The award of the most honourable Golden Lion Prize to the Korean Pavilion at the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale is meaningful in the history of Korean architecture. All the more so when we consider the relatively belated development of modern architecture in Korea, largely due to the country’s trials resulting from the Japanese occupation of the Korean Peninsula (1910–45) and the Korean War (1950–3). The award is also meaningful if we consider the sense of inferiority that the Korean architectural community has felt in relation to other cultural genres such as pop music and film, which have gained international recognition over the last few decades, forming the so-called ‘Hallyu’ or Korean Wave. Of course, the prize at the Venice Biennale, however honourable it may have been, did not automatically admit Korea to the highest rank in world architecture. In addition, the prominence that the Korean Pavilion achieved there seemed to be more related to curation that illustrated the architectural realities of two Koreas (South and North), regardless of architectural excellence itself. Nevertheless, this event is undoubtedly significant since it served as a catalyst for refreshing the view of Korean architecture from a broader perspective. In particular, it encourages us to ruminate on how Korean architecture has appeared in the world and how it has been recognised.

**Two Korean pavilions**

The architecture of one country (or region) is illustrated elsewhere through the likes of publications, visitors’ testimonies, exhibitions, and real buildings. However a national pavilion in an international exposition offers one of the most effective methods of communication. The symbolic value of the building itself as an artefact is no less important than the contents displayed within. Indeed, the building’s relationship between the ‘primary’ function (the denotative meaning) and the ‘secondary’ function (the connotative meaning) is often reversed, as Umberto Eco argued. The participant in an expo, whether a country or a

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1 Chung-Up Kim and Swoo-Geun Kim attempted modern representations of Korean architecture at the 1964 New York World’s Fair and the 1967 Montreal International Exposition, respectively.

2 Representing Korean architecture in the modern West: two Korean Pavilions from 1960s international expositions

*Hyon-Sob Kim*

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1 The Korean Pavilion at the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale, entitled ‘Crow’s Eye View: The Korean Peninsula’. The commissioner Minsuk Cho and co-curators exhibited the architectural realities of two Koreas (South and North).
The Korean Pavilion at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, 1893, installed inside a huge exhibition building.

The Korean Pavilion at the Paris International Exposition, 1900, modelled after the Geunjeongjeon, the Royal Audience Hall of Gyeongbokgung Palace.

The Korean Pavilion at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, 1893, installed inside a huge exhibition building.

company, will imprint its identity on its pavilion as distinctly as possible beyond the building’s practical exhibition function. In the case of national pavilions, until quite recently, there was a tendency for countries to highlight their own traditions in a modern context, or attempt to modernise local aesthetics in diverse ways. It was for this reason that such temporary buildings could play pivotal roles in formulating modern architecture, such as Mies van der Rohe’s German Pavilion in Barcelona, 1929, which sought a universal architecture beyond national characteristics, and Alvar Aalto’s Finnish Pavilion in New York, 1939. Well recognised, the undulating wall of the Finnish Pavilion evoked the northern lights as well as the shoreline of Finland’s lakes; an Aalto-esque vocabulary that became assumed to represent Finnish-ness in architecture. This article asks whether we can observe Korean national pavilions for expos from a similar point of view?

The 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago was the first international expo where Korea participated and installed a pavilion [2]. The next Korean Pavilion was built at the 1900 Paris International Exposition [3] and a traditional Korean gate was unexpectedly erected at the Japan-British Exhibition in London in 1910. My previous research has investigated these pavilions’ characteristics and meanings, along with their political contexts, in terms of ‘the first appearance of Korean architecture in the modern West.’ Even though each of these buildings was important to modern Korean history, it would be difficult to discuss their architectural qualities as they were little more than inferior replicas of a supposedly ‘authentic’ Korean architecture. It was more than half a century before Korea realised national pavilions in world expos based on Korean architects’ designs. This occurred at the 1964 New York World’s Fair, for example, and the 1967 Montreal International Expo. These two events became recognised as the first international expositions that represented a modernised Korea with a distinctive pavilion building. By the early 1960s, Korea had initiated a nationwide economic development plan for a modernised and economically independent country, overcoming the aftermath of the Korean War. The country was then preparing to re-enter the international arena.

From the point of view of architectural history, these 1960s Korean Pavilions are noteworthy for two primary reasons. First, they were creative design works by Korean architects, in contrast to the aforementioned replicas circa 1900. Specifically, these works were accomplished respectively by Chung-Up Kim (1922–88) and Swoo-Geun Kim (1931–86), leading figures of modern architecture in Korea. Their legacies are so substantial that it is impossible to describe Korean modern architecture without mentioning these figures. Second, the two pavilions raised a typical issue in architecture, the modern representation of tradition, in particular because of their construction on an international stage. This issue is not new. Conversely, it is so widespread that any national or regional architecture – whether Western, Japanese, or from the so-called third world – must encounter it at a certain moment in processes of modernisation. Well addressed in the two pavilions, this topic was widely-discussed for generations to come in Korea, though not often related to the two pavilions erected abroad, but to more accessible buildings built in Korea. Indeed, it remains persistent, still occurring and recurring in various guises.

So how did the two pavilions express Korean identity by modernising tradition? How similar and dissimilar were the two architects’ design approaches and the resultant outcomes? In addition, how could we locate these buildings within the history of Korean Pavilions designed for expos? There have been few in-depth studies investigating these questions to date. Even though Inha Jung’s monographs on Chung-Up Kim (1998) and Swoo-Geun Kim (1996) included interpretations of each pavilion, the studies did not develop these themes with an integrated perspective on the pavilions in terms of Korean architecture’s appearance in the modern West. This article therefore investigates the Korean Pavilions from the 1960s New York and Montreal expos, examining their historical significance and meanings.
Chung-Up Kim (1922–88) and the Korean Pavilion at the New York World’s Fair, 1964–5

Although Korea had participated in the 1962 Seattle World’s Fair, the 1964 New York Fair was the first international exposition after the Korean War where Korea built its own significant pavilion. In addition, the Korean Pavilion is assumed to be the first national building in the West designed by a Korean architect. Therefore, it was almost inevitable that the pavilion was designed to reflect a Korean identity, which was at that time something to be expressed by modernising national culture and tradition, above all, through its form. The task was given to Chung-Up Kim, who, though controversial, is generally considered to be one of the first modern architects in Korea. Although the idea of an architectural profession based on the Western model had emerged in Korea a generation before, it was not until Chung-Up Kim and his generation of architects — who began their careers after Korea’s independence from Japan, or after the Korean War — that what might be called ‘Korean modernism’ began to form.¹⁰

Born in 1922 in Pyongyang, the capital city of present-day North Korea, Chung-Up Kim trained as an architect following a Beaux-Arts influenced curriculum in Yokohama (1939–41) and then practiced in Japan and Korea for several years. After this practice experience, he began teaching at Seoul National University in 1947. However the most decisive experience in Kim’s formative years was his apprenticeship at Le Corbusier’s atelier in Paris, lasting more than three years between October 1952 and December 1955. (This unusual opportunity resulted from his meeting with Corbusier at an international conference in Venice in September 1952.) According to Jung, Kim worked there primarily on the Chandigarh projects in India.¹¹ This formative experience was reflected in his early designs, which illustrate the influence of his master, especially in relation to Corbusier’s later sculptural and poetic forms. For example, the roof of the French Embassy in Seoul, 1959–62, the most representative work of Kim’s legacy, demonstrates a close affinity with the Chandigarh Governor’s Palace project, 1950–5, on which he worked, while simultaneously alluding to the traditional Korean roof profile.¹² Indeed, the Modular system applied to Sogang University Main Hall, 1958, and the architectural promenade for Jeju University Main Hall, 1964, are also easily perceived as having Corbusian characteristics.¹³ And this Corbusian influence manifested itself again in Kim’s Korean Pavilion for the New York Fair.

It is not clearly known how Chung-Up Kim was commissioned to design the Korean Pavilion. However, he was clearly the Korean government’s most reliable choice for the project as no other architects had such significant experience abroad as well as in Korea. In addition, his then-recent achievement with the French Embassy would have been a key influence.¹⁴ Swoo-Geun Kim, nine years younger than Chung-Up Kim, had yet to prove his ability, even though he was steadily gaining recognition from the government around this time. The New York Fair was held in Flushing Meadows, the same location as the city’s previous World’s Fair in 1939. Over 140 pavilions were built on the 2.6 km² area. The fair’s motto – ‘Man’s Achievement on a Shrinking Globe in an Expanding Universe’ – reflected expectations of the emerging space age, while diverse physical and cinematic exhibits illustrated recent developments in science and technology.¹⁵ However, numerous national pavilions still attempted to represent their countries’ traditions through architecture as well as the exhibits¹⁶ and the Korean Pavilion was one of them.¹⁷

Located in ‘The International Area’, a few hundred metres north of the Unisphere,¹⁸ the site for the Korean Pavilion faced the United Nations Avenue and neighboured the balloon-shaped Brass Rail restaurant and the Indian Pavilion.¹⁹ The Korean Pavilion’s most salient feature was its two-building composition: the main exhibition hall and a restaurant named the ‘Korea House’. These buildings exemplified the coexistence between the modern and the traditional. The two buildings were seemingly connected at a single point between the upper level deck of the Korea House (its outdoor dining area) and the mezzanine level of the main building. In addition, a replica of the Dabotap, the sixth-century Buddhist pagoda, stood in a pool between the two buildings. Judging from various drawings and model photographs printed in several publications, such as the booklet produced for...
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6 Location of the Korean Pavilion, New York World's Fair, 1964-1965 showing the locations of the Korean Pavilion and the Unisphere among others.
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Accessing the building from the main entrance at the east corner of the site, visitors were led inside following the undulating walls to experience free-formed spaces. This spatial experience continued within the fan-shaped auditorium and free-formed ancillary rooms. On the other hand, the Korea House, the counterpart to the main exhibition hall, was largely traditional in its purpose. It adopted
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8 The (presumably) final version of the Korean Pavilion, New York: a. ground level plan; b. elevation; c. model; d. bird’s-eye view.

9 Entrance-side photograph of the Korean Pavilion, New York: Compared to the walls in the drawings, the realised walls look rather stumpy.
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Directly typical elements of traditional Korean architecture, such as the sloped and curved roof and windows with elaborate lattice patterns. Nevertheless, these were not exact copies of past elements, but modernised versions of them. In particular, the roof revealed this character most clearly by exposing the planar surface without tiles and by dislocating its apex from the centre of gravity. Furthermore, this traditionally-motivated building also possessed purely modern elements such as the spiral staircase (connecting the ground level pantry to the upper level kitchen) and the sinuous ramp (branching out from the upper level deck towards the ground beside the main hall). The latter was clearly borrowed by Kim from Le Corbusier as a promenade architecturale. A similar element was also applied to the interior of the main hall as a zigzag ramp.

Without extensive documentation and photographs of the realised buildings, it is difficult to evaluate the degree of sophistication with which each building was realised. Considering the limited budgets of the pavilion and the few extant photographs showing parts of the buildings, it was possible that not every building met a high construction standard. However, what is clear is the architect’s intention and approach to representing Korean identity. In this regard, we can identify two basic facts. One is that Chung-Up Kim set out to represent Korean identity not only from a historical perspective, but also from the perspective of the present. This is why he juxtaposed the traditional type building with the modern one. The other fact is that, for the traditional type building, he attempted not to restore a past model as it was but to modernise it (the pursuit of a perfect restoration of the past being a concern in the pavilions sixty years previously circa 1900.) In other words, he transformed the traditional elements in a modern sense. The first official commentary on the Korean
Pavilion was most likely delivered at the groundbreaking ceremony on 23 July 1963. Soo-Young Lee, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations remarked: ‘In keeping with this spirit [to launch a greater future from the past] my government has chosen to build a pavilion that does not necessarily reflect the ancient architectural designs of our homeland, but conforms to the newer trends of modernism, the recently developing designs in modern architecture.’

It would be interesting to determine whether the Korean ambassador’s remark placed emphasis on the modern rather than the traditional, which was quite different from the cultural policy then forthcoming from Korea. However, to many foreign eyes, the Korean Pavilion was undoubtedly a work that attempted to harmonise the traditional and the...
modern, stressing both qualities equally. For example, the New York Fair Corporation stated concisely: ‘The Pavilion of The Republic of Korea will be a fascinating blend of modern design and traditional Korean architecture.’” Jeffrey Stanton, who has commented briefly on each pavilion at the New York World’s Fair, suggested that the pavilion linked ‘the Korea of yesterday and today’.” Indeed, Chung-Up Kim’s Korean Pavilion expressed a Korean identity through the coexistence of the traditional and the modern, while the traditional element was also itself modernised.

**Swoo-Geun Kim (1931–86) and the Korean Pavilion at Expo 67, Montreal**

The 1967 International and Universal Exposition in Montreal, known as Expo 67, was the next world’s fair following the New York event in which Korea participated and constructed a pavilion. Swoo-Geun Kim’s commission to the project was credited to his intimate relationship with the Korean government – and consequently with the Korea Trade Promotion Corporation (KOTRA) that supervised Korea’s entry into international expos – that formed from the start of his career in the early 1960s. In particular, it was directly related to his central position at the Korea Engineering Consultants Corporation (KECC), founded in 1965 under the aegis of the military regime. This political stance brought Swoo-Geun Kim numerous large-scale commissions from the government, of a sort which Chung-Up Kim could not enjoy. Chung-Up Kim even went into exile in 1970, due to his discord with the government.

Born in 1931, Swoo-Geun Kim [10] experienced Korea’s independence from Japan in his mid-teens and entered the Department of Architecture, Seoul
National University in 1950 when Chung-Up Kim was an assistant professor at the institution. Though his study in Seoul was soon interrupted by the outbreak of the Korean War, he managed to continue his studies in Japan, taking an undergraduate course at Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music (the present Tokyo University of the Arts), 1954–8, and successively a Master’s course at the University of Tokyo, 1958–60. It has been suggested that, as an undergraduate, he was influenced by the teaching of Junzo Yoshimura (1908–67), a former assistant to Antonin Raymond (1888–1976). However, Kenzō Tange (1913–2005), was a stronger inspiration to the young Korean student, even though he was not admitted to Tange’s research group at the University of Tokyo.13 Kim won the competition for the Korean National Assembly Building in 1959, working with his postgraduate friends in Tokyo, returning to Seoul to open his office in 1961. There he initiated various projects. Though this office became part of the KECC for a while, between 1966–9, it was re-established in 1972 as the Space Group of Korea, the most influential architect firm in the country over the next few decades. Not only have architects trained in the firm played important roles in Korea through to the present day, but the Space Group of Korea Building, 1971–2 and 1976–7,14 is itself regarded as one of the most important modern buildings in Korea, along with Chung-Up Kim’s French Embassy in Seoul.14 In particular, Swoo-Geun Kim’s 1966 foundation of an architecture and art magazine, Space, became crucial because it facilitated communication between different cultural genres, situating architecture – previously regarded just as engineering – between these cultures.

Expo 67, on the theme ‘Man and His World’, was held to celebrate both the centennial anniversary of the Canadian Confederation and the 325 years since the foundation of Montreal. It is considered one of the most successful expositions in history.15 Three areas across the Saint Laurence River – Saint Helen’s Island, Notre Dame Island, and Harbour City – were developed for the event, on which approximately ninety
Swoo-Geun Kim’s primary concern for the solution was to modernise the timber structure of traditional Korean architecture, especially the multi-layered composition that supports the roof. He overlapped several layers of gongpo (bracket), seokare (circular rafter), and buyeon (rectangular rafter) in between the beam on the column and the eaves of the roof. This system, as well as the collective quality derived from the repetition of those elements, was traditional in principle. However, in consequence, the horizontal band of the layers appeared too exaggerated as a composition, which perhaps resulted from the architect’s attempt to compensate for the loss of the traditional sloped roof.

Each structural member, fabricated from laminated timber, was greatly simplified in form, whether circular or rectangular in profile. Due to the sharply-cut straight lines, the structure deviated from the curves that Korean architecture claimed for its typical aesthetics. A similar treatment of each member was applied to the tower, although its salient feature was a simple crisscross pattern. Swoo-Geun Kim’s translation of tradition contrasted with that of Chung-Up Kim who, as previously discussed, was obsessed with the form of the traditional roof, especially with its sinuous lines. Despite the difference, it can be argued that Swoo-Geun Kim’s interest in the timber structure system and its transformation was also inspired by the form of the historical model. His exaggeration of the horizontal layers was devised mainly for visual effect, having little to do with the structural raison d’être.

Canadian commentaries emphasised the contemporary interpretation of traditional forms. For instance, The Canadian Architect Yearbook 1965...
previewed the design, stating: ‘The inheritance of traditional elements has blended with modern concepts.’ In addition, the expo’s official guidebook, 1967, suggested: ‘The pavilion [...] combines the classic beauty of traditional Korean architecture and the qualities of modern design.’ However, to some observers, this modern embodiment of traditional Korean architecture may appear not only Korean but also Japanese. Most decisively, the mechanistic cutting and repetition of the wooden elements assume a Japanese tone, lacking the supposedly Korean curves. The right-angle intersection of the rafters at the corner of the roof looks more Japanese than the Korean seonja-seokare or fanning-out arrangement of rafters [15]. Moreover, the white panels of the exterior wall, visually interrupted only by thin vertical frames following a sparse but regular interval, reveals an impression somewhat similar to the Japanese screen. The backdrop, the framework on Korean doors and windows is exposed to the outside (Chung-Up Kim featured this framework in the Korea House in New York), creating an impression that the interior is a completely papered white room. Indeed, the Japanese magazine Shinkenchiku reported that ‘the detail of the wooden structure is rather Japanese.”

International ideas were changing so rapidly that such concerns with issues of tradition could seem out of date. By contrast, the Montreal fair was an important outlet for architectural innovations. Examples included the Geodesic Dome designed by Buckminster Fuller, 1895–1983, for the US Pavilion [16], the membrane structure of the German Pavilion by Frei Otto, 1925–2015, and ‘Habitat 67”, prefabricated collective housing by Moshe Safdie (b. 1938). These designs seemed to depict architecture’s next directions, apparently pioneering the latest technologies and lifestyles. Swoo-Geun Kim rethought his work after encountering these highly contemporary projects in Montreal, turning to a high-tech style for the next Korean Pavilion for the 1970 Osaka Expo [17].

Korean expo pavilions in the 1960s and the debate on tradition

From these studies of two Korean Pavilions, it is apparent that these architectural approaches to represent Korea from Chung-Up Kim and Swoo-Geun Kim in the 1960s were simultaneously different yet fundamentally similar. The former focused on the formal qualities of the traditional roof while the latter focused on the traditional timber structure underneath the roof. As such, the former design was more expressive and sculptural while the latter appeared more logical and systematic. However, Swoo-Geun Kim’s interpretation of tradition in Montreal was also ultimately about the form of architecture, as was Chung-Up Kim’s interpretation in New York. Nonetheless, this did not suggest an imitation of traditional forms on a surface level. Both shared a common ground, or a sort of argument, that the past must not be imitated but recreated in a modern sense.

The two expo pavilions could be positioned at the forefront of Korean modernism – though neither could be regarded as the architects’ most magnificent works in their own right – because of their attempts to modernise traditional forms rather than directly copy them. This is a reminder of the well-known ‘debate on tradition’ ignited during the design competition for the National Museum of Korea (the present National Folk Museum) in 1966, in between the two international expos. Because the competition guidelines encouraged architects to imitate the exterior forms of the country’s renowned traditional buildings, many architects including the two Kims opposed the competition and consequently opposed the winning entry by Bong-Jin Kang (1917–98) [18]. Kang’s design, which became a notorious landmark within the Gyeongbokgung Palace area from the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), combined heterogeneous elements copied from different buildings, such as the eighth-century stone structure of Bulguksa Temple and the seventeenth-century multi-storey wooden tower of the Beobjusa Temple. However, this combination lacked any recognisable creativity on the part of the architect himself. It seemed common sense to the two Kims and some other intellectual architects at that time to avoid the blind imitation of a traditional form, something not unusual today. Yet, this common sense continued to be broken when the government stressed a formal depiction of tradition for various national facilities, especially under the rule of the military regime in 1970s and 1980s.

This debate about tradition takes on a more complex aspect if related to Swoo-Geun Kim’s pavilion in Montreal, given its Japanese nuances. Perhaps the Japanese characteristics were not intended but coincidental, or at most applied unconsciously as a result of Kim’s intimacy with Japanese culture and architecture. Though the pavilion’s allusion to Japan is controversial, this association could also be directly linked to another symbolic debate, the ‘Japanese-Style Scandal’ from which Swoo-Geun Kim suffered in connection with his design for the Buyeo National Museum, 1965–68 [19]. Due to some of the museum’s formal similarities to the Japanese Shinto shrine (for example, the former’s front gate and roof frames with the latter’s torii gate and chigi lines, respectively), there were bitter disputes between Swoo-Geun Kim and many architects and scholars during its construction in 1967. In the end, the museum was completed to a slightly revised design that adapted those Japanese characteristics. Interestingly, one of the harshest critics of that project was none other than Chung-Up Kim.

Around that time, Chung-Up Kim was forewarned of the rising star Swoo-Geun Kim as a rival, not as a student or junior architect, even though he had always treated Swoo-Geun Kim as such.” At any rate, since this debate became heated while Expo 67 was in full swing, the pavilion in Montreal could also have been a possible target for criticism along with the museum, though it did not arouse such a controversy. It is interesting to reflect on why the
Montreal building was not involved in this contemporary scandal. Perhaps it was because the Japanese images appeared relatively mild and the temporary structure (though it was preserved) was not as important as the national museum in Buyeo, one of ancient Korea’s capital cities. Arguably, the more practical reason is that at that time only a limited number of Koreans visited the pavilion in a remote North American city, limiting discussions about the pavilion itself.

As much as Swoo-Geun Kim suffered from this scandal, it was a precious opportunity for him to reflect on the issue of tradition. He went on to place more emphasis on space rather than form in architecture, a concern well illustrated in the Space Group of Korea Building in the 1970s and his formulation of spatial concepts, such as ‘Ultimate Space’ (1971), and ‘Negativism’ (1980). Swoo-Geun Kim’s transition suggests two points in this context. First, when he designed the Korean Pavilion in Montreal in the 1960s, he was a young architect in his mid-thirties, yet to discover what became his mature language. This contrasted with Chung-Up Kim, who had already developed his own design vocabulary by that time. Therefore, Chung-Up Kim’s transition points not just in the limited history of Korean expo pavilions, but also more broadly in the history of Korean architecture overseas.

Despite the historical importance of the two pavilions, it seems obvious that their approaches can no longer be applied to the present. For the discussion of so-called ‘Korean-ness’, or Korean identity in architecture, the issue of tradition, relating to preindustrial society, has been gradually replaced by that of the present reality, though the latter of course intersects the past. Whereas traditional form and spatial values are still important referents, architects are increasingly attracted to the architectural reality of ‘now here’ (for example, urban structures, social contexts, and technological possibilities) to represent Korea in their architecture. We may understand Korea’s success at the 2014 Venice Biennale from this perspective.

Notes
2. The Korean Wave has been studied from various perspectives. For example, Youna Kim, ed., The Korean Wave: Korean Media Go Global (New York: Routledge, 2013). There have recently been several attempts to promote an architectural ‘Hallyu’, but it is generally a stylistic matter.
5. Sigfried Giedion noted that ‘Finland is with Aalto wherever


8. Jung argued that Chung-Up Kim and Swoo-Geun Kim, who began their careers after Korea’s independence from Japan in 1945, were the first Korean architects to pursue the architect’s own ‘modern self’, producing their unique architectural vocabularies as a result. Jung, *Kimchungup Geonchuknon*, pp. 10–11.

9. In general, Gil-Ryong Park (1898–1943), and Dong-Jin Park (1899–1980), are regarded as the representative figures of the first-generation architects in Korea. They were graduates of Gyeongseong Engineering College, established in 1936 to train Japanese engineers for the colonial regime in Korea. In addition, In-Jun Park (1892–1954) and Yun Kang (1899–1954), who were trained abroad and returned to Korea, belonged to this generation. However, their learning and activities were inevitably limited in colonised Korea. Dong-Uk Kim, *Hanguk Geonchugu Yoeoka [History of Korean Architecture]* (Seoul: Gimundang, 2007), pp. 389–92.


12. However, there was a conflicting testimony that Chung-Up Kim wanted to produce an image of ‘a flying carpet’ using the roof. Ryung-Kook Woo’s motion refers at a symposium entitled ‘Mobanggwa Changojo: daega sideultu hanguk geonchuk’ [‘Imitation and Creation: Korean Architecture in the Age of the Masters’] held at Artist House, Seoul, Hanyang University Sustainable Building Research Centre, 21 May 2013.

13. At the same time, however, he struggled to escape from Corbusian influences. Chung-Up Kim, Kimchungup Geonchukguy *Bitgwa Grinja [Chung-Up Kim]: Architect’s Light and Shadow* (Seoul: Yeolhwadang, 1984), p. 32.

14. His architecture exhibition in 1957, held after his return to Korea, became sensational because it was the first event of its kind in Korea. In 1965, he was knighted with the National Order of Merit from the French government for the French Embassy project. For his autobiographical description, see Chung-Up Kim, *Kimchungup Geonchuknon*, pp. 282–8.


16. The Republic of China (Taiwan) and Thailand appeared to be the most typical adaptations of traditional building types in national pavilions.

17. Unfortunately, architectural details of the Korean Pavilion were not adequately documented in *New York World’s Fair 1964–1965: Korea Pavilion* (1966), the official report by the Korea Trade Promotion Corporation (KOTRA). Oddly, photographs of the realised pavilion were rarely found anywhere except for a few partial views of its entrance and some aerial photos taken from afar. Nevertheless, we can understand its architectural characteristics as a whole by analysing and integrating other available data. See notes 19–22.

18. It was a giant stainless-steel globe structure built at the centre of the fairground.


20. An exterior perspective colour painting of a later version of the pavilion was printed on the cover, of which the black-and-white image was also published in the architect’s report. See note 21.


22. Jung, in *Kimchungup Geonchuknon*, published two plans (ground and upper levels) and one section, as well as two model photographs. However, the plans are not executed versions, but preliminary ones (though they are important in their own right). Seemingly, he was not aware of the architect’s own publication.

23. According to Jung, in *Kimchungup Geonchuknon*, Chung-Up Kim visited Aalto in Finland with Ernesto Rogers in 1954 and was helped by Aalto when deported from Korea in 1971 (pp. 32–4). However, it appears that Kim rather exaggerated his relationship with Aalto, an aspect yet to be investigated.

24. In particular, we are reminded of German modernists, loosely affiliated with the word ‘organic’ or ‘expressionist’, such as Hugo Häring and Erich Mendelsohn.

25. The Korean newspaper *Chosun Ilbo* [Chosun Daily] (21 April 1964), p. 3 reported the low budget for the Korean Pavilion construction (US $ 580,000), compared to Japan’s (US $ 4 million) and Taiwan’s (US $ 2.5 million).


28. In the following decades, many Korean cultural facilities would imitate traditional building forms, complying with the government’s guidelines.


31. Mokchon Architecture Archive, *Yoonsungjong Garudipp [Oral Record*
33. For his early years, see Jung, Kimswoogeun Geonchuknon, pp. 31–42.
34. In general, the two buildings have been considered the most representative examples of modern architecture in Korea. Although there are differing opinions, this was confirmed in a recent survey co-conducted by Dong-A Ilbo [Dong-A Daily] and Space, and published in both in February 2013.
36. This pavilion is reminiscent of the Classical composition of Mies’s New National Gallery in Berlin, 1960–8, that has a similar square plan, eight columns, a coffered ceiling, etc. However, the latter is much purer than the former and, more decisively, the wall-column positions of the two were reversed. By the way, in inverse, those Corbusian and Miesian characters have sometimes been interpreted in relation to East Asian timber structures respectively.
37. According to Jung in Kimswoogeun Geonchuknon, Swoo-Geun Kim had no intention to borrow a traditional style at the beginning but his thinking slowly changed (pp. 96–100). Also, see Mokchon Architecture Archive, Yoonsungjoong Gusuljip, pp. 224–5.
38. Though the skylight and its cover at the centre of the flat roof might be regarded as a vestige of the traditional sloped roof, it was unlikely to affect the entire composition of the roof. On the other hand, one photograph of an earlier stage of the pavilion illustrates that the layer of circular beams was missing from the horizontal band; therefore, the upper structure of the pavilion looks a bit simpler. A close comparison of the pavilion’s earlier state and completed version indicates that the circular beams were added at a later stage of its construction, wrapping the upper part of the rectangular beams by rolling up laminated woods. Not solid but hollow inside, the circular beams were, in fact, fake.
41. Someone might be reminded of the famous exterior view of the Katsura Palace that was well featured, for example, in The Japanese House and Garden by Testuro Yoshida (1935/1953). With the exterior walls removed, the Korean Pavilion in Montreal looks more Korean as argued by Won Kim (b. 1943), who was an assistant architect in Swoo-Geun Kim’s office at that time. Jung, Kimswoogeun Geonchuknon, p. 98.
43. For the Osaka Expo, he had delved into future studies for a while. Jung, Kimswoogeun Geonchuknon, pp. 100, 109.
44. Concerning the two Kims’ approaches to modernising the traditional in the 1960s, Jung, in Kimswoogeun Geonchuknon, contrasted Swoo-Geun Kim’s method of ‘amplifie’ (associating with traditional forms) with Chung-Up Kim’s method of ‘déformer’ (exaggerating or distorting traditional forms) (pp. 76–7). However, these two concepts could not be seamlessly applied to the cases of the two Korean Pavilions, except that both were involved in the representation of the traditional ‘form’ as per this article’s argument.
45. Chung-Up Kim’s own collection of works (1984) did not illustrate the New York Pavilion, and the Montreal Pavilion may well be regarded as a work of Swoo-Geun Kim’s premature period. This situation sharply contrasts with, for example, Mies’s Barcelona Pavilion and Aalto’s Finnish Pavilion.
46. Concerning their critical attitude towards the project, see Chung-Up Kim, Swoo-Geun Kim, et al., ‘ Savedae: Geonchuk, jeontongueul gyesuenghanae gireun? ’ [Roundtable discussion: architecture, how to inherit tradition?], Space 3 (January 1967), 6–17.
47. For example, many national museums such as National Gwangju Museum, 1927–8, and National Jeonju Museum, 1987–90, copied the traditional timber-frame building form using reinforced concrete structure to emphasise the government’s cultural orthodoxy.
48. In particular, many parts of the design work were performed by his assistants Seung-Joong Yoon (b. 1937) and Won Kim. Jung, Kimswoogeun Geonchuknon, p. 97; and Mokchon Architecture Archive, Yonseungjoong Gusuljip, pp. 224–5.
49. For the two Kims’ debate on the Japanese characteristics of the Banye National Museum, see Jung, Kimswoogeun Geonchuknon, pp. 74–5.
50. A criticism and counter-criticism series between the two Kims was published in Dong-A Ilbo [Dong-A Daily], one of the major Korean newspapers, in August and September 1967, while the expo was held between April and October of the same year.
51. According to Jung in, Kimswoogeun Geonchuknon, a newspaper reported at that time that the composition of the main building and the tower was similar to a Japanese style (p. 98), but no further discussions took place.
52. After the event, the Korean Pavilion was preserved owing to its aesthetic quality and, for a while, used as a post office and for other incidental purposes. However, as time progressed, it deteriorated and was abandoned. Recently, the city of Montreal decided to restore the pavilion as part of the expo park renewal to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Expo 67 in 2017. Jae-Suk Jeong, ‘Kimswoogeun-ui geonchuknon, Montreal-seo 50-nyeon mane buhwallanda’ [‘Swoo-Geun Kim’s architectural spirit will be revived in Montreal in 50 years’], Jongang Ilbo [Jongang Daily] (1 July 2013), p. A23.
53. In Japan, Swoo-Geun Kim’s respected Tange had already argued against the formal imitation of traditional architecture more than a decade before. Kenzo Tange, ‘My conception of modern architecture in present Japan’ [text in Japanese with Japanese-English titles], Shinkenchiku 30, No. 1 (January 1953), 15–18.
54. According to Swoo-Geun Kim, the ‘Ultimate Space’ is a relaxed space without any specific function. In contrast to the ‘Primary Space’ for dwelling and the ‘Secondary Space’ for utilities, this ‘Third Space’ is ‘the most humanistic space’ for contemplation, happening, and play, as in ‘Munbang’, a study of the Korean Confucian scholar, or as in ‘Jungja’, the traditional Korean pavilion in nature. This kind of spatial notion came to be integrated into the idea of ‘Negativism’, which placed more emphasis on reducing the negative effects of architectural activities rather than on increasing positive outcomes. Kim related this idea to the traditional Confucianist, Buddhist, and Daoist philosophies, arguing for it as a new desirable architectural thinking to address environmental problems. Swoo-Geun Kim, ‘Geonchugui negativism’ ['Negativism in Architecture'] and ‘Gungseuk gonggan’ ['Ultimate Space’], Joen Gireun Jeobulsa-rok Joko Nupon Gireun Neoljeolsa-rok Jota [The Narrower, the Better Way; the Broader, the Worse Way] (Seoul: Space, 2006), pp. 266–76 and 288–95.

55. For example, the columns and roofs of the front gate at the UN Cemetery, 1964, and of the Jinju Cultural Centre, 1982, illustrates modernised versions of the traditional curvilinearity, and the canopy of the Millennium Gate, 1985, alludes to the light and swift movement of the Korean roof with no direct formal association.

56. The 4.3 Group members, including SungYong Joli (b. 1944), Hyun-Sik Min (b. 1946), and H.Sang Seung (b. 1952), now mostly in their sixties and seventies, are regarded as authoritative figures in the present Korean architectural circle. Their notion of ‘emptiness’, in relation to the spatial concept of the traditional Korean madang, is still a hot issue and yet to be studied. For the discussions on the legacy of the 4.3 Group, see Hungmin Pai, et al., Jeonhwangiui Hanguk Geonchukgwa 4.3 Grup [Korean architecture in the transitional period and the 4.3 Group] (Seoul: Mokchon Architecture Archive & Zip, 2014).

57. During that time, arguably, the architect’s role in the Korean international expo pavilions had been considerably weakened. Hyon-Sob Kim, ‘What is an Exposition to an Architect?’, Space 535 (June 2012), 79–83.


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Hyon-Sob Kim is Associate Professor of Architectural History at Korea University. He was appointed in 2008 after completing his doctoral and postdoctoral researches on Alvar Aalto and East-West exchanges in architecture at the University of Sheffield. His studies on these subjects and Korean modernism have been widely published, including Korean Architecture in the Transitional Period and the 4.3 Group (2014, co-authored); Architecture of Korea University (2016); and Architecture Class: History of Western Modern Architecture (2016, co-authored). Awarded the 2014–15 Harvard-Yenching Institute Visiting Scholarship, he has recently worked at the Harvard University during his sabbatical leave.

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