Pictorial Korea: Visualizing the Nation for a Foreign Audience in Cold War Photobooks

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of East Asian Studies
University of Toronto

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Abstract

In the mid-20th century, a South Korean publication company called the International Publicity League of Korea attempted to change the way that the world perceived their emerging nation-state by producing a series of annual photobooks entitled Pictorial Korea. This thesis examines editions of Pictorial Korea as both constructed visual narratives and material objects to reveal how the IPLK conveyed images of the nation to their intended audience. In order to do so, it traces the company's history, their critique of foreign images of South Korea, their relationship with the world of photography, and the transmission and corroboration of their representations through the materiality of Pictorial Korea. It argues that within the context of the Cold War, the IPLK's works positioned South Korea in relation to the non-communist West and communist North Korea by portraying it as a modern, sovereign nation and the rightful heir to Korean historical tradition.
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Introduction

On January 1st, 1950, almost five years after Korea was divided by the Cold War superpowers, painter turned publisher Song Junghoon [Song Chŏnghun] lamented the conditions of South Korea's publication industry in the newspaper Kyŏnghyang sinmun. In his article, he argued that the nation had to improve the quality of its printed works in order to change the way it was viewed by foreign audiences because a nation's publications were a mark of its level of civilization. He therefore declared that he would make it his life's work to create modern publications that would inform the world about South Korea's advanced culture, even if he could only manage to transmit one line of text or one photograph to foreign viewers.¹

Nine days later, his publication company the International Publicity League of Korea (IPLK) released the first edition of their series of English-language photobooks entitled Pictorial Korea. The first of its kind in South Korea, the book featured over two hundred pages of photographs and accompanying English text. It was divided into sections that depicted South Korea's current events, rural and urban landscapes, historical traditions and customs, modern factories and industries, and thriving art and cultural scenes. Together, this complex collection of representations countered predominant foreign images that portrayed South Koreans as entrenched within a perpetual cultural stasis of peculiar traditions that hindered their development and made them incapable of playing an active role in their defense and modernization. In order to correct what they

¹ Song Chŏnghun [Song Junghoon],"Munhwaundong ūl ŏttŏk’e ch’uujhalkka," Kyŏnghyang sinmun, January 1, 1950. Note that this study maintains the transliteration of Song's name that he often used in the works of the IPLK.
perceived to be foreign misinterpretations of the country and contribute to international visualizations of South Korea, the IPLK combined and arranged photographs by both foreign and domestic photographers. In doing so, they created a visual narrative in which South Korea was presented as a dynamic, vibrant, and modern nation that was cemented by its shared roots in unique local tradition.

In addition to speaking back to foreign representations, the conditions of the Cold War meant that the International Publicity League of Korea was compelled to use photographs in its narratives to simultaneously speak against the communist world, in particular North Korea. When Korea was liberated from thirty-five years of Japanese colonial rule in 1945, the United States and the Soviet Union divided the peninsula into two occupied regions. Then in 1948, each superpower established a government led by native Koreans in their respective regions. This officially created two separate nation-states, the American-supported Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Soviet-backed Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). This situation of two competing governments existing on the peninsula was expected to be solely provisional, as it was assumed that only one would win the battle of legitimacy and come to unite and govern a single Korean nation-state. During this period, South Korea as a nation was thus emerging in competition with North Korea for international recognition as the one and only legitimate Korean state, while also struggling against the shadow of American influence in the region.

The central aim of this study is to uncover the tensions created by this Cold War context within the visual narratives of Pictorial Korea. It thus reveals how the International Publicity League of Korea used photographs to promote conceptions of the
South Korean nation as the rightful heir to Korean historical traditions and a modern, sovereign member of the "free world" due to the conditions of South Korea's triangular relationship with the non-communist West and communist North Korea.

The first chapter of this study examines the context of prior photographic representations of South Korea in which *Pictorial Korea* emerged in the 1950s, when the Korean War ignited foreign interest in the events occurring on the peninsula. In doing so, it suggests ways in which members of the IPLK’s intended foreign audience imagined South Korea prior to their exposure to the images produced by the IPLK. This provides a foundation for the second chapter, which chronicles the history of the IPLK and its works by tracing the company's activities from its establishment in 1945 to the production of its final publication in 1970.

The third chapter illustrates how the narratives of *Pictorial Korea* functioned as a critique of foreign representations of South Korea, particularly those produced by the American magazine *LIFE*. It discusses how the divergent representations in these publications of the involvement of South Koreans in the Korean War and the country's (re)development illustrate the differing goals of the two states, despite their mutually dependent relationship. In addition, this chapter examines the ways in which the material form of the photobook affects the construction of its visual narratives.

The history of South Korean photographic trends is the subject of the fourth chapter, which aims to examine the relationship between the photographs of *Pictorial Korea* and the genre of art photography during this period. It argues that South Korean photographic trends were transformed by the war, as the personal experiences of photographers impacted their choice of subjects and also instigated their participation in
contemporary global art movements, thus affecting their style. Although the editors of *Pictorial Korea* largely eschewed popular subjects of dark depictions of poverty and hardship in order to portray South Korea in a positive manner to its foreign audience, some of its photographs show influences of present-day trends in style. In addition, this chapter argues that the IPLK encouraged its domestic and foreign audiences to conceive of certain photographs as works of art, and thus contributed to the shift in popular perceptions of the medium in the 1950s.

Finally, the fifth chapter discusses the effect of the materiality of the books upon the successful dissemination of its narratives to foreign viewers. It reveals how the state of the books as material objects facilitated the wide-ranging distribution of the IPLK’s images as they were gifted, purchased, and used as souvenirs. This final chapter thus extends the study of the books beyond the moment of production to include a tracing of their social biographies, thereby uncovering the ways in which they were viewed by various members of their intended foreign audience.

**The Truth Claim of Photography and the Role of the Photobook Format**

Prior to examining the representations produced by the International Publicity League of Korea in its English-language works, it is necessary to highlight two critical questions that will be addressed throughout this work: Why did the editors of *Pictorial Korea* use photography to construct and convey images of the South Korean nation to its foreign audience? And secondly, what effect does the material form of a photobook have on the construction and dissemination of photographic representations of the nation?

In response to the first question, *Pictorial Korea* was part of a global trend in which
photographs were employed in projects of journalism, social movements, and state propaganda as a way to construct and complement narratives. This trend emerged because photographs are not only an entertaining and easily accessible medium for conveying information; they are also often valued as objective mechanical transcriptions of events and objects. Due to this common faith in the impartiality of the technological apparatus of the camera, or what Gunning has termed photography's "truth claim," the role of the photographer disappears, leaving behind what is often seen as an authentic two-dimensional record of a single moment in time within a specific space. It is speculated that the decision to use photographs in the works of the IPLK, such as *Pictorial Korea*, was affected by an understanding that their audience would view photographs as objective evidence. In reality, the photograph is not an impartial transcription of the world, but is instead constructed by the photographer's staging, perspective, framing, and post-production, as well as by the differing ways in which viewers interpret the image (which are influenced by both social and material contexts). Nevertheless, despite the clear influence of bias upon the production and viewing of photographs, they are also commonly perceived to be objective due to the ways in which society has historically used them. The use of photographs in *Pictorial Korea* as informational tools thus may have perpetuated such conceptions of their reliability among their viewers.

As contradictory photographic representations of South Korea all carried this same claim of innate truth, the IPLK countered other photographs of the nation-state in part by

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presenting its own visual narrative in the format of a photobook. This form allowed the IPLK to combine images and text to construct a supposedly comprehensive visual representation of South Korea in which viewers are guided to interpret images in certain ways based on their context (see chapter 3). Such a consideration of how the photobook's design and materiality affected the representations constructed by the IPLK is a major overarching theme of this study. Rather than analyze the representations of South Korea in these photobooks as isolated images through a semiotic study of their individual content, this study aims to situate the photographs within their contexts both as contributors to the construction of the IPLK's visual narratives and as mediators in social processes. It therefore considers the following: the ways in which photographs within *Pictorial Korea* both successfully and unsuccessfully create messages based on their arrangement with each other and with text and illustrations; how representations of South Korea within these books work in dialogue with other images of the country such as those found in contemporaneous issues of *LIFE*; and the role of distribution and exchange in corroborating the photobooks' visualizations of the nation and impacting the way in which audiences view South Korea and the world. It thus aims to contribute to an understanding of how photography's inherent claims of representing truth can be reinforced through the context of their viewing, as well as how the material contexts of images facilitate the construction and transmission of visual narratives.

**Studying South Korean Photography**

While studies of colonial and postcolonial photography have increased in recent decades, both Korean and English-language works on the history of photography in
South Korea are rare. This paper intends to encourage the development of this field by bringing the work of South Korean photographers and publishers to the forefront of understandings of how the nation was constructed and visualized during the 1950s. It focuses on the English-language publications that the International Publicity League of Korea produced in the 1950s, in particular Pictorial Korea and its condensed version Glimpse of Korea. Although these works were produced from 1950 to 1970, this study centres on the editions published during the 1950s due to the period's unique social and political context, in particular the Korean War and the postwar period of recovery and redevelopment.

Since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978, there has been increased interest in the study of the production of knowledge about the "Other" within unequal power relationships. Within such a framework, scholars of postcolonial studies have debated whether the marginalized Other, or the "subaltern," is prevented from "speaking back" to Western representations due to the silencing domination of imperial power. However, these debates have predominately taken place within the field of literary criticism. Recently, scholars have attempted to expand understandings of

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4 In particular, only one scholarly work has examined the publications produced by the International Publicity League of Korea. See Ch'oe Injin's article on the founding of the company and the production of the early issues of its news magazine for domestic audiences in "Haebang ch'ogi ǔi sajinjapch'i yŏn'gu: 'Kukchebodo' wa 'Sajinmunhwa' rŭl chungsimŭro," *Han'guk sajinhakhoeji AURA* 10 (2003). For other good Korean-language studies on the history of Korean and South Korean photography, see Ch'oe Injin's *Han'guk sajinsa: 1631-1945* (Seoul: Nunpit, 1999), as well as the works of Yi Kyŏngmin and Pak Pyŏngjong. For discussions of Korean War photographs and memory, see the works of Kim Hyŏnggon and Jung Joon Lee.

5 The first edition of this series was entitled *Glimpses of Korea*; all later editions were *Glimpse of Korea*. When referring to this series, this study will use the more common title.


Orientalist portrayals of the Other and the Other's possible resistance, corroboration, or contribution to Western hegemonic discourses by considering the role of other forms of representation such as photography. In Deborah Poole's work, she has examined representations of the "Other" within what she terms an "image world," in which photographs are in constant dialogue with other representations within specific contexts of exchange and knowledge production that take place in often unequal relationships of power. While this thesis aims to contribute to this recent move towards examining representations produced by non-Western subjects, it also attempts to break from the common West vs. East binary. Instead, it reveals how visual representations of the emerging South Korean nation-state worked within a triangulated relationship with the communist world (in particular North Korea), and the non-communist world (led by the United States). This examination of the photobooks *Pictorial Korea* thus adds an additional dimension to studies of the production of knowledge of the "Other," particularly in the context of the Cold War.

More specifically, this thesis seeks to contribute to scholarly understanding of the as-of-yet largely neglected history of the International Publicity League of Korea and its works. In order to study the visual representations of South Korea produced by the IPLK, a search for remaining editions of their publications was required. While most editions of the IPLK's books published during this time period were successfully acquired from

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collections in North American university libraries, some works remained elusive. This study also utilized sources such as autobiographies and published interviews of IPLK staff members and photographers Kim Hanyong (1924-?) and Yi Kyŏngmo (1926-2001), and photographer Im ûngsik (1912-2001). In addition, it examined articles and advertisements in South Korean newspapers in order to ascertain the ways in which the IPLK participated in the local photography world as well as marketed and sold their works. Through an analysis of these sources, this study aims to both uncover the history of the International Publicity League of Korea and more broadly reveal a way in which South Koreans constructed and disseminated images of the nation during the Cold War.

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10 In particular, Pictorial Korea's French and Japanese editions, which were produced intermittently in the mid and late 1960s, are not included in this study because no copies could be located. As this study focuses predominantly on publications produced in the 1950s, this is not considered a detriment to this project, but a comparison between these different editions of the book would be a fascinating subject for future research for any interested scholar.
1. A Quaint and Primitive Nation: The Influence of Imperialism on Photographic Representations of Korea

In order to understand the visual narratives that constructed the International Publicity League of Korea's imagined South Korean nation, it is critical to first consider the world of images within which they were produced. In addition to contemporary representations, the IPLK's images were also positioned in dialogue with images of Korea that had been disseminated prior to its division. This was because the IPLK did not depict South Korea as a new nation-state devoid of history but instead as the continuation of 4,000 years of Korean tradition. They thus had to contend with photographs of Korea that had been produced prior to its liberation from Japanese rule. These images had predominantly been produced by either the Japanese colonial government or Western travellers who were sympathetic to the Japanese project in Korea.

Photography was a critical part of the Japanese construction and dissemination of knowledge about the Korean colony to domestic and international viewers. When interpreted as objective representations of reality, photographs corroborated colonial discourses in which "Korean culture" was defined as undeveloped and in need of Japanese-guided modernization. Part of the colonial project included a large-scale photographic survey of the peninsula commissioned by the government, which produced almost 40,000 photographs of various Korean cultural "types." Such images were reproduced and emulated on picture postcards sold by Japanese photography studios in Korea to both Japanese residents and foreign missionaries and diplomats, thus

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11 See, for example, the "History" sections that were included in most editions of *Pictorial Korea.*
12 Ch’oe, *Han’guk sajinsa,* 391.
transmitting visual narratives of quaint and primitive "Korean customs" to the metropole and abroad.\textsuperscript{13}

Meanwhile, the colonial government and Japanese residents in Korea produced Japanese and English-language books and newspapers that used a combination of text and photography to justify and gain support for the continued growth of Japan's empire in Asia. According to Mark Caprio, Japanese-language newspapers used photographs from the popular "cultural types" genre in order to juxtapose images of wealthy and poor Koreans, and thus present the Japanese intervention in Korea as a liberation of Koreans from an unequal class system.\textsuperscript{14} At the same time, as Andre Schmid has noted, the Japanese colonial government produced English-language propaganda photobooks which included "before and after" photographs to gain support for the colonization of Korea by claiming that Japan had successfully modernized Korea's undeveloped infrastructure and uncivilized population.\textsuperscript{15} For example, the 1921-22 edition of the Government General Office's English-language photobook entitled \textit{Annual Report on the Progress and Reforms in Chosen (Korea)} contains an image of an "old method of irrigation" in which Korean subjects are pictured working in a field with simple tools. This photograph is juxtaposed with two photographs of a Japanese-built "Modern Irrigation Reservoir" and neatly arranged "Irrigated Rice Fields." Underneath, the text describes how existing irrigation ponds and dams in Korea had fallen into disrepair and become worthless until the Japanese colonial period, when Japanese technicians repaired, constructed, and


maintained the colony's irrigation system.¹⁶ An English-language review of an earlier edition of these books illustrates the impact of such narratives on their foreign audiences, as it claims that the report shows the "many and undoubted benefits which Japan has brought to Korea along material lines."¹⁷ Japan thus effectively used photography to represent the colonizers as benevolent, civilized, and competent rulers, and Koreans as primitive subjects in need of their assistance.

Photographs of Korea that were produced by foreign travellers and missionaries also often reinforced pro-colonization visual narratives that portrayed Korea as incapable of self-rule and requiring Japanese intervention. While foreign visitors such as Isabella Bird Bishop and William Elliot Griffis had produced and published photographs of Korea prior to the colonial period, most of these photographers had encountered Korea after first being introduced to Japan's representations of the country.¹⁸ According to Schmid, many Western travellers were also predisposed towards supporting the Japanese colonization of Korea because Japan's rhetoric resembled that of colonial projects in their home countries.¹⁹ This was reflected in the images created by Western photographers, which often depicted Korea's urban spaces as dirty and old-fashioned.²⁰ In addition, Japanese residents and government officials also actively attempted to shape Western travellers' perceptions of Korea by personally guiding them or determining their itineraries. As travellers were discouraged from interacting with Koreans and instead spent most of their

¹⁹ Schmid, Korea Between Empires, 163.
²⁰ Pak P'yôngjong, Han'guk sajin ū sŏn'gujadal (Seoul: Nunpit, 2007), 177.
time with Japanese residents,\textsuperscript{21} the range of potential subjects of their photographs was highly biased towards Japanese conceptions of the colony. These restrictions and the influence of pro-colonial discourse thus impacted the content of visual representations that were sent home by travellers to foreign audiences.

In contrast, some Western missionaries who lived in Korea during the colonial period attempted to convey proof of the atrocities of the Japanese government upon the Korean population by taking advantage of the popular belief that cameras were capable of impartially recording the truth. For example, Canadian educator and missionary Frank Schofield took fifty photographs of the March 1st Independence Movement that were smuggled to the Korean provisional government in Shanghai in a young Korean's shoes. These images were compiled there into a photobook that featured captions in Korean and English, and 5,000 copies were distributed to foreign countries in an attempt to reveal the harsh oppression of the Japanese government upon Koreans who were calling for national independence.\textsuperscript{22} However, this example is an exception that proves the rule, as the required subterfuge involved in the dissemination of these photographs illustrates how heavily the Japanese controlled the visualization of Korea at the time.

While Koreans were involved in the production of photographic representations of the nation during the colonial period, the images they were able to produce were also affected by Japanese control. Prior to the 20th century, it had been difficult for Korean photographers to produce representations of Korea due to popular misunderstandings about the technology of the camera. For example, Hwang Chŏl (1864-1930), one of Korea's first established photographers, had taken photographs of Korean landscapes and

\textsuperscript{21} Schmid, \textit{Korea Between Empires}, 164.
\textsuperscript{22} Ch’oe, \textit{Han’guk sajinsa}, 380-384.
historical sites in the 19th century. However, he was heavily harassed by fellow Koreans and was imprisoned as a traitor because some conservative nationalists suspected that he was using the camera to divulge national secrets to foreigners.\(^{23}\)

Although photography was more widely accepted during the colonial period, photographers struggled to create their own representations of Korea under Japanese censorship. Many Korean nationalists were concerned about foreign perceptions of Korea, and criticized Japanese newspapers for their misrepresentations of events occurring on the peninsula.\(^{24}\) However, constructing their own images for foreign audiences was a nearly impossible task under the strict control of the colonial government and its police force. Although the severity of censorship varied throughout the colonial period, the colonial police maintained control over the ways in which images of Korea were produced. They confiscated copies of newspapers and periodicals that contained images that did not support the regime, destroyed photographic plates and cameras at the scenes of potentially controversial events, and frequently harassed and imprisoned photographers.\(^{25}\) Even photographers who did not intend to produce images that were critical of the colonial government struggled to take photographs, particularly during the period of total war mobilization in the 1940s. This was due to restrictions on the importation of required film and chemicals, strict laws against organization that limited the sharing of ideas and materials, and the prohibition of taking photographs in militarily

\(^{24}\) Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, 165.
\(^{25}\) Ch’oe, *Han’guk Sajinsa*, 331. According to Ch'oe, Hwang's life was spared because a friend convinced Queen Min and the royal family that Hwang had not been trying to betray the county but simply wanted to show the beautiful sights of Korea to his foreign friends.
advantageous positions such as Pusan. Due to these strict limitations on both the production and transmission of photographs during the colonial period, foreign audiences would have rarely seen any photographic representations of Korea produced by Korean subjects.

The level of foreign audiences' exposure to images of Korea changed drastically in the 1950s. The division of Korea into two separate nation-states in 1945, and more critically the official outbreak of the war between the North and South in 1950, brought an unprecedented level of international attention to the peninsula. Prior to the war, members of the non-communist West encountered few representations of either of the emerging Korean states. In particular, most American citizens claimed little knowledge of North or South Korea before the United States became involved in the war on the peninsula. In a 1951 issue of *LIFE*, its editors wrote that before this point, "Korea was almost unknown to Americans." This was partially due to the fact that the national school curriculum before the 1950s rarely educated its students about Asia outside of the ancient history of China and India. In addition, the few available English-language representations of both Korean states prior to and during the war largely perpetuated common pre-liberation visual narratives of Korean culture as peculiar and undeveloped. This was the case not only in America but also in other countries in the non-communist West. For example, Edgar S. Kennedy, a British soldier sent to the peninsula in 1950, wrote that prior to leaving for Korea, his "only knowledge of the country was derived from a few books and articles, all of which tended to show how quaint the Koreans

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26 Im Ŭngsik, Nae ka kŏrō on Han’guk sadan: Im Ŭngsik hoegorok (Seoul: Nunpit, 1999), 39.
Such representations were prevalent in the American magazine *LIFE*, which portrayed South Koreans as practicing strange traditions and incapable of contributing to the protection and development of their nation-state (see chapter 3).

Therefore, while little attention was paid to South Korea in the non-communist Western world prior to the Korean War, images that these foreign audiences did encounter were heavily influenced by imperialist representations. Predominant images of Korean culture as quaint, primitive, and requiring foreign intervention impacted the ways in which international viewers conceived of North and South Korea. The following chapter will examine how the International Publicity League of Korea, as a group of South Korean citizens, created photobooks intended for a foreign audience in order to respond to such prevailing conceptions of the South Korean nation.

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2. The International Publicity League of Korea: Altering Foreign Perceptions

When Korea was divided in two along the 38th parallel in 1945, a group of artists in Seoul called the International Publicity League of Korea attempted to influence the ways in which foreign audiences perceived of the newly emerging South Korean nation-state. Like colonial period Korean nationalists before them, they were concerned about foreign conceptions of their country, but the Cold War altered the environment in which they had to assert their sovereignty as a nation. Now, the representations they constructed were of a South Korean nation that was in explicit competition with the communist North, as well as independent from the rule of the American occupation forces. Within this context, the IPLK attempted to create representations of South Korea that portrayed the new country as a sovereign nation-state and an indisputable member of the non-communist "free world."30

Although the American military government maintained colonial systems of censorship against publications that were critical of the ruling regime, there was a surge in enthusiasm for the publication of books and magazines on a variety of topics in the southern zone after liberation. Following the evacuation of the Japanese colonial government in August, there were 36 new magazines published in the remaining five months of 1945 and over 1,000 books printed in 1946.31 Publications proliferated despite several obstacles including: a shortage of paper, as South Korea was now cut off from its former sources in the North and Japan; a lack of technical knowledge, because 80% of technicians who had worked at printing presses in Korea before 1945 had been Japanese

30 While the IPLK often refers to the nation-state of South Korea as simply "Korea," this study intends to distinguish between the two states by referring to the country as South Korea when appropriate. 31 Ch'oe, "Haebang cho'gi": 8-9.
residents;\textsuperscript{32} and the maintenance of restrictions on any content that might encourage resentment of the occupying government.\textsuperscript{33}

During this early period of growth in the South Korean publishing industry, a painter named Song Junghoon (1914-?) established a company which he called the International Publicity League of Korea (IPLK). Song had studied Western-style painting in Japan before returning to Seoul in the mid-1930s, where his work was displayed in private exhibitions and published regularly in the newspaper \textit{Chosŏn ilbo}. During the early years of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), he was recruited by the Japanese army and sent to the battlefront in China, where he spent at least a year sketching and painting scenes of the war to serve as propaganda in the metropole and throughout the empire.\textsuperscript{34} It is speculated that Song spent part of the later colonial period in Shanghai, but returned to Korea prior to its division in 1945.\textsuperscript{35}

During the months after liberation, as politicians grappled for power and cities overflowed with homecoming Koreans and refugees, Song recruited painters and news writers in Seoul to work as staff members of the newly established IPLK. According to their later publications, the company was officially founded on August 20th, 1945 - only five days after liberation.\textsuperscript{36} The IPLK's objective was to produce pamphlets, magazines,
books, and other materials that employed photographs as a method of informing South Koreans about local and international news and promoting positive representations of South Korea to international audiences. The group established a headquarters in Seoul where they ran their business operations, and transformed a formerly Japanese-run publication house with a collotype printing press into the "International News Report Printing House." One of the Koreans who had worked on the printing press at this publication house during the colonial period was recruited to join the IPLK as a technician. As the IPLK prepared their first publication in 1945 (Kukchebodo magazine) they also created posters in English and Korean that welcomed American, British, Chinese, and Soviet soldiers as "liberators of Koreans." These posters exemplify the overarching goal of the IPLK to establish amicable relations with potential allies and present South Korea to the world as welcoming and civilized.

The IPLK's First Publication: Kukchebodo

On November 11, 1945, only three months after Korea's liberation, the IPLK published its first official work, a photojournalistic magazine entitled Kukchebodo [International News Report]. The magazine utilized photographs as the primary tool in conveying international and domestic news to its intended South Korean and foreign

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37 Ibid, 14.
38 Kim Hanyong, interview by Ch’oe Pongnim, Han’guk sajinsa kusul p’ŭrokŏn: Charyojip I (Seoul: Han’guk sajinsa munhwa yŏn’gu so, 2010), 31. This may have been Kim Tonghyŏk, who was listed as the photograph editor for Kukchebodo’s first edition and would work with Song on most of the IPLK’s publications, including the Pictorial Korea books, until at least 1968.
39 Kukchebodo’s official English title was “Pictorial Korea.” Note that while this magazine and the IPLK’s later series of books had the same English title, they were separate publications that differed in both content and intended audiences (as Kukchebodo was created for both domestic and foreign readers). They were produced simultaneously until Kukchebodo folded in 1959. To differentiate the two, this study will refer to the magazine as Kukchebodo and the separate series of books as Pictorial Korea.
audience. While photographs had been used as supplements to articles in newspapers in colonial Korea, they had not been the primary medium used to transmit news to their readers. Kukchebodo was South Korea's first photojournalistic publication, and one of only two publications printed during the post-liberation period that focused on photography. The sole other publication dedicated to the subject of photography was a trade magazine intended for professional photographers entitled Photography Culture. Kukchebodo was also distinctive from other publications of the time because it included captions in both Korean and English, and directed its messages towards both South Koreans and English-language foreigners.

The magazine followed a global trend in photography-centric news magazines that had begun in the 1930s with the establishment of publications such as America's LIFE, Japan's Asahi Graph, Britain's Picture Post, France's Vu, and Germany's Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung. The popularity of such publications had been propelled by trends within the photography world and technological innovations in ink, paper, and printing processes. These magazines were indicative of a shift in the editorial styles of many journalistic works, as many publishers perceived of a public demand for brief and

40 Ch'oe, "Haebang Ch'ogi": 8.
41 This magazine published 12 issues from 1948 to 1950, and included discussions of current trends; articles on how to use new kinds of imported chemicals, light bulbs, and paper; and critiques of local photography. See Pak Hyesŏng and Pak Chusŏk, "Han'guk sajin chapchi "Sajinmunhwaw" yŏng'gu: 1948 nyŏn put'o 1950nyŏn kkaji," Han'guk sajinahhoeji AURA 23 (2010). According to photographer Im Úngsik, the magazine ceased publication in 1950 because its editor Yi Tongho was abducted to North Korea during the war. See Im Úngsik, "Korean Camera Circles," Pictorial Korea 1954-1955, ed. Song Chŏng hun [Song Junghoon] (Seoul: International Publicity League of Korea, 1955), 96.
42 There is no evidence that foreign viewers regularly came in contact with the magazine. In comparison, the Pictorial Korea books were read by many foreign viewers, and Song promoted these books (and their condensed versions Glimpse of Korea) to foreigners much more so than Kukchebodo (see chapter 5).
exciting news stories rather than lengthy text-based articles, and also began to consider photography as a tool in the effective conveyance of news to readers.\(^{44}\)

In its early years, photographs of both domestic and international events in *Kukchebodo* were predominantly selected from international news agencies or contributed by the United States Information Service.\(^{45}\) These photographs depicted both political and cultural subjects, such as domestic and international events, local sporting competitions, and the lifestyle and "customs" of South Koreans. The narrative of the magazine was heavily supportive of the American occupation, which is illustrated by the dedication of seventeen pages of its first issue to the display of photographs of South Koreans welcoming the occupying American soldiers.\(^{46}\) The IPLK thus used photographs from foreign organizations to construct narratives that presented South Korea as a unique nation that supported American interests in the region.

The IPLK later began to include domestically produced photographs in its publications, and its fourth issue (released in 1946) was the first magazine in the US-occupied southern zone to include photographs taken by local photographers.\(^{47}\) During the early years of its publication, the magazine did not have an official photographer on staff, and so the few local photographs that it included were submitted by the photography departments of South Korean newspapers.\(^{48}\) While *Kukchebodo* continued to use foreign photographs throughout its publication, there was an increase in the

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\(^{45}\) Kim, *Kusul p’urojet’ù*, 30. Note that the name "United States Information Service" was used overseas while the organization was known as the "United States Information Agency" in the US to differentiate it from the domestic Immigration Services.

\(^{46}\) Ch’oe, "Haebang ch’ogi": 13.

\(^{47}\) Ibid, 14.

\(^{48}\) Ibid.
number of domestic representations of the country after the IPLK hired staff photographer Kim Hanyong in May of 1947. Kim, who was born in 1924 in Pyongyang and spent part of his childhood in Manchuria, had studied photography and printing in the late 1930s at a Japanese-operated technical college in Korea.49 While attending school, he worked as an apprentice at a Japanese printing shop as the only Korean employee.50 When he was hired by the IPLK as their staff photographer, he was tasked with providing images of "local culture" through photographs of South Korean historical sites, local theatre productions and concerts, and art exhibitions, as well as the facilities of local factories.51 He was also sent by editor-in-chief Kim Yŏngju (1920-1995) on errand runs to ask local photographers for permission to print their photographs as part of their section on local South Korean art photography.52 Photographs that were included in these sections of Kukchebodo included those by well-known photographers such as Hyŏn Ilyŏng (1903-1975) and Im Sŏkche (1918-1994). In Kukchebodo magazine, the IPLK therefore founded their method of re-contextualizing photographs from both domestic and international sources as a way to construct images of the world and the nation for its diverse intended audience.

49 Kim, Kusul p’ŭrojekt’ū, 27.
50 Ibid, 29.
51 Ch’oe, "Haebang ch’ogi": 14. Kukchebodo included so many photographs of the inner workings of factories that it was criticized in the photography magazine Photography Culture for misrepresenting South Korea to its foreign readers. See Pak and Pak, "Han’guk sajin chapchi": 109.
52 Kim, Kusul p’ŭrojekt’ū, 39.
Figure 2.1 Kim Hanyong in the International Publicity League of Korea's office.

**Pictorial Korea: Creating South Korea in Photographs for Foreign Readers**

On January 9th, 1950, the IPLK released *Pictorial Korea 1950*, a roughly 250-page book printed on newsprint paper that featured black and white photographs of South Korea's current events, customs, people, fine art, and industry. The book was the first in a series of publications that were released intermittently throughout the years 1950 to 1970 (usually once a year or once every other year), including during the war period. In

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53 There were at least twelve editions published during the period from 1950 to 1970. Although other editions do not list the full names of their editors, the publishing team for *Pictorial Korea 1964* included
contrast to *Kukchebodo*, the *Pictorial Korea* books were directed exclusively towards a foreign audience and most editions were published completely in English. The IPLK also featured primarily South Korean subjects in *Pictorial Korea*, and did not cover foreign news as in *Kukchebodo*. The title of the book reveals the ways in which the editors privileged image over text as the primary medium for the transmitting of representations of South Korea to the world. The term "pictorial" describes a newspaper or other periodical that conveys information mainly through images instead of text. Therefore while captions on photographs and short descriptive articles also contributed to the formation of the IPLK's narrative (see chapter 3), its photographs were presented as the most critical element of their representations of the nation. In addition, its title exemplifies the IPLK's narrative strategies, in which they predominantly referred to South Korea as simply "Korea" in order to present it as the sole sovereign nation-state on the peninsula.

While each edition of the book contained some illustrations, including occasional sketches, paintings, and cartoons, photographs constituted the overwhelming majority of images in *Pictorial Korea*. Like the photographs in *Kukchebodo*, many of the images included in editions of *Pictorial Korea* were culled from the collections of international news agencies and the United States Information Service, as well as the militaries of both South Korea and the United States. Images from these sources were rarely individually

Song Junghoon, Kim Myong-soo [Kim Myŏngsu], Kim Dong-hyok [Kim Tonghyŏk], Chang Kyong-nok [Chang Kyŏngnok], Kim Sung-hae [Kim Sŏnghae], and Shim Bae-un [Sim Paeun]. It is speculated that IPLK staff members Yi Kyŏngmo, Kim Hanyong, and Kim Tonghyŏk were editors on *Pictorial Korea 1953-1954* as the editorial list includes the names K.M Lee, H.Y. Kim, and T.H. Kim.

54 The only edition to include Korean translations of its text is *Pictorial Korea 1950*, which features an introduction in both Korean and English. *Pictorial Korea 1951-1952* includes some transliterated Korean phrases, which indicates that its intended audience was foreigners who would most likely be unable to read the Korean alphabet.
credited to their photographers, and instead their sources were often acknowledged en masse in the opening pages of the books. It is suspected that in some cases, the editors were unaware of the names of the creators of certain photographs. For example, in the case of images taken from military collections, the IPLK editors may have been unable to trace the photographers because when photographs were submitted to the army they often did not retain identifying information.\footnote{Kim Yunjong, *Tak ‘yument ’ōri rosō úi Han ’guk chŏnjaeng sajin* (MA diss., Dongguk University, 2009), in Jung Joon Lee, “Framing the Nation: Nation Building, Resistance, and Democratization in Korean Photography, 1945-2008” (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2012), 70-71.} However, the books also include some images by foreign photographers who had been recognized internationally for their work, such as Max Desfor's *Flight of Refugees Across Wrecked Bridge in Korea* (1950), which won a Pulitzer Prize in 1951.\footnote{This photograph was used in both *Pictorial Korea 1953-1954* and as the cover photograph on the IPLK’s Japanese-language photobook entitled *Three Year History of the Korean War* (1953).} Therefore, while the IPLK often expressed their gratitude to foreign organizations in the opening pages of their books, they chose to refrain from crediting non-South Korean photographers individually in order to de-emphasize the role that foreign images played in constructing their visual narratives.

In contrast, the editors regularly credited images submitted by domestic photographers, which highlighted the ability of South Koreans to produce representations of their nation through modern technology. Some of the photographers whose work was often included within the pages of *Pictorial Korea* included IPLK members such as Kim Hanyong, Song Junghoon and Yi Kyŏngmo, as well as many photographers who were not directly involved in the IPLK, such as Im Ŭngsik, Han Yŏngsu (1933-1999), Yi Hyŏngnok (1917-?), and Ch’oe Minsik (1928-2013). As members of the IPLK were involved in the activities of the photography world at the time, it is suspected that they
personally requested permission to reprint certain photographs in *Pictorial Korea*, as they had for the images used in *Kukchebodo*. The IPLK also placed public calls for photograph submissions to *Pictorial Korea* in the early 1960s in South Korean newspapers. In printing and crediting works by a wide range of South Korean photographers, they illustrated South Korea's familiarity with photographic technology and their ability to create works of art through the use of the camera. This spotlight on South Korean artwork contributed to Song's stated goal of conveying the nation's level of civilization to the world through modern publications.

![Citation for Publication](image)

Figure 2.2. Photograph of Song Junghoon next to a "citation for publication" and an edition of *Pictorial Korea*. In the background there is a poster advertising *Pictorial Korea* to Americans. From *Pictorial Korea* 1961, pg. 197.

57 *Kyŏnghyang sinmun*, February 20, 1920.
58 See Song, "Munhwaundong ūl ŏttŏk’e ch’ujinhalkka."
Although the editors of *Pictorial Korea* briefly acknowledged the contributions of foreign photographers to their constructed visual narrative, they attempted to conceal the role played by Japanese publishers in the creation of their photobooks. It is speculated that the IPLK was forced to outsource the production of at least part of its works to Japan during the early 1950s, due to damage done to South Korean publication facilities during the war and the lack of the ability to print in colour in the country prior to 1961. The majority of the first edition of *Pictorial Korea* appears to have been published at the IPLK’s printing house in Seoul, as the quality of its printing and paper are similar to that used for the domestically produced *Kukchebodo* magazine.\(^5^9\) In addition, the majority of these images are in black and white, except for four colour reproductions of paintings that have been affixed to pages in the book, which corresponds to the limits of printing technology in South Korea during this period. However, it is suspected that this was the only edition printed during the early 1950s in South Korea, because when the war broke out on the Korean peninsula six months after the publication of *Pictorial Korea 1950*, the IPLK was forced to leave behind its facilities and move its headquarters to the southern city of Pusan.

The IPLK was amongst over a million refugees who evacuated from areas of conflict to the relative safety of Pusan, which also served as the provisional capital for the national government during the war. The IPLK established a branch office there where they compiled their first wartime publication, a 15 page work entitled *Glimpses of Korea 1951*, which resembled a condensed version of *Pictorial Korea* in its content and

\(^{59}\) This affected the printing of the first edition, as many photographs were dark and indecipherable. A contemporary reviewer blamed this on the quality of available printing equipment. See *Kyŏnghyang sinmun*, January 12, 1950.
intended audience. The IPLK also compiled the second edition of *Pictorial Korea* in June of 1952 from its headquarters in Pusan. However, in his introduction to this edition, Song writes that both the printing facilities and equipment needed to produce photographs were not available at the time in South Korea due to the conditions of the war. Despite this situation, the publications produced by the IPLK during this period show a considerable improvement in the quality of paper and printing, and an increase in the number of colour photographs.

It is considered therefore that at least part of these works was produced outside of South Korea. This supposition is supported by a story told by Kim Hanyong, who recounts how Song Junghoon presented President Rhee Syngman with a copy of *Pictorial Korea* at some point during the early 1950s. According to Kim, Rhee was delighted by the publication, but infuriated when he was told that the book had been printed in Japan due to a lack of appropriate facilities in South Korea. Rhee thus announced that the government would give money to Song so that the IPLK could produce the books in South Korea "with Korean hands." This story supports two speculations: first, that wartime issues of *Pictorial Korea* and the IPLK's other works were at least partially produced in Japan, and second, that Rhee personally instructed the industrial development bank to loan the IPLK foreign currency so that they could import a new printing press.

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60 This work became one of the IPLK's annual publications, and occasionally featured pages copied directly from the previous year's edition of *Pictorial Korea*. Later editions of this book were entitled *Glimpse of Korea*.
As most of South Korea's publication facilities and printing presses were destroyed during the war,\textsuperscript{63} when the members of the IPLK returned to Seoul along with the national government, it is probable that they discovered that their printing presses had been damaged. The loan of foreign currency that they received from Rhee's government allowed them to import German-made printing presses through an American brokerage company,\textsuperscript{64} which the IPLK used to establish their own printing company entitled "The International Printing Co. Ltd." (figure 2.3). In addition to the production of their own publications, they used the presses to print reproductions of works of art, magazines for other publishers, and campaign materials for political parties.\textsuperscript{65} However, their printing business was restricted during the 1950s, as there were no South Korean technicians who had been trained in colour printing. According to Kim, when a South Korean technician returned from time spent in Germany learning how to operate German colour printing presses in 1961, technicians at other South Korean printing companies were also able to learn how to produce publications in colour.\textsuperscript{66} The resumption of the creation of regular issues of \textit{Pictorial Korea} in 1961, after a four-year break from 1958 to 1961, coincided with this development.\textsuperscript{67} In this year, the IPLK also produced a collection of colour photographs of South Korea entitled \textit{Korea All in Natural Color}. Starting in 1964, editions of \textit{Pictorial Korea} often included text that stated that they had been "Printed in


\textsuperscript{64} The company was called "Karomar Corp. Inc." and specialized in brokering purchases of European manufacturing goods for foreign companies. See advertisement in \textit{Pictorial Korea 1954-1955}.

\textsuperscript{65} Tonga ilbo, March 25, 1959.

\textsuperscript{66} Kim, \textit{Kusul p’urojekt’u}, 110-111.

\textsuperscript{67} The IPLK did produce a publication in 1958 entitled \textit{Pictorial Korea 1948-1958: 10 Years of Korean History Seen Through Photographs}. However while, like \textit{Kukchebodo}, it shared the same name as \textit{Pictorial Korea}, it did not follow the same format as the regular series. It was instead a collection of photographs of political events placed in chronological order.
Korea." These sudden changes in the IPLK's publications and the decision to include this note in later editions of the books substantiates the theory that until 1961, at least parts of *Pictorial Korea* had been temporarily printed in Japan.

![Advertisement](image)

Figure 2.3. Advertisement for The International Printing Co. Ltd. From *Pictorial Korea 1961*, pg. 144.

**The IPLK's Works as State Propaganda**

*Kukchebodo* and *Pictorial Korea* were published regularly throughout the US-occupation period and the years of Rhee's government, most likely because they avoided censorship due to their pro-state messages. Censorship in the southern zone of Korea had
been maintained following liberation, which restricted the content of images that could be published in local magazines and other periodicals. General John R. Hodge had promised Koreans unlimited freedom of the press and the complete removal of Japanese colonial systems of censorship after liberation.\(^ {68} \) However, the American occupation forces continued to censor criticism of the ruling regime.\(^ {69} \) According to Ch'oe Injin, the publication of any periodicals required approval from the military government, ostensibly due to paper shortages. Ch'oe argues that this created an environment in the printing world that resembled the early colonial period.\(^ {70} \) Despite this, the IPLK continued to print its magazines regularly, and also produced photographic pamphlets in 1946 that called for "peace" in Korea and its independence as a sovereign nation.\(^ {71} \) Kim Hanyong does note that the IPLK's publications were occasionally censored by the military's news bureau. For example, they were prevented from including gruesome images of the suppression of local rebellions in 1948, such as the decapitated head of a rebel leader.\(^ {72} \) Overall, however, their pro-regime messages appear to have enabled them to continue to publish regularly.

After the Republic of Korea was established in 1948, Rhee maintained censorship of the publication of any materials that criticized the government or did not comply with anticommmunist discourse.\(^ {73} \) This control over the works created by the press was


\(^ {69} \) Glade, "Occupied liberation."

\(^ {70} \) Ch’oe, "Haebang ch’ogi": 9-10.

\(^ {71} \) These pamphlets were entitled "Aspiration for Peace" (1946) and "Road to Korean Independence" (1946).

\(^ {72} \) Kim, *Kusul p’urojekt’u*, 35-36.

\(^ {73} \) Chang, "Ideology to Interest": 251-252.
heightened in 1955 prior to the 1956 election. While working within conditions of censorship and control under the rule of the US occupation and later President Rhee, the IPLK were generally highly supportive of the ruling government. For example, a sketched portrait of General Hodge was featured on the front page of an issue of *Kukchebodo* published in August of 1946, and editions of *Pictorial Korea* each included a full-page portrait photograph of President Rhee or Park in their opening pages. The IPLK also produced a special propaganda volume in 1955 entitled *Our President*, which was a collection of images of Rhee taking part in official events and inspecting the nation's industries and infrastructure. Thus while Kim's testimony reveals that the IPLK was occasionally restricted in its content due to censorship by the US-occupation government, the content of the IPLK's works commonly resembled state propaganda in their level of support for the ruling regime. Therefore their visual narratives were not heavily impacted by the maintenance of state control of the media.

**Financing Domestic Publications by Distributing American Magazines**

Although the IPLK acquired revenue through the activities of its printing company, the sale of its works, and advertising space in its publications, the publication of *Kukchebodo* and *Pictorial Korea* was mainly subsidized by their distribution of American magazines such as *LIFE* within South Korea. There is no evidence that any of the IPLK’s publications were directly subsidized by the South Korean or American government (outside of their foreign currency loan), or organizations such as the United States Information Service, which supported the production of other South Korean publications.

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publications at the time. The sale of American magazines in South Korea therefore was a critical source of income for the IPLK throughout the 1950s. The IPLK had been importing magazines produced by the company TIME-LIFE Inc. (the publishers of Time and the news photography magazine LIFE) since before the outbreak of war in 1950, and in the 1950s it was given exclusive permission by the South Korean government to continue to import and distribute magazines such as LIFE's international edition. Those in South Korea who lived outside of Seoul found it difficult to find such magazines for purchase, but a subscription to the IPLK's magazine service meant they could have the magazine sent to their homes every week. Even during the war, the IPLK continued to distribute magazines to readers within South Korea. This persisted throughout the 1950s, as the IPLK promoted subscriptions to its services by marketing the magazines to South Koreans as ideal for leisurely reading at the beach or in the mountains, while also claiming that they were read by intellectuals all over the world. The IPLK thus funded the production of its own publications by selling American magazines to South Koreans as the means of enjoying a leisurely, bourgeois lifestyle of relaxation, entertainment, and intellectual pursuits.

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75 See Brazinsky, Nation Building, 51-53 for a history of the American support of South Korean journals such as Sasanggye.
76 Kim, Kusul p’urojekt’u, 33.
77 The first mention of their subscription service can be found in the Kyōnghyang sinmun, November 25, 1948.
78 During this period, the importation of any foreign periodicals had to be approved by the government. In 1957, the government approved the importation of only 82 foreign periodicals, including 54 from Japan and a mere 20 from the United States. See Republic of Korea, Office of Information and Research, Korean Report: Reports from the Cabinet Ministries of the Republic of Korea Vol. 5 (1957) (Washington DC: Korean Pacific Press, 1958), 215.
80 Kim, Kusul p’urojekt’u, 41.
81 Kyōnghyang sinmun, August 3, 1956.
In spite of the revenue accumulated from the sale of foreign magazines within South Korea, the IPLK suffered from financial issues throughout its operation. As stated by Kim, the company struggled to acquire its imported German printing presses in the mid-1950s because it lacked the funds to pay customs fees, which left the presses in the government's customs facilities in Pusan for a number of years. The IPLK's bilingual and photojournalistic magazine *Kukchebodo* was never profitable as they were rarely purchased by South Koreans and could not secure many advertisers. The company was thus forced to cease publication in 1959. While they briefly published another photojournalistic magazine entitled *Visual News (Ponūn nyusū)*, it appears to have been cancelled after only four issues in 1960. Although the IPLK had received a loan from the government in the immediate postwar period, they were not able to repay it. In 1966, this placed the company in danger of being sold at auction. By 1970, the year in which the company ceased its publications, the IPLK was stated to have owed the South Korean government 880,000 won. Meanwhile, although copies of *Pictorial Korea* were sold to distribution companies in Japan and the United States, and while it was available for purchase in both South Korea and foreign countries, Song gave thousands of editions for

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83 Kim Hanyong, interview by Im Yŏnggyun, *Sajin’ga wa ūi taehwa* 3, 32.

84 See mentions of the release of these issues in *Kyŏnghyang sinmun*, June 16, 1960; June 19, 1960; and July 5, 1960.

85 See the inclusion of the IPLK on lists of companies with outstanding foreign currency debt in *Tonga ilbo*, September 1, 1957; *Kyŏnghyang sinmun*, July 5, 1958; *Maeil gyŏngje*, July 22, 1966; *Maeil gyŏngje*, May 29, 1970.


free directly to the IPLK's intended audience (see chapter 5). It is speculated therefore that the publication of these works was not profitable, which may have led to the dissolution of the company in 1970.

One might therefore question why Song Junghoon and the members of the IPLK continued to produce these publications despite the company's debt and the apparent lack of profitability of the venture. Song may have envisioned that once South Korea developed stronger economic ties with the non-communist world, materials that could inform an eager foreign audience about the country would be in high demand and the IPLK would be able to sell its works at a profit. However, this does not appear to be the sole motivating factor in Song's decision to maintain the publication of works such as *Pictorial Korea*. As previously mentioned, while the books were sold in stores and by subscription, he also donated many copies to ensure that they reached their intended audience. In addition, Song's prefaces to each edition of *Pictorial Korea* reveal his concern about the ways in which South Korea was being conveyed in foreign media, and his personal dedication to countering images that he perceived as misrepresentations of the nation. The next chapter will address this issue as it argues that Song and the editors of the IPLK used photobooks as a critique of foreign representations of South Korea and a way to construct and represent a "correct" image of the nation to its international audience.
3. Imagining a Sovereign Nation: *Pictorial Korea's* Critique of *LIFE*

In the opening pages of the first edition of *Pictorial Korea*, published in January 1950, the editors of the International Publicity League of Korea describe South Korea as a country that had been "long ignored and misinterpreted by others." According to their statement, their reason for publishing *Pictorial Korea* was thus "to give the outside world an outline conception of Korea at a glance in pictures and skeleton written materials so as to correct all misunderstandings concerning her."\(^8^8\) Song and his editorial team therefore set out to present the world with an image of South Korea that more accurately corresponded to their own visions of the nation. The fuel for this project was their concern about the images that foreign audiences had previously encountered in other forms of media. One such publication that was viewed by a substantial number of both foreign and South Korean readers was the American magazine *LIFE*. Both *Pictorial Korea* and *LIFE* were pictorial publications produced in the 1950s that supported their respective states during a time when South Korea and the United States were working together to protect the nation and enable its recovery from the war, although each were doing so for their own national goals. However, while *Pictorial Korea* was largely supportive of the United States and its interests on the peninsula, it constructed its visual narratives as a critique of those found in *LIFE*. This was accomplished by portraying the simultaneity of tradition and modernity in South Korea, and by highlighting the role of South Koreans in their nation's defense and redevelopment. This illustrates some of the

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\(^8^8\) International Publicity League of Korea, *Pictorial Korea 1950* (Seoul: International Publicity League of Korea, 1950). Note that while this study also includes an examination of the IPLK's other regular publication *Glimpse of Korea*, it uses "*Pictorial Korea*" to refer to both publications. This is because the two publications are similar, they were directed towards the same intended audience, and *Glimpse of Korea* occasionally featured pages directly duplicated from *Pictorial Korea*. 
tensions of the Cold War, as *Pictorial Korea* attempted to present South Korea as both the rightful inheritor of Korean historical tradition (in competition with North Korea), and a sovereign, non-communist nation-state that was independent from America. This chapter seeks to elucidate the nature of this critique by examining the ways in which *Pictorial Korea* constructed images of the South Korean nation to correct what they perceived to be misrepresentations in foreign media.

In examining the visual narratives produced by the International Publicity League of Korea and *LIFE*, this study does not aim to judge the veracity of images of South Korea or their ability to represent an authentic South Korean nation. In contrast, the concept of a "nation" of South Korea is actually constructed by the visual narratives produced within these works. Benedict Anderson has described the modern nation-state as an "imagined community" of individuals who perceive of themselves as members of a sovereign, limited, and homogeneous group.\(^{89}\) While the IPLK's English-language *Pictorial Korea* books were not created for a South Korean audience, the editors of these publications created images of the nation for foreigners through their compilation of domestic and international photographs. It is important to note that not all South Koreans would have agreed with the IPLK's visual constructions of the nation, as they represented only a small portion of the population (as most staff members were male, relatively wealthy, and lived in Seoul). Their portrayals of the nation were also not necessarily representative of their own individual conceptions of South Korea, because they were propagandistic works for an international audience that purposely eschewed most negative images in order to present South Korea in a more positive light. Therefore the

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representations of South Korea in *Pictorial Korea* must be understood not as true or false depictions of an "authentic" nation-state. Instead, they were the constructions of a group of specific individuals that were utilized in an attempt to achieve certain goals.

In addition, the process of imagining a South Korean nation in the 1950s was complicated by the fact that the country was created in perpetual competition with North Korea. As both South and North Korea struggled to emerge as the victor in the battle over which government would unify and control the peninsula, South Korea appeared to many observers to be the country most likely to collapse. A major element in the construction of the South Korean nation in *Pictorial Korea* was thus representing North Korea as an enemy, communist nation-state in order to gain international support for the South Korean regime instead of its rival in the North. The imagined community of South Korea that was created within the pages of *Pictorial Korea* was therefore contingent upon the political context of the Cold War.

In the process of constructing the nation through images, the visual narratives created by the IPLK worked in dialogue with existing representations of South Korea that had been produced by various domestic and international forces. It is suspected that the editorial team had been exposed to images from both North and South Korean media, as well as various foreign representations of the country such as those in photojournalistic magazines from Japan, the United States, England, France, Germany, and other countries. In particular, this study examines the ways in which the IPLK's visual narratives responded to those in the American magazine *LIFE* because of the company's unique link with this publication.
*LIFE* was a critical influence on the construction of images of the world for American readers in the mid-20th century. It was published during the global peak of popularity of photojournalistic magazines, and was the first American magazine of its kind to achieve wide national readership, which it enjoyed until the 1960s. The creator of *LIFE*, Henry R. Luce, established the magazine because he believed that if photographs were "appropriately viewed and properly mastered," they could be used to control public opinion and create a stable, disciplined, and united modern middle-class America. For the American reader, however, a significant part of the attraction of *LIFE* was the ability to travel throughout the country and the world from the comfort of their own home. According to James Guimond, while reading *LIFE*, Americans "could indeed believe the camera was a magic eye enabling them to imagine they were seeing and conquering the world." As South Korea became a matter of concern for American readers during the US occupation and the Korean war, *LIFE*’s coverage of South Korea both informed its readers about the events unfolding in the peninsula and allowed them to imagine the region as enveloped within an American domain of control.

In addition to being a crucial source of funds for the IPLK during the 1950s, *LIFE* was also a personal influence on its editors and photographers. The issues of *LIFE* that were distributed by the IPLK were special biweekly editions entitled *LIFE International*, which presented the content of the original issues of *LIFE* from a global perspective and did not focus on stories taking place in America. However, South Koreans also had

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access to the original version of *LIFE*, as is evidenced by a photograph in *Pictorial Korea 1954-1955*, in which a model is posing while looking at a copy of the July 11, 1949 issue of the American domestic version of *LIFE* (figure 3.1). According to Kim, South Korean photographers often used *LIFE* as an educational tool through which to learn photographic techniques. He personally read the magazine while taking notes on the composition and arrangement of its photographs, and claimed that it greatly influenced his own work.⁹³ In addition, IPLK member Yi Kyŏngmo has stated that the first time he read *LIFE*, he came to understand the contemporary international trends that Song had been attempting to emulate in their pictorial news magazine *Kukchebodo*.⁹⁴ Although it is unknown how many South Koreans were reading *LIFE* after liberation and during the 1950s, it was clearly widely encountered by local photographers. The representations of South Korea that were included in *LIFE* were therefore part of the world of images that Song and his team had been exposed to and thus were attempting to amend within their own works.

⁹⁴ Yi Kyŏngmo in *Sajinga wa ū taehwa* 3, 52.
Figure 3.1. Choi Ki Bok [Ch'oe Kibok], *By a Fountain*. From *Pictorial Korea 1951-1952*, pg. 127.

This study does not intend to claim that the IPLK's works successfully replaced *LIFE's* images with their own and thus transformed the ways in which foreign audiences perceived of South Korea. Due to unequal relationships of power that allowed the "Occident" to produce and control knowledge about the "Orient," international images of South Korea were to a great extent dominated by representations produced by the West,
such as those in *LIFE*. Yet the works of the IPLK illustrate the ability of South Koreans to contribute to the image world by working in dialogue with prevalent Western representations. Thus although the IPLK was not able to invalidate the images of South Korea that were presented in *LIFE*, it managed a critique of the magazines that inserted their own visual narratives into the broader realm of the image world.

**Image, Text, and Design**

Before engaging in an examination of the constructions of South Korea in *LIFE* and *Pictorial Korea*, a discussion of the relationship between photographs and text is required. While both *LIFE* and *Pictorial Korea* primarily used photographs to create their representations of South Korea, they both also employed captions in an attempt to control the ways in which a viewer might interpret their images. Theorists have argued that signs such as photographic images are arbitrary and do not have a fixed meaning; instead, their meaning for each viewer is interpreted within the context of viewing. This context is particularly influential in the case of photojournalistic works, because, as Caroline Brothers has written, "headings, captions, associated texts, adjacent images, the character of the publication itself and representations encountered elsewhere all help determine a specific reading." For Susan Sontag, the most critical element of this context is the photograph's accompanying text, as "all photographs wait to be explained or falsified by

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95 See Said's influential work entitled *Orientalism* (1978) on the relationship between power and knowledge production.
their captions." Due to the material form of photobooks and photomagazines, editors are able to combine images with text within their visual narratives in order to affix certain meanings. Roland Barthes has termed this attachment of caption to image as an "anchorage" of meaning, because the viewer is guided to interpret the image in certain ways through the use of accompanying text and surrounding context. In turn, the combination of image and text can create a "relay," as the two substantiate each other’s claims and create a unified message. This relay is also created by the combination of photographs together within one context, such as in a photomagazine or photobook, where the arrangement of images within groups contributes to the formation of certain narratives. As will be discussed later, these works do not always successfully achieve the anchorage and relay of intended messages. However, despite these occasional disruptions, viewers of publications like LIFE and Pictorial Korea encounter photographs within a controlled context that impacts how they are viewed.

In addition, the design and presentation of photographs in these works influences the ways in which viewers interpret these images. Although the Pictorial Korea books were part of a global trend of creating photography-focused publications that presented nation-states as homogeneous imagined communities, their relatively simple design underlined the truth claims of their images. Such national photobooks were most often produced in Europe, America, and Japan, but photobooks that constructed a "nation" through images were also produced in South and Central America in the 1930s.

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100 Ibid, 41.
were many examples of national photobooks produced contemporaneously in other countries from the 1930s to 1950s in which the editors used innovative graphic design techniques to create dynamic representations of a country or region. For example, photobooks being produced in Germany, the Soviet Union, France, and Japan during the mid-20th century used Bauhaus-inspired editing techniques to create a "cinematic montage" of images of the nation with stunning collages of overlaid images that had been manipulated and often incorporated with other forms of media.\textsuperscript{102} In contrast, in the IPLK’s publications, photographs are usually arranged in a straightforward manner in pairs or in groups, and most often are surrounded by blank white space and supplemented underneath with short captions.\textsuperscript{103} This is similar to the editorial style of \textit{LIFE}, in which photographs are placed in aesthetically pleasing arrangements but maintain straight edges and are not edited into elaborate montages. Unlike the Bauhaus-inspired trends in graphic design of the time, such simple styles of editing create the illusion that photographs have not been manipulated or edited in post-production, and instead underline the claim to objectivity inherent in photography by representing images as though they have not been influenced by the bias of a photographer or editor. The design format of both \textit{LIFE} and \textit{Pictorial Korea} therefore corroborates their claims of portraying the truth about South Korea to their audiences.

Finally, the presentation of images with or without the attributions of the involvement of individual photographers in their creation also affects the ways in which...
viewers interpret their objectivity. In *Pictorial Korea*, often the only photographs that were credited to their artists were those that had been produced by domestic artists and were included in their "Photo Salon" sections. Krista Thompson has written in her study of Caribbean picture postcard photobooks that combining images in such collections that do not name individual photographers "reveals a seemingly collective, impartial, and transparent visual record."\(^{104}\) The IPLK’s strategy of keeping photographers anonymous outside of its art photography sections thus effectively concealed the role of foreign photographers in the production of the editors' imagined South Korean nation, while also underlining the objectivity of the images by erasing traces of human bias in their construction. Similarly, *LIFE* also chose to discourage readers from considering the bias inherent in the creation of its images by crediting photographers together on a separate page in the opening section of its magazines. Distancing the names of photographers from their images promoted conceptions of the images as impartial records. The photobook and photomagazine formats thus allowed the editors of these publications to anchor images with text, arrange them into visual narratives, and present them as objective representations of reality.

**Images of South Korea in *LIFE*: America as a Guide in Modernization**

As *LIFE* prioritized subjects that were of current relevance to the American reader, there were no photographs of Korea included in its issues until 1944.\(^{105}\) The first

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\(^{105}\) As discussed previously, South Korean readers had access to both the original and international version of *LIFE*. Thus study analyzes the original American version.
photographs of Korea in *LIFE* appeared in September of that year, when the then-colony was promised by members of the Allied Powers at the Cairo Conference that it would receive independence "in due course."\(^{106}\) In anticipation of their readers' curiosity about this previously unfamiliar country, *LIFE* introduced Korea in an article entitled "KOREA - United Nations Promise Independence to Country Which Observes a National Humiliation Day."\(^{107}\) It appears that a shortage of representations of Korea had left many Americans curious since Korea appeared more frequently in the news when the fall of the Japanese empire in Asia seemed increasingly probable. This first article served to fulfil a perceived desire for knowledge about this foreign country and its people.

The 1944 photo essay in *LIFE* presented Korea as a peculiar nation that was both undeveloped and weak. It thus maintained the visual narratives that had been disseminated by the Japanese colonial government, while replacing Japan with the United States as the potential modernizing force in the region. Its first images were shot in an ethnographic-style mode, in which so-called typical Korean objects (such as rubber shoes and a horsehair hat) were removed from their contexts and photographed on white backdrops. Other photographs depict various practices that appeared abnormal to *LIFE*'s editors: an elderly man in unfamiliar costume, women washing their all-white laundry with burned millet straw as soap, a Korean wedding party, a man sleeping on a wooden floor, and girls entertaining guests at a dinner. The photographs rarely feature subjects who appear aware of the camera, which portrays Koreans as unfamiliar with the modern photographic process that is occurring. It also fosters a belief in the objectivity of the

\(^{106}\) "KOREA - United Nations Promise Independence to Country Which Observes a National Humiliation Day," *LIFE* 17 no. 10, September 4, 1944, 63.

\(^{107}\) Ibid, 63-68.
representations, as the camera and photographer appear invisible in the process of recording the moment. These black-and-white photographs are juxtaposed on many pages with colour advertisements for various American products (such as cars and dog food), which promotes the interpretation that unlike America, which is in a constant process of development and progress, Korea is in permanent stasis. In the second half of the 1940s, *LIFE* maintained such representations in its photographs of the newly formed South Korean nation. For example, it portrayed the island of Cheju-do as a backwards world where women divers work while their husbands take care of the children. Such images presented both colonial Korea and post-liberation South Korea as a nation of irrational customs that remained incomprehensible to the modern American.

Throughout the war, as the Korean peninsula became a more popular subject in *LIFE*, similar photographs and articles highlighted the strange lifestyles and quirks of South Koreans. For example, in the July 22nd, 1950 issue, the nation of South Korea (which had become suddenly relevant to America only a month before) was introduced to readers through images of their peculiar and amusing customs. These included photographs of open-air barbershops, young girls jumping on seesaws, traffic cops that seemed to dance in the street, and the constant source of *LIFE*'s curiosity - the interminable laundry duties of South Korean women. Such entertaining representations figured South Korea as benign and friendly, and encouraged readers to accept the country

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108 The text of this article notes that the only thing that has changed in Korea since 1400 is its name and the fact they have stopped burying the elderly alive. See ibid, 63.

109 William P. Gray, "Island of Amazons," *LIFE* 21, no. 4, July 22 1946, 10.

110 The most confounding of these being the claim that South Koreans like Western sports but also enjoy "joyous stone fights" - "a game in which one team throws rocks at another." See "What's Going On In Korea?"*LIFE* 38 no.16, April 18 1955, 181-182.

111 "KOREA: This Strange Land Has Bracing Climate and Depressing Proverbs," *LIFE* 20 no. 2, July 10, 1950, 78.
as an ally of America. In doing so, *LIFE* supported the intervention of the US in South Korea as a project of helping an allied nation that was in need of American guidance.

Another symbol of South Korea that was ubiquitous in *LIFE*’s coverage of the Korean conflict was an image of an elderly man in white robes with a horsehair hat, long beard, and walking stick. For example, a special issue on Asia published in December of 1951 included an illustrated map of the region in which each country was represented by a single sketched figure. While other countries were symbolized by figures of warriors or seductive beauties, the editors chose to place a drawing of an elderly man hunched over a walking stick over the Korean peninsula. The choice to use one figure to represent both North and South Korea is indicative of the expectation at the time that the side that won the war would unite Korea as a nation that shared a traditional culture. Critically, their symbol for Korea (which included South Korea) depicted the country as feeble and harmless by connecting it to a traditional past from which it had not yet progressed. This indicates the attitude of the United States towards the allied South Korean nation, and also shows how even North Koreans were presented as harmless pawns of the communist forces. Overall, *LIFE* depicted Koreans as amusingly baffling and pitifully weak, and therefore a harmless nation that was in need of American military and economic aid in order to defend themselves and the world from the further encroachment of communism.

**Constructing National Sovereignty in Pictorial Korea**

In comparison to *LIFE*’s brief articles about the nation, the International Publicity League of Korea visualized South Korea through much lengthier works that were capable of portraying the nation as complex and often contradictory. Unlike *LIFE*, the IPLK did
not attempt to utilize a journalistic photo essay format in its works for foreign audiences, and instead divided its photographs into sections based on broad themes. These sections were not formatted as concise narratives like the articles in "LIFE" because the IPLK was not attempting to create a news magazine that would update its readers biweekly on current events. In contrast, they attempted to create an updated, comprehensive 200 to 250-page volume of images of South Korea every year. While the content of each edition of "Pictorial Korea" in the 1950s differed depending on the events of the time, they rarely deviated from a format in which photographs were presented in chapters. These chapters often included: official events with political significance that featured South Koreans interacting with foreign dignitaries and representatives from the military; citizens participating in domestic and international events; a fine art section that featured reproductions of domestic paintings, photographs of dance and theatre performances, and still captures from South Korean films; an exhibition-style section called a "Photo Salon" that featured art photography (see chapter 4); and a text-centric history, identical in most editions throughout the 1950s, that traced the country's origins back to the mythic creation story of Tan'gun.

This presentation of photographs within a large collected work enabled the IPLK to construct a South Korea that was an amalgam of diverse images. In Paul Melo e Castro's study of a 1960s photobook of Lisbon, he argues that the arrangement of still-images in photobooks creates a "concise world" (borrowing the term from photographer John Gossage) that exists only within its pages.\(^\text{112}\) The format of photobooks thus allows

even seemingly contradictory photographs to be arranged together to form a complex whole because their inclusion within the same publication constructs the illusion that they share a common link. For example, photographs of rural and urban spaces, representative of traditional and modern culture respectively, are presented as existing together in harmony within the pages of *Pictorial Korea*. A two-page spread of such a composition can be found in *Pictorial Korea 1954-1955*, which includes photographs of four very different landscapes that are all claimed to be representative of South Korea: a crowd of people on docks by the sea, a cow in a field, and two night-time cityscapes (figure 3.2). While the former two photographs are rural scenes that depict traditional lifestyles and countryside tranquility, the two latter photographs are long-exposure shots that capture the lights of transportation and electricity, and thus the traces of a mass of urban citizens travelling through the city. In particular, one photograph portrays a historical building surrounded by radiant streams of electric light, which renders South Korean urban space as simultaneously constituted by symbols of tradition and modernity. Together, these photographs are combined to create a broader image of a diverse but connected national South Korean landscape.
The elderly men in white robes and horsehair hats that were the main symbols in *LIFE*'s representations are included as part of the IPLK's South Korea, and figured as representative of the South Korean maintenance of historical traditions. The conception of a national South Korean tradition in *Pictorial Korea* linked citizens by their claimed shared history and origin, and portrayed the national landscape as a geographic space in which these traditions were sustained. As Bhabha has noted, this idea of shared origin and landscapes is a crucial part of the construction of imagined national communities.\(^\text{113}\)

Yet these images are portrayed as only one element of a dynamic culture that included

modern cityscapes, burgeoning industries, competitive international sports, state-of-the-art schools, and a world of high culture and the arts. For example, images of labour practices are juxtaposed in *Pictorial Korea* in order to highlight the concurrent tradition and modernity of the country. Women hanging out seaweed and squid to dry on beaches are included along with photographs of female factory workers working at massive looms in a textile factory or inspecting silk reels that are laid out in lines on factory shelves.\(^{114}\)

Within the pages of *Pictorial Korea*, therefore, the editors present a variety of images that form an amalgam of the traditional and modern in order to portray South Korea as both simultaneously developed and historically rooted in a unique ethnic tradition.

Single photographs within these books also present a similar image of the modern and traditional existing in unison. In these images, urban spaces are shown as combining elements of the country's unique history with figures that might be more recognizable to foreign audiences as symbols of modern urban life. For example, a photograph in *Pictorial Korea 1956-1957* shows men in dark suits walking on a sidewalk between modern cars and an old historic stone wall, presenting an amalgam of symbols of modernity and tradition (figure 3.3). The angle of the photograph, taken from above and looking down upon the scene, is also reminiscent of global aesthetic trends and therefore underlines the level of modernity in South Korea. Similarly, other photographs show city scenes in which bustling groups of pedestrians, including men in suits with briefcases and women in white dress carrying bundles on their heads, are portrayed against a backdrop of large colonial-style and historical buildings.\(^{115}\)

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\(^{115}\) Ibid, 131.
unique traditional culture in South Korea that was rooted in history, while also illustrating how it was similar to other developed members of the non-communist world.

Figure 3.3. Lee An Soon [Yi Ansun], A snapshot on the Sokong-dong street. From Pictorial Korea 1956-1957, 143.

The Infinitely Replicated South Korean Subject in Pictorial Korea

A critical factor in the construction of an imagined homogeneous South Korean nation in Pictorial Korea is the lack of individual identity ascribed to most subjects of its images. The only South Koreans who are named within these works are officials or local celebrities such as dancers or actresses, which portrays other subjects as metonyms for a greater South Korean whole. As Leonard Folgarait has written about the subjects of photographs that constructed a Mexican nation in the early 20th century, "they are mere representations, ephemeral beings that have been conjured up by a society in need of
some organizing purpose, existing as the imaginary cross section of a cohesive nation.\textsuperscript{116}

Therefore the viewer is encouraged to imagine a nameless farmer walking in a field with an ox, or a group of children playing in a pond, as representative of a multitude of South Koreans who exist outside the pages of these photobooks. In these cases, the purposeful absence of anchoring text enables the open-ended interpretation of the identity of the photographic subject, and in doing so encourages the viewer to construct an image of a cohesive South Korean national population.

Images of women within \textit{Pictorial Korea} particularly exemplify the ways in which individual subjects are used to represent a culturally cohesive South Korean population, despite the portrayed diversity of their roles in society. While tropes of the elderly man in white robes that are pervasive in \textit{LIFE} are reproduced as part of \textit{Pictorial Korea}'s imagined South Korea, the IPLK's preferred symbol of South Korean culture was conversely a young woman wearing a brightly coloured dress called a \textit{hanbok}. Such images were most often used on the covers of the IPLK's publications that were sent to foreign audiences. Similar photographs had been produced by Japanese residents during the colonial period, in which Korean women in \textit{hanbok} were labeled as \textit{kisaeng} (dancing girls) and portrayed as illustrative of a unique Korean culture and tradition.\textsuperscript{117} This "Orientalized" the Korean population in order to position Japan as modern and capable of producing knowledge about less developed nations. As in photographs produced by the Japanese in the early colonial period, women in \textit{hanbok} in \textit{Pictorial Korea} are depicted


\textsuperscript{117} Yi Kyŏngmin, \textit{Kisaeng ŭn ŏttŏk’e mandŭrojuŏnŭnga} (Seoul: Sajin ak’aibŭ yŏn’guso, 2005).
as representative of South Korean women in general.\textsuperscript{118} For example, the woman depicted on the cover of \textit{Glimpse of Korea 1953} is described as "a typical Korean young lady" (see figure 3.4).

According to Kim, images of women in \textit{hanbok} were used in South Korean promotional materials because \textit{hanbok} were perceived to be a unique aspect of Korean culture. When asked why these images were so prevalent in promotional materials of the time, Kim answered, "When we talked about things to be sent abroad, we said we should definitely use \textit{hanbok} - since it's about Korea, we couldn't put Western clothes on the models to present Korea, could we? So they wore a \textit{hanbok}, and a \textit{jokduri}, and we created something that was Korean."\textsuperscript{119} For Kim, the presence of the \textit{hanbok} in the photograph turned what might otherwise have been seen as a universal figure into a specifically South Korean image. Such perceived historical traditions are not inherent elements of a particular society but are instead inventions that serve as a method for nation-states to claim ethnic similarities and therefore justify sovereignty.\textsuperscript{120} Kim's perspective on the creation of these images illustrates how images within \textit{Pictorial Korea} and similar publications both responded to and perpetuated existing conceptions of South Korean tradition, thus allowing them to present the nation as maintaining a cohesive historical Korean culture. This additionally positioned South Korea against the North by claiming that it was managing to conserve and maintain Korean history, and thus was the sole legitimate Korean nation-state on the peninsula.

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{119} A \textit{jokduri} is a hairpiece sometimes worn in some ceremonies such as weddings. Quote in Kim, \textit{Kusul p’urojekt’u}, 132. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are the author's own.
\textsuperscript{120} Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, \textit{The Invention of Tradition} (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
Although these women are the IPLK's primary symbol of South Korea's inheritance of "Korean" culture and sovereignty, the inner pages of its publications portray a more varied and heterogeneous presentation of female members of the nation. Similar to the previously described combination of modernity and tradition in South
Korean landscapes, women simultaneously represent South Korea's link to a historical past as well as to its modern projects of economic development and national security. Within the pages of these books, women are shown in images playing a variety of different roles such as factory workers, farmers, actresses, poets, and soldiers. These representations of women in varied positions in society are juxtaposed with images of women engaging in roles that are linked to a perceived traditional culture. For example, next to two photographs of policewomen in uniform in Pictorial Korea 1950, the editors placed a small illustration of a woman in a white dress carrying a pot over her head.  

Likewise, the "customs" sections of the Pictorial Korea books rarely feature men and instead primarily use women to illustrate South Korean traditions. Women are thus pictured doing needlework, playing on a seesaw, and washing laundry. Therefore women in South Korea are represented as both carrying out many different roles in society as active members of the modern nation-state while also preserving a symbolic link to a traditional Korean culture. Such constructions exemplify how Pictorial Korea used photographs to critique LIFE's representations of South Koreans as a peculiar and backwards nation-state by combining images of common tropes of its "tradition" with those that depicted its "modernity."

**The Korean War in LIFE and Pictorial Korea**

Photographic representations of national subjects during the Korean War in Pictorial Korea were also constructed in dialogue with those found in LIFE. In LIFE, South Korea served as the background for America's war against communism, and its

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citizens were depicted either as victims of communist aggression who disrupted the efficiency of American troops or as potential communist threats. In contrast, the IPLK's editors used their coverage of the events of the war to position South Koreans as playing a central role in the defense of their nation and in the protection of the "free world" from the global communist threat. This approach reflected the tensions of the Cold War period in South Korea, as the IPLK attempted to assert South Korea's sovereignty as a nation through images of the Korean War that positioned the country both in competition with North Korea and against its dependence on the United States.

The outbreak of the war in 1950 increased American interest in South Korea, and it was rare for an issue of LIFE in the early 1950s to lack a photo essay related to the war or an editorial debating the benefits or drawbacks of American intervention. In order to gain public support for United States involvement in the war, photographs of South Korea in early 1950s editions of LIFE served as justifications for the sending of United States servicemen to a place that had previously been seen as irrelevant to its citizens. One way in which LIFE figured the war as pertinent to Americans was by covering the conflict through the perspective of individual Americans who were serving as members of the UN Forces in Korea or working as war correspondents and shadowing the troops on the frontlines. Americans were therefore the main protagonists of the war as told by the photographs and articles printed in LIFE.

Such a focus on the American role in the war was common in other domestic media of the time. For example, according to Jin K. Kim, New York Times articles about South Korea published from 1945-1961 portrayed the country as a "war-stricken land of perpetual conflicts" where the lives of its people were entirely determined by the power
struggles of global superpowers.\textsuperscript{122} As South Koreans in \textit{LIFE} are shown from the perspective of American troops and war correspondents, non-combatants are often portrayed as weak victims of communism who inadvertently impede the operations of the American troops despite their support for US involvement.\textsuperscript{123} While members of the South Korean national police force are depicted as brutal and cruel, ROK soldiers that work with the UN forces are described as easily assimilated into American culture.\textsuperscript{124} South Korean civilians and soldiers alike are thus represented as being subordinate to American soldiers and predominantly uninvolved in the defense of their country against communist threat.

Although \textit{LIFE} mainly portrayed South Korean civilians as harmless supporters of the American cause, it occasionally depicted the people of South Korea as potential enemies of the "free world." For instance, an August 1950 issue of \textit{LIFE} included a photograph taken from the vantage point of a tank that was driving down an urban street. This neighbourhood appears deserted except for three long-bearded men with walking sticks who are in white dress and horsehair hats. They are walking down the sidewalk to avoid the tank, and one of them is staring directly at the camera while the other two are looking down at the ground in front of them. The accompanying text claims that while most American viewers would assume that these men were harmless, the photograph is deceptive. A correct reading of the photograph, according to the writer, is provided by a


\textsuperscript{124} David Douglas Duncan, "The Durable ROKs," \textit{LIFE} 29, no. 11, September 11, 1950, 56.
knowledgeable American officer, who explains his perception of the events to the non-
expert viewer. He claims that the men are suspicious because they are in a group of three
(uncommon for men of their apparent high status), they are "marching in perfect military
step," and their "traditional white robes are bulging with what could be hand
grenades." In this article, LIFE's typical symbol of South Korea, the elderly man in
traditional costume, is anchored through its accompanying text to present even the most
seemingly innocuous South Koreans as potential communist infiltrators. The
combination of the photograph and the article's analysis portrays Americans as the crucial
mediator between the communist and non-communist world due to their ability to define
South Korean subjects as either trustworthy or suspicious. Throughout the war years,
LIFE therefore foregrounded the role of Americans in the Korean conflict by representing
South Koreans as either weak victims of communism that had to be rescued by the
United States or potential enemies that could be identified through American expertise.

In contrast, the photobooks produced by the IPLK disputed the representations
produced by LIFE by re-positioning South Koreans in critical roles in the war against
communism. This was an attempt to serve two goals: first, to portray the country as
sovereign despite the American and United Nations intervention in the war, and second,
to encourage the international community to support South Korea instead of the North by
depicting it as a member of a community of allied anti-communist nations. In the early
period of the war, the IPLK depended mainly on images of the conflict that had been
produced by foreign correspondents because South Korean photographers lacked relative
access to the scenes of the battlefront. While some South Koreans were drafted as official

125 John Osborne, "Report from the Orient: Guns are Not Enough," LIFE 29, no. 8, August 21, 1950, 77.
126 Ibid, 77-85.
photographers for the South Korean and UN armies, such as Yi Kyŏngmo and Im �ʻungsik, they were forced to send their film to military communications offices and therefore their works could not be submitted to local publications such as *Pictorial Korea*.\(^{127}\) In addition, Kim Hanyong has stated that although Song attempted to send him to take photographs of the battlefront in 1950, he was sent back south when the troops he was riding with came across trucks full of people being evacuated.\(^ {128}\) Recognizing the danger, Song then ordered him to return to their headquarters in Pusan.\(^ {129}\) As the battlefront was not easily accessible to civilian photographers, the IPLK thus depended on photographs from international news agencies, the armies of the UN forces and South Korea, and the United States Information Service to position South Koreans at the centre of their accounts of the war. As the war progressed, these images were supplemented by photographs of the South Korean army in training, which were taken by IPLK staff members such as Yi Kyŏngmo and Kim Tonghyŏk. The creation of the IPLK's narratives of the role of South Koreans in the war thus involved a process of re-contextualizing and combining foreign and domestic images.

The IPLK's works did not deny the major role played by the United Nations forces in the Korean conflict, but instead emulated *LIFE*’s coverage of the war while inserting South Koreans into the narrative. South Koreans are therefore shown as simultaneously capable of playing a secondary role to the UN forces and also taking the lead at the centre of the action. In keeping with the IPLK's enduringly positive representation of the nation, *Pictorial Korea*’s narrative of the war portrayed it as a

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127 Im, *Han'guk sadan*, 103.
largely bloodless affair, as photographs rarely included the wounded or dead, and instead focused on scenes of training, strategizing, and celebration of battlefield victories. One such photograph echoes common photographs in *LIFE*, as it features a young South Korean soldier awkwardly holding a map for a circle of UN officers who appear to be discussing tactics. In comparison, however, a similarly staged photograph in another edition shows five South Korean officers leaning over a map, with an accompanying caption that identifies them as "ROK Officers planning strategy," thus using the relay of image and text to position South Koreans as major players in the war.

The IPLK also portrayed members of South Korean army as significant to the war against communism by including images in which they were depicted as critical parts of the UN forces. In one photograph, for example, South Korean soldiers laugh with UN troops as they stand around a large sign that says "You are crossing the 38th parallel courtesy of 3rd ROK Div." (figure 3.5). South Korean soldiers were also shown receiving medals from American officers for acts of valour. Although *Pictorial Korea* included considerable coverage of members of the UN forces, its representations differed from those in *LIFE* because they were accompanied by photographs of South Korean troops and officers. For example, the IPLK dedicated several pages of *Pictorial Korea 1951-1952* to images of the UN air forces, including four pages of photographs of American fighter jet pilots that resembled a photo essay published in *LIFE* the same year.

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130 IPLK, *Pictorial Korea 1951-1952*, 44.
133 Ibid, 76.
(which featured different photographs of many of the same pilots). However, unlike in \textit{LIFE}, they followed this section with two pages of photographs of South Korea's own air force. Also in contrast to representations in \textit{LIFE}, South Korean troops are shown as capable of training and fighting on their own without the aid of UN forces. Photographs in \textit{Pictorial Korea 1951-1952} show scenes taken at army centres where South Korean soldiers are training for battle, as well as "ROK troops in action," neither of which include members of the UN forces. Overall, the IPLK expanded international representations of the anti-communist forces in Korea by supplementing them with photographs that proved South Korea's involvement in defending the nation and the world from communist aggression.

Figure 3.5. First U.N. Troops to cross the 38th parallel hold a sign posting ceremony to let all know that the 3rd ROK Div. made the historic crossing. From \textit{Pictorial Korea 1951-1952}, pg. 72.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[136] Ibid, 114-115.
\end{footnotes}
In contrast to *LIFE*’s portrayal of South Korean civilians as disrupting American operations and potential communist infiltrators, the IPLK portrayed South Korean civilians as actively aiding the UN forces in their fight against communism. In order to do so, *Pictorial Korea* presented images of South Koreans who remained in conflict areas and were actively helping the war effort. For example, civilians are shown working as "ammo bearers" as they cart loads of ammunition across fields or load them onto boats. Other images depict South Koreans helping American casualties evacuate, reversing the roles portrayed in common photographs of United Nations soldiers aiding wounded South Korean civilians.\(^{137}\) South Korean non-combatants are therefore inserted into the narrative of the war by the IPLK, portraying all members of the nation as capable of contributing to the maintenance of its sovereignty.

Another area in which *Pictorial Korea* differed from *LIFE* in its representations of South Korea during the war was its portrayal of the maintenance of everyday life and culture despite countrywide upheaval. For example, while the wartime edition *Pictorial Korea 1951-1952* features over one hundred pages of photographs related to the conflict, they also include many images of South Koreans taking part in regular routines. Photographs of civilians struggling to survive as refugees in Pusan are thus juxtaposed with images that depict citizens of the city continuing to take public transportation to work and selling luxury bags.\(^{138}\) Meanwhile, it also includes sections dedicated to the fine arts and culture of South Korea, with photographs of sporting events, theatre performances, and reproductions of paintings. Such dichotomous and often contradictory images of South Korea are placed within the same editions in order to maintain the image

\(^{137}\) Ibid, 40.
\(^{138}\) Ibid, 131.
of an anti-communist, civilized South Korean nation that continued to thrive despite communist threats on their sovereignty.

Finally, an analysis of the anchoring of one common image of war that was regularly found in both *LIFE* and *Pictorial Korea* reveals the divergences between the narratives of the two publications. Both works often feature photographs of large masses of refugees carrying their belongings as they trudge through shallow rivers to evacuate conflict zones. However, they each use different captions to guide their audiences towards the intended "correct" reading of such images. In *LIFE*, a photograph of a large group of refugees crossing a river is featured as part of a section entitled "Refugees Get In Way." About one hundred refugees can be seen in the front of the image, with a few captured in the foreground looking directly at the camera, while thousands are pictured in the background making their way across the river with a mountain range behind them. The caption on the photograph states, "wading stream after they have been frisked by South Korean police, the fleeing men and women carry their pathetic belongings. American fighter planes zoomed above to make sure the crossing was an entirely friendly one."\(^{139}\) Here, benevolent and militarily powerful Americans act as defenders of the innocent from possible surprise communist attack, and South Koreans are presented as potential communist infiltrators who must be inspected by the police. Both of these intended messages, however, are entirely supplemental to the visual representation, as neither the American fighter planes nor the South Korean police described in the caption appear in the photograph. The text therefore not only anchors the intended meaning of the photograph but also expands the viewer's imagination of the scene beyond what is

\(^{139}\) Mydans, "Refugees Get In Way," 22.
included in the frame. In doing so, the photograph and its guiding text act in a relay of meaning that encourages viewers to imagine Americans as simultaneously charitable and military powerful, and South Koreans as both victims of communist threat and potentially subversive agents.

In comparison, the IPLK's editors used text to encourage viewers to interpret a similar photograph in a way that more effectively supported its own narratives. This photograph is included in a section entitled "Red Invasion," which features other photographs of refugees as well as the destruction caused by the communist forces. In this one photograph, a mass of men, women, and children carry their belongings as they wade through a river (figure 3.6). In comparison to LIFE's caption on a similar photograph, the people in this image are represented as innocent victims of the communist attacks and not potential infiltrators. Such an interpretation is anchored by its caption: "The Red invasion into Seoul kicks out the citizens of the city on the way to the southern area."\(^{140}\) The accompanying text of these photographs renders them as South Korean citizens whose lives have been disrupted by the conflict instigated by the "Red" forces. Such a depiction exemplifies how South Koreans in Pictorial Korea were portrayed as incapable of being communists, in contrast to the citizens of the North. The anchoring of text to image in this case enabled the IPLK to portray refugees as inherently anti-communist and thus critique LIFE's representations of South Koreans as possible communist infiltrators.

\(^{140}\) IPLK, Pictorial Korea 1951-1952, 31.
Recovering from the War: The (Re)Development of South Korea

After the war, the IPLK countered foreign representations of South Korea by depicting the nation's recovery as a re-development driven by South Korean citizens instead of a modernization project initiated by foreign powers. While South Korea and the United States both desired the postwar economic development of the country, an analysis of the post-1953 editions of Pictorial Korea and LIFE reveals the divergence in the two states' representations of this project. Two primary differences between the images of South Korean development in these two publications are their portrayals of the main participants and the temporality of this project. In the pages of LIFE, South Korea's modernization commenced when the nation-state was occupied by the United States, who began a project of rescuing the childlike South Koreans from poverty and educating them about modern ways of life. In contrast, the process of re-development after the war in
*Pictorial Korea* was part of an ongoing history of modernization that had begun long before the arrival of the Americans and the United Nations. In *Pictorial Korea*, therefore, the war was only a setback in South Korea's development, and the foreign aid provided by the United States and the United Nations was employed by South Koreans to repair and resume the growth of their infrastructure and industry.

The first way in which these two publications diverged in their representations of South Korea's (re)development was the portrayal of the role of foreign financial and material support during and after the war. *Pictorial Korea* promoted foreign governments' allocations of funds to aid projects in South Korea that would enable the country to rebuild its infrastructure. In comparison, *LIFE* encouraged its readers to directly donate money and goods to orphans who symbolized the inability of South Koreans to lead their own recovery from the war. In sending money, clothing and toys to American foundations, *LIFE*'s audience was promised that it could help the undeveloped of the world gain a better, more American, lifestyle. In these representations, South Koreans were symbolized by a begging young male orphan, a common figure in American 1950s media that Eleana Kim has termed the "waifs of war." For example, in an image printed in a 1954 issue, a boy wearing only a dirty oversized shirt looks up at the camera with his hand outstretched, under a title that reads "Voice from Korea: Won't You Help Us Off Our Knees?". The supporting text informs the reader that South Korea receives most of its aid from the American government, but implores them to send

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donations to private foundations such as the American-Korean foundation, which gave aid directly to South Koreans such as the young boy in the photograph.  

While this boy was not identified, other articles in *LIFE* told the stories of specific young orphan boys who were in need of American aid. One particularly characteristic example is the story of Kang Koo Ri, a South Korean boy who was featured in three separate articles throughout the 1950s. His first appearance was in an extensive photo essay entitled "The Little Boy Who Wouldn't Smile." This article used photographs to tell the story of his time in an orphanage as aid workers and other children attempted to help him recover from the loss of his family. *LIFE*’s representations of his story were so effective that many American readers responded by sending packages of clothing, toys, and medicine for Kang and the other children at his orphanage to the TIME Inc. offices. In March of 1952, Kang appeared in the magazine again, this time smiling and healthy. According to this article, his photographs were to be used in the American Protestant organization's promotional material for their overseas aid projects. Readers were once again updated on Kang's progress in 1956, when a photo essay informed readers that Kang had been adopted by an American family and was now successfully adapting to American life.

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142 Howard A. Rusk, "Voice from Korea: Won't You Help Us Off Our Knees?" *LIFE* 36, no. 23, June 7, 1954, 179.
144 In addition, photojournalist Michael Rougier was so personally affected by the children he encountered at this orphanage that he sent out an internal memo to the staff at Time Inc. asking them to start their own collection of gifts for the children. See “"The Little Boy Who Wouldn’t Smile': A Story of the Korean War," TIME Inc. *LIFE*, accessed January 18, 2015, http://life.time.com/history/the-little-boy-who-wouldnt-smile-a-story-of-the-korean-war/#26.
These images of South Korean orphan boys served multiple purposes within \textit{LIFE}'s narratives. First, they were proof of the destruction and tragedy caused by communism and thus the superiority of capitalism. Both begging orphans and happily assimilated adoptees reminded readers that the United States was on the "right" side of the Cold War. They were also symbols of the need for Americans to protect the United States by rescuing South Korean citizens from the dangers of a lack of modern civilization.\footnote{For other stories of South Korean boys who were adopted by American families, see "A New American Comes 'Home,'" \textit{LIFE} 35, no. 22, November 30, 1953, 25-28 and "A Saga of Sam and a Colonel," \textit{LIFE} 42, no. 8, February 25, 1957, 137-143.}

As Christina Klein has noted, the American media during the 1950s often claimed that "hungry children are susceptible to communist promises of a better future; thus hungry children threaten the security of Americans."\footnote{Christina Klein, \textit{Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 154-155.} Unassimilated South Korean children, who symbolized the nation as a whole, were therefore not only worthy of a reader's pity but also a danger to American safety. This justified the continued presence of Americans in South Korea in order to protect the home front from the encroachment of communist aggressions. In addition, as Eleana Kim has argued, the symbol of South Korean children allowed Americans to conceive of the United States involvement in South Korea as a "humanitarian intervention" instead of a "postwar occupation."\footnote{Kim, \textit{Adopted Territories}, 76.}

It was therefore portrayed as a project based on compassion and not military interests. Lastly, as Martha Rosler has noted, documentary photographs figure their viewers as powerful due to their ability to look upon images of the socially powerless.\footnote{Martha Rosler, "In, Around, and Afterthoughts: On Documentary Photography" in \textit{The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography}, ed. Richard Bolton (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 306.} In the process of the transmission of these images to \textit{LIFE}'s audiences, its intended reader was
addressed as a modern citizen capable of aiding the underprivileged of the world. Overall, images of the "waifs of war" served in a multi-layered way: perpetuating images of the evils of communism, justifying the United States' continued presence in South Korea, and figuring the American nation as benevolent and powerful benefactors in the developing world. Even American citizens on the home front thus became the critical figures in South Korea's recovery from the war in *LIFE*'s representations.

In contrast, foreign aid is usually portrayed in *Pictorial Korea* as being received through government-to-government support, and South Koreans are depicted as playing a central role in the reconstruction of their country after the war. While both publications encouraged foreign aid to South Korea, the difference in approaches may be due to the intended audiences of these publications, as the IPLK's works were often given directly to foreign diplomats and politicians who may have been perceived as capable of affecting the allocation of domestic funds towards aid projects in South Korea (see chapter 5).

*Pictorial Korea 1956-1957* in particular focuses almost entirely on the foreign-funded efforts of South Koreans to reconstruct the country's infrastructure and industries. This edition used photographs to highlight the contributions of the United States government and United Nations aid organizations that financed the purchasing of new streetcars and ships; the rebuilding of power plants and factories to produce fertilizer, glass, toothpaste, and paper; and the ongoing construction of stores, schools, and libraries. In comparison to *LIFE*, the recovery from the war that takes place within the pages of *Pictorial Korea* is thus centered on the redevelopment of South Korea's infrastructure and not the rescue of the lives of its individual citizens.
In *LIFE*, the protagonists in the story of South Korea's development were individual American citizens who were portrayed as modernizing sources of knowledge who intended to teach the South Korean masses about civilized methods of life and work. They thus were encouraging them to progress beyond their stagnation in peculiar customs and recover from the tragic destruction of the war. According to Guimond, *LIFE* often figured such modernization processes in developing countries as requiring both American aid and "know how."\(^{151}\) Guimond argues that the composition of photographs of educational meetings between Americans and foreigners highlighted the superior position of Americans through cropping, camera angles, and lighting. Americans were often placed in positions so that they were more visible, looked more dynamic, and appeared larger and more significant.\(^{152}\) In one representative photo essay, *LIFE*'s editors arranged photographs of a US soldier instructing South Korean farmers on how to slash through rice with a scythe that he had built for them. He then stands over a farmer, inspecting his work in an authoritative pose, as children watch in amazement nearby.\(^{153}\) Such scenes are figured as part of an American modernization project in South Korea that was designed to ensure that South Koreans were capable of resisting communist ideology and continuing to serve as a buffer between communism and the American home front. This project was conducted on a personal level by Americans who attempted to improve the lives of South Koreans through small-scale advancements of their ways of life.

In contrast, the postwar recovery that takes place in the pages of *Pictorial Korea* was conducted on a much larger magnitude by South Korean citizens and their


government. In *Pictorial Korea*, South Korean development is figured as a re-
development to repair damage done by the war to an already modernized country.

*Pictorial Korea 1951-1952*, published in June of that year, claims that there was over 5 billion dollars worth of damage to industrial facilities in South Korea by that point in the war. In the 1954 edition, amongst photographs of reconstruction efforts and the rebuilding of industry that are all entirely on a white background, the IPLK compiled a full-page series of photographs framed by a black background that represented "A part of Korean industries before the war." These photographs show massive machines being used in factories prior to 1950, illustrating that international aid projects in South Korea were not "developing" a formerly uncivilized, primitive country, but were acting as a helping hand in the restoration of South Korea's previously healthy and vibrant industries back to their former condition. The growth of South Korean industry by its citizens was also illustrated by the substantial number of advertisements for various domestic companies that were included throughout the pages of each edition of *Pictorial Korea*.

Although foreign organizations had provided the financial means necessary for redevelopment, South Koreans are depicted as being the main agents in these processes in *Pictorial Korea*. For example, *Pictorial Korea 1956-1957* includes a list of the amount of aid sent to South Korea by foreign organizations and governments, claiming that these organizations aimed "to establish a self-supporting economy in Korea" that would allow the South Korean government to reconstruct its nation after the war. Rhee is also figured in several photographs inspecting new farming equipment, factories, and recently

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constructed housing developments. The overseeing of the redevelopment of South Korea is thus represented as the role of the national government and not international organizations such as the American-Korean Foundation endorsed by LIFE.

In addition, *Pictorial Korea* depicts individual South Koreans as playing a direct role in the reconstruction of their homes and livelihoods. South Korea had suffered over 3 billion dollars of property damage during the war, and the homes of over 5 million citizens were rendered uninhabitable by the destruction.\(^{157}\) While this massive damage is illustrated in photographs of the ruins of war in *Pictorial Korea*, South Koreans are often shown as working within these spaces to rebuild their lives. One such photograph shows several people sorting through piles of rubble for intact bricks and re-arranging them for reuse in the repair of old buildings and the erection of new structures (figure 3.7).\(^{158}\) Similarly, in his introduction to *Pictorial Korea 1954-1955*, Song describes South Koreans as rebuilding homes and bridges with their own hands.\(^{159}\) Therefore while the redevelopment of South Korea is achieved through the support of foreign aid in *Pictorial Korea*, its citizens are portrayed as the critical leaders of this project.

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The reconstruction of South Korea is also illustrated through before and after shots of urban spaces that had been destroyed during the war. These images depict the effectiveness of continued aid projects and the capability of South Korea to resist communist aggression. For instance, *Pictorial Korea 1961* features photographs taken from an elevated viewpoint above Sejong-ro [Sejongno] Street in Seoul at three different points in history: the first depicting crowds amassing in 1948 to celebrate the establishment of the Republic of Korea; the second portraying widespread destruction of the street's buildings during the war; and the final showing the successful reconstruction of the area in 1961, displaying its high-rise office and residential buildings (figure 3.8).
The cityscapes here have not been restored precisely to their previous condition, but instead are improved due to both international aid and the hard work of South Korea's citizens. Through these representations, *Pictorial Korea* shows that South Korea's urban spaces were already "modern" prior to the war, and that while the destruction of the war interrupted their process of continued development, the cities of South Korea have now bounced back, and are constantly improving and remaining up-to-date with other modern urban spaces throughout the non-communist world.

![Seoul Reconstructed](image)

Figure 3.8. *Seoul Reconstructed*. From *Pictorial Korea 1961*, pg. 20-21.

**South Korea as a Member of the "Free World"

The editors of *Pictorial Korea* portrayed South Korea as a bulwark against global communism and a member of the "free world" community of allied nations in order to
encourage the maintenance of support for the nation's redevelopment projects. During the Cold War, anti-communist rhetoric figured countries as part of the "free world" if they opposed communism and therefore supported the "freedom" of capitalist society. This was part of what Klein terms a "global imaginary of integration" in which capitalist states were connected through their economic links to the hub of the United States, creating a perceived "stable international order built on the principle of U.S.-centered collectivity." For states such as South Korea who wished to join the economic network of allied nations in the "free world," it was critical to portray their dedication to capitalism and their vehement anti-communism. In addition, financial assistance from the United States government had been given to South Korea with the understanding that, as Secretary of State John Fulles stated, "American economic aid is not accorded on the basis of friendship but as a contribution to winning the cold war." The IPLK thus utilized popular Cold War discourses in order to fulfil their goal of supporting the further economic development of South Korea.

One way in which the IPLK portrayed South Korea as a member of the "free world" of allied nations was by claiming that its members were staunchly against communism. After the war, Song warned readers that although gunfire on the peninsula may have ceased, "the fire of anti-communism is still burning in the hearts of them so briskly that a single drop of oil will be able to make it flare up again at any time." According to Namhee Lee, such anti-communism was not immediately pervasive within

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160 Klein, Cold War Orientalism, 44-46.
162 IPLK, Pictorial Korea 1953-1954, 3.
the South Korean public after the war.\textsuperscript{163} This highlights the fact that the IPLK was constructing narratives of widespread opposition to communism, which may not necessarily have existed at the time, in order to encourage continued foreign aid to South Korea.

One way in which South Korea is represented as part of the "free world" was through its juxtaposition with the communists of the North. This also served as a way for the IPLK to assert South Korea's sovereignty vis-à-vis North Korea. As early as 1950, the IPLK described communists in the North as a "thorn in the flesh" of the South Korean nation.\textsuperscript{164} Within a section of photographs of Pyongyang in this edition, the editors anchored the meaning of an otherwise ambiguous photograph of several adults sitting outside a residence by captioning it as "Hungry citizens."\textsuperscript{165} Such photographs, as well as several images of refugee children who had escaped from communist rule, illustrate the IPLK's recognition of the dangers of communism and the need to protect South Korea from the communist threat. These narratives of anti-communism continued after the official outbreak of war, particularly in representations of South Korea's ruins, because the destruction inflicted by the war was described as inciting a hatred of communism amongst South Korean citizens.

The IPLK maintained such Cold War discourses that encouraged readers to conceive of South Korea's membership in the "free world" throughout its publication of Pictorial Korea up until 1970. For example, Pictorial Korea 1968's inside cover page proclaims that the books had been "published solely in the interest of the free world for

\textsuperscript{164} IPLK, Pictorial Korea 1950.
\textsuperscript{165} IPLK, Glimpses of Korea 1951, 9.
the past 23 years in the face and under the constant threat of the Communist aggressions!" In employing such narratives, the IPLK also promoted the maintenance of foreign interest in the nation's development by alluding to the continued danger that communist threats in Korea might lead to communist attacks on the "free world." This was compounded by advertising for Pictorial Korea, in which American readers were informed that "Knowledge of Korea and her problem is a step towards peace and security of the American home." The emulation of popular Cold War discourses of anti-communism was therefore a critical part of the narratives of the IPLK.

Finally, the interactions of individual South Koreans with people from allied nations portrayed the country as a member of an imagined diplomatic community of the "free world" and a legitimate nation-state. While such images were also included within the pages of LIFE, the contextualization of these photographs created differing narratives in these two publications. LIFE featured many photographs of American officials who visited South Korea on inspection tours or as part of aid missions, smiling and shaking hands with local citizens or being received by cheering crowds. Guimond argues that such photographs were used to construct positive public opinions about the United States' activities abroad because they represented Americans as friendly, good-humoured, and wanting to help the people of developing countries "simply because they liked them, and the foreigners reciprocated." In comparison, Pictorial Korea used similar photographs to show how influential people in the world recognized South Korea's sovereignty and approved of the continued

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166 IPLK, Pictorial Korea 1968.
167 See poster in photograph of Song in IPLK, Pictorial Korea 1961, 197.
168 Guimond, American Photography, 190.
international support for the country's redevelopment projects. Images of South Korean officials interacting with international diplomats, military officers, and other important people from foreign countries were frequently printed in the IPLK's publications. For example, a special volume produced by the IPLK in 1958 entitled *Pictorial Korea 1948-1958: 10 Years of Korean History Seen through Photographs* almost entirely consists of a collection of photographs of South Korean and foreign officials meeting in various formal situations.\(^{169}\) In turn, such photographs in *Pictorial Korea* are often combined with images of South Koreans taking part in international conferences and meetings as representatives of the nation on the international diplomatic stage.\(^{170}\) Likewise, South Korean athletes also serve as symbols of their country's membership within an international community, as they are frequently shown participating in global sporting events, where they not only received medals but also were recognized and admired by foreign fans.\(^{171}\) This combination of photographs of South Koreans participating in global diplomatic and sporting events serves as proof of the nation's sovereignty and its membership in a global community of allies who constitute the "free world."

**South Korea as a Travel Destination**

Although the photobook format allows for the anchoring and relay of meaning due to the combination of image and text, attempts to guide the interpretations of viewers occasionally fail due to the contradictions of elements that constitute their visual

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\(^{169}\) This book is so heavily focused on staged photographs of meetings between government and military officials that a review published in the *Tonga ilbo* criticized it for neglecting to deal with topics related to culture. See Yi Töckhin, Rev. of *Sajin úro ponin Taehan Min'guk 10-yönsa*, *Tonga ilbo*, September 14, 1958. Note that this book was not an edition of the regular series of *Pictorial Korea* books.  
\(^{171}\) Ibid, 45.
narratives. This is particularly true in the case of representing South Korea as a potential tourist spot for foreign travellers.

During the postwar period in the 1950s, the books rarely encouraged their readers to travel to South Korea. Instead, they focused on the creation of an imagined sovereign South Korea that was a civilized, anti-communist, and industrial nation capable of playing an active role in global events. This is particularly evident in the editions published from 1954 to 1961, in which Pictorial Korea shows its foreign audience photographs of South Korea without making the implicit suggestion that readers should travel to the country to see it for themselves. Such messages differed from the narratives found in some other contemporary photobooks that intended to alter international images of specific nation-states. For example, a government-funded Japanese publication company entitled NIPPON attempted to alter negative perceptions of Japan by figuring it as an ideal travel spot complete with comfortable accommodations and modern travel facilities. In comparison, while Pictorial Korea also tried to amend foreign conceptions of the nation-state, the majority of its works throughout the mid and late 1950s were devoid of tourist-centric messages, and in fact contained little information about how a foreigner might travel to and within South Korea. Pictorial Korea during this period therefore attempted to correct foreign perceptions of South Korea through the transmission of photographs, but did not encourage foreigners to verify such images for themselves by exploring the country in person.

However, perhaps surprisingly, Song and his editorial team during the war years attempted to portray South Korea as an ideal place to travel. The publications produced

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by the IPLK during the war present a contradictory image of South Korea as a site of ongoing upheaval and conflict and also a pleasant place for tourists. The contradictions in such a narrative are not acknowledged by the publishers, and instead images and text that present the destruction and tragedy of the war are often set side-by-side with tourist-centric representations. The contradictions inherent in the presentation of images of war along with descriptions of the features of local regions often disrupted the IPLK's attempts to anchor photographs to intended meanings.

For example, *Glimpses of Korea 1951* was divided into sections based on regions, which serves as a method of anchoring the imagined nation in historical local traditions while also informing foreign viewers about potential places they might visit. In particular, the editors describe Taejon [Taejŏn] as a transportation hub from which tourists can "travel in all directions by railway," and recommends its hot springs to readers. Directly underneath this description is a sketch similar to typical wartime images of refugees travelling in a line while carrying their possessions on their backs. Below this illustration is a photograph of a woman bending over in the ruins of buildings with a caption that reads "Ravaged Taejon" (figure 3.9). A similar dichotomy is apparent on a larger scale in *Pictorial Korea 1951-1952*, in which, after over one hundred pages of images that represent the ongoing war being fought on the peninsula, the content of the book suddenly shifts to a twenty-page depiction of "Places of Interest" and suggested itineraries for foreign travelers. In these cases, the IPLK's attempt to use the anchoring of text and the format of the photobook to construct narratives of a cohesive nation rooted in

preserved local traditions is ultimately undone by the contradictions inherent in the combination of such travel-centered discourse and images of the devastation of war.

Figure 3.9. Honam - Taejon. From Glimpses of Korea 1951, pg. 9.

The IPLK did not return to such discourses of tourism until the 1960s, after international interest in the country had waned. Representations of South Korea had become increasingly rare in LIFE after the war, with only a few photographs of the country appearing in its issues after 1958. In correspondence with the diminished foreign interest in producing images of South Korea, Song no longer described his intentions as being the correction of foreign misunderstandings in the 1960s. In contrast, the 1960s editions of Pictorial Korea served as large-scale advertisements for South Korea as a tourist destination. In Pictorial Korea 1968, he wrote that he devoted particular attention
to the compiling of photographs from all regions of Korea that had "exotic charms" and would "assuredly appeal to foreign tourists." These editions are filled with photographs of historical sites and landscapes, and feature many advertisements for South Korean airlines and hotels. In contrast to earlier editions of these books, in which images of historical sites often contain either a few or no visitors, photographs of South Korea's tourist attractions in the 1960s include crowds of domestic and international sightseers in the frame, thus figuring them as ideal spots for travel.

Compared to the representations of South Korea in late 1950s editions of *Pictorial Korea*, the country was presented in the 1960s editions as fully accessible to the foreign traveller. Photographs of its tourist attractions are arranged next to photographs of foreigner-friendly hotels that boast of luxurious Western-style suites. Thus although elements of South Korea might appear exotic and foreign to the reader, they are assured that they would still be comfortable while travelling. In the IPLK's publications, the development of South Korea in the 1960s therefore took place not in its heavy industries but in its tourist facilities, which Song claims were "continually being erected in various scenic sections of the country." The 1968 edition also provides foreign readers with extensive information about travel to the country, including information about visas, vaccinations, exchange rates, customs duties and the process of declaring goods. While former editions attributed agency to South Koreans by figuring them as the most crucial protagonist in stories of the nation, the primary subjects of the later books are the foreign travellers who might visit the country. It appears that the intended audience for the

175 Ibid, 30-31.
176 Ibid, 28.
177 Ibid, 30.
IPLK's publications at this point were no longer foreign officials who might influence the support of economic aid to South Korea, but instead a middle-class international visitor whose direct investment of foreign currency into domestic businesses through tourism might stimulate the South Korean economy. However, a shift towards a focus on travel still enabled the IPLK to maintain its former narratives in which South Korea was portrayed as a sovereign and modern nation-state. The major change was that it was now fully accessible to the foreign traveller.

**Conclusion**

As this chapter has argued, the critique of *LIFE* in the IPLK's works during the 1950s unveiled the tensions of the Cold War period. Through its visual narratives, which were created through the unique format of the photobook, *Pictorial Korea* attempted to portray the nation as the rightful inheritor of Korean historical tradition in competition with North Korea, and a sovereign nation-state that was independent from the United States. In combining photographs from domestic and international sources, the IPLK thus responded to other representations of South Korea by portraying it as an active member of a community of allied anti-communist states. While the subjects of its photographs changed over time, particularly in the 1960s, its visual narratives continued to attempt to change the way that its intended foreign audience viewed the emerging nation-state within the framework of Cold War discourses.
4. Pictorial Korea's Photo Salons and 1950s Photography Trends

The destruction and tragedy of the Korean War left a lasting influence on photographers in South Korea and their choice of subjects. The war destroyed much of the infrastructure of the photography industry, including studios, cameras, and printing facilities, and photographers personally experienced great upheaval in their lives as many were drafted into the army while others were forced to leave their homes when the conflict encroached upon the territory of the South. A transformation of the ways in which South Koreans conceived of photography was thus initiated by their experiences of the war, which created a shift in trends in subjects and styles. Unlike prior to the war, some South Korean photographers began to attempt to use the camera as a tool in social criticism and not simply the creation of artistic works. Others also participated in international trends in photojournalism that emphasized the capturing of a single "decisive moment." As these images were often incompatible with the enduringly positive visual narratives of South Korea in the IPLK's publications, Pictorial Korea does not largely serve as a representation of the predominant photography trends at the time. However, by selectively printing the more hopeful and innocuous images produced by South Korean photographers, they encouraged the elevation of photography to an art form in the 1950s, and also portrayed national subjects as developed due to their ability to represent themselves through modern technology.

Photography During the War

The first way in which the Korean War influenced the production of photography in South Korea was the physical uprooting of photographers from their facilities and
equipment. Many South Koreans who lived in the northern region of the country, including the members of the IPLK, were forced to evacuate to the city of Pusan, a port city in the southern region that became the provisional war-time capital.178 For example, staff photographer Kim Hanyong, who had been born in the region that was now the North but had migrated to Seoul after liberation, hid at the IPLK's printing house to avoid being drafted by invading North Korean soldiers before moving his family to Pusan. Other members of the IPLK also became refugees in Pusan, where they continued to compile a considerable number of printed works during the war, including an edition of Pictorial Korea in 1952, three editions of their brief, condensed version of Pictorial Korea entitled Glimpse of Korea, and non-photographic publications such as a collection of short stories and a booklet of illustrations entitled Korean Customs (1951).179

Photographers from various regions of the country congregated in Pusan, and despite leaving behind cameras, darkrooms, and materials in their home cities, many of them found ways to obtain the items they required to continue practicing their craft.180 Kim, for instance, acquired a camera when he temporarily found a second job as a photojournalist for the Pusan ilbo newspaper, and used the processing facilities at the IPLK's temporary headquarters to develop his submissions for local and international photograph competitions.181 One photograph taken by Kim in 1951 in Pusan verifies the continued activities of South Korean professional photographers (figure 4.1). In the

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178 Kim, Kusul p’irojekti’u, 66.
179 As Korean Customs was printed in colour, which according to Kim Hanyong was not possible in South Korea until 1961, it is speculated that this work was also printed outside of the country (see chapter 2).
180 American troops became a critical source of film and other required materials following liberation. Im Êngsik (who was originally from Pusan and operated a photo studio there) had struck a deal with some of them when they arrived in the late 1940s to trade imported film for the processing of American soldiers' own personal photographs. Im Êngsik, Han’guk sadan, 66.
181 Kim, Kusul p’irojekti’u, 71.
image, a group of men stand on a commercial street behind makeshift podiums that advertise their photographic services. It appears that their samples of previous work are largely studio portraits, which indicates that photographers attempted to sustain themselves during the refugee period in Pusan by continuing to take portrait photographs.

Figure 4.1. Kim Hanyong, *Pusan Kwangboktong*, 1951.

During this time, other photographers were drafted into the army to take frontline photographs for the United Nations Forces or the South Korean military. IPLK staff member Yi Kyŏngmo and regular contributor Im Ŭngsik both worked as official war photographers during this period. According to Im, his personal experiences during the war led to a transformation in his individual photographic practices, and prompted him to
advocate for changes in art photography trends in South Korea throughout the 1950s.\textsuperscript{182} Im was an art photographer from Pusan who was asked to join the UN forces to cover the invasion of Incheon in September of 1950. When he arrived in Seoul and saw the tragedies caused by the destruction of the war, he was unable to take a single photograph for four days because the techniques he had been trained in proved wholly inadequate for capturing the horrors of life and death that he found there. He wrote that the war made him realize that "photographs were not just for the depiction of beauty. They had to express everything that happened in life."\textsuperscript{183} According to Im, he thus realized that photographers had a moral obligation to act as mediators by conveying information about the realities of war to members of the South Korean nation, many of whom were isolated from the conflict as refugees in Pusan.\textsuperscript{184} This later translated into his contributions to the development of a documentary-style trend of photography in South Korea. This movement, called *saenghwalchu"i* [life-ism] realism, focused on the depiction of everyday life and humanity after the war.\textsuperscript{185} Although Im continued to work as an art photographer, his wartime experiences thus affected his conception of the camera's ability to represent the world and the role of the photographer in the transmission of information.

The war also served as a personal introduction to global trends of photojournalism for some photographers, as the events of the war provided opportunities to encounter novel techniques through their interactions with war correspondents. During the war,

\textsuperscript{182} See Im, *Han'guk sadan* for an account of his wartime experiences and their impact on his work.

\textsuperscript{183} Im, *Han'guk Sadan*, 138.

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid, 90.

\textsuperscript{185} Jung Joon Lee, "No End to the Image War: Photography and the Contentious Memories of the Korean War," *The Journal of Korean Studies* 18 vol. 2 (2013), 338. Im invented the term *saenghwalchu"i* realism in order to avoid association with the style of "socialist realism," due to state-mandated anti-communism. See Im Úng-sik, interview by Im Yŏnggyun, *Sajinga wa ǔi taehwa* 3, 83.
many international photojournalists made names for themselves on the battlefields of Korea. Out of 310 war correspondents in Korea in 1950, 50 of them were photographers.\footnote{Lee, "Framing the Nation": 71.} Some of these foreign correspondents, including \textit{LIFE} photojournalists Margaret Bourke-White and Hank Walker, have been cited by South Korean photographers as personal influences on their own work. Kim, for example, has mentioned how he watched Bourke-White in action and took notes on her techniques of using a flash as she took photographs in Pusan.\footnote{Kim, \textit{Kusul p’urojektiũ}, 41. In regards to Bourke-White's distinctive technique, Parr and Badger have written that her photographs were often taken from low angles and employed the use of dramatic lighting, and additionally note that "sometimes her use of flash tends to freeze her subjects like rabbits caught in a car's headlights." See Parr and Badger, \textit{The Photobook}, 140.} In addition, Yi Kyŏngmo has stated that he had the opportunity to meet Bourke-White twice during the war, and that this impacted his own style.\footnote{Yi Kyŏngmo, interview by Im Yŏnggyun, \textit{Sajinga wa ŭ taehwa} 3, 57.} Im Êngsik also claimed that the experience of watching \textit{LIFE} photographer Hank Walker take photographs of the Incheon landing in 1950 changed the way he thought about photography, as it introduced him to the possibilities of creating impressive photographs outside of ideal, staged conditions.\footnote{Im, \textit{Han’guk Sadan}, 86.} \textit{LIFE} correspondents were certainly not the originators of photojournalism, as in fact its staff had been advised by photographers and editors from Germany prior to the magazine's first publication in 1936.\footnote{Ohrn, \textit{Dorothea Lange}, 33.} However, foreign photojournalists such as those from \textit{LIFE} served as an intermediary for the transmission of new techniques and styles of photography that were localized by South Korean photographers. The war was thus a stimulus for some South Korean photographers whose encounters with human tragedy and global trends in...
photographic styles during the war was a foundation for the development of new
graphic movements in the late 1950s.

Pre-War Photography Trends

In order to understand the ways in which images in Pictorial Korea related to the
larger context of photographic trends at the time, an examination of pre-war art
photography styles is necessary. Images that were portrayed as art photography within
the pages of the IPLK's works predominantly maintained subjects and forms that had
been popular prior to the war and had originated before liberation. During the colonial
period, photography had been used by both Koreans and Japanese residents for the
production of studio portraits, picture postcards, journalistic coverage of events, and
artwork. Images that were produced by photographers for submission in art exhibitions
called "salons," as well as juried competitions, were defined as being part of a genre
called ssarong [salon]. Janet Poole has written that the prevalent subjects of these
photographs had been influenced by popular trends in so-called Western-style painting.
During the colonial period, competitions run by Japanese residents encouraged
photographers to submit works that depicted an innocuous and exotic Korean "local
colour," which predominantly included images that featured the reflection of light upon
water or children in pastoral landscapes. Photographs that won local exhibitions and
competitions were occasionally printed in newspapers. The promotion of these images

191 See Ch’oe's Han’guk Sajinsa for an excellent history of photography in Korea prior to and during the
colonial period.
192 Janet Poole, When the Future Disappears: The Modernist Imagination in Late Colonial Korea (New
193 Ch'oe, Han'guk Sajinsa, 237.
in public exhibitions and newspapers thus encouraged the perception that the genre of "art photography" was inherently tied to these popular subjects.

After Korea's liberation from Japanese rule in 1945, common subjects of colonial period photography were largely maintained because of social conditions that repressed the growth of local photographic practices. During the post-liberation period, there were not many active photographers in South Korea because of the prohibitive cost of buying cameras and processing film,194 as well as an importation tax on the chemicals, film, and paper required for photography.195 Exhibitions and competitions held during the 1945-1950 period also predominately perpetuated the same themes as those that had been organized during the colonial period. Such exhibitions included an annual showcase organized by the IPLK called the "Korean Native Cultural Photography Exhibition," which encouraged the submission of photographs of local culture and development.196 According to Pak Pyŏngjong, the photographs entered in the International Publicity League of Korea's showcases during this period were very similar to those that had been produced by Korean and Japanese photographers prior to liberation.197 As will be discussed later, such subjects would largely be reproduced within the IPLK's visual narratives of South Korea in order to produce positive images of the nation and link it to perceived historical traditions.

194 Kim, Kusul p'ŭrojekti ŭ, 34. According to Kim Hanyong, after liberation, photographers who were not wealthy often had to choose between eating lunch or taking photographs as it was so expensive to purchase and process film. See ibid, 69.
195 This tax was lifted in late 1949. See Pak and Pak, Han'guk Sajin Chapchi, 106.
196 Kyŏnghyang sinmun, October 13, 1949.
197 Pak P'yŏngjong, "Ilche sidae ŭ sallongsajin hyŏngsigi haebang ihu ŭ han'guksajine mich'in yŏnghyang," Han'guk sajinakhoeji AURA 16 (2007), 47.
Postwar Photography

Wartime experiences and encounters with new contemporary techniques initiated a transformation in photography trends during the 1950s. After the war, photographers such as Im Úngsik criticized salon-style photographers for ignoring the social conditions of the time by continuing to mimic the subjects of paintings in their focus on nature and staged scenes. Im thus advocated for the development of a photographic genre of *saenghwalchuŭi* realism that would intentionally eschew salon-style subjects in order to represent the "stern reality of social life." As this movement became popular in the mid and late 1950s, the works of self-proclaimed *saenghwalchuŭi* realism photographers tended to feature scenes of humanity that brought the marginalized of society into the forefront. For example, one of Im's most well known photographs in this style features a man leaning against a wall with a sign reading "looking for work" around his neck, as two men in business-suits greet each other behind him (figure 4.2). This photograph highlighted the conditions of those in the margins of society while denouncing those who, like the men in the background, ignored them while going about their daily lives. Pak has asserted that photographs that were proclaimed to be part of the genre of *saenghwalchuŭi* realism were often not critical of social conditions in such a way. For instance, those by Chong Pomt’ae and Ch’oe Minsik often focused on more banal and benign aspects of everyday life such as young children playing or people eating. However, as a whole, the works of the members of this movement illustrate a clear shift in prevalent art

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199 Pak P’yŏngjong, "Ilche sidae," 50-51.
200 Lee, "Framing the Nation": 355.
photography subjects from the tranquil images of landscapes and rural scenes to urban-centric images that placed human subjects in the foreground.

Figure 4.2. Im Ŭngsik, Kujik [Looking for Work], 1953.

Part of this shift in South Korean photography involved the participation of domestic photographers in contemporary global trends. As Pak has noted, South Korean photographers after the war subsumed the many and varied styles that they encountered in international photographic publications under the label of "realism." These included trends that were described in other parts of the world as reportage, photojournalism,
documentary photography, and "straight photography." One particular contemporary trend in which South Korean photographers contributed was a move away from styles that portrayed the subjects of photographs as passive to a more active and dynamic presentation of life. This movement was spearheaded by the work of French photojournalist Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004), particularly in his 1952 photobook *The Decisive Moment.* Cartier-Bresson's definition of a "decisive moment" was a split second in which all the elements of a scene line up and form an ideal, stunning image in which the "essence" of the event is captured on film. The most famous of Cartier-Bresson's "decisive moment" photographs entitled *Derrière la Gare Saint-Lazare* [Behind the Gare Saint-Lazare] (1932) features the silhouette of a child leaping across a flooded urban street. This movement towards more dynamic photographs that appeared to capture the spontaneity of everyday life (but were in reality often the product of many attempts at staging an ideal photograph) was propelled by innovations in new photographic technology. Lightweight cameras such as the German-made Leica facilitated the capture of such decisive moments because they were smaller and less cumbersome than earlier cameras, enabling photographers to take images in previously inaccessible settings.

The increased availability of such cameras in South Korea and their encounters with international publications led to the participation of many local photographers in such global movements. In the mid-1950s, new techniques were made more popular by

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201 Pak, *Sŏn’gujado’il*, 151.
the decrease in the price of lightweight cameras in South Korea, like the imported
Leica. The works of South Korean photographer Yi Hyŏngnok are emblematic of the
ways in which some local artists transitioned away from salon-style techniques by
engaging in international trends. For example, a photograph taken by Yi in 1954
entitled Muddy Street, Sŏgyodong, Seoul (figure 4.3) resembles the interpretation of
urban life in Cartier-Bresson's Derrière la Gare Saint-Lazare. This image illustrates how
South Koreans were members of international photographic movements who
incorporated ideas such as the capturing of "decisive moments" into their own work, thus
becoming involved in a community of international photographers whose styles
influenced each other and developed global trends.

Figure 4.3. Yi Hyŏngnok, Chint’anggil, Sŏulsi Sŏgyodong [Muddy Street, Sŏgyodong, Seoul],
1954.

205 Im Êngsik, "Han’guk sajin’gye ŭi hyŏnhwang - chakhwa kyŏnghyang ŭl chungsimŭro," Sŏul sinmun,
August 1959.
206 Yi was one of the pioneers of the "realism" movement in South Korea as a founder of the photography
group Sŏnsŏnhoe [New Line Society] in 1956. See Pak P’yŏngjong, Han’guk sajin ŭi sŏn’gujadŭl, 149.
Photography in *Pictorial Korea*

In addition to journalistic images that depicted current events and photographs that documented the lifestyles and industry of South Koreans, each edition of *Pictorial Korea* that was released in the 1950s and early 1960s also featured what was often called a "salon" of exceptional art photography. While art photography during this period was shifting from scenes of leisurely pastoral landscapes to close-ups on social conditions and the dynamism of urban spaces, the photographs in the photo salons of *Pictorial Korea* continued to focus on established themes of tranquility and "local colour." This was due to a need to present images of South Korea that would portray the nation in a positive way and assert its linkages to claimed historical Korean traditions. The majority of the photographs included in these sections thus depicted rural scenes of farmers in fields, the play of light on water, impressive historical sites, or children playing peacefully. Many of these photographs had been taken by self-proclaimed "realism" photographers such as Im Ŭngsik, Yi Hyŏngnok, Ch’oe Minsik, and Chŏng Pomt’ae (1928–?). However, socially critical photographs such as Im's *Looking for Work* or images that showed the dilapidation of buildings and the trials of urban life such as Yi's *Muddy Street, Sŏgyodong, Seoul* were rarely selected by the IPLK’s editors for inclusion in their works. This was because they were not congruous with the positive images of the nation that they were attempting to promote.

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207 Over time, it was variously titled "Some Phases of Korea through a Camera" (1950, 1951-1952), "Salon of Best Photographs" (1954) and "Photo Salon" (1955-1964). These sections were no longer included in the late 1960s and 1970 editions.

208 One exception to this was the inclusion of Im's photograph *Namok* [Stripped Trees] (1950), in which a young boy stands amidst the ruins of a devastating fire, in *Pictorial Korea 1954-1955*. However, this photograph was used as a representation of exemplary art photography, as it was one of the first images produced by South Koreans to be accepted for inclusion in an international photo magazine (America's
The maintenance of such popular prewar subjects was also apparent outside the photo salon in other sections of *Pictorial Korea*. While the IPLK used foreign and domestically produced photojournalistic images to inform its viewers about current events in the country, it also used photographs that were considered part of the genre of art photography to portray South Korea to the world. For example, a photograph by An Wŏlsan (1909-1978) entitled *Plow*, which had won a prize at the IPLK’s 1948 Korean Native Cultural Photography Exhibition, was printed on the title page of *Pictorial Korea* 1950's section on South Korean industry (figure 4.4). Similarly, a photograph used in the same edition as part of a section about South Korea's unique products is an example of the persistence of pre-liberation aesthetic trends within the IPLK's works (figure 4.5). While the image is titled "Earthenware," the unnamed photographer has not featured the jars as the main subject of the image. Instead, the products are included in a quintessential pastoral scene of a family in white clothing walking along a dirt path. The lighting and composition of the shot resemble styles that were typically found in the photo salon section of the books, and it appears that the photographer took the shot from a ditch next to the jars in order to achieve the aesthetically interesting low angle. These examples illustrate how the images that were used by the IPLK as conveyors of information about South Korea also maintained subjects and styles typical of photographs that had been popularly conceived of as works of art prior to the war.

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Photography Annual, 1955). See the next section for a discussion of the promotion of photography as art in *Pictorial Korea*. 
Figure 4.4. An Wŏlsan, Chaenggi [Plow], 1948. From Pictorial Korea 1950, pg. 179.
While photographs in the salon sections of *Pictorial Korea* predominantly maintain these prewar subjects, the style of the salon's images occasionally reveals the influence of postwar trends. For example, Kim Hanyong's photographs were ideal for the construction of the IPLK's imagined South Korea because, as he has described, his photographs were "hopeful and a little more idealist" than photographs being produced by *saenghwalchuŭi* realism photographers. The subjects of his images were overwhelmingly positive and he rarely took photographs of popular realism subjects such
as the impoverished and homeless.\footnote{Kim, \textit{Kusul p'ŭrojekt'ũ}, 73.} Despite this intentional divorce from trends in subjects of the time, some of his photographs that the IPLK editors selected to be included in \textit{Pictorial Korea}'s photo salons reveal his participation in contemporary stylistic movements. In particular, he has stated that the dynamism of Cartier-Bresson's photographs was an influence on his own work,\footnote{Ibid, 102.} which is illustrated by one exemplary photograph of a "decisive moment" that was included in \textit{Pictorial Korea 1956-1957}. In this image, a group of young children run down a set of stairs in front of a church in the middle of a snowstorm (figure 4.6). In contrast to other images in the photo salon in which subjects appear passive, Kim's engagement with trends of the time portrayed South Korean national subjects as active and energetic.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{image}
\caption{Kim Hanyong, \textit{Snowy Day}. From \textit{Pictorial Korea 1956-1957}, 133.}
\end{figure}
Despite the inclusion of such photographs of urban scenes, most images in *Pictorial Korea*’s photo salons depicted rural sites and local culture that asserted the country’s sovereignty by linking it to an enduring tradition located within the countryside. As Stephen Daniels has written, "to imagine a nation is to envision its geography." The geography of the countryside in *Pictorial Korea* was used as a representation of the shared landscape of the imagined South Korean nation. A critical way in which the IPLK presented rural spaces as unifying the nation was through presenting images of the countryside without identifying the names of specific locations. In doing so, these photographs came to represent the homogeneity of all landscapes outside of urban centres. One example of this is a photograph by Kim Suk Ka [Kim Sŏkka] in *Pictorial Korea 1954-1955*’s photo salon entitled "Twilight in the Village" (figure 4.7). The image presents a rural village tucked within an expanse of fields that is sheltered by a border of mountains and a wide river that surrounds it. The rays of light that shine down upon the houses and the river appear to define the landscape as distinctive from that around it, and thus present it as a model of rural space which can be imagined as simultaneously reproduced throughout South Korea. The anchoring caption, which defines the group of houses as simply "the Village" (and thus does not identify its location) is a critical part of the portrayal of this rural space as representative of that which might be found throughout South Korea. As seen in some of the images above, photographers during this time period often titled their images of urban spaces with the name of the city and neighbourhood in which they were taken. In comparison, rural spaces were rarely labelled by their location.

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Therefore the anonymity of the village encourages imaginations of rural South Korea as a uniform geographical space that contains a cohesive nation who lives within similar spaces and thus experiences life in similar ways.

Figure 4.7. Kim Suk Ka [Kim Sŏkka], *Twilight in the Village*. From *Pictorial Korea 1956-1957*, pg. 132.
Rural scenes in *Pictorial Korea*’s photo salons also portray South Korean national subjects as maintaining traditional lifestyles despite the upheavals of war and redevelopment. Images of social activities in the countryside depict the simplicity and tranquility of everyday life. In once again declining to identify the location in which these photographs were taken, they are shown as replicated throughout South Korea. For instance, a photograph in *Pictorial Korea 1956-1957* entitled "Outdoor Entertainment" by Chung In Sung [Chŏng Insŏng] (1911-1996) depicts a scene in which two figures nap in a field while people gather and dance in a circle in the background behind them (figure 4.8). Such images represent the South Korean countryside as an isolated space in which historical culture is preserved in an unchanging form, in defiance of the potential disruption of life threatened by communism. In claiming that South Koreans were able to maintain practicing rural traditions, the IPLK positioned the country as the heir to pre-division Korean history, against the ever-present specter of the North.

Figure 4.8. Chung In Sung [Chŏng Insŏng], *Outdoor Entertainment*. From *Pictorial Korea 1956-1957*, pg. 134-135.
Promoting Photography as an Art Form

Although the images chosen by *Pictorial Korea*’s editors predominately did not reflect the transformations in subject and style occurring in the photography world during the 1950s, the IPLK contributed to the elevation of photography to the level of an art form in this period. Prior to the 1950s, photography was regarded by much of the South Korean public to be a production of technology and not the craft of an artist. This understanding was rooted in perceptions of photography that had been prevalent in the colonial period, when most Koreans did not value photographs or consider them worth paying for. According to Ch'oe, this stunted the development of photography and made it difficult for photographers to earn money for their work.212

Even during the 1950s, South Korean artists who worked primarily in other media scorned photography as being produced by simply the *ch'algak* [click] of a camera.213 Such a refusal to acknowledge photography as art was not unique to South Korea, as photographers elsewhere in the world also struggled against the popular perception that photography was produced without effort, and therefore lacked an "artist."214 The public was also deterred from considering photography as a form of art by its inaccessibility during the post-liberation period and the early 1950s. During this period, the production of art photography was still a cost-prohibitive undertaking that was limited to professionals or the wealthy. The lack of accessibility for most people until the mid-

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213 Kim, *Kusul p’ürojeki ū*, 81-83.
214 Bourdieu, "Social Definition," 77.
1950s meant that there were not many people who were interested in raising the status of photography to that of "art," or in developing theory about its use and techniques.\textsuperscript{215}

This lack of artistic and public support for photography meant that until the late 1950s, South Korean art photographers were limited in available avenues through which they could display their work. While there were numerous art galleries in the country at the time, many of them refused to display photography exhibitions.\textsuperscript{216} Even the Korean National Art Exhibition, which featured works of art from various fields, did not accept photography until 1964 because of the objections of other artists.\textsuperscript{217} This was an issue of critical financial importance to photographers, as the lack of opportunities to present their work to the public meant that they were largely unable to sell their art, and were also not eligible to receive cash prizes in art competitions. The opinions of artists who worked within other media therefore discouraged the elevation of photography to a form of art in South Korea, which impacted the work of photographers.

Within this environment, the IPLK attempted to raise the status of photography in society, as well as encourage the formation of images of the emerging nation-state, by holding national exhibitions and competitions. Song and his team worked together with domestic and foreign organizations such as the South Korean government's Office of Public Information and the United States Information Service in the late 1940s to organize annual displays of local works entitled the Korean Native Cultural Photography Exhibition.\textsuperscript{218} Although held in Seoul, this competition featured submissions from

\textsuperscript{215} Pak and Pak, "Han’guk sajin chapchi": 104.
\textsuperscript{216} Kim, Kusul p’urojekt’ ū, 81.
\textsuperscript{217} Im Ŭngsik, "Sajinyesul ū kwaje - kukchône sajin kaib ūl kyŏngahayŏ," Tonga ilbo, September 2, 1964.
\textsuperscript{218} See call for submissions in Tonga ilbo, October 30, 1948, and Kyŏnghyang sinmun, October 13, 1949.
photographers throughout the country, encouraging notions of a unified nation. South Koreans were invited to submit images of national culture and the country's development, thus promoting the participation of citizens in the construction of a collective imagining of the emerging South Korean nation. In addition, the IPLK provided prize money to winners, supporting photographers financially while promoting perceptions of photography as valuable works of art. The IPLK also held a photography exhibition in Japan, providing a vehicle through which the works of South Korean photographers could be introduced to foreign audiences and thus gain international recognition.

Meanwhile, the IPLK also attempted to transform domestic and international perceptions of South Korean photography by suggesting in their printed works that some images should be viewed as part of a separate genre of "art photography." In the magazine Kukchebodo, images by South Korean artists were regularly introduced to local and international readers as part of their coverage of domestic cultural activities. Similarly, the Pictorial Korea books presented South Korean photography to its audience as works of art by placing them within "photo salons" that were part of larger sections devoted to reproductions and images of other types of "fine arts." This format encouraged readers to view images as works of art. As John Tagg has written, constructed conceptions of defined divisions between photographic "genres" dictate the ways in which viewers interpret images. Building on Tagg's argument, Karen Strassler has written that they are "sets of social practices, aesthetic conventions, and 'semiotic

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219 Kyŏnhyang sinmun, November 7, 1949.
220 Kyŏnhyang sinmun, October 12, 1948.
221 This included an exhibition of photographs of the Korean War that was held in Tokyo in 1953. See IPLK, Pictorial Korea 1953-1954.
ideologies' that condition how people make and make sense of photographic images."\textsuperscript{223}

The format of the publications of the IPLK thus encouraged South Korean and international readers to recognize certain images as part of a "genre" of art photography. This was an attempt to transform popular opinion about the potential of the medium by encouraging them to see photographs in new ways. While it is impossible to determine the impact of the works of the IPLK on conceptions of the medium during this period, their attempts to portray photographs as works of art shows their participation in the greater struggle for recognition within the photography world at the time.

Conclusion

Public interest in photography and acknowledgement of its value as artwork increased in the mid 1950s. According to Yi Kyŏngmo, as technology became more affordable, it was fashionable in the mid-1950s for men to carry a Leica camera around their neck as an accessory and status symbol.\textsuperscript{224} In 1956, the American travelling exhibition \textit{Family of Man}, which included over 500 documentary-style photographs from all over the world, was brought to South Korea, and in the same year a group of realism photographers led by Yi Hyŏngnok held their own exhibition.\textsuperscript{225} The mass popularity of these exhibitions contributed to the general public's awakening to the possibilities of photography and a growing appreciation for the works of domestic photographers as art.\textsuperscript{226}

\textsuperscript{224} Yi Kyŏngmo, interview by Im Yŏnggyun, \textit{Sajinga wa ŭi taehwa} 3, 57.
\textsuperscript{225} Pak, \textit{Sŏn 'gujadil}, 153.
\textsuperscript{226} Yi Kyŏngmo, interview by Im Yŏnggyun, \textit{Sajinga wa ŭi taehwa} 3, 57. See also Kang, \textit{Chaebalgyŏn}, 10.
During this period, Song and his staff were active members of the South Korean photography world. The company employed a staff of photographers who regularly contributed their own productions to their publications, and while they were unable to pay non-staff contributors for their images, they provided a platform for the presentation of domestically produced photography on a mass scale through their exhibitions and printed works. The works of the IPLK therefore, while largely neglecting contemporary photographic trends, were entangled within the photography world of the time as they contributed to the development of the appreciation of photography as an art form.

227 Kim Hanyong, interview by Ch'oe, "Haebang ch'ogi": 15.
5. Sending *Pictorial Korea* to the "Free World"

"The people of the free world are watching and cheering in admiration... This year's edition of the annual publication *Pictorial Korea* has finally been released! It now debuts in every country in the world."

- Advertisement, *Kyŏnhang sinmun*, August 8, 1957

In order for the International Publicity League of Korea to affect global perceptions of South Korea, the visual narratives they produced and compiled had to be distributed to their intended foreign audience. This process involved the advertising, sale, donation, gifting, shipping, and sharing of the books on an international scale. The conveyance of the IPLK's constructed images to the world was therefore enabled by the materiality of the books as objects that could be marketed and exchanged in such social processes. This chapter aims to examine the effect of this materiality of the photobooks as they worked as mediators of diplomatic and personal relationships within the non-communist world. It will also discuss how the distribution of the photobooks as objects created contexts of viewing that shaped the ways in which the IPLK's narratives were received.

This consideration of the photobooks as objects follows a recent increase in interest in the study of photographs as image-objects whose material form affects the ways in which they are viewed and interpreted. In particular, anthropologist Elizabeth Edwards has criticized the common tendency of scholars to study photographs semiotically by solely examining the interpretations of signs and symbols perceived to be present in their printed images. She argues that such an approach divorces the photograph's image from its material form, thus neglecting to consider the influence of the materiality of the photograph as an object on the viewer's interpretation, as well as
overlooking the ways in which the image and object act in dialogue with each other.\textsuperscript{228} She thus encourages scholars of photography to adopt Daniel Miller's approach of examining the material qualities of historical objects in order to understand their cultural value and perceived meaning.\textsuperscript{229} This chapter will adopt such a framework in its consideration of the editions of \textit{Pictorial Korea} as objects with individual histories, or what Edwards describes as "social biographies,"\textsuperscript{230} in order to understand the various roles that the materiality of the books played in the construction of an imagined "free world" and South Korea's position within it. This extends the study of the books from simply an examination of their contents to an analysis of the ways in which they acted within diverse historical contexts as material objects.

The task of uncovering the social biographies of the \textit{Pictorial Korea} books involves an examination of the International Publicity League of Korea's methods of marketing, sale, and distribution, as well as the traces of exchange and ownership found in the editions of the books that were studied for this project. Although the total number of \textit{Pictorial Korea} editions that were produced and circulated worldwide is unknown, an analysis of library holdings illustrates the wide-reaching distribution of these books during and after the period of their publication.\textsuperscript{231} According to international library catalogues, copies of \textit{Pictorial Korea} and \textit{Glimpse of Korea} can currently be found in libraries around the world in countries including South Korea, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Taiwan, and Japan. Most of these books

\textsuperscript{230} Edwards, "Material Beings": 70.
\textsuperscript{231} The IPLK claims in \textit{Glimpses of Korea 1951} that 30,000 copies of \textit{Pictorial Korea 1950} had been sold, but there are no available records to substantiate this claim.
appear to have been acquired by libraries later in the 20th century as donations from collections of their previous owners, although some libraries reported acquiring editions during the 1950s (mostly after 1956). The books are also sold in used bookstores, as well as on both South Korean and English-language online auction sites. Almost all of the editions that were compiled for this study contained clues to their histories as material objects. Many included bookplates, stamps, checkout cards, signatures or initials, dedications, letters, or other traces of their use. The IPLK also included commendatory letters from foreign readers in many of its publications. These varied sources reveal a cross-section of the multitude of ways in which people engaged with the books since their publication in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Most Appropriate Gift for Foreign Acquaintances

In order for the IPLK to achieve their goals of transmitting images of South Korea to the non-communist world, they had to ensure that their books reached their intended foreign readers. One way in which the IPLK attempted to transmit its works to its audience was through placing advertisements in Korean-language newspapers. These advertisements did occasionally include brief English text, including the title of the books and suggestions as to where they could be purchased, but the majority of text was directed towards a South Korean audience (see figure 5.1). Messages in Korean encouraged domestic readers not to purchase

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Libraries that reported holdings of *Pictorial Korea* to the Library of Congress in the 1950s included: University of Virginia at Charlottesville; Union Library Catalog of the Philadelphia Metropolitan area; The Academy of the New Church, Bryn Athyn; and the Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science. According to local newspapers, there were also copies held at a public library in Buffalo, New York (*Buffalo Courier-Express*, August 25, 1957) and an elementary school library in New York (*Sandy Creek News*, January 31, 1957).
the books for their own enjoyment or education, but to buy them as gifts to personally introduce South Korea to foreign acquaintances. These advertisements thus attempted to persuade South Koreans to act as intermediaries in the distribution of the books. For instance, one Korean-language advertisement in the *Tonga ilbo* newspaper in 1955 describes that year's *Pictorial Korea* as an "introduction to Korea presented in a deluxe edition with vivid printing and ample content, and the one and only gift for people from allied nations." In 1957, a similar advertisement in the *Kyŏnghyang sinmun* suggested to Korean-language readers that the books would be "the most appropriate Christmas gift for anyone overseas." The IPLK thus used the suggestion of a need for South Korean readers to give gifts to foreign relations as a way to distribute their books to their intended audience.

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233 While the English-language version was the only one to be promoted by the IPLK in Korean-language newspapers, they also produced a version in French in the mid-1960s entitled *La Corée Graphique* and at least two versions in Japanese at the end of this decade.  
235 *Kyŏnghyang sinmun*, October 26, 1957.
The ideal intermediaries in these transactions were South Koreans who could afford copies of the book and knew foreign acquaintances that were members of the IPLK’s intended audience. However, for most South Koreans, the cost of buying an edition of *Pictorial Korea* would have been prohibitive. As *Pictorial Korea 1950* cost 2,500 won or 3 US dollars (roughly 29 US dollars today) and the average annual income in 1953 was 67 US dollars, few members of the South Korean public would have purchased the books themselves.\(^2\)\(^3\) It is also unlikely that most South Koreans would have had relationships with foreigners to whom they felt a desire or need to give a gift. Nevertheless, the dedications written within editions of

the books and letters to the editor that were regularly published in *Pictorial Korea* indicate that the books were successfully distributed to their planned foreign audience. These letters were written by a wide-ranging selection of readers, including the director of the United States Information Service, the mayor of Los Angeles, a professor in Australia, and Canadian missionary and teacher Frank Schofield.237

While some of these copies may have been given directly to their recipients by the IPLK, many South Koreans who worked as government or military officials acted in accordance with the IPLK's recommendation and gave the books to foreign dignitaries and personal relations. The presentation of these books from giver to receiver was often recorded within the inside cover in the form of a dedication. For example, a newspaper in Sandy Creek, New York reported in 1957 that the local elementary school's library had received a copy of an edition of *Pictorial Korea* through a woman named Mina Risley. According to the article, Risley had been given the book directly by South Korea's Minister of Education, Lee Sun Keun [Yi Sun'gŭn] who had written a dedication in the front of the book in both Korean and English.238 A similar dedication in another book suggests that some South Koreans gave multiple copies of the books to foreign readers. In the back pages of an edition of *Pictorial Korea 1950*, Goo Byoung Hak [Ku Pyŏnhak] wrote his name and address under "From" but left a large blank space after "To." It appears that Goo was unsure of who the book was intended for, and may possibly have been signing

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237 Schofield spent several years in Korea during the colonial period as an educator, and later returned there in 1955 to resume teaching. See chapter 1 for a brief discussion of his role in disseminating images of Korea during the colonial period.  
238 *Sandy Creek News*, January 31, 1957: 3.
several copies of the book at once to be given to foreign acquaintances with the intention of filling in the names of recipients at a later point. Other South Koreans who included dedications in the copies of the IPLK's books that they gave to foreign acquaintances included the mayor of Seoul and staff who worked within the mayor's office. While it is suspected that some of these South Koreans were given copies of the books by the IPLK for free, others may have purchased them at local retailers. Either way, these South Koreans acted as mediators in the distribution of the IPLK's works to their foreign acquaintances, as the company had intended.

As part of the process of distributing these books to foreign readers, the senders not only aided the IPLK's goals of reaching their intended audience, but also participated in the construction of representations of South Korea by confirming the veracity of the IPLK's visual narratives. The act of giving the books functioned as a personal affirmation of the images included in its pages. A letter to the editor written in *Pictorial Korea 1964* illustrates the ways in which people who were not employed by the IPLK were involved in the corroboration of its representations of South Korea by distributing them to a wider audience. This letter was written by Soo Young Lee [Yi Suyŏng], a member of the Korean Mission to the United Nations. Lee states that he annually received copies of *Pictorial Korea*, and verifies the accuracy of its representations of South Korea by stating:

> I am sure that the distribution of this publication that comprises the vivid account of the development and reconstruction of Korea today, together with her traditional cultural feature had greatly helped introduce Korea and her people to the United Nations, more than any other form of presentation. It is

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239 While South Korea did not receive a seat in the General Assembly of the United Nations until 1991, it regularly sent a team of representatives. Lee's name is included on a list of these representatives in 1968. See "Susŏk taep’yo e Ch’oe oemu UN ch’onghoe Han’guk taep’yo," *Maeil gyŏngje*, October 15, 1968.
for this that I take great pleasure in recommending "PICTORIAL KOREA" as a true reporting of my country of today.  

Although it is not clear if Lee directly gave the books to people he met at the United Nations, he endorsed them as accurate representations of South Korea by recommending them to others. Similarly, while another South Korean working in the United States did not present acquaintances with copies of the book, he confirmed its visual narratives by showing his personal copy, which had been given to him by Song, to Americans that he encountered.

The act of signing the books for an intended recipient was another way in which the sender corroborated Pictorial Korea's representations of the nation. For example, one dedication written in a copy of Pictorial Korea 1954-1955 described the book as a "brief summary of our country's customs and etc." and encouraged the receiver to show it to their friends. People who received a copy from an acquaintance or were shown the books may have considered the visual narrative produced by the IPLK to be more (or possibly less) reliable based on their personal relationships with and perceptions of their acquaintance. South Koreans who were not members of the IPLK therefore played a role in the production of the IPLK's imagined South Korea by impacting the ways in which their foreign audience received their visual narratives.

Creating a "Free World" of Readers

The distribution of Pictorial Korea to its intended audience not only constructed conceptions of South Korea for its readers, but also contributed to the production of an

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240 IPLK, Pictorial Korea 1964, 4.
imagined community of the "free world." As previously discussed (see chapter 3), the books positioned the country as a member of a community of anti-communist nations through its photographs and text. In addition to this, the materiality of the book also served as a way to construct this orientation. By proclaiming to its readers that the English-language Pictorial Korea books were created for the "free world," the IPLK played a part in the creation of an imagined community of readers that shared both a language and homogeneous ideology. This "free world" community was not a crystallized group of people that existed inherently, but was a perceived connection between countries that was built through the use of discourse such as that found in Pictorial Korea. Song claimed in 1957 that its readers in the "free world" included people in the United States, England, France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Australia, and countries within the "Far East." As these countries were presented as part of a community of readers of Pictorial Korea, they were therefore positioned as members of the imagined "free world" to which the books were addressed.

The sale of the books within foreign countries also contributed to this conception. For example, Pictorial Korea was sold in stores overseas in countries including Japan, Vietnam, the United States, and Hong Kong (see figure 5.2). The 1970 edition of Pictorial Korea included a photograph of over $10,000 worth of copies of Pictorial Korea 1969 being shipped to their distributing agency in Los Angeles. This worldwide marketing and sale of the books therefore corroborated the IPLK's narratives that claimed

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242 IPLK, Pictorial Korea 1956-1957, 11
243 In 1967, a Japanese company purchased $3750 worth of Pictorial Korea for distribution. See Maeil gyŏngje, May 25, 1967. It is unclear whether these books were printed in English or Japanese, but the latter is possible as the IPLK published at least two Japanese translated editions of Pictorial Korea, in 1968 and 1969.
244 IPLK, Pictorial Korea 1970, 230.
that South Korea was not only a sovereign country but also a member of an imagined community of anti-communist nation-states who were linked through economic ties.

The books were also used as tools in the establishment and representation of friendly relationships between South Koreans and other members of this imagined community of the "free world." For example, Song personally gave a copy of *Pictorial Korea* to the mayor of Los Angeles as part of the celebrations of the formation of a "sister city" relationship between Pusan and Los Angeles. The book thus served as a mediator in the establishment of a relationship between Song and the mayor, as well as between the two cities. Prior existing relationships were also verified through the act of giving the
book to a foreign acquaintance. For example, a South Korean major general gave a copy of *Pictorial Korea 1950* to an American military officer, dedicating the work by signing the inside pages, "To, my dear LT. Col Wooters, for your good health." Editions of the book thus both facilitated and manifested relationships between South Koreans and members of allied nation-states, acting as metonyms for broader diplomatic relationships between the countries of South Korea and the United States.

Similarly, the South Korean government also used *Pictorial Korea* as tangible representations of South Korea's friendly relationships with foreign servicemen, travellers, and residents. The government's Office of Public Information distributed the books, as well as other domestically produced English-language materials (such as literary journals and newspapers) to visitors of the Office's "Korea House." This cultural centre, which was built in 1957, was designed primarily to educate United Nations servicemen who were living in South Korea about the country's culture in order to improve relations between foreign servicemen and the local population. Visitors to the Korea House were invited to enjoy South Korean cultural entertainment, such as tea ceremonies, dances, film screenings, and sightseeing tours. According to government records, almost 19,000 UN military personnel and over 7,000 civilian foreigners visited the Korea House in 1958 alone. In addition to acting as souvenirs of their experiences in South Korea and at the Korea House, the books were representations of the relations between visitors and South Korea's population. Foreigners in South Korea were also given copies of the books directly by the IPLK, as Song distributed thousands of copies of *Pictorial Korea* and the company's other works to American and United Nations

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servicemen. He also publically presented prominent foreign officials in South Korea, such as General James Van Fleet, with copies of the book (see figure 5.3). Outside of the country, he sent 1,500 copies of the condensed version of Pictorial Korea entitled Glimpse of Korea to the Melbourne Olympics in 1956 to be given to international visitors and athletes. These cases illustrate how the books were used as both mediators and representations of relationships between South Koreans and citizens of other nation-states, thus forging and verifying diplomatic and personal connections between the country and its allies.

Figure 5.3. Song presenting books to General James Van Fleet. From Pictorial Korea 1961, pg. 198.

247 Tonga ilbo, December 6, 1962; IPLK, Pictorial Korea 1964, 146.
248 IPLK, Pictorial Korea 1961, 198.
249 Kyŏnghyang sinmun, November 21, 1956.
Pictorial Korea as a Souvenir

For some readers, the books also served as tangible representations of personal experiences within and attachments to South Korea. *Pictorial Korea* was not only purchased by South Koreans and given to foreigners, but also was available to be bought directly by readers within and outside of South Korea. As was previously mentioned, the books were sold in bookstores in other countries directly to their intended foreign readers. They were also on sale in South Korea in commercial and public spaces that were frequented by international visitors and residents. These included the PX stores on UN forces army bases, and large South Korean bookstores, department stores, and hotels. The books could therefore be directly bought by foreign travellers, servicemen, and residents in South Korea as reminders of their experiences in the country, regardless of whether the visual representations constructed by the IPLK corresponded with their own imagined South Korea. They were also available to be purchased directly from the IPLK by subscription, which encouraged the forging of personal relationships with South Korea even for those who had never visited the country.

One book that was purchased as a link to personal experiences with the country is an edition of *Pictorial Korea 1956-1957* currently held in the University of Toronto libraries. According to the dedication written on its inside cover, the book was given to a recipient addressed as "Dr. Grierson" by an unknown sender who writes, "This is the picture of KOREA in which are your love, mind, spirit, and your whole [sic]." The

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252 This edition was later donated to the Canadian School of Missions and Ecumenical Institute by Grierson’s wife, and then acquired by a local Toronto bookseller who donated it to the libraries of the University of Toronto in 1988.
recipient of this edition, Robert Grierson, was a Canadian medical missionary who had worked in Korea for almost forty years from 1898 to 1934.\textsuperscript{253} Although the book may have partially been intended as an educational tool to fulfil the recipient's perceived desire for information on the current state of the country, it was also a representation of his personal attachment to the once unified Korea. While it was not bought by Grierson in the country, it was a later reminder of his experiences in Korea during the colonial period. In such cases, the books acted not only as gifts but also as souvenirs. According to Susan Stewart, "the souvenir reduces the public, the monumental, and the three-dimensional into the miniature, that which can be enveloped by the body, or into the two-dimensional representation, that which can be appropriated within the privatized view of the individual subject."\textsuperscript{254} As souvenirs, the \textit{Pictorial Korea} books were miniature versions of South Korea that could be used as reminders of experiences there, thus sustaining links between the country and those who felt a connection to it.

\textbf{South Koreans and \textit{Pictorial Korea}}

This focus on the distribution of \textit{Pictorial Korea} to its intended foreign audience does not aim to deny the ways in which the books were read, interpreted, and valued by South Korean readers. Many South Korean citizens were exposed to these books (including those who gave them as gifts), and they may have agreed or disagreed with the IPLK's representations of their country. Even those who were not familiar with the English language may have enjoyed looking at the books as they provided them with the

\textsuperscript{253} Bruce Grierson, "The Book of Bob," \textit{The Walrus} 1 no. 5 (June 2004): 67.

\textsuperscript{254} Susan Stewart, \textit{On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection} (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1984), 137.
opportunity to view photographs of South Korea, particularly as domestically produced works that included photographs of the country were rare at the time. The images of South Korea created by the IPLK may have also influenced their own personal conceptions of themselves as members of a South Korean nation, and of the country as part of a global network of allied nations.

Nevertheless, it is clear that many South Koreans considered the book mainly as a tool to be used in the introduction of the nation to foreigners. Reviewers in domestic newspapers, for example, primarily determined the value of the books based on their perceived successful reception by their intended foreign audience. For instance, one reviewer's brief description of the books in 1957 highlighted the IPLK's success in achieving its goals of reaching international audiences by including a list of countries from which copies had been ordered. Another article in the same year evaluated an edition of *Pictorial Korea* based on its ability to impress foreign viewers with the quality of its photographs and journalism. Similar to Song in January of 1950 (see introduction), the reviewer therefore judged the value of the publications based on their ability to convey the level of South Korea's technological and cultural development to the world. These examples illustrate how South Koreans perceived of the books as tools in representing an imagined South Korea to a foreign audience, and not as intended for purchase and consumption by national subjects.

**The Library as a Microcosm of the Image World**

A final point of discussion about the materiality of *Pictorial Korea* relates to the

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way in which its narratives have been positioned within broader worlds of representations as parts of libraries and collections. The orientation of the books within greater collections of representations of South Korea facilitates the comparison and contrast of the imagined nation within *Pictorial Korea* with those of other works. This has affected the ways in which their images have been interpreted both currently and during the period of their publication. It is doubtless true that the *Pictorial Korea* books were rarely viewed without the influence of a reader's preconceptions about the country, which were formed by other representations in the image world that may have contrasted with or corroborated the images printed within its pages. Such influences may have included other media such as film and television, images in popular printed media such as *LIFE* (see chapter 3), personal experiences in the country, stories heard of those who had fought in the war, and a vast bank of other forms of knowledge about the country.

A consideration of how the books were positioned in collections of other printed works serves as a metonymic representation of how they worked within such larger personal banks of knowledge about the country. For example, the edition of *Pictorial Korea 1950* that is currently held in the Columbia University Library was donated by Theodore Richard Conant, a filmmaker who spent several years working in South Korea during the 1950s. This book was part of Conant's immense personal collection of books, films, photographs, and other media related to South Korea that he donated to Columbia University in 2008. On the first page of this edition of *Pictorial Korea 1950*, Conant marked his ownership and thus the book's position as part of his greater collection by writing "T. Conant" in the top right corner. The books are thus linked through Conant's mark of ownership with a collection of other works that claim to represent South Korea.
This places them in direct comparison with other representations of the country that exist within these materials. In collections of books and other media, readers therefore encounter *Pictorial Korea* not as comprehensive and isolated representations of the country, but as single parts of larger collections of information about the country and its citizens.

Readers' encounters with *Pictorial Korea* within the space of library collections have contributed to their formation of individual understandings and knowledge about the country, including during the period of its regular publication. An example of this can be seen in the traces found in an edition of *Pictorial Korea 1951-1952* that has been in the libraries of Princeton University since at least 1954. According to its checkout card, it was borrowed seven times in the 1950s, twice by a student named Glenn Paige. Paige was a Korean War veteran who was attending Princeton at the time. He later taught political science at Seoul National University, helped establish the University of Hawai'i Center for Korean Studies, and wrote a book about Truman's decision to intervene in the Korean War. The location of the books within libraries thus made them accessible to a greater number of viewers and allowed readers to use them as a tool in their construction of knowledge about South Korea and the events that occurred there. The space of the library or collection thus serves as a microcosm of the larger image world within which *Pictorial Korea* contributes to the construction of an imagined South Korea for its readers.

Conclusion

A consideration of the *Pictorial Korea* books as material objects reveals the ways in which their wide-ranging distribution influenced interpretations of their visual narratives. The materiality of the books enabled the verification of their representations by those who distributed them and gave them as gifts to foreign readers. In addition, their dissemination corroborated the IPLK's discourses by contributing to the construction of an imagined community of the "free world." The books also served as a tool in the representation and solidification of relationships between South Korea and citizens of other nation-states, which symbolized broader diplomatic relationships between the country and its allies. Furthermore, they acted as souvenirs that reduced imaginations of South Korea into tangible objects of value for those who used them as reminders of their experiences in the country. Lastly, the materiality of the books directly affected the ways in which their representations were viewed because it allowed for the physical positioning of the books within a greater image world of representations of the country, which enabled the comparison and contrast of the IPLK's visual narratives with those found in other materials. Today, the books continue to mediate relationships and contribute to conceptions of South Korea due to their materiality. The form of the visual narratives produced by the IPLK thus allows for the continuation of diverse interactions with the books as they are exchanged, donated, and encountered within varied contexts. Over half a century after their publication, the material form of the *Pictorial Korea* books therefore continues to impact the ways in which today's viewers conceive of and imagine South Korea.
Conclusion

In August of 1970, Song Junghoon and the IPLK produced their last known publication, the final edition of *Pictorial Korea*. Although the reason for the apparent dissolution of the IPLK after this date is unknown, it was most likely due to the company's enduring financial difficulties. The IPLK had struggled to fund its publications throughout the 1950s and 1960s, as they were unable to make a profit and had outstanding debts to the government. In addition, their decision to stop creating *Pictorial Korea* in 1970 may have also been related to a global decrease in interest in photographic publications. During the boom of popularity in television in the 1960s, the American magazine *LIFE* suffered from a decline in its once massive readership, and eventually ended publication in 1972.\(^{258}\) The growing prevalence of other modes of conveying visual narratives, such as television, may have been a similar factor in the IPLK's decision to end its twenty-year project of disseminating images of the nation through printed photographic materials.

The dissolution of the IPLK also coincided with its members' growing interest in other, potentially more profitable, business ventures. In the late 1960s, while the IPLK was still producing editions of *Pictorial Korea*, Song Junghoo started a company called International Art Production (*Kukche At’üp ’ürodŏkson*). By 1972, the company employed over 120 South Korean artists to manually colour in black-and-white cartoons that had been created in America. The cartoons were then exported back to the United States where they were broadcast on television.\(^{259}\) Former staff photographer Kim

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\(^{259}\) Min Pyŏngun, "Isaeksuch’ul (7) manhwayŏnghwaw yongyŏk," *Tonga ilbo*, November 28, 1972. Song's history after the establishment of this business is unknown, although his apparent disappearance from the
Hanyong also moved on to more profitable endeavours. Following the dissolution of *Kukchebodo* in 1959, he had established his own photography studio in Seoul. During the 1960s, while he continued to submit photographs to *Pictorial Korea*, he became one of South Korea's first advertising photographers. According to Im Ŭngsik, although Kim struggled financially for the first ten years after he established his studio, he successfully became a pioneer of the genre of commercial photography in South Korea.

The IPLK's persistence in regularly publishing new works despite overwhelming financial struggles is proof of their dedication to the task of countering foreign representations of South Korea. Even during the upheaval and destruction of the Korean War, despite a lack of access to printing facilities, the IPLK continued to produce works that were intended to "make [the] outside world understand Korea as she was and is." This study has attempted to elucidate the ways in which the IPLK utilized the format of the photobook to create and disseminate such positive representations of the South Korean nation to its intended foreign audience. The placement of images within the context of a photobook guided readers to certain interpretations due to the arrangement of foreign and domestic photographs with accompanying text. The visual narratives produced by the IPLK also criticized foreign representations of the country such as those in *LIFE*. Their method of doing so was not to deny popular tropes of South Korea's unique traditions, but instead to supplement such images with proof of the country's modernity and development. While these images largely eschewed contemporary art world may have been due to the inclusion of his name on a blacklist of over fifty artists who were accused of having collaborated with the Japanese government during the colonial period. See Yi T'aeho, "Ch’īn’ilsisurin segallae ro ch’ŏlgae kkŏgotta," *Kyŏnghyang sinmun*, August 3, 1991.

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260 Pak, Sŏn’guyadul, 173.
261 Im, Han’guk sadan, 197.
photographic trends of the time, they encouraged viewers to interpret photography as an art form and thus elevated perceptions of the nation by portraying its capability to produce modern fine arts. As this paper has argued, the IPLK used photographs to portray South Korea as the legitimate heir to Korean historical tradition, in comparison to North Korea; and a sovereign nation-state capable of contributing to its own defense and redevelopment, despite the continuing presence of foreign powers in the country.

The materiality of the books as objects then facilitated the transmission of these constructed visual narratives to their intended foreign audience. In sending images of South Korea to the non-communist world in book form, the IPLK established and affirmed the country's position within an imagined "free world" community of allied nations. Although the IPLK ceased publication in 1970, their works have continued to affect the ways that viewers conceive of the country. They currently remain in private collections and libraries throughout the world, and are often sold in used bookstores and through online auctions. They can therefore still be accessed, as intended, as educational tools in the forming of understandings of South Korea, which despite the end of the Cold War maintains its position in a triangular relationship with North Korea and the anti-communist Western world.

Meanwhile, they are also viewed by readers that the IPLK may not have predicted, such as members of the Korean diaspora in the West. A poem by Jennifer Kwon Dobbs, a Korean-American adoptee, illustrates one way in which readers currently encounter and view the *Pictorial Korea* books. She writes:

I love, so it's hard to tell
where Sukkul-am Cave is in *Pictorial Korea*.

Copyright 1956. The truth is purchased
from Pittsburgh's Caliban Bookshop in '99,

because the girl on the cover wore a striped hanbok
She is me, is not me (I'm learning

how to manage paradox.) ... 263

For Dobbs, the discovery of an edition of *Pictorial Korea* in a used bookstore in the United States in the late 1990s not only contributed to her conceptions of her identity, but also affected the ways in which she viewed South Korea. She goes on to describe her trip to Sukkul-am Cave [Sŏkkuram], which she had seen in photographs in *Pictorial Korea*. Although the works of the IPLK were intended to be viewed by foreign audiences in the 1950s and 1960s in order to gain recognition as a sovereign state vis-à-vis another Korean nation and the imposing shadow of the United States, their persistence as material objects allows for the continued development of their new social biographies. As tangible transcriptions of the ways in which South Koreans imagined the emerging nation-state at specific moments in the Cold War, they thus continue to affect how the country is visualized by the readers who encounter them.

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