

Completion Report

College of International Studies, Korea University
Jung-Sun Han

Subject of Research Project : (UN)Making of Heritage in Transnational Japan

Research Objectives

This research dealt with growing concerns in the field of heritage studies. It was particularly concerned with the implications of the increasing participation of diversified actors in cultural activities both at local and global levels. Would internationalized and diversified cultural involvement contribute to a more democratic governance of local societies and a peaceful management of international relations? In probing the question, this research delved into the legacy of imperial norms and practices of heritage management upon the contemporary global society of post-imperial Japan.

Methodology and Field Work

The primary methodology of this research is based on the analysis of both primary and secondary texts and discourses related to materiality, space, and conservation. As for the prewar Japanese policies and practices of making national parks, we collected and utilized the serialized text entitled *The National Parks*, published by the Association of Japanese National Parks. In the case of contemporary conservation movements for industrial sites, this research team investigated materials published by civil organizations and conducted interviews with activists. As for the World Heritage listing of the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, we collected and examined mass media reports, promotional materials, related webpages and expert comments showing the practice of forming public opinion and how the campaign to be included in the World Heritage list was organized and conducted.

Results

The results of this research were divided into following three topics.

Topic 1: Making of National Parks for Tourism in the Empire of Japan

We examined the processes and reasons why Mt. Kumgang was not selected as a national park in order to identify the standards and conditions for making cultural heritage in modern Japan.

Topic 2: Making of Industrial Heritage in Contemporary Japan

We examined the Japanese and Korean cases of transforming industrial past into cultural heritage, while at the same time situating the making of industrial sites within the context of global cultural transformation.

Topic 3: Competition among Values in the Making of World Heritage

We explored the ways in which various values of the museum were formulated, negotiated and appropriated in the process of making it into a World Heritage site.

Contributions and Utilizations

This research will contribute to the development of Asian studies in the following three ways. First, this study considered the possibility of transnational cooperation for the protection of cultural and natural heritage through the close examination of Japanese and South Korean cases, by focusing on the “universal value to humanity” represented by UNESCO World Heritage. Secondly, it highlights the importance of materiality and how it affects the formation of specific discourses. By tracing the processes of identifying and preserving parks and buildings as cultural property or cultural heritage sites, this study reexamines the workings of nationalism. Lastly, this research will provide further insight into the social history of politics. Highlighting the fact that cultural heritage associated with various values has been politically constructed, it involves liaisons between different regions as well as between the state and civil society.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.) Han, Feb.8, 2023, Tuebingen University, Tuebingen Korean Studies Lecture Series, “Dark Heritage in Japan-Korea Relations”
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Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.) Jung-Sun Han, <i>Dark Heritage in Contemporary Japan: Relics of an Understround Empire</i> (London: Routledge, 2024)
