articles revealed four groups of acting subjects: scholars, the government, the public and others. “Scholars” are people who work in professional and/or academic fields, such as researchers, teachers or people who study heritage. The “public” refers to anyone without any organizational affiliation. The “government” encompasses the official representatives of the Korean government, such as the president of the country, members of government ministries, and government decision-makers. “Others” include journalists, politicians, and other professionals.

Figure 13 provides the demographics of pro-conservation opinions, pro-demolition opinions and other opinions about the fate of JGGB. The pro-conservation opinion is largely supported by scholars (48.5%), and the pro-demolition opinion is heard often from the public (38.5%).



*Figure 13.* The charts of percentages of actors of each opinion group on demolition of JGGB.

## 5.2 The evolution and content of the debate

An analysis of the research shows three categories of opinions: pro-demolition, pro-conservation and “others.” The dominant debate discourse was between pro-demolition and pro-conservation groups.

This section presents the chronological development of the debate between those two main groups, and their respective arguments. There are three significant phases:

- a) The demolition announcement phase (1991 - 1993): This period began January 1991, when the Minister of Culture, Lee O-Young, announced the demolition. It ended in 1993, just before President Young-Sam Kim made an announcement confirming the demolition plan.
- b) The intense debate phase (1993 - mid-1995): This phase covers the period from the President's announcement of his intention to demolish the building, until the start of the demolition.
- c) The demolition phase (mid-1995 - 1997): This phase concerns the destruction period of the JBBC.

**a) The demolition announcement phase (1991-1993)**

This debate is an important one during the year of the Minister of Culture's announcement. There is an immediate reaction, dominated by scholarly discourse. One particular article in Han-Gyeo-Re newspaper (1991)<sup>12</sup>, that reported the opposing opinions of two scholars, is particularly representative of the experts' debate.

The History Professor, Hyeon-Hee Lee, states that the JGGB must be demolished for two main reasons: memorial obstacles, and spiritual obstacles. In his opinion, the building is a strong symbol of the suppression of the Korean people. He points out that the material to build it, was

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12. Lee, H. & Kim, J. (1991, June 21). Jaeng-Jeom I-Reo-Ke Bon-Da Yet Cho-Seon Chong-Dok-Bu Cheol-Geo [Seen in this light, the issue on the demolishment of ex-Japanese General Government building]. Han-Gyeo-Re. 957, 12.

forcibly collected from Korea using Korean labourers to work on the construction site. He argued that the colonial Japanese people chose this particular location, the place of Gyeong-Bok Palace, the place of the five hundred-year dynasty of Cho-Seon, to build their JGGB in order to distort the “Korean National spirit” and block the “national energy” (‘Feng shui’<sup>13</sup>). Lee uses a spiritual argument here, which are taken very seriously in Korean culture. The feng shui invasion question has been treated as a highly controversial rumour among scholars, while the notion is broadly accepted by professionals and activists. It’s still one of the important reasons why the pro-demolition group wanted to dismantle the JGGB. Lee points to the shapes of two buildings, the JGGB and the Seoul City Hall building, that are reminiscent of the shape of “Il (日: Japan in chinese letter), meaning “Great Japan.” According to Lee, these symbols are shaming to the South Korean people and justify the liquidation of Japanese vestige. In his view, the demolition must be done to avoid visits from the Japanese to a “glory past” symbol of their country. Finally, Lee warns that any person that opposes to the demolition of the building is guilty of anti-patriotism. The discourse of this scholar is an example of the view that support the demolition “to avoid the remembering” that Depagne (2011) mentioned.

Conversely, Jeong-Dong Kim, a professor of architecture, insists on preserving the JGGB for the uniqueness of its architecture. To him, it is an example of a rare modern style of

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13. Chapter 3.3 shows the importance of Feng shui on JGGB. This idea that Japan carried out the feng shui invasion has been treated as a highly controversial rumor among scholars, while the notion is broadly accepted by professionals and activists. Whether or not the complex story is out of the scope of this research. However, this perception is one of the important reasons why the pro-demolition group wants to dismantle the JGGB.

architecture and a valuable example of Baroque urban planning<sup>14</sup> (artistic value). He adds other arguments, such as the cost of demolition and the unethical government spending of a large amount of the national budget for an issue that is not a priority to South-Koreans.

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14. The Baroque style was a trend of Imperialism countries that the official building is the centre of a city and the road is long and wide in front of the building. This style was based on Prussian German people's plan and completed by Japanese people. As the Japanese people was impossible to make new architectural style, so the façade was Renaissance style. (Kim, 1991)



### 옛 조선총독부 철거

- 옛 조선총독부 철거인 국립중앙박물관의 철거문제를 놓고 문화부는 물
- 하반기에 공청회 등을 열어 국민여론을 수렴할 계획이다.
- 이 문제를 놓고 일제 잔재의 청산에 있어 이 건물이 마땅히 철거야 한다
- 는 주장과 '건축상' 자체의 의미를 살려 보존되어야 한다는 의견이 맞서고
- 있다. 무척 의견갈 소용없다.

오랜만에 영원이 이루어질 것 같다. 올해 문화부 보고 가운데 옛 조선총독부 철거(현 국립중앙박물관)의 관련 철거와 경복궁의 복원 계획이 특히 눈에 띄었다.

사학계는 이와 관련해 대체로 철거와 이원복합을 찬성하고 있는 것 같다. 왜 그로록 볼까요? 가칭한 작품(?)인 옛 조선총독부 건물이 철거하면 하는가. 일제가 우리나라를 불법적으로 침략한 1910년 이후 그들은 즉각 용감하고도 위대한 '일제 종파'를 자어 식민통치의 구실점으로 삼아 우리 민족을 억압하여 왔다. 일제는 장소를 폭력한 결과 우리 민족의 대표적 궁궐이며 5천 년 역사의 정기가 모인 경복궁을 철거 그 자리에 총독부를 지으려고 했다. 활기찬 민족사의 새를 쓸음으로써 우리 민족의 자존의식을 되찾아주는 용감하고도 단련한 용모였던 것이다.

일제는 1916년부터 본격적으로 공사를 시작해 10년 만인 1926년 10월1일 옛 조선총독부 철거를 준공했다. 따라서 이 땅에 총독부 철거가 들어선 지 65년 만에 광복 이후 46년 만에 가시적으로 일제

어떤 사람은 철거 주장이 식민통치의 영유권에서 비롯된 것이어서 무의미하다고 말한다. 고고학자와 건축가 등 이 이에 동조하는 편이다. 그러나 원일-무일제가 아닌 이상 철거에 반대하는 사람들은 어떤 이유를 내세우진 간에 민족사 앞에 죄를 짓는 것이다.

요즘 일본인 관광객이 국립박물관을 많이 찾고 있다. 이들은 함께 온 아비-손자에게 이 건물을 가리키면서 유래를 자랑스럽게 설명하는 것으로 그들 방문

있는 상징성에 모자라는데, 이도 다량한 논리일면 이론의 여지가 없다.

반면 이 건물을 보존하려는 주장에도 주의를 기울일 필요는 있다. 이 건물은 그 자체만으로 존재하는 것이 아니고 새하얀 뒤 우리나라 모든 건축물과의 연결고리를 갖고 존재해온 것이다.

총독부 건물이 세워졌던 시대는 바로 크고 도시계획이 삶을 보이던 때였다. 바로크 양식은 왕권이 절대적인 제국주의 국가에서 선포하던 것인데, 이것은 관청 건물을 가문에 놓고 도로를 정면으로 넓고 길게 놓는 형식이다.

이 건물 철거는 프러시악체 독일인에 의해 기본 설계안이 만들어졌고 일본인 건축가가 수정해 마무리했다. 따라서 건물 철거의 입면은 프러시악체가 되었다. 일본은 나름의 근대 건축양식을 만들 수 없었기 때문이었다.

총독부가 불상식하게 경복궁 터 안에 이 건물을 세우려 할 때 일본은 건축가, 화가들은 반대했다. 지금도 당시의 일본인 건축가들은 사실을 부끄러워하고 있다고 한다. 그런데 이 건물은 일제에 의해서만

## 민족 자존심 회복

### 총독 관저였던 청와대도 헐어내길

식민 잔재를 완전히 청산하려는 시발점이다. 그런데 왜 이렇게 말했을까? 이유는 무엇인가?

총독부 철거 건축 당시, 일제는 어떤 계획에 따라 건축물을 만들었는지 전문가가 부족했다. 따라서 일제는 독일로부터 건축 기술자를 초빙해 그의 지도로 일제관 1만여평의 5층 회랑형 건물을 준공했다. 물론 총독부 철거 건설에 필요한 각종 자재는 우리나라와 전역에서 강제 징발하거나, 연인원 50만명에 이르는 한국인 노동자를 강제 동원해 값싼 노임으로 이 건물을 준공한 것이다.

### 경복궁앞 택한 이유

건축 당시 조선총독부 관저는 경복궁의 4천평을 철거해 명치하자나 일부는 고대관들의 별장이나 집터에 활용될 것으로 이용했다. 경복궁의 일부인 종래문, 정철소, 금원교를 비롯해 각종 전각, 정자, 호수 등을 바꾸어놓아 훼손하거나 철거해 조선총독부 철거로 흡수한 것이다. 총독부 철거를 건축하는 동안 3-1 민족혁명, 6-10 독립전쟁 운동 등 우리 민족의 항일 저항투쟁이 치열하게 지속돼 1945년 8월15일 건물을 완공할 수 있었다.

이 건물은 '김'자형으로 제어 지극히 서늘한 '정'정서(정)의 '자'자형으로 '김'자를 상징적으로 나타냈다. 더욱이 하늘에서 보면 청와대 뒷산이 '자'자모양이어서 이를 합쳐서 보면 '자'자모양이 된다.

의 목적을 달성한다. 그곳에서 이들은 대우-황도주의의 아편한 수역에 잠기는 것이다. 1909년 총독부 준공 당시만 해도 일본의 도시에는 이런 거대한 건축물이 없었으나 "내회담 조상이 이렇게 큰일을 해냈다"는 자부심을 보여준다. "위대한 조상의 대의"를 계승한다는 "본연의"와 아들-손자에게 자랑할 만한 것이다.

일제 강점기 36년 동안 철거 건설에 필요한 각종 자재는 우리나라와 전역에서 강제 징발하거나, 연인원 50만명에 이르는 한국인 노동자를 강제 동원해 값싼 노임으로 이 건물을 준공한 것이다.

다국 이 건물이 경복궁을 유린했다는 사실만으로 한다는 것이 아니라 5천 년 민족사의 기개를 발산-아름답게 소명을 불가불하게 한다는 풍수지리학조차 고려해 일제가 이 건물을 지었다는 사실을 재-판단할 필요가 있다.

일본 역사학자도 언급 일본은 역사학자들이 만났던 이 건물의 철거 여부를 묻고 "왜 이 철거를 했느냐"며 반대 의견을 펼친다. 일제가 지은 건축물은 다 헐어버려야 할 것 같지만 아니다. 선별적으로 철거해야 한다는 주장에는 대한성이 있다. 그러나 일제는 정중이 있고 알기가 있는 법이다.

### 일본 역사학자도 언급

경복궁 복원이 시작되었다. 이번 기회에 총독부 철거를 철거하고 총독의 관저였던 청와대도 철거할 청산하는 과정은 민족사 복원사업이 완벽해질 때이다.

## 역사적 가치 파괴

### 건축물 부수는 것은 진전아닌 후퇴

고 있다는 뜻이 되는 것이다. 고도소나 화강암의 경우도 그런 의미의 하나이다.

세상사에 사람 다음으로 건축물만큼 현상감 넘치는 극적인 요소가 없다.

우리는 상하이에 가면 임시정부 철거물, 비마에 가면 아웅산사의 현장을 보러 왔었다. 따라서 그 건물들은 우리 모두를 위하여 거기 있어야 하는 것이다.

일백과 백을 받으며 지낸 일제 치하를 생각하면 일제가 지은 건물을 부수는 일은 당연한 것이라고 볼 수 있다. 그러나 다른 면으로 보면 그것도, 곧 헐어버리는 것이 분노를 식히는 유일한 길인가 생각해보아야 할 것이다.

### 문화·사회적 의미도

옛 조선총독부 철거의 철거 여부도 문화국이 바뀔 때마다 문제가 되었던 것이다. 이 건물을 철거하고 무장한 이승만 대통령이 있었는가 하면 오히려 2개 층을 수직 증축하여 사용하려는 박정희 대통령의 의견도 있었다. 그리고 얼마전에는 총리관저로 남겨야 한다는 건 두원 대통령의 의견도 있었다. 이제 와서 또 다시 여론은 이에 힘치는 쪽으로 가고 있다는 느낌이다.

제국주의 잔재에 대한 호-분효를 따지는 것은 의미가 없다. 모두에게 "이들의 건물"에 들림없이 때문이다. 지금 옛 조선총독부 철거를 철거하자는 여론도 민족정기 회복, 서울 철도 6백여미터라는 기념성, 경복궁이란 장소가 담고

지어낸 것이 아니다. 물론 건축 주체는 일본인이었지만 이 건물에는 한국인 건축가 박길홍(화신대학원 설계자)과 수장은 우리 기술자-노동자들의 노력도 들어있었던 것이다.

또한 이 땅의 나무와 돌이 주재료로 쓰였다. 일제강점기의 나무가 고밀도 목재로, 창살의 화강석 그리고 담판의 대리석...등 거의 모든 자재가 우리나라에서 쓰였다. 이제 "세상은 사물로, 사람은 세계로"의 속담은 정식으로 뒤엎어 갈지를 갖고 이 건축물의 건축적 가치는 한정하고, 통일 한반도의 내일을 생각해야 할 것이다.

이 건물이 철거된다면 북한할 때 생겨날 건축-기술적 문제는 남겨두더라도 경복궁 안의 옛 총독 관저(현 청와대) 그리고 국군기무사령부, 민속박물관, 전통음식박물관 등 나머지 건축물들도 모두 철거되어야 할 것이다.

### 우리건축가 작업 참여

처음으로 다시 들어가, 한국 정치사의 산실인 청와대, 대한민국 정부수립의 산실이었던 중앙청, 12-12사태의 현장이었던 보안사령부(현 기무사령부) 건물들도 모두 내몰대로의 역사적 의미가 깊다는 것을 재인식해야 할 것이다. 건축은 유거해서로 행하여 있으므로 건축물을 부수는 것은 결국 건물을 죽이는 것이며 아무의 좋은 뜻이 있어 철거된다 해도 그것은 건물이 아니라 오히려 후일의 학살이 된다는 것을 잊지 않아야 할 것이다.



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Figure 14. The column of two scholars from the each opinion group on demolition of JGGB. Source: Lee and Kim (1991).

This argument had been used successfully in the past, and was the main reason the building had escaped demolition previously. He emphasizes that the government has no practical reasons (as urban development pressure) for demolishing the building. Rather, it is only an "expensive"

emotional decision in an attempt to erase a shameful period of Korean history. Kim's arguments are often-advanced by other people from the pro-conservation group.

For some public members of this group, this is a wasted effort: the government can erase the symbol, but not the history it symbolizes:

(...) What is wrong with the building? Feeling of the building is our problems. Even if a building is demolished, the Japanese colonial era will still remain in Korean history. History should stay as the history, we need to wisely find the current.<sup>15</sup>

Even if the JGGB, that was the main building of Japanese colonial era, is demolished, the history of Japanese colonial era is not wiped off of Korean history and the humiliating ordeal is not going anywhere. It seems rather being the history itself and seeing the facts for arousing the national identity.<sup>16</sup>

The proposed alternative, for them, is to see the existing building as a positive symbol rather than a shameful one. Precisely, as sign of South Korean's resilience: "We can use the building as a symbol of remembrance, that we can beat Japanese colonialism, and now look to prevent the same past"<sup>17</sup>. Pro-conservationists propose to use the building as an educational tool to show the dark side of human history: "it is necessary to conserve the building as an educational symbol to overcome our humiliating history"<sup>18</sup>. They point to international examples, specifically the

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15. Jeong, T. (1993, May 24). Chung-Ang-Bak-Mul-Gwan Cheol-Geo-Ju-Jang-E I-Gyeon [Different opinion on demolition of the national museum of Korea building]. Kyeong-Hyang, 14766, 16.

16. Cho, I. (1991, Mar 10). Cho-Seon-Chong-Dok-Bu Geu-Dae-Ro Du-Ja [Let's leave the Japanese General Government building like now]. Han-Gyeo-Re, 870, 12.

17. Jeong, T. (1993, May 24). Chung-Ang-Bak-Mul-Gwan Cheol-Geo-Ju-Jang-E I-Gyeon [Different opinion on demolition of the national museum of Korea building]. Kyeong-Hyang, 14766, 16.

18. Cho, I. (1991, Mar 10). Cho-Seon-Chong-Dok-Bu Geu-Dae-Ro Du-Ja [Let's leave the Japanese General Government building like now]. Han-Gyeo-Re, 870, 12.

Auschwitz Concentration Camp and Hiroshima dome. This argument is, however, rejected by pro-demolition group that conclude that these international examples are totally different:

(...) The Pro-conservation side insist on the value of symbol which reminds us of the painful and shameful history and the value of history. However, it is a different reason than the Hiroshima dome or Auschwitz Concentration Camp. Because the purpose of building JGGB was to demolish the palace of five hundred year dynasty and to annihilate the Korean National spirit and energy. (...) If the JGGB is preserved, it will be insult Korean's spirit.<sup>19</sup>

Pro-conservationists also point to the potential economic value of the site as a tourist attraction:

“(...) Japanese people’s visiting to the JGGB is no problem. (...) Japanese visitors came a lot, then please be happy as earning money”<sup>20</sup>. The final argument advanced by the pro-conservation side involves the risk of damaging the relics of the museum. Possibly to stall for time, they ask that a new museum building be built first before demolishing the JGGB.

During this time period, Japanese scholars participate in the debate to argue for the conservation of the building. A Japanese research association, organized by researchers of Modern Architecture and called the “Meiji Architecture Research Association”, agrees that the JGGB had an unpleasant history. However, the association estimates that the building holds a “high value of the Asian Modern Architectural history”, and calls for a review of the demolition project<sup>21</sup>. This Japanese scholars’ intervention irritated a lot the pro-demolition group, as shown in this article:

I cannot believe that there are these imprudent Japanese people and feel resentment against this

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19. Kim, D. (1991, June 15). Min-Jok-Jeong-Ki Mo-Dok Chong-Dok-Bu-Geon-Mul Cheol-Geo-Reul [For demolishment of the Japanese General Government building which is the insult of national spirit]. Han-Gyeo-Re, 952, 12

20. Jeong, T. (1993, May 24). Chung-Ang-Bak-Mul-Gwan Cheol-Geo-Ju-Jang-E I-Gyeon [Different opinion on demolishment of the national museum of Korea building]. Kyeong-Hyang, 14766, 16.

21. Il-Bon Geun-Dae-Geon-Chuk-Sa Yeon-Gu-Hoi Yet-Chong-Dok-Bu-Geon-Mul Bo-Jon-Yo-Cheong [Japanese association of the Modern-Architecture-History asks the preservation of former Japanese General Government building]. (1991, June 04). Han-Gyeo-Re, 942, 13.

kind of Japanese. (...) The architecture is valuable. However, even if the architecture is valuable in worldwide, still we cannot think the value things in front of this building. We are feeling more anger and remorse on this building. (...) Korea lost the five hundred-year-palace because of Japanese invasion and this is cultural humiliation. (...) The Japanese people, who want to pass over the vice and crime with smiling, will be not only the scholars, but also some others.<sup>22</sup>

During the following year (1992), the debate continued but ebbed. This decrease can possibly be accounted for the septicism toward governmental decisions and follow-through<sup>23</sup>. However, the arguments from each group were almost identical to those of the previous year. 1992 was the year when the pro-conservation group get formed and organized<sup>24</sup>, while the pro-demolition group mobilized (as fund-raising campaign, to “demolish” the pro-conservationist argument that the demolition is a misuse of public funds):

The Korean Government decided to demolish the JGGB, the fund was not prepared because of the Pro-Conservation group and the cost of demolition construction. To conclude, I suggest the fund-raising campaign for the construction and being more assertive attitude to the public. (...) The JGGB suppresses Korean energy as the Japan’s intention when this building was built.<sup>25</sup>

There was a third opinion, presented by the scholar Jeong-Ho Choi<sup>26</sup> who uses examples from other countries to propose deconstructing the JGGB and selling the fragments to interested parties,

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22. Kim, C. (1991, June 04). Geong-Bok-Gung-Gua Cho-Seon-Chong-Dok-Bu [Kyeong-Bok Gung and the Japanese General Government]. Dong-A, 21493, 2.

23. As mentioned in the chapter 3, the demolition of JGGB had been debated since the post-war period and no concrete actions had been made.

24. Gu Il Chong-Dok-Bu-Geon-Mul Cheol-Geo Chok-Gu-Dae-Hoi [Insisting meeting for the demolishment of former Japanese General Government building]. (1992, February 27). Dong-A, 21749, 12.

25. Gwon, K. (1992, December 29). Chong-Dok-Bu Geon-Mul Cheol-Geo Mo-Guem-Wun-Dong Beol-I-Ja [Let's start fund-raising campaign for the demolishment of the Japanese General Government building]. Han-Gyeo-Re, 1436, 10.

26. Choi, J. (1992, October 16). Jeong-Dong Column; Yet Chong-Dok-Bu-Geon-Mul Cheol-Geo-Ui Myo-An [Jeong-Dong Column; An excellent idea for the demolishment of former Japanese General Government building]. Kyeong-Hyang, 14555, 5.

potentially the Japanese. His inspiration comes from the Eiffel Tower's metal spiral staircase<sup>27</sup>. The idea to keep some fragments is later revisited and used by the government (in the construction of a public park with remnants from JGGB).

### **b) The intense debate phase (1993-first mid 1995)**

When the newly elected President, Young-Sam Kim, announces his firm intention to demolish the JGGB in order to recover “national spirit” on October 21 of 1993, the conflict between the pro-demolition side and the pro-conservation side of the debate peaks. The debate intensifies from this date to the start of the demolition in 1995. The President's decision is interpreted as a victory by the pro-demolition group who re-orient their attention toward what should replace the JGGB. They likely viewed official decision as irreversible. Focused now on the building's replacement object, some alternatives are suggested by people such as Kim (1994) and Jeong (1994) to build a “Humiliating tower or museum”<sup>28</sup> or to “mov[e] the JGGB to the underground ”<sup>29</sup>.

The pro-conservationist group reacts strongly. There is an important movement advocating saving the building from demolition and a strong opposition to the “demolish first” attitude supported by the government:

(...) The definite plan is late along with the controversy so there is doubtful question “Is it again failed to demolish the building?” (...) President Kim made a direction of “Demolish the JGGB as soon as possible to revive the national spirit and energy” and it seemed like the “Demolish first” opinion was mainstream. (...) However, recently, the “Build first” opinion was suggested by some

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27. The staircase is torn down as twenty four pieces and sold to some collectors.

28. Kim, J. (1994, February 05). Na-Ui Je-Eon 「Yeok-Sa-Gong-Won」 Yong-San-E Jo-Seong-Ha-Ja [My opinion; Let's build 「History Park」 in Yong-San]. Kyeong-Hyang, 14994, 16.

29. Jeong, C. (1994, September 15). “Gu Chong-Dok-Bu-Geon-Mul Ji-Ha-Ro Om-Ki-Ja.” [“Let's move former Japanese General Government building to the ground”]. Kyeong-Hyang, 15201, 13.

people, so the proceeding of demolition is difficult.<sup>30</sup>

As noticed by the journalist Yun, even while “the decision to the former JGGB was made last year [1993], the opposing opinions [were] still suggested”<sup>31</sup> in 1994. Aware that there was only one year to convince the government to change its decision, the pro-conservation group redoubled their efforts as shown by the newspaper columns of the day. There is continued insistence that “the humiliating history cannot be forgotten”<sup>32</sup> and on the artistic value of the architecture of the building, its economic value as a touristic attraction, and the problem of moving the relics (Kang, 1994). There is emphasis on the building’s educational and historical value, and accusations that the government was being selective in its version of history, picking and choosing only the “glory” of the building and ignoring its dark past:

(...) If I talked about the history, the place is not only the place of Japanese colonial era, but also the place of Cho-Seon dynasty. There was no other colony experience that the symbol of five hundred years on the building has been demolished. Then the symbol of colonialism was built on the same site. (...) Someone said it is the educational place for history, but after 50 years of Independence, I can see the place could be Japanese people’s place to be justified. The history study is enough with relics and records of the Independence Hall.<sup>33</sup>

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30. Yang, G. (1993, October 21). Chung-Ang-Bak-Mul-Gwan Cheol-Geo-Seon-Hu Gong-Bang-E Gye-Hoyk-Pyo-Ryu [Planning of National museum of Korea drifts because of a battle between 「before and after demolition」]. Kyeong-Hyang, 1489, 15.

31. Yun, J. (1994, September 30). Chung-Ang-Bak-Mul-Gwan Jol-Sok I-Jeon Chu-Gung[National museum of Korea is pressed hard because of 「a rough-and-ready move」]. Dong-A, 22641, 4.

32. Kang, W. (1994, December 02). Chung-Ang-Bak-Mul-Gwan Kok Heol-Eo-Ya-Hat-Na [Why the National Museum of Korea has to be demolished?]. Kyeong-Hyang, 15272, 5.

33. Gu, Y. (1994, December 06). Keong-Hyang-Sin-Mun-Eul Il-Ko Chung-Ang-Bak-Mul-Gwan Cheol-Geo-Jae-Ron Yeo-Ji Eop-Da [Unquestionable demolishment of the National Museum of Korea after reading Kyeong-Hyang newspaper]. Kyeong-Hyang, 15275, 16.

One of the notable observations is the introduction of Japanese journalists into the debate. One Japanese reporter garnered attention by directly questioning the Mayor of Seoul. Han-Gyeo-Re's article reports:

(...) the Japanese reporter Guroda from Japanese Sankei Newspaper asked that "Seoul has the old history of 600 years but the JGGB is also 70 years old building. Isn't the demolition of JGGB destroy of history? Have you ever discussed with the Government?" Also, a reporter from Japanese Hokkaido Newspaper questioned that "It is understandable the demolition of JGGB from the historic background but the building itself is excellent. Don't you think about preservation?"<sup>34</sup>

The Mayor Lee answers that the "demolition is decided from the long time ago with the Government after discussion. The thing we need to throw away should be thrown away and the pride of history is the most important issue"<sup>35</sup>. If the Japanese journalists didn't argue with Korean officials, they also didn't hide their negative opinions of the demolition of JGGB.

Also, another observation is that the case became an international issue. It was debated internationally in the 'International Conference of Asian Cultural Assets' in January 1995, where 350 people from eighteen countries throughout Asia discussed the preservation of heritage. The Professor Seong-Mi Lee, a representative of the Academy of Korean Studies who attended the conference, states in the newspaper that "it was one of topic on the discussion that the JGGB,

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34. Ahn, Y. (1994, January 27). 'Chong-Dok-Bu-Geon-Mul Cheol-Geo Yeok-Sa-Pa-Goy A-Ni-Nya' Il Ki-Ja, Si-Jang-E Jil-Mun-Gong-Se [Japanese Journalist, shower questions on the Mayor of Seoul 'Isn't demolishment of Japanese General Government building destroy of history?']. Han-Gyeo-Re, 1799, 17.

35. Ahn, Y. (1994, January 27). 'Chong-Dok-Bu-Geon-Mul Cheol-Geo Yeok-Sa-Pa-Goy A-Ni-Nya' Il Ki-Ja, Si-Jang-E Jil-Mun-Gong-Se [Japanese Journalist, shower questions on the Mayor of Seoul 'Isn't demolishment of Japanese General Government building destroy of history?']. Han-Gyeo-Re, 1799, 17.

which is from colonialism, needs to be preserved in any form. But the last decision is up to the people of its nation”.

### **c) The demolition phase (second mid-1995 -1997)**

In 1995, the JGGB began to be demolished. On August 8th, the 50th Independence Day celebration, the upper part of the building, the spire, was cut by a new engineering technique. As reported by chapter 3, thirty thousand people, including scholars, the public and members of the government, gathered in front of the building and shouted with joy as the spire of JGGB was removed. Every newspaper covered the event. Most articles express the public euphoria. This first act of demolition is seen as a strong symbolic victory for Korea, as the newspaper titles suggest (see Table 8).

They present it as the death of a vestige of “disgrace”, a symbol of “shameful japanese imperialism”, and the “hurt of nation”. The destruction of the spire has been interpreted as the end of a shameful period and the start of a new glorious chapter for South Korea. The newspapers talk of a “liberation day”, the moment of “the reconnection to the national context”, the beginning of “new history”, and an opening to “the future glory”.

It is reasonable to assume that the pro-conservation group experienced feelings of negativity from the demolition of the JGGB’s spire. It is important to note that their negative emotional discourse didn’t discourage them as they continued to express their opinions. For example, a writer, Jeong-Wuk Go criticize the demolition in his published book name ‘1 Se-Jong street’. In one article that appeared in the Han-Gyeo-Re newspaper, the professor of arts, Heung-Jun Yu, expresses regrets that the pro-conservation faction didn’t have legitimate enough arguments to convince the parties involved to save the building. But he shows his relief in regards to, not the building, but

the social conflict. He argues that the sensitive nature of the debate split society into factions and that people like himself had avoided expressing any opinion.

Table 8. *The selected titles of newspaper articles of pro-demolition group in 1995.*

Title	Author	Newspaper	Date
· "Finally connected the 「National context」 " The day for the demolition of spire of former JGGB which is the Japanese rule's symbol	N/A	Dong-A	1995.08.16
· Open new light, new history	Hak-Sun Kim	Kyeong-Hyang	1995.08.16
· Shout of "Get over hurt of nation"	Chang-Geum Kim	Han-Gyeo-Re	1995.08.16
· "I'm deeply touched by this historic work" Jeong-Pyeong Lee who is the representative of San-Cheon Development for the removal of a spire	Jeong-Hun Choi	Kyeong-Hyang	1995.08.16
· Go away the history of disgrace and come the future of glory	Hwa-Dong Seo	Kyeong-Hyang	1995.08.16
· Thrilled demolition of the spire of colonization...The wave of acclaim	N/A	Mae-II- Kyeong-Je	1995.08.16
· Spotlight to the vestige of Shameful Japanese Imperialism in Seoul	Gu-Jae Park	Kyeong-Hyang	1995.08.30
· Toward the history of 「a symbol of disgrace」	Won-Sun Heo	Kyeong-Hyang	1995.08.16
· Special contribution on the 50th Independence Day that is a day for demolition of a 「Vestige of disgrace」	Yong-Ha Shin	Dong-A	1995.08.15
· 'Bell of liberation' at temples and churches around the nation for the 50th anniversary celebration of Independent Day	N/A	Han-Gyeo-Re	1995.08.16
· Cheering from all over the country after removing 「Vestiges of Japanese imperialism」 ; the 50th Independent Day celebration events over thoroughly	N/A	Kyeong-Hyang	1995.08.16



Figure 15. The cut spire of JGGB. Source: Gu Chong-Dok-Bu-Geon-Mul Cheom-Top Jeol-Dan [Cut the spire of former Japanese General Government building]. (1995).

Once JGGB began to be demolished, Han-Gyeo-Re felt able to openly criticize the pro-demolition group:

(...) Some pro-Demolition advocates were burning their lips like an independence fighter on this problem but very conservative in their other times. A person's opinion needs to be supported by its pertinent acting of the person not only theories. But the demolition was possible with the

opinion of people, who didn't have consistent attitude on the situation.<sup>36</sup>

Concerning the outgoing debate around the removing or not of the remains of JGGB, he suggests to conserve them in the site after demolishing the building. He also scoffs at the idea to restore Gyeong-Bok Palace as Korea cannot, in his view, return to the feudal period.

Because of the massive size of the building, the demolition period lasted two years. During this time, the relics were moved from the JGGB to a temporary museum and newspapers continued to cover the demolition as the most important event of the year. Even with the demolition announced, planned and begun, the pro-conservation side continued to defend the building. Just before demolition was complete, they tried one last opposition strategy by filing a suit against the government in the Seoul District Court:

The meeting for preservation of the National Museum of Korea (Representative Won-Ryong Kang and other 6 people) applies for an injunction to stop demolition of the National Museum of Korea (Former JGGB) and requested the reconsidering of decision.<sup>37</sup>

Nonetheless, the deconstruction was soon resumed. The curator of the National Museum of Korea, Yang-Mo Jeong, states at the press conference on June 12 that “there are some people who request the moving and recovery of the JGGB but this is non pertinent as the preparation is already

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36. Yu, H. (1995 February 25). Chong-Dok-Bu-Geon-Mul, Pye-HeoRo Nam-Ki-Ja [Let's leave like the ruins of the Japanese General Government building]. Han-Gyeo-Re, 2159, 5.

37. Gwon, H. (1996, June 18). Chung-Ang-Bak-Mul-Gwan Bo-Jon-Mo-Im Cheol-Geo-Gum-Ji Ka-Cheo-Bun Sin-Cheong [Apply for an injunction to stop demolition, the meeting for preservation of the National Museum of Korea]. Han-Gyeo-Re, 2591, 22.

finished”<sup>38</sup>. Jeong also explains that the building of the “JGGB is not as great as the overestimation”<sup>39</sup>.

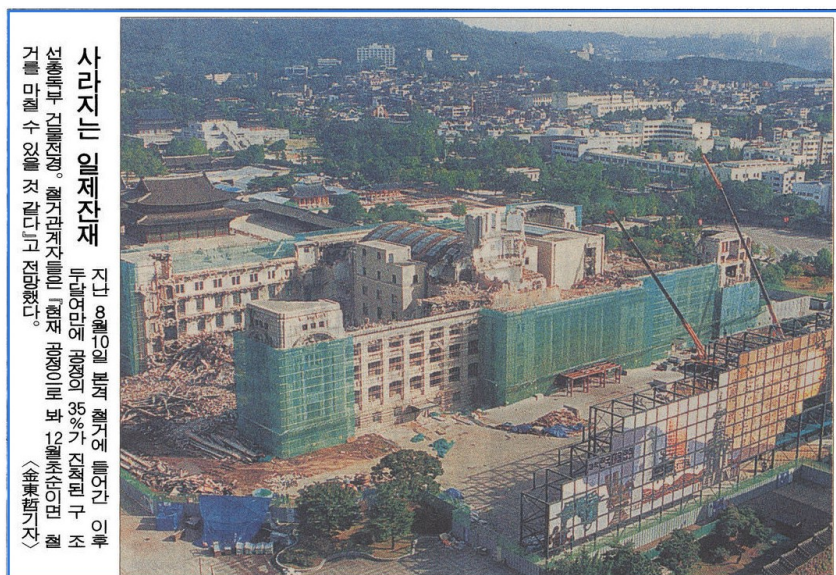


Figure 16. The disappearing Japanese vestige. Source: Kim (1996).

Finally, the desconstruction was resumed in August of 1996. The newspapers covered the resumption on August 21<sup>st</sup> and the end of the demolition on November 14<sup>th</sup>. On December 21<sup>st</sup> of that year, the government gave out residual stone fragments of the JGGB to the public as souvenirs.

In beginning of 1997, newspapers report feelings around the total disappearance of the building. The pro-demolition side expresses relief at a first step toward “cleaning” the country of similars artefacts:

(...) The complete demolition of JGGB is showing our bright future. We need to try our best

38. Oh, M. (1996, June 12). “Gu Chong-Dok-Bu Ye-Jeong-Dae-Ro Cheol-Geo [“Former Japanese General Government will be demolished as scheduled”]. Dong-A, 23222, 39.

39. Oh, M. (1996, June 12). “Gu Chong-Dok-Bu Ye-Jeong-Dae-Ro Cheol-Geo [“Former Japanese General Government will be demolished as scheduled”]. Dong-A, 23222, 39.

until our country becomes the most beautiful country of every part.<sup>40</sup>

The pro-conservation group expresses regret at the loss of a valuable modern building:

(...) This is reality that the many Modern architecture, the evidence of history, is demolished like the Former Russian Legation. The JGGB is also disappeared because of many complex reasons. This is the time to discuss if the Modern Architecture can be removed like this without any reevaluation.<sup>41</sup>

Many articles from that year focus on the next project, the “restoration of Gyeong-Bok Palace”, the Korean part of JGGB, by the government. In 1998, there are no more articles on the demolition of JGGB, just a few that mention how some remains of the JGGB were displayed as an exhibition at the outdoor Independence Hall.



40. Jang, C. (1997, January 14). Tu-Ki-Peun Chong-Dok-Bu-Geon-Mul Hae-Che [Meaningful demolition of Japanese General Government building]. *Dong-A*, 23424, 37.

41. Yeon, G. (1997, April 02). Sin-Geon-Chuk Ki-Haeng (8) Gu-Russia Gong-Sa-Gwan [New Architecture Journey (8) Former Russian Legation]. *Mae-Il-Kyeong-Je*, 9718, 30.

## CONCLUSION

This analysis of newspaper articles finds that the conflict around the JGGB is globally a classical difficult heritage conflict. Pro-demolition arguments were based largely on the concept of *memorial obstacles*. The JGGB was seen as a symbol of national shame. This was linked to the public's perspective that the Japanese colonial era was a shameful part of the history of South Korea and that any vestige from this period should be erased.

Pro-conservationist discourse, dominated by professionals, also relied on classic tropes. They stressed *memorial value* and *educational value*. In this frame, the Japanese colonial era was a dark part of the Korean history, but concrete symbols should be kept out of an obligation to remember and to educate future generations. This side of the debate also relied on the *art value* of the building as an example of Asian modern architecture, the *use value* of the building in its ability to be reconverted, and its *economic value* as a tourist attraction. These concepts are usually what experts value in a monument and are defined by Riegl (1903; 1982).

This case confirms the idea that heritage is a social construction that balances intrinsic values (universal/expert values) and extrinsic values (social given values). When the marriage between these two aspects is consensual, the heritage became a “social cement” (Melé, 2005). However, when there is a divergence in terms of representation and appreciation of heritage between many social groups (citizens, authorities, scholars, private actors, etc.), there can be social division, as in the JGGB case. This JGGB example shows, as Melé posited (2005:51), how heritage conflict is a “special moment of argument, justification, expression of positions, discussions, power related buildings on the terms and impacts of public actions”. Even if the outcome was not the result of compromise between the pro-conservation and pro-demolition factions, the controversy was an opportunity for South Koreans to explore their new post-colonial identity.

Table 9. *The reasons and values in each type of opinions about demolition of JGGB.*

Group	Reasons	Specific Reasons from the JGGB
Pro-Conservation	1) Memorial and	· Obligation of remembrance
	2) Educational values	· A way to educate future generations
	3) Art value	· Example of Asian modern architecture and Baroque style urban planning
	4) Use value	· The ability of reconversion to any functions
Pro-Demolition	5) Economic value	· Tourism to boost the local economy · Save the budget of demolition of the non-defective building
	6) Memorial obstacle	· A symbol of the painful memory · To avoid the remembering
	7) Socio-cultural obstacle	· Japan's feng-shui invasion/blocking the national spirit

Beyond its classification as a typical heritage conflict, this case study presents two different specific and contextual elements. First, the government did not present any *practical reasons*, such as urban development, to destroy the building. Further, the building's dismantling cost and the construction of a new museum, which consumed a large portion of the national budget, appeared to be totally emotional. Second, Feng-Shui was presented as one of the main reasons for destroying the building. This socio-cultural element has always been a fundamental and strong belief system in Korea.

Finally, by showing an example of a difficult piece of South-Korea's heritage, this research wanted to contribute to the difficult heritage field (empirical contribution) and fill a little bit of the gap on the South Korean case studies in the general literature about colonial heritage (which is more oriented on European colonies). This study is limited to one emblematic example but could spark further research on South Korean tumultuous heritage. The other limitation of this study was a methodological constraint. Due to the vast quantity of articles surrounding this difficult heritage, the range of articles was limited to the most controversial time period. However, the conflict can be traced back to 1945 and continues to the present day. Further research of different time periods may prove to be interesting. Further research can also explore the lasting legacy of Japanese colonialism in Asia, and compare the different scenarios (like South Korea vs Taiwan). Also, it would be valuable if it contributed to discussions about postcolonialism or nationalism. Any of those other cases could be subject to fascinating researches.

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