Accommodation of Western Modernism in Korean Architecture
-A Case Study of Dong-jin Park (1899-1981)-

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Abstract
This research examines the adoption of Western modernism in Korean modern architecture in the early 20th century, which was a period of conflict not only between tradition and modernity, but also between the East and West. The overall research explores a representative and pioneering Korean modern architect, Dong-jin Park (1899-1981), who actively practiced his design during the Japanese colonial period. In particular, this research scrutinizes Dong-jin Park's recognition of Western modernism through his publications, for example, in magazines and newspapers, which described his recognition of Western architecture. Through the representative architect's ideas and writings, this research seeks to identify the characteristics and origins of Korean modern architecture.

Keywords: Dong-jin Park; Modernism; Tradition; Korean modern architecture

1. Introduction
In Korean history, the initial debate between tradition and modernity dates back to the 19th century. The Korea Joseon Dynasty had changed rapidly due to its contact with Western civilization, and Korea experienced a serious crisis in attempting to solidify the nation's identity while undergoing the period of Japanese colonialism (1910-1945). Korea's tangible and intangible heritage thus lost their unique morphologies, character, and sense of history. Architecture was no exception to this difficult process. Korean modern architecture combines elements of Western modernism, Japanese modernity, and Korean tradition. In the late 19th century, after the opening of the ports, Western architects began to build Western-style structures in Korea Joseon, and during the Japanese colonial period, Korean architecture was influenced by Japanese architects who embodied Japanese modern architecture, a style that incorporated elements of modern architecture. Korean modern architecture thus combines elements of Western modernism, Japanese modernity, and Korean tradition, and in the early 20th century, Korean modern architects began to think about their identities as they were positioned between these various influences.

Although in this complex colonial environment, the activity of Korean modern architects was very limited, there were, nevertheless, a few Korean modern architects who actively practiced their design in Korea Joseon. Moreover, they tried to embody Korean modern architecture in the context of both Western architecture and Japanized Western architecture. These efforts formed the characteristics of Korean authentic modern architecture. This research is aimed at finding the origins of Korean modern architecture in the contexts of tradition and modernity and in the midst of an architectural culture dominated by Westerners and the Japanese. Through the ideas of the Korean architects of this period, this research will locate the cultural identity of Korean modern architecture.

2. Research Method and Framework
In order to identify the characteristics and origins of Korean modern architecture, this study focuses on a Korean modern architect who actively practiced his designs during the Japanese colonial period: Dong-jin Park (1899-1981) (Fig.1.). This research examines Dong-jin Park's several publications, for example, in magazines and newspapers. In particular, Park published a series of articles entitled "Uri jutaege daehaya (About Our Houses)" in the newspaper The Dong-A Ilbo sixteen times from March 14 to April 5, 1931. In order to explore the future of Korean housing, he emphasized the importance of understanding Western architecture and the trends of contemporary architecture; this, he wrote, enables one to understand the real situation of Korean traditional architecture (Park, 1931b, p. 4). In his publications, he introduced various Western architectural movements through his critiques, including the French Art Nouveau Movement, the Secession Movement, the New Architectural Movement in the Netherlands,
German Expressionism, Russian Constructivism, and so on. Through introducing these Western modern architectural movements, he wanted to provide an international perspective to Korean architecture.

Fig.1. Dong-jin Park's Photo. Source: In-suk Yoon, "Hangugin geonchugga parkdongjin (Korean Architects-Dong-jin Park)," Geonchugga (Architects) (September, 1996): p. 80

3. A Representative Korean Modern Architect: Dong-jin Park

Dong-jin Park was one of very few Korean architects who tried to integrate the influences of Western modernism into Korean architecture based on Korean traditional practices. He was the first generation to receive a modern education in Korea, and he actively designed Korean modern architecture with Western modernism in mind. He was the representative architect who worked at the frontier between modernism and tradition in Korean modern society.

Park studied architecture at the Gyeongseong Industrial Professional School and the Gyeongseong Technical High School from 1917 to 1926. (The Gyeongseong Industrial Professional School changed its name to the Gyeongseong Technical High School in 1922.) He was expelled in 1919 from the school for actively participating in the Samilundong (Sam-il Movement or the March 1st Movement) which was the Korean resistance and independence movement that arose in 1919. This was a nationwide campaign against Japan, and the Japanese government actively worked to suppress people who participated in this movement; as a result of his involvement in this movement, he was arrested. After he was released from prison, he was readmitted to the same school, the Gyeongseong Technical High School, in 1924 and graduated in 1926. After graduation, Park worked for the Japanese Government-General of Korea as a construction engineer. At the time, graduating from the Gyeongseong Industrial Professional School or the Gyeongseong Technical High School and working in the Japanese Government-General of Korea was an elite career not only for Japanese architects, but for Korean architects as well.

During his studies at the Gyeongseong Industrial Professional School from 1917 to 1918, Park received an education in Western-style building based on modern architectural ideas from professors who were trained in architecture as a fine art. At the Gyeongseong Technical High School, however, where he studied from 1924 to 1925, he received a different architectural education, one that was focused more on engineering; this is because the school was influenced by the Japanese educational system, which concentrated more on engineering than on architecture as art. At that time, Japan needed more engineers who could work in Korea Joseon in order to realize their architectural ideas, thus they actively, even aggressively, promoted this approach during the colonial period. This intense training focusing on engineering subjects enabled Park to build up his architectural abilities. While working in the Japanese Government-General of Korea, he acquired practical knowledge of the process of turning architecture into reality (Ahn, 1997, p. 99). He resigned from the Japanese Government-General of Korea on October 30, 1940. Before stepping down, he had already begun his own architectural practice.

There have been some evaluations of Dong-jin Park's works in more recent times. Architectural historian Il-joo Yoon said that "Even if someone might raise objections to Park's architectural style, which adopted the Gothic [revival] style in the early 20th century, we cannot overlook his achievement in modern Korean architecture. He tried to embody modern architecture as much as he could in Korea within a short period" (Yoon, 1965). The Korean architectural historian, Dong-wook Kim, wrote that "Dong-jin Park digested Western architecture fully, and then tried to reproduce Korean modern architecture based on reflecting the spirit of the age" (Kim, 2007, p. 390).

Dong-jin Park began to design different types of buildings in diverse styles from the mid-1930s. He mainly designed school buildings, including the Boseongjeonmunhaggyo maseuteo peullaen (The Master Plan of Bosung College, 1934) and the individual buildings on the Bosung College campus, including the Boseongjeonmunhaggyo bongwan (Main Hall of Bosung College, 1934) and the Boseongjeonmunhaggyo doseogwan (Library of Bosung College, 1937) (Fig.2.). In the 1930s and 1940s, he designed a number of major buildings, such as the Joseon ilbo saok (Korean Daily headquarters buildings, 1934), the Jungang junghaggyo bongwan (Jungang Middle School's main building, 1936), and the Pyeongan gongeop hakgyo (Pyeongan Industrial School's main auditorium, 1942). Bosung College was changed to Korea University in 1946. This campus was strongly influenced by contemporary American campus master plans. When Dong-jin Park was designing the Bosung College campus, Chun-suk Ahn, a professor at Bosung College, provided a catalog of Duke University in the United States, and Dong-jin Park came across a photograph of the Duke Library (Fig.3.). He used this catalog as a reference for his design of the Bosung College campus (Kim, 2012, p. 47).
Park’s designs of the Bosung College main hall and library were especially modeled on Duke University’s library, the medical school building, and the union building (Kim, 2012, p. 47-58). Moreover, the building surface of the Bosung College Main Hall (1934) and the Bosung College Library (1937) were built using marble on their surfaces, a practice based on Gothic Revival architecture in the United States. This material gave a very heavy and stable style to the buildings (Ahn, 1997, p. 103-104). A representative Korean architectural historian, In-guk Jung, wrote about Dong-Jin Park’s achievements in the book *Hyeondoae geonchuglon* (Theories of Modern Architecture):

Park designed the Korean University Headquarters from September 1933 to September 1934 and Korea University’s Library from June 1935 to September 1937. He designed the headquarters of Bosung College, which was three stories made of marble and reinforced concrete. The size of this building is approximately 1,000 pyeng (approximately 3,305 m²). The Korea University Library is very similar in style to the Bosung College building, utilizing marble and reinforced concrete as well. The building has four turrets at each of its corners. These decorations are magnificent and beautiful. These buildings were constructed by Korean assets, and it is surprising that Korea’s newly-rising business tycoons asked that their buildings should be designed by Korean architects. The architect created a great building that displays both [Western] medieval and modernized architecture. This moment is very significant in the history of Korean modern architecture (Jung, 1970, p. 250).

We should know that the Renaissance-style housing, which was focused on form in the 18th century, was replaced by functionalism and pragmatism in the late 19th century because the Renaissance style was lacking in satisfying the new life of the time (Park, 1931b, p. 4).

Park’s magazine and newspaper articles encouraged the Korean public to lead “a reasonable life,” which was a modern concept that developed after the late 19th century. Park also emphasized “efficiency” in order to explore new housing (Park, 1931f, p. 4). In particular, he advocated housing improvements based on Western concepts of functionality and rationality. Park believed that in some ways, the traditional system of hanok was in contradiction to modern life. He argued that it is difficult to build up modernity only through the continuation of Korean tradition without a reinterpretation of this tradition:

[hanok] had a poor appearance, lacking in changes relevant to modern life … It used primeval materials… its plan originated from the feudal age… I cannot help denying this inefficient plan of hanok (Park, 1941).

Moreover, he strongly insisted on reviewing the ondol system in modern housing because it, too, had inefficient aspects. Instead of using the ondol, he promoted the pechka (a Russian brick stove) because he believed that the latter was a more practically efficient heating system (Ahn, 1997, p. 228).

Dong-jin Park’s efforts to persuade the Korean public to reevaluate Western architecture are most evident in his article "Hyeondoae geonchugui chuse (Trends in Contemporary Architecture)" written for The Dong-A Ilbo (1931). In this article, Park introduced trends of Western architecture and architects to the public:

This essay is not [meant] to explore a technical detail of specialized architecture. In order to decide on a trend for our houses, we need to know what other countries are doing and what other countries are arguing about regarding architecture. Even if the contents of this essay might be disorganized, I will explore the trends of modern world architecture. … In modern society, the status of architecture in the arts is the most positive position. [That is, the status is very high.] It is a great product of the late 19th century to get a new current of thought in architecture (Park, 1931b, p. 4).

Park thus wanted to introduce modern world architecture to the public because he believed that Koreans could model new housing trends by looking to the architecture of other countries. To illustrate this, Park explained the Art Nouveau movement, which occurred in Paris, and the Secession movement, initiated in Vienna, because he believed that these two movements represented the most important architectural ideas for Korea — that these two movements would play a significant role in establishing the direction of early modern Korean architecture and life:
The first representative movement was Art Nouveau in Paris and the second was Secession in Vienna. These two movements defied old-fashioned architecture, which exemplified tradition and conventionalality. These two movements attempted to expunge outdated habits, which constrainedly related to new forms of architecture but, unfortunately these outdated habits are not related to new forms of architecture. These movements looked for a creative artistic form through investigation of the architectural essence. The Art Nouveau movement investigated natural materials, which were different from traditional ones. The Secession movement was an influential modern movement. This movement had a lot of potential to create modern movements in art and could develop a synthetic overall new life in the modern period. This movement will play a significant role in influencing other movements in the near future. It is necessary for us to appreciate a great master of the Secession movement, Otto Wagner, and his comment that “art does not need to consider the art itself” (Park, 1931b, p. 4).

Park thus believed that Art Nouveau and Secession were two representative movements that could overcome and oppose traditional and conventional architecture. In particular, Park praised the figures behind these artistic movements who tried to find a different way instead of following conventional structure. By highlighting these two movements, which were actively developing in the West, Park wanted to emphasize trends in Western architecture and persuade Koreans to adopt Western trends in their own modern architecture.

4.2 Dong-jin Park's Investigation into Western Countries' Architecture: England, the Netherlands, Germany, and France

In The Dong-A Ilbo, on March 18, 1931, Park investigated Western countries (England, the Netherlands, Germany, and France) as examples of advanced Western architectures in order to explore future trends after the Secession movement. These countries' new attempts inspired Korean modernists in the early 20th century to adapt new technologies and skills from the West and apply them to modern Korean architecture. Park began with England by providing an image titled "Magnificent (or sublime) and spectacular views of modern architecture" and he went on to introduce the concept of [then explain the silver/aged concept]. He wrote in his article: "A silver [the aged] and countryside housing (England)" beginning with: 

England has strength in suburban and rural architecture. Therefore, England influenced the trend of developed housing in North America. Among these architectures, which were influenced by England, the most interesting thing was the development of housing in a provincial city, and there are some special characteristics specific to housing in rural areas (Park, 1931b, p. 4).

Park believed that England's housing in rural areas had many advantages, and that Korea should adopt this architectural style because most Korean housing projects were located in rural areas. He believed that England had much experience in constructing houses in rural areas and "silver [the aged]" houses. In particular, Park thought that the strength of English architecture lay in developing country communities with suitable country buildings. For these reasons, Park intended to integrate the strengths of England's housing in rural areas into Korean modern architecture, especially in suburban areas (Fig.4.).

Fig.4. "Hyeondageonchugui Wigwangigwan (yug) (Magnificent and Spectacular Views of Modern Architecture, No. 6)." Source: Dong-jin Park, "Uli jutaege daehaya sam (About Our Houses, no. 3)," The Dong-A Ilbo (East Asia Daily) (March 17, 1931b): p. 4

Park also praised the architectural knowledge and thought of the Netherlands as well as that country's desire to create new architecture and their architects' passion for innovation. Park emphasized the motto of Dutch architect Hendrik Petrus Berlage (1856-1934), who was the country's leading modern architect:

First, a new movement of Netherlands [:] The reason that Holland's architecture obtained a flamboyant (gorgeous or flowery) reputation was the result of their burning passion. Arts in each country have their own peculiarity in expression. The differences between the arts originate from their own characteristics; in order to understand the differences among each country's arts, it is important to explore the initial forms of arts and then the modern situation [of arts]. After that, we can anticipate [forecast, predict] the arts in the future. In this sense, the Netherlands got out of the period of adoration totally [The Netherlands extricated a dark ages., a new age [era, epoch] is the starting point of the Netherlands' new [advanced] architecture. …

Berlage played a significant role in nurturing the Netherlands' young and fresh budding (blooming of) architecture and this blooming began to mature through [the work of] architect Berlage. …

As Berlage said, "Architecture is a combination of fine arts by means of its own purposes, structures, and different forms," and his architectural theories influenced not just architecture, but the broader world of arts as a whole.
In the Netherlands, there runs a modern energy in freedom, peace, clear sky, pure man and woman, innocent sympathy, beautiful dream, pastoral mood, and national passion. Whenever I see your [Netherlands'] art works, it is difficult for me to control my emotions, such as envy, effervescence and a throbbing heart (Park, 1931c, p. 4).

In this new movement, Berlage stood as a vanguard. For Park, the architecture of the Netherlands was very innovative and fresh, and it helped open his mind to new perspectives in architecture, as evident in his high praise for Berlage and his motto "Architecture is a composite of arts." Park believed that architecture influenced the entire territory of arts beyond its own borders. In order to support his argument, Park discussed the multi-family houses in Hoek, in the Netherlands, because this type of housing complex embodied Holland's dynamic and creative architectural activities as one of the leading countries of modern architecture at that time (Fig.5.).

At that time, German architecture, which was represented by the International Style, was at the forefront of world architecture, and Park intended to make use of these trends to renovate Korean modern architecture in the early 20th century. He observed Hans Scharoun's project at the Weissenhof Settlement in Stuttgart (1927) as a good example of modern architecture, and encouraged Korean architects (and even the public) to know more about these modern trends (Fig.6.).

Architectural historian Sigfried Giedion praised the Weissenhof Settlement: "The Weissenhof Settlement of 1927 is evidence of the group's steady efforts to bring the creative forces of the period to realization. Germany was impoverished, and there was a shortage of materials, when the magnificent gesture was made of inviting creative artists from every country to erect buildings at Stuttgart" (Giedion, 2008, p. 480). There are a few more positive opinions about the Weissenhof Settlement of 1927 from other architectural historians, and in particular, Giedion wrote several articles about this building in different mediums (Giedion, 1928; Giedion, 2008, p. 595). Through Park's interpretation of the International Style, we can examine how he understood world architecture, and how he wanted to adapt the advantages and strengths of these Western modern architectural models to Korean architecture.

Park also introduced many primary characteristics of French architecture and of the most prominent modern French architect, Le Corbusier, in The Dong-A Ilbo
on March 19, 1931. In this article, Park offered high praise for French culture and its role in architecture through its revolutionary development, and he believed that French architecture represented the modern spirit: "In the latest formation and artistic expression of architecture] there were no changes as dramatic as those in French architecture..." In French paintings, there are many changes in methodology that are distinct from naturalism, which was [represented by] the previous era of Raphael. These new changes include Impressionism, Cubism, Futurism, and Surrealism. Although painting is a two-dimensional representation, three-dimensional architecture provides a greater possibility of change in broad regions as compared to paintings. French architecture proved that possibility of change. In particular, the Eiffel Tower, which was erected at the Paris Exhibition in 1900, played a significant role in showing the revelation of modern architecture in terms of materials and structure. In the general architecture community, progress and development go up a gentle slope. The appearance of Le Corbusier in the modern period influenced the environment of architecture significantly (Park, 1931d, p. 4).

Park believed that French architecture represented a very radical change and that it was revolutionary; French architecture in the early 20th century can be compared to the transition of two-dimensional arts to three-dimensional buildings. He also saw the Eiffel Tower as exemplifying the French spirit, meaning the strong progress toward a modern architecture. Park strongly believed that, based on Le Corbusier's architectural practice and philosophy, Le Corbusier was the most outstanding and revolutionary architect of the modern age.

Park explored and examined the "rationalism" of Le Corbusier's architecture in detail and explained these ideas to the public, introducing Le Corbusier's famous metaphorical expression that "A house is a machine for living in" (Park, 1931d, p. 4). Park agreed with Le Corbusier's glorification of rationality, quoting Le Corbusier's words through his own interpretation: 'Rational architecture, which was crowded by the play of ornamentation, was obviously ugly and twisted. Extreme purity without decoration in [modern] architecture is an amazing fact, similar to the invention of "arch" architecture in Rome. From now on, let us investigate briefly what a hero of world architecture, Le Corbusier, said about rationalism. His statement that "A house is a machine for living in" is a well-known architectural slogan of the modern day. Social lives are controlled by modern technology, for example, by flight records of distance and speed, the printing ability of a super-high-speed rotary press, and the expansion of wireless range. Our space and time are controlled by these technologies. It is natural that Le Corbusier's motto "A house is a machine for living in" is a rule of the "record creating system." There is a saying that states "the more reasonable, the more beautiful." In the past, we believed that pursuing the reasonable was the arbitrariness [misunderstanding] of a scientist. However, these days we believe that rationalism is one of the standards of beauty. In this sense, in Le Corbusier's saying "A house is a machine for living in," he praised the rationality of planes and cars (Park, 1931d, p. 4).

Park argued that it was important to pursue rationality in order to live in this modern society. As he stated above, Korean architecture needed this "rationalism." Several times in magazines and newspapers he mentioned the "irrationality" of Korean traditional architecture, such as the kitchen and its layout as well as other hygienic issues. Park thought that the rationalism of French modern architecture was the most important and urgent matter for Koreans to learn. He thus strongly encouraged Koreans to incorporate rationalism, using the case of French architecture and architects as a model.

Moreover, Park claimed that contemporary people should follow modern concepts such as rationality, hygienic concerns, and efficiency; in particular, Koreans of the early 20th century should pursue modern international trends and concepts. He wrote:

In the modern period, "life" — which emphasizes individual and social consciousness and new standards such as hygiene, public order, mass production, and so on — decides the value and ideal of arts. Therefore, as Le Corbusier pointed out, in associating with the concept of rationality of ships, cars, and aircraft, he tried to move away from the unconventional, traditional forms in architecture.

We [Koreans] should know that French architecture outrivals other traditional European architecture (Park, 1931d, p. 4).

Park emphasized some modern concepts such as hygiene, public order, mass production, and so on, and believed that Le Corbusier most fully embodied these concepts through his designs and publications. In traditional Korean culture, such issues were not primary concepts and thus were not of special concern in the Korean social context of that time, which was closer to a premodern society. Park was impressed by Le Corbusier's ideas and recognized the significance of rationality. He argued for the adoption of the concept of rationality into Korean architecture through the implementation of hygiene, public order, and mass production.

In order to support his argument, Dong-jin Park focused on Le Corbusier's representative housing project, the Villa at Garches (1927-1928), in The Dong-A Ilbo on March 19, 1931 (Fig.7.). Park did not mention or explain this building in detail in his article, but rather simply showed a photographic image without saying much about it. However, after he explained the concept of rationality, he selected this building as an exemplar which embodied the idea of rationality in architecture. The Villa at Garches was
the representative building which comprehensively manifested rationality in modern architecture (Le Corbusier, 1956, p. 140). This building is composed of a grid system of 15 ft. 3 in. by 7 ft. 8 in. The grid system is not necessarily related to the interior plan (Le Corbusier, 1967, p. 54). The façade was not designed to support the weight of this building, but rather its main purpose was to carry sunlight to the inside of the building. Only the columns serve to support the structure's weight. In terms of the interior, this building is not aesthetically focused on decorations of luxurious materials; rather, its interior emphasizes proportion and disposition in order to embody rationality (Le Corbusier, 1967, p. 54). In Korean traditional architecture, the grid modular system existed in temple and palace buildings made of wood. However, the grid system did not exist and was not applied in hanoks, the Korean traditional wooden housing. Most hanoks were constructed by carpenters, who relied on their previous experience of the construction crafts. Using the grid system thus meant a transition from pre-modern to modern construction methods. Park believed the grid system was one of the ways to embody "rationalism" in constructing buildings. In the same article, Park praised planes and cars, associating these modern products with rationality (Park, 1931d, p. 4). He thus intended to educate the Korean public which was unfamiliar with these modern concepts.

Fig.7. "Bulgug galeusieui jutaeg (Villa Garches, France)". Source: Dong-jin Park, "Uli jutaege daehaya o (About Our Houses, no. 5)," The Dong-A Ilbo (East Asia Daily) (March 19, 1931d): p. 4. Photo collected by the East Asian Architectural History Lab at Hanyang University, Seoul

5. Conclusion

After Korea was opened to the West, Western culture influenced the Korean tradition both socially and economically, and architecture was no exception. From the early 20th century, Western modernity was translated into Korean modernity in earnest. The first generation of Korean modern architects, represented by Dong-jin Park, began to introduce Western architectural culture into Korean society in the early 20th century through public media such as magazines and newspapers. Through Park's efforts, the Korean public began to become aware of Western architecture even though its influences were not very strong. However, Park played a significant role in helping the public become familiar with elements of Western culture. Park relieved and helped to smooth the cultural shock that occurred in the process of accommodating Western architectural culture in the early 20th century.

Even if Dong-jin Park adopted Western culture to construct Korean modern architecture, he did not simply impose Western culture or architecture onto the Korean tradition. Park was not just trying to imitate Western architecture. Park seriously considered and tried to understand Western authentic architectural ideas and then applied these ideas to new Korean modern architecture. Park adopted Western cultures' advantages into Korean tradition and through these efforts constructed a new Korean-style modern architectural culture, as shown in the example of the application of the grid system to the Korean traditional housing hanok. In this sense, Park's efforts, which tried to construct Korean modern architecture through accommodation and adaptation of Western modernism, played a significant role in constructing the authentic characteristics and origins of Korean modern architecture.

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Notes

1. Here and throughout, the author underscores Dong-Jin Park's original quotes to emphasize.
2. Dong-jin Park defined the aged as "silver," and the aged means the old generations or old people. For him, the aged and silver are interchangeable concepts.
3. The Eiffel Tower was actually constructed in 1889 for the 1889 World's Fair in Paris.

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