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In The Defense of Memory: The Preservation and Mobilization of Historic Defiance in Contemporary South Korea

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Abstract

Through the interrogation of the Jinjuseong Fortress in Jinju, South Korea, the connections between nationalism, memory studies, and the role of the built environment can be better understood. This thesis attempts to dissect the presentation of the Korean nation at this site as a continuous, inevitable nation through historic resistance to the Japanese and the role of this presentation in creating ontological security. In looking at four specific sites within the fortress that have been added over the past 400 years, the Changyeolsa Shrine, the Sites of Nongae, the Patriot's Altar, and the Jinju National Museum, the continuous and iterative development of a Korean collective memory through the built environment is shown. This iterative process has allowed these entities to work with one another to create a network of memory infrastructure which has merged the distinct memories contained by each site into a unified collective memory that influences contemporary South Korean politics, both domestic and international. Untangling this web of memorialization presents an opportunity to challenge the infallible narrative presented at this place and contest memory's false restrictions on international relations.

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Introduction

The Jinjuseong Fortress, a fully restored 16th-century fortress occupies the heart of a modern city, Jinju. Today, this fortress is home to a vast network of memorial infrastructure made up of over two dozen sites, including shrines, memorials, altars, a national museum, and an annual festival, most in the memory of the Imjin War but, more importantly, all to the Korean nation. Even though the exterior of the fortress may seem outdated and out of place, it still represents a very practical means of defense. While it physically defended the people and the city of Jinju from invaders between 1592 and 1598, today, the fortress defends a much more abstract idea, the nation. Although the price to gain access to the fortress is no longer blood, the approximately $1.50 entry fee for the fortress and its enclosed sites now presents a deliberately created national narrative that continues to be mobilized to represent, protect, and project the agency of the Korean people and nation.

Jinju's role in Korean history traces back thousands of years. However, its role during the Imjin War has cemented its place in the national imagination. The Imjin War began in 1592 with the invasion of the Korean Peninsula by forces from the Japanese Home Islands of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Jinju, being at the southern tip of the Korean Peninsula, was immediately in the path of the invading forces. Just a few months after the initial invasion, the Chŏson defenders of Jinju rebuffed an attack from Hideyoshi's invading force. However, in 1593, Hideyoshi's forces returned to Jinju with over 90,000 troops and overran the Chŏson forces defending the fortress.[1] Following their victory, Hideyoshi's forces massacred the defenders and "Korean records claim 60,000 deaths, … [with] a massacre of soldiers and non-combatants alike" resulting in the Nam

[1] Stephen Turnbull, *Samurai Invasion*. (London: Cassell Military, 2002), 156.

River running red.[2] Despite this absolute defeat, this battle became the foundation for the potent nationalist myths which have been interpreted and mobilized by contemporary Korean nationalists into defining national characteristics of defiance and hope.

This fortress is home to a deep history of commemoration and memories. In preserving and mobilizing these memories, this fortress attempts to simultaneously bring to life and historicize the events of the Imjin War. While these two efforts seem at odds with each other, the production and reproduction of collective memory at this site relies on both of these actions. The nurturing and promoting of the collective Korean memory through various spaces within the city of Jinju, specifically the Jinjuseong Fortress, creates fertile ground to produce foundational and salient myths of the nation. Current visitors feel most connected when these stories are firmly placed in a historical context while simultaneously making the battle feel both contemporary and imminent.

The use of space at this site, through shrines and the festival held here, tells a continuous story of Korea. For example, a story of one defender, Nongae, continues today as remembering a 19-year-old who sacrificed her life for the nation to continue the fight against the Japanese.[3] This story is remembered throughout South Korea today and is used to inspire defiance, virtue, and loyalty, transforming the memory forged at Jinju from a story of defeat to a tale of defiance. For Nongae, her memory embodies not only the ideal Chŏson Korean patriot but a contemporary South Korean patriot. In tying this over 400-year event to the present, this site maintains the conception of an unceasing Korean nation that is and will always be worth the ultimate sacrifice.

The role of space serves as the key player in this negotiation of temporality. Through the filling of the Jinjuseong Fortress with memory infrastructure, the memory of events is deeply

[2] Ibid., 160.
[3] Ibid., 96.

ingrained in the site, but also with one another, creating a web of memorialization, in which each site's memory supports the other regardless of an authentic relation. The continual building of this infrastructure over 400 years has tied a vast and fractured history into an ostensibly united narrative. This has almost exclusively been through state attempts to control the narrative of the nation by manipulating this infrastructure and its message. However, even though the built environment is made up of memory infrastructure, the space still continues to be used in daily activity, independent of memory purposes. These quotidian uses create gaps in the state's control. These gaps expose the limitations and mendacity of the singularizing national narrative.

Through a web of memorialization, made up of the Changyeolsa Shrine, Uigisa Shrine, Patriot's Altar, the Jinju National Museum, and the Jinjuseong Fortress itself, the stories and their memories of events are grounded in Jinju and maintain, rearticulate, and, ultimately, reproduce national identity. The sites of memory and the city of Jinju itself each embody and convey a different memory, retelling, and perspective of the Korean collective imagination. Together, as a collective, the built environment serves as the nexus of these different memories in the transmission of a seemingly unified Korean national identity. This transmission constantly works to rearticulate a contemporarily apt and seemingly unchanging national identity. In this way, the site selectively ties events from Chŏson Korea together with contemporary South Korea to create what is understood as the continuous Korean nation today. Ultimately, this city, the fortress, and the sites within it serve as and support the foundation of national myths. This creates a mutually constitutive cycle of memory and national identity reliant on the Jinjuseong Fortress.

Literature Review

To explore the significance of Jinju, its fortress, and the memory produced and reproduced there, the connections between nationalism, memory studies, and the role of the built environment must be drawn together. By focusing on sites of memory as identity builders in contemporary South Korea and historical Korea, the production and reproduction of the Korean nation can be used as a new way to understand the connection between national identity's reliance and impact on memory and the built environment.

To understand how a nation forms, first, an understanding of what a nation is must be defined. The widespread conception of the nation as an imagined community that Benedict Anderson articulates in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* still dominates the field.[4] Helping to reconcile this theory in the Korean context, Haboush's *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation* relies heavily upon Anderson's definition of the nation as an imagined community to develop the idea that the Imjin War helped to forge the Korean nation.[5] Haboush heavily draws on Anderson's foundational concept of the nation. Looking at the Korean example, Haboush attempts to shift Anderson's concept backwards in time while also developing new mechanisms of national formation. Together, these scholars provide the framework to discuss the Korean nation within the context of the Imjin War, allowing for analysis via other theories of nationalism, memory, and the built environment. For the purposes of this thesis, the nation is understood as an entity curated by the state while made up of the people.

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[4] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2016)
[5] JaHyun Kim Haboush, *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016)

Before engaging with other fields, a basic understanding of Korean nationalism must be established. For the scope of this work, this will mainly focus on contemporary articulations of the pre-modern Korean nation and its relation to contemporary South Korean identity. This is specifically driven by Haboush's work which engages with the Imjin War and early Chŏson Korea. Scholars of Korean nationalism focus on the following periods: the 1876 opening of Korean ports by the Japanese and the end of Chŏson; the early 20th-century Japanese occupation of Korea, including events such as the March 1st Movement; and the post-1945 liberation of the Korean Peninsula. Each of these periods represents developments, some of which build off the previous era, while others are independent of the prior phase. However, all these periods do share one thing: they remember the past.

For the Korean nation in the context of the Jinjuseong Fortress, the memory begins with the Imjin War. Haboush's arguments extend the formation of the Korean nation to the early modern conflict of the Imjin War. Haboush applies Anderson's definition of the nation as an imagined community to a nascent Korean nation. Like Anderson, Haboush focuses extensively on language and vernacular as the means of galvanizing national identity.[6] During the Imjin War, rather than print-capitalism spurring the spread of a vernacular, it was spread through what could be described as print-defense in which circulars and messages were spread exclusively in the Korean Hangul alphabet calling for the defense of the nation.

Haboush explores the development of a culture of commemoration immediately following the Imjin War which encouraged and maintained memories of the war. In this culture that permeated both public and private life, narratives "create[d] their own autonomous commemoration."[7] This culture is embodied by the Jinjuseong fortress. For Haboush, Japanese

[6] Ibid., 116.
[7] Ibid., 152.

invasion created Korean processes that were the beginning of a formation of a Korean identity during the Chŏson period, which helped give birth to the Korean nation.

This culture of commemoration born out of the Imjin War can be seen throughout the post-liberation period and even into the present. Because this thesis focuses on the Jinjuseong Fortress in Jinju, South Korea, the remaining section pertaining to the development of Korean nationalism will exclusively address South Korea. Gi-Wook Shin explores this dynamic in his chapter on "Nation, History, and Politics: South Korea."[8] In this analysis, Shin looks towards the marshalling of nationalist politics in the pre-democratic post-liberation South Korea.

Post-liberation South Korea looked intentionally towards historic instances of national manifestations to create national legitimacy. This reverence for history combined with anti-communist discourse created a distinct variety of Korean nationalism that was restricted to below the 38th parallel. Following liberation, South Korea was ruled by a series of authoritarian leaders, like President Park Chung Hee, who ruled from 1961 to 1979. During his rule, Park extensively employed nationalist rhetoric, including language like "nation regeneration" and "national consciousness."[9] His idea of a South Korean nation focused on combining ethnic and political elements of the nation. In doing so, he separated the "North Korean communists" from this reproduced Korean nation based out of South Korea.[10] The South Koreans, by this logic, were the true heirs to real Korean identity.

His authoritarianism was exemplified most during the Yushin Reforms, where he seized even more power. He justified these so-called Reforms as a "patriotic mission" in the name of

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[8] Gi-Wook Shin, "Nation, History, and Politics." in *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity*, ed. Hyung Il Pai and Timothy R. Tangherlini, Korea Research Monograph 26 (Berkeley, Calif: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1998).
[9] Ibid., 152.
[10] Ibid., 152.

the nation, comparing it to the historic March 1st Movement.[11] In this undemocratic post-liberation South Korea, nationalism became an exclusively top-down project dictated, often created unilaterally, by an authoritarian leader. Nationalist projects became a means of creating legitimacy rather than a means of building national consciousness. This often manifested in call-backs to popular historic movements that had few to no ties with the contemporary events and focused on an oppositional North Korean to frame everything as for national security. In doing so, leaders like Park created a national project that supported their own authoritarian rule.[12] However, these top-down influences on South Korean nationalism shifted as the nation democratized.

During and following the democratization of South Korea, nationalism has been increasingly defined by democratic and civic ideals. However, the defensive and oppositional framings of nationalism are still deeply ingrained today. One recent example of this lasting trend was South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's emergency martial law declaration on December 3, 2024.[13] In his declaration, President Yoon repeatedly claimed his actions were for the defense of the nation. While not directly referencing the past like Park, Yoon's rhetoric relied on the same call to the defense of the nation as a tool of political legitimacy.[14] To uncover why the concept of defense of the nation and its use for sustaining legitimacy is so salient in Korean nationalism, the Jinjuseong Fortress and its history in both the physical and abstract protection of the nation offer answers to how this process began and evolved over time.

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[11] Ibid., 154.
[12] Ibid., 155.
[13] Da-Gyum Ji, "Full text of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's emergency martial law declaration," *The Korea Herald,* December 3, 2024, https://www.koreaherald.com/article/10012293.
[14] Ibid.

In focusing on the Jinjuseong Fortress, the formation and selective maintenance of memory from 1592 to today is exposed as a vital feature of Korean national identity. This fortress represents the linkage between memory, the nation, and space. Continuing with nationalist scholarship, to understand the continuing significance of this site, both Anthony Smith's *Myths and Memories of the Nation* and Anderson's concepts of calendrical, empty, and homogenous time explore the nation's relation to time.[15] Smith's concept of the "nationalist as an archaeologist" lays out a framework to examine how the nation creates continuity between the contemporary nation and the historic nation by using historical events and sites.[16] Together, Anderson and Smith explore the temporality of the nation. But they do not address the relationship of the nation to the future. This gap in the conversation is where memory studies and the built environment will help to resolve the implications for nationhood in the future.

The site itself serves as the lynchpin between memory and the nation. The site, through Pierre Nora's concept of "lieux de mémoire," can be conceived as a manifestation and container of the collective memory.[17] Nora's concept is deployed through the concept of memory infrastructure, which looks at the connections between the "lieux de mémorie." In putting Halbwachs's ideas from *On Collective Memory* in conversation with Nora's understanding of memory through sites, the importance of space and its use becomes a significant means of not just maintaining collective memory but also forming it.[18] Haboush and Anderson's engagement with the nation and the Imjin War when re-examined with the aid of the insights from Nora,

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[15] Anthony Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 181.
[16] Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 181.
[17] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de mémoire," *Representations*, Special Issues: Memory and Counter-Memory, No. 26 (Spring 1989): 7-24.
[18] Maurice Halbwachs and Lewis A. Coser, *On Collective Memory*. (Heritage of Sociology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Halbwachs, and Smith on space, memory, and time allow for a reframing of national formation to be considered in terms of memory.

Importantly, this fortress over the past 400 years has produced a continual, or purportedly continual, series of "lieux de mémoire," both overt and banal, in the form of memorials, museums, and the built environment. This production, however, is not exclusively backward-looking but also attempts to project the nation into the future. This constant memory production, for the past, present, and future, represents the remaining saliency of memory within national identity. For the nation, memory is not only significant for its historic qualities but is also a key part in determining and mapping out the future vision of the nation. At the Jinjuseong Fortress, national identity is not only reproduced in the contemporary but also forged for the future.

The Jinjuseong Fortress serves as an ideal site to understand this national production due to its plethora, density, and duration of "lieux de mémoire." These "lieux de mémoire" each engage with the nation in different ways. To understand these different means of interacting with the nation, the seemingly oppositional concepts of Billig's "banal nationalism" and Fox and Miller-Idriss's "everyday nationhood," or everything nationalism, create a framework for understanding how these "lieux de mémoire" project the nation through their existences and the environment that they inhabit.[19][20] Everyday nationalism corresponds to the contingencies of daily life rather than being created by elite designs.[21] On the other hand, nanal nationalism advances symbols promoted by the nation-state to ensure the ubiquity of the nation in everyday life.

[19] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage, 1995).
[20] Jon E. Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss, "Everyday Nationhood," *Ethnicities* 8, no. 4 (2008): 536-63.
[21] Ibid., 553.

With the expanded conception of "lieux de mémoire," the boundaries between exhibition and museum become increasingly permeable. This gives Cameron's question of museums as "temples or forums" an expanded purview as it can be applied to the overall site and specific sites within it.[22] In serving as either temples or forums, the form alongside the content of these sites plays a significant role in the development of Halbwachs's concept of collective memory. By combining questions about museum structure and the formulation of the memory, the nation is drawn out by the two types of nationalist symbolism: Billig's banal and Fox and Miller-Idriss's everyday, which simultaneously use the same sites to pursue the same goal but in very different ways.

De Certeau's theory of space in *The Practice of Everyday Life* aids in expanding the analysis of the "lieux de mémoire" of Jinju beyond just the symbolic messages transmitted by the memorials and museums.[23] His work suggests the need to incorporate physical space and the built environment into this overall conversation as both the use of space and the form of the built environment create another avenue of memory formation and transmission. Jinjuseong demonstrates that building collective memory for the purpose of national identity and the transmission of this memory to the public, while appearing to be, is not a seamless process. This process reveals the gaps within memory's transmission over symbolic and physical space and its impact on the nation's future.

Tying these historical and spatial methods together, the collective identity and memory formed at this site creates a sense of ontological security as laid out by Jennifer Mitzen. According to Mitzen, ontological security is derived from the individual's need for it. This

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[22] Duncan Cameron, "The Museum, a Temple or the Forum?," *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, ed. Gail Anderson (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira, 2004): 11-24.
[23] Michel de Certeau and Steven Rendall, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 29.

security is not defined or related to the "body but of the self, the subjective sense of who one is, which enables and motivates action and choice."[24] In other words, the individual's security of self can be understood as their conception of self as stable. Mitzen argues that the ontological security seen at the individual level can and must be extrapolated to the state level. This ontological security creates a stable environment allowing states to have agency. For the case of South Korea, the collective memory derived from the Jinjuseong Fortress helps create this stable identity and environment through maintaining a necessity of resistance and sense of antagonism towards Japan, treating the 1592 forces of Hideyoshi as the same as the 2025 Japanese state.

Theoretical Argument

This process of national memory-building reveals the contrived presentation of a nation that is presented as continuous, infallible, and inevitable. Regardless of its artificial construction, the memory held in Jinju continues to define Korean nation and impacts South Korea's relationships vis-à-vis Japan and China. This presentation creates an ontological safety net for the South Korean state. The Jinjuseong Fortress serves as an empirical case to use for a spatial and historical analysis of this nationalist web of memorialization that continues to impact contemporary and future South Korean international relations. This fortress has been an enduring place of commemoration for the past 400 years. Its long history and place in the formation, maintenance, and expansion of the Korean nation presents an ideal place to interrogate this process. The memories of the war and the defense of the city have transformed the whole fortress into a site of memory.

[24] Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological security in world politics: State identity and the security dilemma." *European Journal of International Relations,* Vol. 12 (2006), 344.

This singular presentation of the Korean nation defined by resistance and the memory of resistance towards Japanese forces created a sense of ontological security. This creation has been perpetuated for the past 400 years at the Jinjuseong Fortress ingraining this sense of security within the Korean state. This constant reproduction has created a lasting ontological safety net that provides the South Korean state a sense of agency. However, the web of memories that creates the net is tied to historic hostile relations with Japan and thus continue to influence contemporary South Korean international affairs. In doing so, this ontological safety net simultaneously provides state agency but also places implicit restrictions on South Korea's relationship with Japan. In framing both the historic and contemporary South Korean national identity strictly within the boundaries of centuries old resistance to Japan, this resistance must continue both in the form of memory and policy.

In looking at the continued importance of the spatial, physical, and commemorative processes at this site, the Jinjuseong Fortress sheds new light on how ontological security can be domestically created through historic international relations that are maintained by concentrated and durable of memories contained by memorials. These memorials' ability to selectively remember blur the lines between history and memory and create a seemingly unassailable national identity. By understanding how that the presentation of the artificially continuous nation can be and is able to remain so salient, ways to problematize and challenge this status quo may arise. In challenging this basis of ontological security, it opens the door for revisit the antagonism that underlies South Korea and Japan's relationship. In all, regardless of this site and the nation's presentation, the construction and features of its individual components depict a deeply flawed collective narrative which must be questioned.

Methodology

The sites within the fortress itself each give insight into different aspects of the collective memory produced at the Jinjuseong Fortress. Through the memory infrastructures' creation of a web of memorialization, each site fills a unique memory gap which allows for the nation to effectively create an identity and transmit it through time. Each of these memories, whether consciously or unconsciously, buttresses another creating this illusion of a unified and seamless national identity. Together, these various memories held within this space added throughout time create a web in which the sum is greater than the parts. Untangling this web presents an opportunity to challenge the narrative presented here and create a new understanding of the nation and its formation.

To untangle this web, by looking at just a few of the sites within this fortress, the Changyeolsa Shrine, the Sites of Nongae, the Patriot's Altar, and the Jinju National Museum, the relationship created by how these sites exist, engage, and build off one another demonstrates the power of place in memory formation, articulation, and transmission, especially in terms of the nation. This analysis will examine the form and content of these sites alongside their historical development to explore how memory and its presentation has developed within the Jinjuseong Fortress. This qualitative analysis will explore the language at the sites, the usage of the sites, and the historical development of the Jinjuseong Fortress. These sites do not exist in a vacuum and, by looking at them in concert with one another through how each memory engages with the others, the social life of these sites influenced by the built environment can be seen. In all, this will help amplify the limited English-language literature addressing the Korean nation during the Imjin War through engaging with frameworks of contemporary Korean nationalism, memory

studies, and the significance of the built environment to help uncover the importance of the nexus between these three fields and their relationship to state ontological security.

Qualitative Cases Studies

The Jinjuseong Fortress resides in the heart of the modern city of Jinju, South Korea. Surrounded by bustling streets and modern coffee shops, this restored fortress creates a direct pathway to the history of Korea. The reconstruction of the fortress began in 1969 and was officially completed in 1979 with the restoration of exterior walls, the fortress has continually seen additions to its interior. This includes the Uigisa Shrine to Nongae in 1983, Jinju National Museum in 1984, and Patriot's Altar in 1987.[25] The process of continually articulating memory at this site continues into contemporary times with the additions to commemorative sites, including the updating of the Jinju National Museum in 2018. Overall, there are about two dozen sites of interest within the 1,760-meter circumference of walls.[26]

[25] "Jinjuseong," Jinju, South Korea.
[26] Ibid.

Figure 1. Map of Jinjuseong.[27]

Changyeolsa Shrine

Even though the fortress, as it looks today, was not reconstructed until the 1970s, it has continually been a site of commemoration since the battles in the 16th century. The Changyeolsa Shrine, on the western edge of the fortress, was "established in 1607 to honor those who sacrificed their lives" during the Second Siege of Jinju.[28] Today, this shrine remains a place for traditional, quiet, and individual reverence with three shrines and a stele pavilion. Its classical architecture closely resembles the buildings of the neighboring Hoguksa Buddhist. This shrine represents early engagements with the memory of events and the beginning of the formation of

[27] "Map of Jinjuseong," September 25, 2024, Historic site placard in Namseong-dong, Bonseong-dong, Jinju-si, South Korea.
[28] "Changyeolsa Shrine, Jinju," Gyeongsangnam-do Cultural Heritage Material, Jinjuseong Fortress, Jinju, South Korea.

collective memory at this site. It also provides a basis to see how this collective memory has developed and been mobilized through the past four centuries.

Figure 2. Changyeolsa Shrine.[29]

Sites of Nongae

Similar to the Changyeolsa Shrine, the Uigisa Shrine dates back to the early 17th century. However, unlike the Changyeolsa Shrine, the Uigisa Shrine is devoted to one specific individual, Nongae. For the purpose of simplification, the Sites of Nongae can be understood as an umbrella term for Uiam Rock, monument of Uiam Rock, and the Uigisa Shrine. These three sites combined help begin to bridge the gap between the 16th century and today. Uiam Rock, "the righteous rock," the rock that Nongae purportedly jumped from, gained this moniker in 1629

[29] Henry Hong, "The Changyeolsa Shrine," September 24, 2024. Jinju, South Korea.

when it was inscribed with these words.[30] This rock sits in the Nam River just outside of the fortress's walls. This commemoration evolved in 1722 with the creation of the monument of Uiam Rock which began with a stone stele that was erected a few yards higher up the bank from Uiam Rock. This stele honors the deeds of Nongae and in 1741 a pavilion was built to house this stele.[31] Later during the 19th century, the commemoration of Nongae continued, and, in 1983, the Uigisa Shrine, which is housed inside the refurbished walls of the fortress, was built.[32]

Figure 3. Uiam Rock (Right) and Monument of Uiam Rock (Left).[33]

[30] "Monument of Uiam Rock," Gyeongsangnam-do Cultural Heritage Material, Jinjuseong Fortress, Jinju, South Korea.
[31] Ibid.
[32] "Uigisa Shrine, Jinju," Gyeongsangnam-do Cultural Heritage Material, Jinjuseong Fortress, Jinju, South Korea.
[33] Henry Hong, "The Uiam Rock and Monument of Uiam Rock," September 25, 2024. Jinju, South Korea.

Figure 4. Uigisa Shrine.[34]

The Patriot's Altar

The Patriot's Altar of Imjin Wars in Jinjuseong Fortress (the Patriot's Altar) shifts back to the trend of collective commemoration that began with the Changyeolsa Shrine. However, the Patriot's Altar takes this commemoration to the next highest level. The Patriot's Altar completely massifies those who died and their memory into one singular entity. This altar was built in 1987, the same year of the mass June Democratic Struggle and the subsequent democratization of South Korea.[35] This altar, unlike the previous sites mentioned, takes a more modern form. Devoid of bright colors and traditional architecture, the Patriot's Altar is a gray stone plateau.

[34] "Jinjuseong Fortress Uigisa Shrine & Meta Jinju Uigisa Shrine," The GongGam, accessed April 2, 2025, https://www.ithegonggam.com/post/7478990537513041 92/jinjuseong-fortress-uigisa-shrine-meta-jinju.
[35] Ministry of Culture and Information and the City Administration of Jinju. "Gyesa Patriot's Altar of Imjin Wars in Jinjuseong Fortress." December 1987. Jinju, South Korea.

Unlike the Changyeolsa Shrine and the Sites of Nongae, this altar provides a space for mass gatherings, including an annual memorial service to the battle.

Figure 5. Top of the Patriot's Altar.[36]

The Jinju National Museum

The most recently updated site within the fortress is the Jinju National Museum. In 1998, the museum was redesigned to specialize in the Imjin War and was being updated in both 2008 and 2018.[37] This museum sits directly inside the walls of the fortress. However, unlike the other sites within the walls, the museum is managed by the central government as opposed to the other sites which are mostly funded and administered locally. Regardless of this managerial difference, the museum's design had in mind its place within the fortress. Its design specifically focused on

[36] Henry Hong, "The Patriot's Altar at Dusk," September 24, 2024. Jinju, South Korea.
[37] Jinju National Museum, "Museum History," in About the Museum, *South Korean Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Sport*, Accessed March 22, 2025, https://jinju.museum.go.kr/eng/html/sub04/0403.html.

"avoid[ing] giving a massive, overwhelming appearance, while pearlstone was used as the main material for the joining areas so that it would appear to be in harmony with the surrounding landscape."[38] Aesthetically, this museum fits seamlessly within the fortress, but its permanent exhibition, updated in 2018, of "One War, Three Memories" differs from the other sites within the walls of the fortress.[39] The exhibition explains "the Imjin War should be understood beyond any single country's perspective and in a historical context that considers the present and the future of the three Asian countries."[40] While distinct in its framing of the war, through its place within the walls, this museum inhabits the Jinjuseong Fortress's web of memorialization and contributes to the overall memory produced and articulated throughout the whole fortress.

Figure 6. The Jinju National Museum inside the Jinjuseong Fortress.[41]

[38] Jinju National Museum, "Building Information," in About the Museum, *South Korean Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Sport*, Accessed March 24, 2025, https://jinju.museum.go.kr/eng/html/sub04/0402.html.
[39] "One War, Three Memories," in *the Imjin War Hall*, Jinju National Museum, Jinju, South Korea.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Jinju National Museum, "Building Information."

Qualitative Analysis

This accumulation of memory infrastructures within the fortress built on a collage of Korean national perspectives transforms history into a seemingly singular identity. Part of what ties these visions of national identity together is the way in which visitors traverse the fortress and visit the various sites. While there is not a singular path or way to move through the fortress, by moving through the sites in their chronological order of construction, the iterative process of memory construction creates a seemingly unified, singular telos of Korean national identity and history. This 400-year iterative process at the Jinjuseong Fortress has an effect of creating a superficially and spatially unified message and perpetuates the illusion that all these sites and the various iterations of the Korean nation are temporally tethered. However, these perspectives, while apparently aligned, become increasingly disjointed as each site is interrogated in depth.

Changyeolsa Shrine

The first chronological sites of interest are the Changyeolsa Shrine and the Hoguksa Temple. These two sites are the oldest in the fortress, dating from 1607 and the Goryeo Dynasty in the 13th century, respectively.[42] These sites, specifically the Changyeolsa Shrine, offer insight into the beginning of the process of memory formation in Chŏson and how this formation is exploited and continued to this day. The modern-day shrine is home to the relocated Chongch'undgan Altar, an altar to commemorate the first siege of Jinju, which was shut down and destroyed during the Japanese occupation.[43] This altar was originally dedicated to the "six [bodies] who were identified but also to all of the dead whose identities could not be easily

[42] "Hoguksa Temple," Traditional Buddhist Temple No.70, Gyeongsangnam-do Cultural Heritage Material, Jinjuseong Fortress, Jinju, South Korea.
[43] "Changyeolsa Shrine, Jinju", Jinjuseong Fortress.

verified."[44] In doing so, this original altar, now contained within the Changyeolsa Shrine, served as an early Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Because the defenders of Jinju were made up of soldiers, civilians, and government officials, this altar was untraditionally inclusive. This inclusion of all those who died for the nation takes on a key quality of Anderson's nation, made up by individuals who "willingly… die for such limited imaginings."[45] This extraordinarily early instance of the imagined community problematizes Anderson's claims of the singular development of nationalism tied to print-capitalism. Even though the agency and commitment to the nation of the individual victims at Jinju will most likely forever be unknown, through commemorative practices, the Korean states - both the historic state, Chŏson, and contemporary state, South Korea - claim that these lives were given in the name of the same nation, the Korean nation. These state-led actions represent the state's curatorial role in defining the nation as made. It is through these commemorative sites, almost always organized and maintained by the state, that this curation occurs. This represents the beginning of the commemoration culture in Chŏson.

This establishment of commemoration culture helped to reshape how time was experienced. This new temporal framing has qualities that Anderson describes as homogenous and empty. Homogenous and empty time plays a key role in developing the imagined community. The homogeneity of time is defined by the universalized measurement of it "by clock and calendar."[46] This marking through clock and calendar is incredibly significant in creating simultaneous and shared experiences, like newspaper reading or mass collective action, uniting and linking otherwise disconnected individuals into an imagined community. This universalization and marking allows for different people to experience different or the same

[44] Haboush, *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation*, 138.
[45] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.
[46] Ibid., 26.

things simultaneously. This new experience of time is described by Anderson as "calendrical time."[47]

This calendrical time defined by homogeneity is distinct from the previous temporal experience of "messianic time," namely because calendrical time allows temporal coincidence. Anderson defines temporal coincidence as "transverse [and] cross-time"[48] which is represented by "steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity"[49] rather than the "simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present"[50] of messianic time. This temporal coincidence is the experience of homogenous time. Temporal coincidence's role in separating the past, present, and future impacts not just the individual experience of time but also the nation's influence and usage of it. Part of calendrical time is the redefinition of time from being "marked by prefiguring and fulfillment" to being "empty." This emptiness empowers the individual's experience of time in allowing individualized experience while also acknowledging that others can experience it differently.[51]

This individualization of time provides the foundation for creating an imagined community. Individualization allows for the joining of the shared experiences into a distinct collective imagination that would not have been possible without differentiated experiences of time. The collective is made up of the individual. Additionally, this emptiness of time also empowers for the nation to attempt to fill it. For Anderson, this new conception of time allows for simultaneity over geographic scale which is understood as temporal coincidence. However, through the iterative and continual development of memorial infrastructure at the Jinjuseong

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[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid., 24.
[49] Ibid., 26.
[50] Ibid., 24.
[51] Ibid.

Fortress, a new experience of space-time is formed: “Memorial Time.” This Memorial Time can be understood as being between Calendrical and Messianic Time. Memorial Time has the qualities of empty but non-homogenous time which allows for a feeling of simultaneity over a temporal scale rather than the geographic scale of Calendrical Time. This trans-temporality of Memorial Time creates a feeling of memorial coincidence.

This feeling of memorial coincidence that transcended a temporal scale relies on the existence of empty time. In the case of Korea, this emptiness emerged during the Imjin War, which created a mass event that redefined the lived experience and created a collective community of shared memory. In breaking from Anderson, the nascent Korean nation emerged prior to the 18th century print-capitalism through resistance and maintained itself through commemorative practices and memorial building. This break is seen in the full embrace of empty but not homogenous time. Even though the Imjin War accelerated the existence of homogeneous, empty time on the Korean Peninsula, both these characteristics did not continue following the end of the war.

The mass event of the peninsula-wide invasion created a shared crisis which, in turn, prompted a sense of simultaneity. In response to this crisis, the actions and goals of the Chŏson state increasingly aligned with its subjects through a resistance mobilized in part by a nascent literary culture. This nascent literary culture was defined by a unique but not widespread Korean script, Hangul.[52] Combined, these two unifying mechanisms of resistance and literature pushed the Chŏson people and their state into something more than just a political entity but something imagined, a proto-nation. Through resistance, the shared experience most often came in the form of Chŏson Koreans’ participation in the state-sanctioned army or volunteer militias known as

[52] Haboush, *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation*, 110.

Righteous Armies.[53] In taking arms, this mass resistance provided a simultaneous, shared experience that helped develop the mass imagi-nation of Chŏson subjects into Koreans as they defended more than just their immediate family.

In mobilizing this popular resistance, the Chŏson state relied on more accessible forms of communication. In drawing upon Anderson's framework of the imagined community, Haboush looks at the specific Korean circumstance during the Imjin War to identify the means in which the imagination was being formed. For Haboush, one of the main ways of this was through language and vernacular.[54] This inclusion of ordinary people in state edicts and decision-making by publishing in the Hangul script created a new affinity between the people and the state. The nation-building process had begun. A proto-nation was visible with the state directing and the people making it up. This relationship, while still stratified and hierarchical, reflected the development of a horizontal Korean identity in response to a shared crisis.

It is important to note that the horizontal aspect of Korean society at that time existed exclusively in the context of national identity and not socially or economically. Following the war, there was very little leveling of status as Chŏson Korea did not rid itself of slavery or Cheonmin and Baekjeong discrimination. But, the process of nation-building, while not as urgent or cross-cutting, still continued in Chŏson Korea and manifested through sites like the Changyeolsa Shrine. This spatially-based nation-building process resulted in time to no longer being experienced as both homogeneous and empty. The absence of a shared crisis, such as the Imjin War, or a shared experience, such as popular resistance, removed the feeling of simultaneity across a geographic scale that was previously felt. As for the nascent literary

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[53] Samuel Hawley, *The Imjin War: Japan's Sixteenth-Century Invasion of Korea and Attempt to Conquer China*. (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch, 2005), 270.
[54] Haboush, *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation*, 107.

culture, the official court, no longer in dire need of popular support, largely moved away from using Hangul and reverted back to the less accessible classical Chinese, which would largely continue until the Gabo Reforms of 1894.[55] The lack of shared events and inclusive practices removed the homogeneity of time as there was no longer an "extraordinary mass ceremony" that connected the lives of those living on the Korean peninsula.[56] However, the emptiness of time remained and continued to be exploited. This empty time was immediately filled in the aftermath of the war by sites like the Changyeolsa Shrine and the Chongch'undgan Altar. This use of empty but non-homogeneous time set the foundation for the experience of Memorial Time.

Over time, this emptiness has been filled by the memory infrastructure and commemorative practices. At the Jinjuseong Fortress, physical monuments, shrines, and museums look to the past in acting as "lieux de mémoire" and simultaneously acknowledge the future as a non-prefigured and unfulfilled space. In breaking from Anderson, the sites themselves maintain an empty but heterogeneous time, specifically, the Changyeolsa Shrine does this by containing the memories of the past and being grounded in the specific historical moment of its construction and without the simultaneous ceremony of mass transmission. This shrine, in being spatially bound, requires individuals to engage with it. Through this engagement, the memory contained within the site is imbued on its visitors allowing for the site to project meaning into empty time of the individual. In focusing exclusively on the emptiness of time, the lasting duration of the Changyeolsa Shrine allows for similar memories of the Battle of Jinju to be evoked regardless of whether it was visited in 1600 or 2020. In doing so, the Changyeolsa Shrine began the experience of Memorial Time within Jinjuseong Fortress, in which visitors can

[55] Michael Robinson, *Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 18.
[56] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 35.

transcend temporal boundaries. This shrine represents the beginning of deep interactions between the past, present, and future that are driven by the memorials' exploitation of empty time.

The creation and maintenance of this shrine as a "lieu de mémoire" entrenched both time as empty and the Jinjuseong Fortress as a significant site in the Korean imagination. This original altar and its contemporary home at the Changyeolsa Shrine were both maintained by the Korean state, first in the form of the Chŏson dynasty and now by the South Korean government. Through the states' supervision, this site served and serves as a representative of the Korean people. Even though the Changyeolsa Shrine today focuses on the spirit tables of 39 individuals, the roots of this site in the Chongch'undgan Altar begin the transformation of the individual experience within the battles of Jinju during the Imjin War into a collective experience. This transformation is done through the site itself.

Nora's framework of the "lieu de mémoire" helps to examine the role of place in identity formation. In becoming a lieu de mémoire so long ago, the Changyeolsa Shrine set a precedent at the Jinjuseong Fortress for memory presentation. For Nora, the lieu de mémoire is where "memory crystallizes and secretes itself."[57] This original memory that has been crystallized at this shrine focuses on the 39 of the 60,000 Chŏson Koreans who died during the second siege of Jinju. However, even though the placement of memory crystallizes through physical sites, this shrine, and the memory it contains, remain "in permanent evolution" as the contemporary site remembers itself as a place to "honor those who sacrificed their lives" in 1593.[58] It is not until the second paragraph of the placard that the more limited but original "39 patriots" are mentioned.[59] The original memory contained at this site starting in 1607 was restricted to a

[57] Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de mémoire," 7.
[58] Ibid., 8.
[59] "Changyeolsa Shrine, Jinju," Jinjuseong Fortress.

limited few. However, both in physical and symbolic changes, in being a container of memory, this site itself and the memory it holds have continued to adapt.

The addition of the Chongch'undgan Altar to the Changyeolsa Shrine during the Japanese occupation in the early 20th century represents the flexibility of Nora's lieu de mémoire. This addition marked the beginning of the shift in focus from the individual to the collective. Specifically, the relocation of the Chongch'undgan Altar about 300 years following the establishment of both the Chongch'undgan Altar and the Changyeolsa Shrine is indicative of the "play of memory and history [in the production of lieu de memorie], an interaction of two factors that results in their reciprocal overdetermination."[60] In combining these sites, this lieu de mémoire and the historical events at Jinju gained new meaning. With Chongch'undgan Altar's memory of the Chŏson victory at the first siege of Jinju and the Changyeolsa Shrine's memory of defeat at the second siege of Jinju now placed within the same container, the two battles became interchangeable, and with it, the defeat is superseded in memory by the preceding victory. Even though victimhood and sacrifice are emphasized, the overarching survival of the Chŏson state reframes the defeat at the second siege of Jinju into the same conversation of the victory at the first battle. In doing so, this lieu de mémoire has "no referent in reality" but rather is able to dictate the history it contains through the amalgamation of memory and history. [61]

The Changyeolsa Shrine's process of reframing history to be defined through memory is part of a wider process at the Jinjuseong Fortress. Dating back to the early 17th century, the Changyeolsa Shrine set the foundation for the insular and iterative memory culture of the Jinjuseong Fortress. This is embodied by the fortress's enduring self-referential memory. The fortress and almost all the sites inside serve as their "own referent: pure, exclusively self-

[60] Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de mémoire," 19.
[61] Ibid., 23.

referential signs."[62] By being physically and temporally cloistered from the rest of Jinju, the Jinjuseong Fortress and the sites that it contains are able to become hyper-lieux de mémoire. The concentrated and cloistered qualities of this site further the feeling of Memorial Time, in which temporal, but not geographic, boundaries can be transcended. In being physically protected by the reconstructed walls of the fortress, these sites have an endless "capacity for [the] metamorphosis… [and] endless recycling of their meaning."[63] The only guidelines are the original memories imprinted on the sites which mostly, like the case of the Chongch'undgan Altar and the Changyeolsa Shrine, have been reframed to memorialize the survival of the Chŏson state and, by proxy, the Korean nation. This hyper-memorialization has resulted in the rapid and cyclical development of a collective memory and national identity.

These lieux de mémoire serve as the foundation of the collective memory embodied by the fortress. This collectivization of memory was done through these lieux engaging with one another while also representing the Korean collective memory. The first lieux at this fortress, the Chongch'undgan Altar and the Changyeolsa Shrine, focuses mainly on the memories of individuals. Even though both allude to the collective through all of the defenders of Jinju, the foundation of these memorials is individuals, with the Chongch'undgan Altar focusing on six bodies and the Changyeolsa Shrine highlighting 39 individuals. This trend of venerating individuals continues in the chronologically next in line lieux de mémoire within the fortress.

The Sites of Nongae

Farther east in the fortress and just through a gap in the wall, a path leads to a rock that sits about five feet of the bank in the river. This rock is purportedly the same exact stone that

[62] Ibid., 23.
[63] Ibid., 19.

Nongae jumped off, taking with her the Japanese general Keyamura in 1593.[64] This rock, called the Uiam or Righteous Rock, continues to be revered today with the network of memory building out of it, including the monument of Uiam Rock and the Uigisa Shrine. Like the previous shrine, the focus on the individual, Nongae, fuels this memory and provides a further opportunity to deify both individuals but also actions. The personal and powerful story of an 18-year-old woman's murder-suicide for her "nation" allows for this individual memory to be collectivized.

In re-examining Halbwachs's understanding of collective memory, these lieux highlight the role of highly idealized specific individual memories in influencing collective memory. The Sites of Nongae's focus on the individual but create the foundation of a collective Korean identity. This is done not only by design of the sites, but also by how they are utilized in celebrations. The memories of specific individuals serve as the basis of the collective.

Applying lieux de mémoire to Halbwachs's framework on collective memory to the sites at Jinjuseong reveals how individual memories become the basis of the collective. At the Jinjuseong Fortress, the concentration of these lieux only amplifies their qualities as foundational makers of collective memory and identity. Halbwachs articulates collective memory as "only the result, or sum, or combination of individual recollections of many members of the same society."[65] Halbwachs explains that human memory only exists within a collective context. However, this collective is built upon the individual, which is then mobilized by individuals both in the present and the future to help fill memory gaps. These lieux de mémoire play a key role in facilitating the transition of memory to being singularly individual to collective.

These lieux de mémoire help create society's memorial parameters. These memorials build off one another to create an extremely deliberate and intentional representation of the past.

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[64] "Uigisa Shrine, Jinju," Jinjuseong Fortress.
[65] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 39.

For Halbwachs, this is understood as "the past… not [being] preserved but [rather] is reconstructed on the basis of the present."[66] These memorials reconstruct the past through the individual memories which they contain. The Sites of Nongae do this much more explicitly than the Changyeolsa Shrine. By focusing on the story of one individual who is characterized by her loyalty, fidelity, and patriotism, the individual memory of Nongae is one to which others, regardless of temporal location, can relate and aspire. [67] Consequently, these forms of remembrance simultaneously humanize and deify Nongae.

This is embodied most through the Annual Nongae Festival. This festival specifically honors the memory of Nongae and the actions she took following the Second Siege of Jinju. The festival's own description explains how Jinju, and, specifically, this fortress, must be home to this festival because the memory, history, and past actions of Jinju "cannot be imitated in any other region."[68] This geographic limitation further highlights the emphasis on Memorial Time's ability for temporal rather than geographic coincidence. This geographic significance, created and amplified by the memorials at the Jinjuseong Fortress, defines the system in which Halbwachs explains memories occur.[69] These systems form the parameters of memory based on the individual.

These limited but transmissible individual memories provide the foundation of the collective memory. It is through the festival that these individual memories are reframed into the collective. These events amplify the experience of Memorial Time as they remain spatially restricted to the Jinjuseong Fortress. One event that was part of the Annual Nongae Festival was the "Experience of Nongae's Sacrifice." The event took place at least during the 2005 to 2011

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[66] Ibid.
[67] "Uigisa Shrine, Jinju," Jinjuseong Fortress.
[68] "The 24th Jinju Nongae Festival Event Overview."
[69] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 53.

Annual Nongae Festivals, when "children [were encouraged to] jump off a structure in a reenactment of [Nongae's] martyrdom."[70] As a Jinju city official, who runs the festival, explained, "it is an event to experience Nongae's patriotic martyrdom."[71] In responding to criticisms that the event encourages suicide, the official re-emphasized that Nongae's actions were not suicidal but rather noble "martyrdom." Through this experience, the memory of an individual, Nongae, is transplanted within the minds of people separated from her by over 400 years. Through this event and its location, individual memories and experiences of the past are reframed and transmitted within a contemporary context thus amplifying and collectivizing this memory.

Without the lieux de mémorie which geographically ground memory, the individual memory of Nongae would struggle to be collectivized. Together, the lieux de mémoire and their associated commemorative practices create the parameters of the collective. In doing so, the memories that fill the minds of contemporary Koreans are sourced from not just the "social milieu" that Halbwachs identifies as the family but also the spatial and commemorative milieu at the Jinjuseong Fortress. [7273] This contemporary spatial and commemorative reconstruction of the past "gives [the collective memory] a prestige that reality did not possess" and thus forms an extremely deliberate, intentional, and seemingly legitimate collective memory.[74] This, in turn, legitimizes the nation. Lieux de mémoire create an environment in which memory does not have to be restricted to an individual. This now collective memory helps to serve as a basis for collective identity, which crystallizes through the framework of the nation. This process can be

[70] Kim Rahn, "Event to honor Nongae draws fire," *The Korea Times*, May 30, 2011, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/southkorea/20110530/event-to-honor-nongae-draws-fire.
[71] Rahn, "Event to honor Nongae draws fire."
[72] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 53.
[73] Ibid., 52.
[74] Ibid., 51.

seen as beginning at the Sites of Nongae and the Changyeolsa Shrine. However, it becomes more explicitly visible in the subsequently added lieux de mémoire.

The Patriot's Altar

Right next to the Sites of Nongae is a wide-open concrete space that culminates with the steps up to Patriot's Altar of Imjin Wars (the Patriot's Altar) in Jinjuseong Fortress. In travelling up these steps, the fortress's past is fully transformed from individual memories to those of the collective. This collectivization is key to establishing the nation's relationship to the past. In collectivizing memory to a further degree than in the previous sites, this Altar creates a bridge between the past, the present, and a malleable future. The memories of the previous memorials are exploited and built into a larger national framework, creating a unitary conception of the nation that has seemingly existed for generations. In doing so, the nation's influence on empty time is no longer restricted exclusively to the past but is expanded to the future.

The Patriot's Altar was built in 1987. This altar serves to reframe the memory of resistance from individual to collective. While almost all of the memory infrastructure in the fortress employs resistance as a crucial unifier and as a productive symbol of the Korean nation, most notably, the "Patriot's Altar of Imjin Wars in Jinjuseong Fortress" by the South Korean "Ministry of Culture and Information jointly with the City Administration of Jinju" transforms historic acts of popular resistance into palpable contemporary national ideals. [75] By looking at this altar, the means by which the memory of these historical events is mobilized reveals memory's role in both the maintenance and projection of the nation.

[75] Ministry of Culture and Information and the City Administration of Jinju, "Gyesa Patriot's Altar of Imjin Wars in Jinjuseong Fortress."

Taking Billig and Smith's ideas together with those of Anderson and Haboush, the Patriot's Altar represents the role of memory and memorialization in allowing the nation to project itself through time. Once created, Billig explains that every imagined community has "its own collective memory" and, to ensure its maintenance, necessary steps are taken to preserve this memory.[76] For Billig, this is done through banal nationalism. Banal nationalism turns the mechanisms of imagination, like resistance, into concrete symbols by representing them as flags or symbols which become so ingrained in society that they transition from "symbolic mindfulness to mindlessness."[77] The memorialization of Jinju's defense reflects the state-led effort to turn popular resistance into a metonym for the Korean imagined community. In the case of the Patriot's Altar, it does this through focusing on all the defenders, unlike the previous, which highlighted a select few. The Patriot's Altar is to "the patriotic fighters who spent their lives to save this country." In describing the acts of these individuals over 400 years ago as to "this country," the popular resistance is no longer just the means of imagining the community but is transformed into maintaining and projecting this imagining. The Patriot's Altar converts resistance from individual acts to a flag representative of all with allegiance to "this country." This flagging of national resistance through the memory of the defenses of Jinju in the 1590s is used "as a metonym [for the nation as a whole.] By citing [this] flag" of resistance, the whole imagined community is referenced.[78] This identity metonym continually recreates an event which was vital to forming the imagined community. The Patriot's Altar continues to evoke the experience of Memorial Time through the creation of memories of a collective experience, inclusive of all, regardless of temporal location.

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[76] Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, 38.
[77] Ibid., 41.
[78] Ibid.

Through this memorial-induced metonym, the nation projects the past into the present and vice versa. The Patriot's Altar applies the defense of Korea in 1592 to the 1987 pro-democracy movement by connecting these two distinct acts into unified Korean resistance through re-defining the past in the terms of 1987 through applying "this country" to a Chŏson Korea of 1592.[79] For Smith, this ability of the nationalist to retreat back into the past to influence the present, while also using the present to reinterpret the past, creates a "two-way relationship between ethnic past and nationalist present."[80] The Patriot's Altar's reliance on the past and usage of the present to dictate the past reflects the nationalist, through Smith's framework, as an archaeologist. The nationalist "forget[s] as well as remember the past" to create a collective memory of the imagined community.[81]

This altar amplifies and maintains the collective memory of popular resistance to link it with contemporary South Korea. This site's selective memory imbues the imagined community with a limited sense of self in which popular resistance must exist at its core, as only the popular resistance and martyrdom of subjects of "this country" are remembered.[82] This selective and altered memory of Chŏson Korea's past and the tying of resistance to the present cements each instance of popular resistance as a part of national identity in the Korean collective memory. In doing so, the previous memories of individuals at this fortress are reframed to be included in the collective. This malleability of memory continues the trans-temporal relationship that the memorial infrastructure creates which allows for nationalism to overcome temporal limitation.

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[79] Ministry of Culture and Information and the City Administration of Jinju, "Gyesa Patriot's Altar of Imjin Wars in Jinjuseong Fortress."
[80] Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 181.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ministry of Culture and Information and the City Administration of Jinju, "Gyesa Patriot's Altar of Imjin Wars in Jinjuseong Fortress."

The malleability of time extends to the future. Cross-temporal connections of this monument and the fortress embody the two-way relationship between the past and present but also create a space for the projection of the nation into the future. The empty time of Memorial Time allows Smith's archaeologist to be a futurist by influencing the future. Today, the Patriot's Altar remains an active commemorative site with the 51st Annual Memorial Service taking place here in 2022.[83] This service, attended by National Assembly members, continued to focus on the Second Siege of Jinju and this site's place in Korean identity. The curated memory of the Patriot's Altar acts as a synecdoche for all Chŏson's past. This reduced past is "rooted in the current spirit of Jinju" through the memory infrastructure.[84] In reducing the past, this memory infrastructure allows for linear ties between past and present, explaining that "the noble sacrifices of our ancestors that the Republic of Korea exists today."[85] By connecting Jinju of 2022 to the Jinju of 1593, this memorial service unifies the noble death of Koreans, whether they be Chŏson or South Korean, creating the vital linkage between the past and the present.

This memorial service represents the cognizance of the future. During the ceremony, the mayor of Jinju claimed that "the concepts of the words patriotism and loyalty are fading," and argued that the purpose of "Imjin Battle Memorial Service" is to return the nation, through the emblematic monument, back to the forefront of the Korean mind. [86] Through these words, the Patriot's Altar, because its memory is inherently collective, unlike the previous sites, serves as the model memorial for which memory can be passed on to the collective. And because the

[83] Yun-Gap Han and Jeong-ho Choi, "The 51st Jinjuseong Imjin Battle Memorial Service held," Gyeongnam Provincial Newspaper, June 10, 2022, http://www.gndomin.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=329189#0BNb.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.

Patriot's Altar ties the collective memory of resistance to Korean identity, the memorialization of popular resistance is an effective means of centering the nation within the collective memory.

The service helps to make the public mindful of the nation again. While both the service and the flag of resistance play different roles in creating this two-way relationship between the past and present, banal nationalism requires both the mindful and the mindless to be impactful with each serving a different purpose. Each of the speakers, ranging from the mayor to National Assembly members to community leaders, appealed to the nation and relied on this altar in looking "to regenerate the community."[87] In their speeches, each one implicitly highlighted the feeling of Memorial Time created at this site and emphasized the ability of the memory contained within this site to help return each visitor to a perceived moment in which the nation is centered. These speakers are quintessential nationalists, often representing the state, who are seeking to transcend temporal boundaries to use the past to alter the present and vice versa.

This mindfulness reframes this altar into a futurist institution. In its usage during memorial ceremonies, following references to ancestors and the emphasis of the connection between the past and the present, speakers quickly moved to projecting the Korean nation into the future, extolling the memory of Jinju and popular resistance. National Assembly members explained that the nation today "will inherit that spirit" of sacrifice and resistance.[88] Here, this altar is "providing a framework for the socialization of successive generations."[89] By holding these services annually, this event is not a one-off but will continue into the future and so will this inheritance of spirit. This annual event, alongside the ubiquitous deification of the nation, projects it into the indeterminable future. The resistance that protected Chŏson and began the

[87] Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 181.
[88] Han and Choi, "The 51st Jinjuseong Imjin Battle Memorial Service held."
[89] Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation*, 14.

imagined community in 1592 continues to be used in 2022 and beyond. A community leader explained his "wish is that through the Jinju Battle Memorial Service, our sons and daughters will realize their love for their country and further become great servants for the country in the future."[90] Through the memory infrastructure at this fortress, the nation and its altered memory are projected into the future. The collectivization and contemporization of the memory of resistance at this site changes how the nation is interpreted. This deification of the victims is transmuted into the deification of the nation. The dual role of this site in both its active and passive ceremonial use fully frames the nation as a virtuous entity that must also be brought into the future and, in doing so, sets the foundation for the nation to be projected into the future.

Figure 7. Use of the Altar in the Commemorative Service.[91]

[90] Han and Choi, "The 51st Jinjuseong Imjin Battle Memorial Service held."
[91] "The 51st 70,000 Memorial Ceremony to Honor the 70,000 Civilian and Military Personnel of Jinjuseong Imjin Gyesa Year Held," *Gyeongnam United Newspaper,* October 11, 2022. https://www.knyhnews.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=16148.

The Jinju National Museum

However, because the national futurists continue to experience Memorial Time created by this memorial infrastructure that remains empty, the future is not yet prefigured. This simultaneously presents the indeterminate future where the national narrative may or may not continue to be projected into the future. In looking at the Jinju National Museum, also located within the fortress, an alternative projection of the nation into the future is seen. Unlike the previous sites, the museum takes a broader approach to memory. The museum specializes in the entire Imjin War rather than just exclusively the history of the Jinjuseong Fortress. The main exhibition in the museum is *The Imjin War Hall* which welcomes the visitor through a narrative retelling of the Imjin War and its aftermath. However, Korean memories are not alone in this museum. The first placard visitors see upon entering *The Imjin War Hall* introduces the Imjin War as "One War, Three Memories," actively acknowledging the differing memories of the conflict in Korea, China, and Japan.[92] It is significant that the museum goes to great lengths to explain the importance of understanding this conflict "beyond any single country's perspective" and keeping in mind the "present and the future of the three Asian countries."[93] Most strikingly, this exhibition concludes with the acknowledgement of an empty and malleable future in explaining the desire of building "future-oriented relations between Korea and Japan."[94] In this framing of the conflict, this museum reveals the fallacy that the same national narrative must be projected into the future and thus challenging the inevitable, unbroken nation. This abrupt exposure of the emptiness of Memorial Time's future problematizes the presentation of the

[92] "One War, Three Memories," Jinju National Museum.
[93] Ibid.
[94] "Conclusion to the Exhibition," in *the Imjin War Hall,* Jinju National Museum, Jinju, South Korea.

previously unified memory, revealing the possible delusion of nationhood presented elsewhere within the fortress.

The form of the museum allows it to frame memory in a different way from the rest of the buildings in the fortress. The museum creates a more interactive and inclusive space than previous sites. Through Cameron's framework of museums acting as either forums or temples, this memory space serves as a forum which allows for "confrontation, experimentation and debate."[95] This is drastically different from the previous locations, which have a "timeless and universal function… [achieved by] the use of a structured sample of reality," especially in their traditional architecture. The Jinju National Museum acknowledges the fluidity and shifts within memory itself.[96] This is reflected in the history of the museum which has been updated three times since its opening in 1984 and most recently in 2018.[97] In this constantly changing presentation of memory, the museum does not present itself as "an objective model" of the memory of the Imjin War or the defense of the Jinjuseong Fortress.[98] In acknowledging and including Japanese and Chinese memories alongside the Korean ones, this museum frames itself as an internationalist and cosmopolitan space rather than an exclusively nationalistic one.

This positioning is supported by the administrative and organizational construction of this museum. Unlike the previous sites, which only have placards in Korean and English, this museum labels each of its exhibitions in Korean, English, Chinese, and Japanese. Additionally, the museum has dedicated staff members to support visitors and lead tours for each of these languages.[99] In providing in-depth translations and having staff members devoted to each

[95] Cameron, "The Museum, a Temple or the Forum?," 19.
[96] Ibid., 23.
[97] Jinju National Museum, "Museum History."
[98] Cameron, "The Museum, a Temple or the Forum?," 23.
[99] Thank you so much to Emily and Gongju for their hospitality and expertise of the museum and of Jinju.

language, the museum creates an environment welcoming to people from all these different places, not just Koreans. This explicit attempt to present themselves as a cosmopolitan space forces the museum to reckon with the memory of the Imjin War differently than other spaces within the fortress. However, even though its organization as a forum and its multilingual support, the museum does not fully escape from the exclusively Korean nationalist narrative that permeates the rest of the fortress.

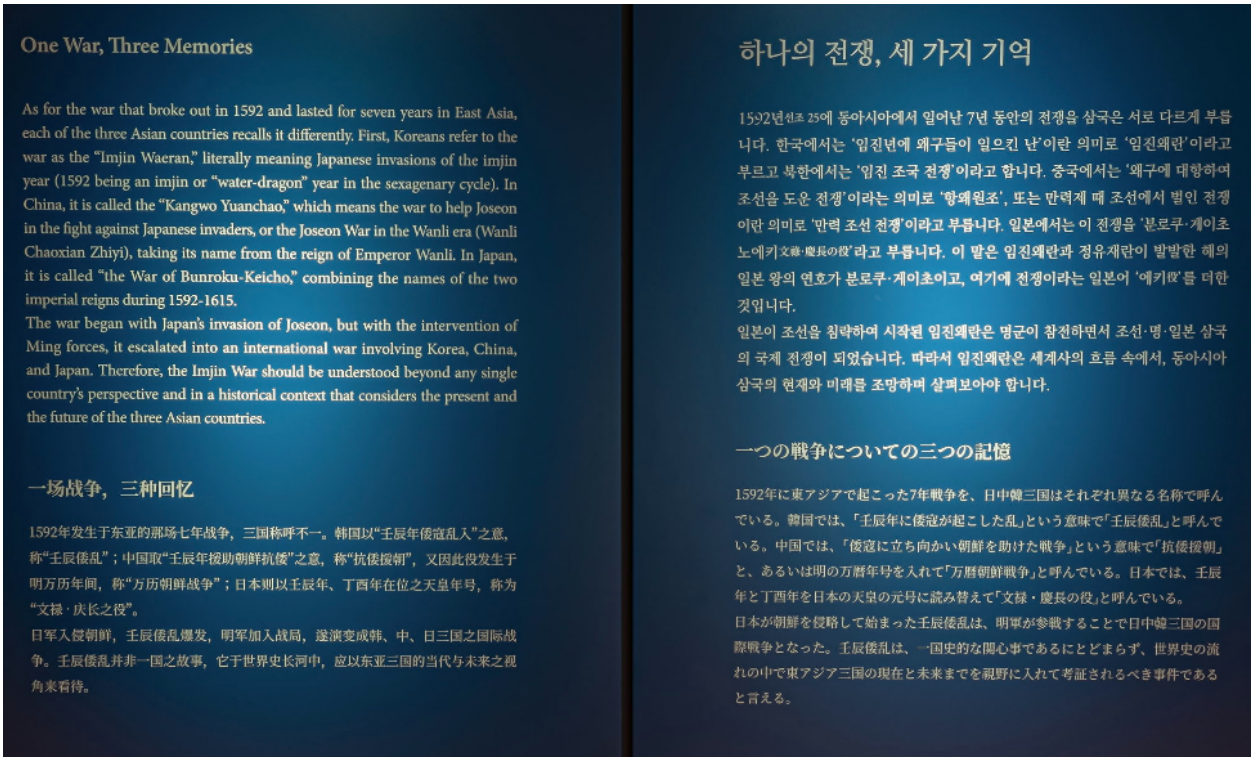

Figure 8. One War, Three Memories placard in English, Korean, Chinese, and Japanese.[100]

For example, even though the museum is framed as a cosmopolitan space, the highlighting of Korean memories and experiences remains on an exhibitional level. This is most explicitly clear in the weapons display. These displays mostly highlight the Chŏson weaponry and their advanced gunpowder cannons. The interactive tablets demonstrate that the museum as

[100] "One War, Three Memories," Jinju National Museum.

an interactive space does not fully transcend the "use of a structured sample of reality" that Cameron exclusively attributes to the museum as a temple.[101] In these interactive displays, visitors are encouraged to assemble, prepare, and use various weapons. However, this display is far from innocent. In using the weapons, the visitor aims and then fires these weapons from the walls of Jinjuseong Fortress against Japanese invaders and watches as the different weapons kill and/or injure the animated Japanese invaders. This interactive space is also geared towards children, with a foot stool being placed in front of the screens, with child-sized footprints encouraging use. This exhibition creates an opportunity to partake in the popular resistance that once occurred at this fortress and, while being inclusive in terms of age, it still presents the Japanese as the enemy. And of course, there is no option to "play" a Japanese invader. Overall, this weapons exhibition's focus on Chŏson weaponry creates a memory of Korean technological and military supremacy. Even though the Imjin War Hall ends in highlighting the importance of remembering war "not from the perspective of the victor and the vanquished, but instead to seek ways of realizing world peace and the mutual prosperity of humankind," it fails to fully remove itself from the former perspective.[102] This permeation of singular Korean national identity tied to lasting antagonism towards the Japanese and the history of Chŏson that begins outside of this museum and extends to all the space within the fortress, regardless of whether that space is occupied directly by memory infrastructure, including this museum.

[101] Cameron, "The Museum, a Temple or the Forum?," 19.
[102] "Conclusion to the Exhibition," Jinju National Museum.

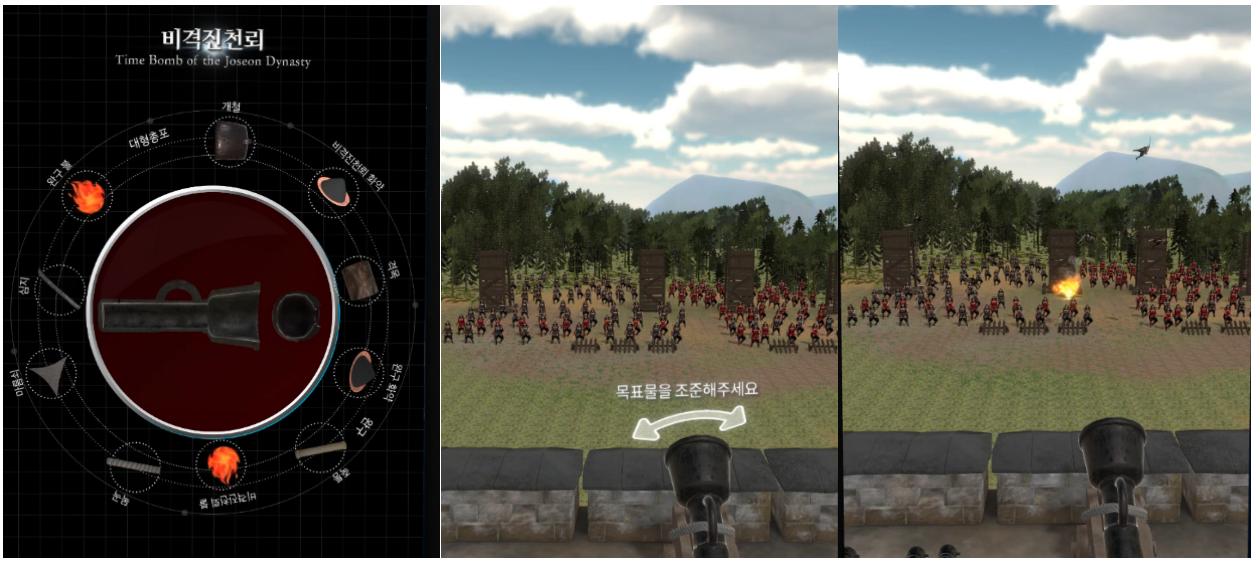

Figure 9. Interactive display of loading and firing a cannon. First frame is arming the weapon. Second frame says, "please aim at the target." Third frame has an explosion that sends an invader flying.[103]

In being cloistered off by the fortress walls, the sites of memory's effects are spatially amplified with memories reverberating off the walls. The fortress creates a commemorative space where these sites of memory compound each other. It also contains vast green spaces with no commemorative sites. These empty green spaces allow for the fortress to serve not just as a place of memorializing but also as a place of leisure. De Certeau addresses how these dual purposes influence the meaning of space and how people derive meaning from that space. However, these green spaces are frequently co-opted and increasingly influenced by the surrounding commemorative spaces. This co-opting takes the form of both extraordinary festivals and quotidian revenue generation. Multiple annual festivals and events take place inside the fortress, including the memorial service held at the Patriot's Altar, a Nongae Annual Festival, and another event dedicated to the city of Jinju itself. On the other hand, this space has a ticketed

[103] "Time Bomb of the Joseon Dynasty," in *the Imjin War Hall*, Jinju National Museum, Jinju, South Korea.

entry with a $1.50 fee to get into the fortress that goes to the city of Jinju which maintains and runs the fortress and most of the sites of memory inside.

This co-opting represents the reality that these empty spaces in the fortress are not truly for leisure activities and exemplifies De Certeau's idea that "the dividing line no longer falls between work and leisure."[104] De Certeau separates work and leisure not by their location, but by their "modalities" and "formalities."[105] This distinction allows for space to simultaneously contain both uses. In the context of the fortress, the work can be understood as the national project, while the leisure being anything not building towards the national project, although it does serve as a space for people to connect which ultimately builds social cohesiveness. This national project, at the fortress, actively works to build national identity and consciousness through associating the historic with the contemporary by transmitting the trauma of the past to today. This spatial framework aligns with ideas presented by both Miller-Idriss and Fox and Billig. For Billig, this is understood as banal nationalism which incorporates the nation into daily life. While for Miller-Idriss and Fox, this simultaneously is explained as everyday nationalism which "correspond[s] to the contingencies of their daily lives."[106] These two processes are usually seen as oppositional, as banal nationalism is associated with top-down processes by "elite design"[107] while everyday nationalism is built out of quotidian routine. However, at this fortress, through the unique spatial interactions, concentrations of memory, and physical makeup of the fortress, these two seemingly oppositional processes become unified and, in effect, reconcile the tension between elite design and the contingencies of everyday life.

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[104] De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 29.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Fox and Miller-Idriss, "Everyday Nationhood," 553.
[107] Ibid.

The national project exploits space by enclosing both sites of memory and green, communal spaces inside the walls of the fortress. In doing so, work in the form of the banal national project and everyday leisure "flow together."[108] This undermines the view that leisure is always in opposition to work. Inside the Jinjuseong Fortress and amongst its lieux de mémoire, there is no dividing line, and work overtakes leisure. The national project takes precedence over leisure even if the illusion of space for leisure is created because this everyday leisure has become imbued by nationalistic qualities.

However, even this prioritization of the national project is not truly all-encompassing. Because the national project at the Jinjuseong Fortress is so intrinsically tied to lieux de memoire and space overall, it struggles to effectively occupy, monitor, and police every square inch. In these gaps, it leaves the opportunity open for activities of resistance to the national project. These resistant activities occur when the space usually devoted towards the national project is instead used subversively to serve individual goals, like leisure, rather than prioritizing the project. De Certeau uses the concept of "la perruque," meaning "wig" in French. This concept is "the worker's own work disguised as work for his employer."[109] In this context, as the work is the national project, the employer is the nation, and each member of that nation is a worker. Through this framework, the Jinjuseong Fortress essentially becomes a factory of the nation, constantly weaving an ontological safety net for the state. Through both the sites of memory it contains and the spaces that it encloses, this factory produces and projects a unified national narrative. This work requires the individuals to take part by engaging with sites to be imbued with memories. Over time, these efforts create a collective memory in which nationhood becomes ubiquitous. This ubiquity is not only seen in the individual but also in the built environment outside of the

[108] De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life,* 29.
[109] Ibid., 25.

fortress as the nation imprints itself on spaces in myriad ways, such as naming roads, designing infrastructure, and using green space. In doing so, the attempt to overcome the limitations of Memorial Time's geographic limitations are seen. However, despite this increasingly expanding nationalistic framework, the nation remains necessarily flawed and uncertain. Even though the sites within the fortress and the concentration of memory create a deliberate and salient national narrative, this narrative remains in flux both in how its audience receives it and how the curators design it.

Limitations

This thesis uncovers the influence of the concentration of memorial infrastructure on state identity formation and its durable impact on foreign relations. However, the main limitation facing this study is the limited number of sites analyzed within this thesis. The Jinjuseong Fortress is home to about two dozen sites, and while these four are representative of broader trends, they likely miss out on more nuanced and specific trends of Korean memorial culture that could be picked up in a broader analysis of this site. Also, while this case explores Korean national identity, collective memory, and South Korea's lasting contentious relationship with Japan, because this case study is based to South Korea, the conclusions about the significance between memory, nationalism, and the built environment and their relationship to ontological security cannot effectively be extrapolated to a global scale. A commensurate study of like sites in various countries and regions would need to be undertaken to do so. Additionally, in focusing on articulating the role of memory, nationalism, and the built environment in developing ontological security, this thesis is unable to have an in-depth explore the implications and impact

of sites like the Jinjuseong Fortress on specific South Korean policies relating to either China or Japan.

Conclusion

The Jinjuseong Fortress is and will continue to be a critical location of Korean national memory. Every year it continues to host a myriad of nationally imbued ceremonies amongst its lieux de mémoire, almost all of which harken back to the Imjin War of 1592. The memory within this fortress presents itself as both the authoritative and authentic past of the Korean nation by tying the contemporary South Korean state to the early modern Chŏson state. In creating this tie, the site also forges a future in which this narrative of a continuous Korean nation will be projected into the future. In relying on individual memories, this site as a whole crafts a very deliberate and politically useful collective memory. Cumulatively, this site creates the foundation of South Korean ontological security, and, through its constant reproduction of memory, this site maintains an ontological safety net defined by the collective memory presented at this site. The importance of this collective memory remains visible in current South Korean politics through recent events like South Korean President Yoon's attempted coup in December of 2024. In his speech unilaterally declaring martial law, President Yoon's rhetoric closely mirrored much of the language, ideas, and memories found within the walls of the Jinjuseong Fortress.[110] In his declaration, Yoon framed his action as one of national defense and of resistance to protect the Korean nation from falling into the "abyss of national ruin" and, like many of the lieux de memorie inside the Jinjuseong Fortress, to protect and "pass down a proper country to future

[110] Ji, "Full text of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's emergency martial law declaration."

generations."[111] In doing so, he presented a need to protect and reaffirm the memory at the Jinjuseong Fortress to maintain the ontological security of South Korea and his own adminstration. However, even though this memory is presented as an authoritative, inevitable, and infallible history of the Korean nation, in reality, it remains in a state of constant change and thus can be altered. This uncertainty of how the narrative of Korean resistance will be interpreted by contemporary and future generations was likewise reflected in the nation's resistance to President Yoon's attempt to dismantle Korean democracy.

The Jinjuseong Fortress continues to see updates to the sites within it, and with each change, the memory contained within the fortress shifts. Most recently, the national and municipal governments agreed on moving the Jinju National Museum out of the fortress. The new Jinju National Museum is set to be moved over one kilometer away from the fortress because its current home is "too constrained to meet growing visitor demand."[112] However, this may be more than just expanding services but also an attempt to remove the alternative framing of the Imjin War that the museum presents from the purely nationalistic messaging of the other sites in the fortress. Even if this instance of reshaping of the memory contained within Jinjuseong Fortress is done to solidify the current presentation of the Korean-centered memory of the past, it represents that the memory narrative remains malleable and that, if it can change one way, it can also shift the other way.

By parsing out the history of this fortress, the artificial continuity of the Korean nation between the historic, the contemporary, and the future is broken. This is particularly important to emphasize when dissecting the bond between the contemporary South Korean state and the

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[111] Ibid.
[112] Merlin Fulcher, "Competition results: Winner of New Jinju National Museum named," *The Architercutral Review*, September 7, 2023, https://www.architectural-review.com/competitions/competition-results/competition-results-winner-of-new-jinju-national-museum-named.

historic Chŏson Korean state that has been developed for centuries. In challenging this unity between the past and the present, the tying of the nation to the future is no longer inexorable as its temporal invincibility is shattered.

The manufactured quality of this national collective memory exposes the fallibility of a national memory. The telos of the nation that is presented at this site is not inevitable. In a world racked with increasingly jingoistic leaders from South Korea's President Yoon to the United States' President Trump, who rely on deliberately chosen memories, it is important to remember that the presentation of the nation in both the present and the future is not an immutable fact. But rather, these narrow presentations are delicate constructions that can be decoded, problematized, and reframed to create a more inclusive and diverse understanding of our past. This provides an opportunity for a future that is not dedicated to memories cloistered behind walls but a future in which the memories and perspectives of one group can ultimately engage with other narratives and begin to be reconciled.

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