

Power Play in Pyongyang: City and Space as Theaters of Power under
the early Kim regime in North Korea 1950s-1990s

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I, Carolina E. Santiago Álvarez, hereby declare that this thesis titled “Power Play in Pyongyang: City and Space as Theaters of Power under the early Kim regime in North Korea 1950s-1990s” is an original work which has cited and used all primary and secondary sources accordingly. The conclusions that have been reached in this thesis are my own and therefore my responsibility.

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Abstract

The current power structure of Pyongyang, the totalitarian state of North Korea, its philosophy; Juche and its main political figures such as Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il may seem shrouded in mystery. What exactly is this power structure? How can we explore and understand it? How are Juche, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il connected to it? This thesis understands that to answer these questions we must observe the spatialization of power within the rebuilding of Pyongyang and construction of its spaces that occurred from the 1950's to the 1990's. Understanding that spaces includes monuments and memorials, public spaces, sport, art and education facilities and transportation. It has found that both the rebuilding of Pyongyang and the construction of these spaces are essential in legitimizing and building the political power of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, creating a totalitarian state, and writing and developing Juche.

Biographical Note

Carolina Elena Santiago Álvarez has been a student of History from a young age, winning the History Medal for her enthusiasm and high achievement when she graduated High School from The Academy of Immaculate Conception in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. She completed her Bachelor's Degree in History at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus in 2017. While completing her BA Carolina was a member of the Association of History Students, and completed the courses and teaching practice necessary for a Teaching License. After Graduating from her BA with Honors, she enrolled at the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus for her Master's Degree in History. During her MA, Carolina enrolled in the 3-week intensive Korean Language Program at the Language Education Institute in Seoul National University, South Korea, due to her interest in East Asian History and Languages. Carolina also conducted two independent researches about the public spaces in Seoul, South Korea. One of them; *The story and transformation of Seoul as a political theater and of its public spaces during the 20th century: The mirrors of Korea* was published in Cruce Magazine in October 2019. The other; *Japanese Colonialism, Nationalism and Imperialism as Urban Disruptors: The transformations of Seoul and its public spaces during Korea's Colonial Era under Japan (1910-1945)* is in the process of being published. During her time as an MA student, Carolina also took Intensive Chinese Mandarin and was part of the PEAFF (Programa de Experiencia Académicas Formativas) program in which she worked closely with professors on research, editing and translating works and gained a more in-depth knowledge about the writing and researching process. Presently, Carolina wrote and defended her MA thesis in June 2020 and completed her MA Degree. She is expected to continue her studies at the University of Chicago in the Fall of 2020 to complete a second Master's Degree in East Asian Languages and Civilizations.

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Dedication:

To Korea and her people.

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Introduction

The political implications of power, its components, aesthetic and role is a dynamic wave that flows through History; it is present in social structures, economic systems and law enforcement. We can also observe it through architecture, urban development and spatialization of power in cities. This thesis pretends to explore the process of spatialization of power in Pyongyang and the city's public spaces, which served as theaters of power during the 1950's-1990's under the early Kim regime.

What are public spaces, how do they relate to power and what does this thesis understand as “theaters of power”? The study of space has grown over time, from Euclid to Kant. However, this thesis will use the definition of “space” and of its division of “public space” as proposed by French philosopher Henri Lefebvre since it best defines, for the purpose of this thesis, public spaces and their relationship to power. Lefebvre understands “space” as an entity that is a product of a social construct, not as an empty whole that exists independently of the human being.¹ Lefebvre also separates space into “public and private space”. Lefebvre understands that if it's the case that a public space is designated for political and social purposes, the decoding language behind it includes establishing a practice of the public within the public space's parameters, including images and symbols within the city, and the fomentation of public but at the same time political relationships.² He further explains that public space is a tool used by its creator to classify, manipulate, sort and structuralize the public.³ It is also important to point out that much like anthropologist Setha Low who argues that to understand space we must look at it from a cultural and ethnographic point of view, this thesis states that to understand a space we must look at it from an instrument of power point of view. “Theaters of Power” is a term used by Spiro Kostof in *The City Assembled: The elements of urban form*

¹ Setha Low, *Spatializing Culture: The ethnography of space and place* (New York: Routledge, 2017)

² Ibid, 245.

³ Ibid, 374.

through History. For Kostov, “Theaters of power” are spaces that have been seized by a political change that has occurred in societies that have been transformed through revolution, and have become stages for exhibiting public power, particularly through festivals and events directed toward revolutionary re-education. In totalitarian states, these events and festivals are joined by the reaffirmation and immortalization of power in monumental architecture, and observances of political loyalty.⁴ This is very important, because we will observe how North Korea during this time frame will develop into a totalitarian state, and both the process that occurred in Pyongyang, as well as its public spaces are part of this transformation. This thesis also draws upon American Historian Lewis Mumford’s view of a city into this phrase, since for Mumford, the city is a theater in which society plays out its relationships which can be manipulated through the control that the government has over the physical organization of the city.⁵ Sociologist Richard Sennet must also be acknowledged within the phrase “theaters of power” since he understands that cities are areas of power whose spaces are both created and broken by the image that man has of them.⁶

The relationship between space and power is an intricate process, and its result is a construction of an urban realm that lies within the authoritative sector’s parameters of the ideologies. This relationship of space and power can be traced to the French Revolution and the creation of the Republic. Pre-Revolution, public spaces in Paris were dedicated to nobility and the church, but during the revolution they were opened and turned into spaces and symbols that were meant to portray, represent, celebrate and serve the new ideals that arose during the Revolution. One of these spaces was the Plaza of Louis XV which was originally built to commemorate Louis XV and included a statue of him. During the French Revolution, the statue was torn down and replaced with a guillotine that would eventually be used to execute Louis

⁴ Spiro Kostof, *The City Assembled: The elements of urban form through History* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd.:1992), 195-197.

⁵ Lewis Mumford, *The culture of cities* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co, 1938)

⁶ Richard Sennet, *Flesh and Stone* (New York: W.W. Norton &Company, 1994), 25.

XVI, and the Plaza would become the Place de la Révolution and an important space of the Revolution. ⁷ Pyongyang and its public spaces under the early Kim regime following the Korean War also suffer a similar transformation, since they were rebuilt or used as theaters of power to intricately portray in a propagandistic nature the new power structure and political ideology; Juche that both Kim Il Sung and his son, Kim Jong Il developed and centered around them and the Kim family.

The main objective of this thesis is to explore how Pyongyang's public spaces such as monuments and memorials, spaces, sport, education, art and entertainment facilities and infrastructure are deeply embedded in the spatialization of power that occurred in North Korea between the 1950's and the 1990's. This thesis will explain how, during the rebuilding of Pyongyang after the Korean War, the rising Kim regime was careful to integrate their political ideology; Juche to architecture and infrastructure to exercise authority that would secure their past, present and future position in power in every aspect of the city. This thesis also discusses the political and historical elements tied intricately with this rebuilding process including post North Korean War history, the rise of the Kim Family, the Juche Ideology as well as the precedents drawn upon for the transformation of Pyongyang: The Soviet Union and China.

The main sources for this essay are mainly concerned with North Korea, Pyongyang and the Juche Ideology. First, it takes into account articles from Rodong Sinmun (Pyongyang's main newspaper) which are essential to understanding how Pyongyang's spaces come into play with North Korea's power structure. Second, the research takes into account the *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* edited by Phillip Meuser. This work is a compilation of various authors who write about different aspects of the DPRK's Pyongyang. It includes an excerpt of Kim Jong Il's *On the representations of Architecture* which is essential to understanding what architecture is and what it must represent in terms of power within the rebuilding of Pyongyang.

⁷ Ibid, 292.

This work also includes Philosopher Christopher Posthofen's discourse on the relation of space and power within Pyongyang, which for this thesis is vital to observe how Pyongyang's places are directly designed as a message of power. *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* also contains a chapter by South Korean Architect; Ahn Chang Mo, who discusses the history of Pyongyang's growth as a city and its transformation under the Kim Regime. Phillip Meuser's own contribution to *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* is a compilation of monuments and memorials of Pyongyang and an analysis of how they are designed within the power structure of Juche. This thesis will also examine closely *Construccion en Korea*, a publication commissioned by the North Korean Government that narrates the rebuilding of Pyongyang's infrastructure, industry, and spaces during the era of Kim Il Sung. This work is important because it informs the reader of the changes of the city from a Juche propagandistic point of view. Because of this propagandistic approach, we can observe to what degree Pyongyang's rebuilding is immersed in the political language of the DPRK. Finally, *On the Juche Idea*, the bible of North Korea written by Kim Jong Il, will be closely examined, because without a deep analysis of Juche, there can be no analysis of the spatialization of power in Pyongyang.

To conclude, this research seeks to include North Korea in a more global discussion of space and power. To highlight the uniqueness of this relationship in Pyongyang while observing its precedents found in China and the Soviet Union. It seeks to understand how Juche, the rise of the Kim Family and their connection to North Korea's history is explicit in rebuilding Pyongyang's spaces. As a final purpose, this work hopes to try and answer the question; Can we try and understand how the North Korean people live in Pyongyang by observing their daily spaces, infrastructure and places in the city?

Section I: Behind the Scenes; Historical Panorama

Pyongyang

Pyongyang was founded as the capital of (arguably mythical) Go-Joseon by King Tangun in 2333 B.C. and remained the capital of the following Dynasty kingdoms of Gija Joseon and Wiman Joseon. From 427 AD. onwards it was the capital of Goguryeo until it was annexed by the Chinese Tang Dynasty in 668 AD. The Tang Dynasty however was pushed away from the Korean Peninsula by the Korean Kingdom of Silla less than ten years later, and it served as the northern stronghold of the latter from 668AD to 935AD. At this point, Pyongyang became a stronghold/northern capital for the following Goryeo Dynasty and housed Jeongjong Palace (918 to 1382). Pyongyang was less important to the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1915) than it was for Goryeo, but eventually the city grew and was divided into a northern and southern sector, and what we know as Pyongyang today formed the southern section of Pyongyang-do. During the colonial period, Pyongyang (renamed Heijo, 1915-1945) burst at the seams since it was used by the Japanese as the Industrial capital of Korea and developed at a quick pace, even faster than Seoul. After liberation, the city was renamed Pyongyang and put as the temporary capital of the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the official name for North Korea), since the latter still considered Seoul to be the true capital of North Korea. Sadly, during the Korean War (1950-1953) Pyongyang suffered heavily from air bombing, and the city was decimated to the ground.⁸ An interesting piece of Pyongyang's history can be found through one of the articles of Pyongyang's Newspaper Rodong Sinmun; "Walls of Pyongyang", it explores the surviving walls of Pyongyang when it served as the capital of the Goguryeo Dynasty. The walls were divided in northern, central, inner and outer, the court of

⁸ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 89.

the Dynasty was within the inner walls. The government offices were located within the central walls.⁹

The Kim Family

The lives of (both real and state created) of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il are important to trace if we are to understand the Juche Ideology, the reconstruction of Pyongyang and the new public spaces that arose in the city. Professor Victor Cha explains the life story of both these characters in *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future*.¹⁰ Kim Il Sung was born as Kim Song Ju in Mangyongdae Village near Pyongyang on April 15, 1912. He was the son of Kim Hyong Jik (father) and Kang Pan Sok (mother). Kim's parents were devout Presbyterians, and his father was an activist within the early anti-Japanese movement in Korea. Kim Hyong Jik moved his family out of Colonial Korea into Manchuria where he died shortly afterwards. The Kim family then moved to China and Kim Il Sung studied in Chinese schools in Jilin Province, where he joined in his 20s the anti-Japanese guerrilla movement and trained with the Chinese communists for the next twenty years, even if Kim did not consider himself a communist. While State Juche Ideology falsely states that Kim Il Sung founded the Korean People's Army in 1932, it is true that around this year Kim led his first guerilla unit who made a name for itself in the Battle of Donging by distracting the Japanese long enough so the Chinese commander of the unit escaped from the Japanese forces. Cha explains that although they are no glorifying accounts of his combat skills, Kim couldn't have been that bad, considering that the Japanese forces had a bounty on his head that started at ten thousand dollars and rose to one hundred thousand dollars. Kim was soon forced to leave China and cross into the Soviet Union. He lived in the Soviet Union from 1941-1945 where he settled and enjoyed the life of the elite with his first wife Kim Chong Suk. Here Kim Jong Il was born. While in Russia, Kim joined

⁹ Kim Yun Mi, "Walls of Pyongyang", *Rodong Sinmun*, February 1, 2019.

¹⁰ Victor Cha, "*The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future*". Cha currently holds the D.S. Song-KF Chair in Government and Asian Studies at Georgetown University.

Khabarovsk Infantry Officers School where he eventually became a captain and led a battalion of two hundred Koreans, Russians and Chinese. Official North Korean state ideology proclaims that during this period, Kim was actively fighting against the Japanese in the Korean border, but official records of the Soviet Union describe Kim as being emaciated and in poor health, unable to participate in most military exercises.

Kim returned to Korea in 1945, to very different circumstances that state ideology claims. For starters, Kim did not return in a glorified outfit fresh from fighting against the Japanese. He was selected as the figurehead for the Soviet Occupation Zone of North Korea because (according to Cha) Stalin had no real plan for Korea and he wanted to ensure Kim's loyalty to the Soviet Union. Kim entered Korea in 1945, at 33 years old, having only spent nine years in Korea, knowing little Korean, as the leader of a terribly behaving Soviet Military entourage. The Soviets would write him speeches in Korean and considered him nothing more than a puppet, but this suited Kim just fine and he slowly accumulated power through the dependency relationship that North Korea had with the Soviet Union. He demanded money, machinery and weaponry, which Stalin promptly gave him and Kim started killing his political rivals, throwing them into forced-labor camps, and writing stories about himself. For instance, he claimed that he fought in one hundred thousand battles against the Japanese. He also occupied himself with having Korean Communist History rewritten, putting himself in the place of the first true Korea Communist; Yi Tong Hwi. Kim also deleted Soviet History in North Korean History, eliminating the influence, affluence and involvement that the Soviet Union had in establishing North Korea. There was nothing before Kim, there was only Kim and then after Kim. Cha explains that he sought to replace himself with God, a vital component

in the Juche Ideology which will be explained in the next chapter. The first statue dedicated to Kim rose in 1949, and that same year Kim began calling himself “The Great Leader”.¹¹

State Ideology also muddles Kim Jong Il’s birth and biography. For instance, North Korea claims that Kim Jong Il’s birth was prophesied by a swallow and that on the day of birth; February 16, 1942, a new star appeared, and the sky was painted with a double rainbow. Most importantly, it claims that Kim Jong Il was born on Mount Baekdu, the northernmost sacred mountain of Korea. This story is false, for Kim Jong Il was born in the Soviet Union as Yuri Irsenovich Kim. He was preschooled in Stalinism, and came to North Korea in 1945 when he was three years old. He was sent to Jilin Province during the Korean War and when he came back he studied political economy at Kim Il Sung University in Pyongyang and graduated in 1964. He was short, pudgy and wore high heels and a bouffant hairstyle to compensate for his lack of height.

Kim Jong Il was instrumental in the deification process of his father. Jong Il was the orchestrator behind all the propaganda films and revolutionary operas of North Korea which ultimately led to the immortalization of Kim Il Sung. Cha explains that when he met the highest-level North Korean defector, Hwang Jang Yop who was a Juche Ideology teacher and mentor of the Kim Family, there existed intense competition between the members of the Kim Family for the spot of the successor of Kim Il Sung. The competition, according to Hwang, consisted of who could make Kim Il Sung godlier. The contestants were Kim Yong Ju (the younger brother of Kim Il Sung), Kim Jong Il, and Kim Jong Il’s stepbrother; Kim Pyong Il. After joining the DPRK party, Kim Jong Il ordered that the first biography of his father (and his ideas) be written and promulgated widely. Jong Il then went on to lead the “4-15 Creation Group”, a group in charge of making personal spaces and monuments to Kim Il Sung in

¹¹ Victor Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2018), 65-75.

Pyongyang, and started with the Mangyongdae birth site, the Juche Tower, the Arch of Triumph and then the Great Monument on Mansu Hill. The monument was extremely disliked by Moscow and China, who viewed the monstrous statue of Kim Il Sung on Mansu Hill as an abomination of Soviet Ideology. Still, it allowed Kim Jong Il to accomplish his purpose as in 1974, he was anointed the successor of his father. Kim Jong Il had a number of affairs with North Korean actresses, dancers and models. One of them, Ko Yong Hui, would be the mother of Kim Jong Un. Before and after he took the reins of power, Kim Jong Il was extremely excessive in spending. He built at least eight palaces for himself, complete with cinemas, stables, video game rooms, movie theaters and hunting grounds filled with game, and imported western items such as \$2.6 Million worth in Swiss Watches. The \$2.6 Million came at a time when North Korea was experiencing its worst famine in the 1990s. Jong Il was also responsible for the Anti-American propaganda in North Korea, since (according to Cha) he saw his separation from his family during the Korean War as the United States' fault, he had many studios built to make Anti-American propaganda films. After his father died in 1994, Kim Jong Il built a Mausoleum for his father, and declared the new calendar of North Korea; Year One would be 1912 (the year his father was born). The new Kim was "elected" the new supreme leader of North Korea.¹²

North Korea

While Kim Il Sung began grabbing the reins of power in 1945 after he arrived in the peninsula with the Soviet Union after World War II, the true physical historical consequences of this did not come into play until after the Korean War. In other words, the historical traces behind the transformation of Pyongyang and the city's public spaces did not officially start until after the Korean War. Three important things happened after the Korean War that sets the stage for the creation of this "new Pyongyang" under Kim. One, Pyongyang and North Korea laid in ruins

¹² Ibid, 77-91.

because of the bombing during the war. Two, Kim Il Sung was successful in eliminating his political rivals and concentrating all power around his figure. Three, the DPRK and Kim embarked on an aggressive rebuilding crusade of Pyongyang as well as North Korea as a whole. This is the backbone for the new Pyongyang and the public spaces that followed.

During the Three-Year Plan (1954-1956), the state mobilized the masses toward rebuilding North Korea. Pyongyang was completely built from the ground up, complete with the main boulevards, and squares that we see today. However, most of the old part of the city that had survived the War was demolished. There was no room for the old historical past in this new Pyongyang. The Three-Year Plan was also directed toward rebuilding the foundations for industrializing Pyongyang. Here the DPRK used the natural mineral resources that North Korea enjoyed such as iron and uranium and the industrial blueprints left behind by the Japanese to rebuild its industry. It is important to remember that North Korea served as the main industrial powerhouse of Korea while under colonial rule, it had many industries, and the main power supply of the peninsula, while South Korea was the rice basket. In other words, North Korea had many past advantages when it came to rebuilding itself, however it relied heavily on Soviet Aid, as well as Soviet imports of fabrication materials, oil and Soviet Korean “experts”. China left its troops in North Korea until 1958 to serve as laborers. This successful Three-Year Plan was also dedicated to the collectivization and mechanization of agriculture due to the food shortages in North Korea that had begun before the Korean War and now aggravated themselves. This is mainly due to the fact that North Korea did not count with the food supply from South Korea, where the conditions were more favorable for growing food.

Now that the Three-Year Plan had begun rebuilding North Korea, Kim Il Sung could implement the Five-Year Plan (1956-1961), which followed Soviet footprints as well as the Great Leap Forward in China under Mao, dedicated towards revitalizing, growing and expanding the economy. At first, the Five-Year Plan, like the Great Leap Forward seemed

successful, but in the long run, the Five-Year Plan like the Great Leap Forward proved catastrophic, for all its driven-on mass production, both left their respective countries in famine and ecological disaster. Kim Il Sung carried out this plan through a centralized and state directed process as well as the mobilization of the masses. All private industries were turned over to the state, and all production was collectivized. Kim promulgated the start of local but collective industries and pushed the Juche ideal of self-reliance. Political Ideals and industry were also mixed with myths. Take for example the Chollima Movement, inspired by the legendary Korean horse who was able to gallop massive amounts of space in a single day. The Chollima Movement urged workers as well as farmers to not only spend extra hours, but to forgo basic needs such as food and going to the bathroom to reach impressive feats in industrial production such as Chollima the horse did in speed. A Seven Year Plan (1961-1967, which was extended one year) followed the Five-Year Plan to continue industrial growth.

Rebuilding and growing North Korea wasn't solely focused on physical changes, but political, state and consolidation of power as well. This began when Kim Il Sung was successful in eliminating his rivals in the Korean Workers' Party and rising as the sole central political figure of North Korea. Some of his rivals included the domestic Korean communists that had lived in North Korea during the Colonial Period, and the Soviet Koreans. Kim especially condemned the Soviet Korean faction within the Korean Workers Party because they sought a gradual rebuilding of North Korea directed toward the restoration of agriculture and light industry, while Kim and his faction wanted to give full priority and not stop work on the rebuilding process and the construction of heavy industry.¹³ The Soviet Korean faction was also increasingly aligned with the de-Stalinization policies taking place in the Soviet Union after Stalin's death (1953), while Kim was trying to further distance himself from the Soviet Union. The successful elimination of the Soviet Koreans came in the 1966 purge, and this was

¹³ Adrian Buzo, *The Making of Modern Korea*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 89.

aligned perfectly with the further implementation of the Juche Ideal of “self-reliance” and with the effort to separate the Soviet Union from North Korea and avoiding that the DPRK fall into the de-Stalinization processes that were occurring in the Soviet Union after Stalin died. The only group that Kim allowed to maintain power was the guerilla faction of the party that had fought against the Japanese in Manchuria during the colonial period, since they were an intricate part of Juche ideology and backed his position in power. This is very important, because in Juche and in Kim Il Sung’s political agenda, the reunification of Korea could only be accomplished if North Korea became a strong military power by adopting extreme military mobilization.¹⁴

To consolidate his power and figure, Kim Il Sung began a harsh process of indoctrination that involved the burning of books, the cementation of Juche as State Ideology and the personality cult/religion directed toward his political persona. Consolidation of power also involved expelling all foreigners from North Korea, isolating the country from its “allies” and forcing international couples to divorce and leave the country. Badges with his face were required to be worn by every party official, and the media was solely focused on him. By 1970, art, literature, music, performances and news revolved around either Kim Il Sung, his family, Juche or party propaganda. Ironically, this strong consolidation of power attributed a lot to the rapid rebuilding and recovering process of both Pyongyang and North Korea.¹⁵

North Korea began to decline after Seven Year Plan, during the following Six Year Plan (1971-1976) and at the beginning of the 80’s, mostly because of the unstable nature of the relationship between the Soviet Union, China and North Korea, that meant a loss of monetary aid for North Korea, as well as the splurging of money on showcase monuments and military building. Energy and food shortages were common, and by the mid 1980’s to early 1990’s

¹⁴ Ibid, 87.

¹⁵ Ibid, 86.

relations with Gorbachev's Soviet Union and Deng Xiaoping's China ended. Nevertheless, North Korea adhered to its "self-reliance" policy and refused to open trade to generate income while spending all it had on the military. The leader decided that although its country was weak in its economy, it would not be weak in its military, pouring all its resources on nuclear weaponry, which would lead to a nuclear crisis in 1994 and the promulgation of USA-lead military exercises in South Korean territory.¹⁶

1994 was a marked year in North Korea, since Kim Il Sung died. While in a certain way his death marked the end of an era it ensured continuation of it. Kim Jong Il assumed the reins of power but from a military seat, as he had abolished the seat of presidency understanding that his father, Kim Il Sung would be the only eternal president that North Korea would ever have. In this manner Kim Jong Il continued the policy of putting the military first which would lead to North Korea's disastrous famine crisis of the late 1990's started by floods in August 1995. This event also known as the Arduous March, killed millions of people, it is estimated that it wiped out 10% of the North Korean population.¹⁷ Deforestation, and lack of investing in agricultural advances and irrigation, as well as soil exhaustion, the short growing season did nothing to alleviate the crisis. North Korea was forced to appeal to international organizations for food aid, however, most of the food aid that arrived in North Korea was given to the military. In 1998, the conditions for food growth improved but starvation and malnourishment, especially in children, was still common. Nuclear weapons, military abuse, economic shortages and aid would be the prime historical characteristic of North Korea to the early 2000s. Ideologically, a reinforcement of Juche and personality cult of Kim Il Sung was enforced. A new calendar was adopted. 1912, the year that Kim Il Sung was born, became year one. Kim Jong Il also steered Juche to become a more nationalist and military ideal. Kim Jong Il

¹⁶ Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Korea*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 361-395.

¹⁷ Suki Kim, *Without you there is no us*, (New York: Broadway Books, 2014) ,6.

fabricated his birth place to be Baekdu, close to where the mythical figure of Tangun established the first Korean state. Then he announced that the remains of Tangun had been found, thus supporting the idea that the Korean race was a “distinguished race” and that his bloodline descended from the Great Tangun.¹⁸

¹⁸ Victor Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2018), 65-75.

Section II: Setting the Scene

The Juche Ideology and the creation of the North Korean Totalitarian State

It is not possible to understand the political reasoning behind the spaces in Pyongyang without looking at the Juche Ideology of the DPRK and the role it played in turning North Korea into a Totalitarian State. Juche was officially born in a speech given by Kim Il Sung in 1955 “*On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work*”. Juche was then transformed into a political and state ideology by Hwang Jang Yop and adopted as the sole state guiding lines of North Korea at the Party Congress of 1970.¹⁹ Hwang Jang Yop would later defect to South Korea in 1997 and up to date he is the highest ranked North Korean defector. The process of adopting Juche also involved an extreme indoctrination in which all art, literature, film, education, culture and history revolved around Juche.²⁰ The Ideology, which took bits and pieces from other ideologies and incorporated them into its body, quickly grew into a personality and religious cult that patronized the deification of Kim Il Sung. Both the deification and the adopting of Juche process was largely in part developed by Kim Jong Il.²¹ In fact, Kim Jong Il became the main proprietor of the growth of Juche with his treatise; *On the Juche Idea* in 1982.²² As a whole, when you read *On the Juche Idea* it explains that the Juche doctrine in essence understands that the masses are in an endless struggle against nature, and that in order to survive or achieve victory over this struggle the masses need to follow obediently in revolutionary activity “The Great Leader”, Kim Il Sung. Who is the only being capable, knowledgeable enough to lead the masses, to the ultimate victory which is the unification of the Korean Peninsula.²³ The multifaceted nature of Juche allowed North Korea

¹⁹ Victor Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2018), 38-39.

²⁰ Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Korea*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 373.

²¹ Victor Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2018), 38-39.

²² Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Korea*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 372.

²³ Jong Il Kim, *On the Juche Idea*.

to be ideologically independent from the Soviet Union and China but to keep on receiving aid from both of them at the same time.²⁴

Victor Cha in *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future* divides the Juche Ideology into four components. These are; self-reliance (man is in charge of his own fate, the Korean race is in charge of its own fate without any interference from outside powers), the people are the masters of the Revolution, the Revolution must be pursued through self-reliance and that the primal component of the Revolution is loyalty to the supreme leader (Kim Il Sung). In other words, in Juche, man made his own history by following the Suryong (supreme leader) blindly till Korea reached the ultimate state of human development, which in this case was the unification of Korea under Kim Il Sung. Cha also explains how Juche draws on previous ideologies. He understands that Juche is communist in the sense that it establishes capitalism and imperialism as the enemies and that the Revolution would be carried out in a class struggle. Nevertheless, it emphasizes man as an individual more than the class, differing from Marxist-Leninist Universalism and therefore turns the Juche Ideology into a nationalist ideal and a mechanism of control over the people. Cha also explains that Juche places the state and the sovereign in an ultimate position, quite different from Marxist-Leninist Theory. Juche circles around the Korean people, the Korean State, Korean identity and, above all, Korean sovereignty. Because of this, Cha agrees with B. R. Myers in understanding that Juche also shares similarities with fascism. Juche also draws from Confucianism since it emphasizes respect of hierarchy, and filial piety. In Confucianism, the children would serve their father, in Juche the Korean people would serve their leader. Cha also explains how Juche has a religious connotation. Through Juche, Kim Il Sung sought to replace himself with God.²⁵ North Korean State Propaganda even called Kim Il Sung as being higher to Christ, Buddha, Confucius and

²⁴ Victor Cha, *The Impossible State: North Korea, Past and Future* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2018), 38-39.

²⁵ Ibid, 37-45.

Mohammed in love, benevolence, virtue and justice, respectively.²⁶ Juche became a religion of state, political ideology and personality cult. We can compare this conglomerate of beliefs with what James C. Scott in *Seeing like a State* calls a “narrowing of vision”. A state by narrowing and simplifying certain aspects of larger and more difficult terms allows it to control and manipulate this “easier version” more effectively toward their political mission and creation of an autocratic and totalitarian state.²⁷ Kim and North Korea by breaking down and narrowing “the big words” such as state ideology, political doctrine, religion and history into Juche allows the North Korean State to more easily manipulate its people and government and shape itself into an autocratic and totalitarian state. The state ideology of North Korea? Juche. The history of North Korea? Juche. The religion of North Korea? Juche. The political system of North Korea? Juche. This “narrowing of vision” and easy manipulation in turn create an easier control over the movement of the masses into one focus and goal and the atomization of a society, both elements foundations of a totalitarian state as explained by Hannah Arendt in *On the Origins of Totalitarianism*.²⁸ In the case of North Korea however, it must be important to point out that the actual support of the masses of the North Korean totalitarian state may in fact be purely constructed by the propagandistic nature of the North Korean government. Nevertheless, Juche Ideology is steadfast in proclaiming that the North Korean people must move together in mass within and toward the revolution.

Michael J. Seth in *A Concise History of Korea* describes Juche as nothing more than “vague ultra-nationalism and glorification of the leader”²⁹ and highlights its xenophobic and racial nationalist significance more than Cha. Seth also understands that the personality cult within Juche although highly focused on Kim Il Sung is also directly toward the Kim family,

²⁶ Ibid, 73.

²⁷ James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State* (New Haven, Yale University Press), 27.

²⁸ Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harvest, 1973), 23.

²⁹ Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Korea*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 370.

especially when you consider recent events, the powerhouse of Kim Il Sung's sons, daughters and extended family and the competition that they have with each other to remain in the seat of power, and the rewriting of North Korean history to specifically revolve around them. For example, when the problem of succession of Kim Il Sung came to play, the state suddenly became focused on cramming each Kim into North Korean History to turn the personality cult of Kim Il Sung to the Kim Family. The latter is present when Kim Il Sung's great grandfather; Kim Ung U was proclaimed to have participated in the fight against the U.S. Imperialists and assisted in the sinking of the *USS General Sherman* in 1866 in the rewriting of North Korean History (Kundae Choson Yoksa).³⁰ The further embedding of the cult of the Kim Family and Kim Il Sung, reinforces the undying loyalty that the North Korean must have toward their immortal Great Leader, who now is present in their past, present and future, an aspect that is vital in the creation of a true and long lasting totalitarian state.³¹

Neither Meuser, Posthofen or Chang Mo's chapters in *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* go into depth analyzing Juche Ideology and its components, unless they speak about the influence of the Ideology directly into the urban panorama of Pyongyang. Meuser however, does let the reader know between the lines his emphasis with linking Juche to Christianity and religion. He calls the Juche Ideology the ersatz religion of North Korea, and he compares the significance and structure of the cathedral in Cologne, Germany and the Tower of the Juche Idea.³² Meuser also calls Mangyongdae (the site where Kim Il Sung was born) "Bethlehem, NK"³³ while presenting a picture comparison of a mockup of the site in Mangyongdae with the Christian Nativity Scene. Posthofen analyzes and compares Juche to Mythology especially when he discusses the role of myth and religion as presented by Roland

³⁰ Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Korea*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 371-372.

³¹ Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harvest, 1973), 323.

³² Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 54.

³³ Ibid, Front Flap.

Barthes and what this means for Pyongyang since the city is built to maintain the Juche Myth while displacing the individual completely.³⁴ Therefore we can infer from the reading that Posthofen not as much equalizes but observes Juche as a kind of Mythology. It is useful to bring up how Roland Barthes explores the relationship between myth and the creation of a power structure. Barthes highlights the unrealistic and malleable nature of a myth and its man-made creation that lends credibility and foundation to an ideology, because you either believe it or you don't, there is no room for questioning it.³⁵ The Kim regime, by constructing the Juche myth does not only lend credibility and foundation for the North Korean totalitarian state but also places it in a status of an equalizes it with legend...and who doubts a myth?

Kim Jong Il “On the representations of Architecture”

To understand city transformation and the public spaces that arose in Pyongyang during the Early Kim Regime, the philosophy of Kim Jong Il on what architecture represents is important to underline along with the Juche Doctrine, for while Kim Il Sung was the president of the DPRK it is Kim Jong Il who was mainly in charge of all the construction and architectural work going on within the city and in North Korea. He was even called “great builder or great architect”.³⁶ Kim Jong Il published in 1991 a 180-page book on his thoughts of the theory of architecture; *On Architecture* and how it should be implemented within North Korea. An excerpt is included in *Architecture and Cultural Guide: Pyongyang*, and from it we can gather many things. First, that what we can infer, that what we know as “public spaces” in the Western World is categorized under “architecture” in the Juche Doctrine and in the Kim Family perspective. For Kim Jong Il, architecture is a product of social revolutionary history, an ideological and utile construct that reflects the material needs, customs, sentiments and emotions of the present people (in this case the North Koreans). Architecture must include

³⁴ Ibid, 175-178.

³⁵ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1957)

³⁶ Won Yong Yong, *Construcción en Corea*, (Pyongyang: Editorial de la Revista Ilustrada “Corea”, 1991), 35.

architectural structures that have both a basis of material utility and ideological spirituality. The study of architecture and the realization of architecture must be carried obediently by the architects to follow the Party's and the Leader's plan, as architecture is an evolution on the philosophical ideal of the Juche Doctrine. Architecture must include monumental structures since they are the best instruments to carry out an education of the masses and are the best visual and lasting representations of greatness and achievements. Architecture in all circumstances, must reflect revolutionary ideals, national characteristics, originality, variety, collectivism and Juche orientation, champion the working class and "only the working class", and balance the aspect of beauty, creation, purpose and mission in all its structures.³⁷

If we observe closely, architecture for Kim Jong Il draws on precedence from Soviet Constructivist Architecture, Stalinist Architecture and Maoist Architecture. Soviet Constructivist Architecture is present during the early Soviet Regime and the pre-Stalinist Era (1920s-early1930's). It blends art, modernity, technology, engineering and ideological indoctrination. In basic terms, Constructivist Architecture sought the cutting with the past and the transformation of society through architecture, it considered architecture as a catalyst or a reactive that would build the new soviet man and the new soviet society.³⁸ Constructivist Architecture would cease when Stalin came into power in 1933. Stalin sought to demonstrate to the world the power of the Soviet Union through its architecture. Therefore, he sought to create grand, imperial and vast neoclassicist spaces, buildings and areas on an enormous scale that served as propaganda for the power of the Soviet State. Quite different from the Constructivist period, the government had more control over what was built, and how it was built. A perfect example of Stalinist Architecture is the Seven Sisters of Moscow. These vast

³⁷ Philipp Meuser Ed., *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang Vol II* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 185-220.

³⁸ Catherine Cooke, "La forma es una función x, el desarrollo del método de diseño de los arquitectos constructivistas," in *Constructivismo Ruso* (Barcelona: Ediciones de Serbal, 1994) 47-88.

constructions are an excellent portrayal of the ostentatious style of Stalinist Architecture.³⁹ We can clearly observe in Kim Jong Il's *On the representations of Architecture* how he explains that Architecture must include monumental representations of grandeur for the education of the masses, combining both Soviet Constructivist Architecture and Stalinist Architecture. Early Communist China followed Stalinist Architecture style in construction while blending nationalist sentiment and symbolism that architecture had traditionally and historically held throughout the ages in China. The Ten Grand Buildings built to celebrate the first decade of Communist China demonstrate the blend of Stalinist Architecture, CCP Nationalism and Traditional Symbolism perfectly.⁴⁰ After the Soviet-Sino split in the 1960's, the birth of the Cultural Revolution and the further implementation of Maoism and Mao influence in the government, this architecture blend represented in the Ten Grand Buildings was replaced with Maoist Architecture. Maoist Architecture sought to reinvent Communist China away from Soviet Revisionism that followed after Stalin's death as well as American Imperialism. Its main characteristics were austere, and plain facades with nationalist emblems as well as further representations of Mao himself, establishing the personal cult of Mao characteristic of China's Cultural Revolution.⁴¹ Kim Jong Il's *On the representations of Architecture* explicitly explains that Architecture must include nationalistic symbols, and although Kim Jong Il states that Architecture must only glorify the masses alone, Pyongyang clearly follows Mao's example of exalting particular father figures within their architecture.

To bring Kim Jong Il's writing and ideals on what architecture should be further into context and within a more recognizable physical historical example we can form a comparison between him and Hitler's Architect; Albert Speer. Speer, like Jong Il was intimately close with

39 Mwaniki, Andrew . "What Was Stalinist Architecture?" World Atlas. <https://www.worldatlas.com/what-was-stalinist-architecture.html> (accessed March 5, 2020).

40 Lillian M. Li, Alison J. Dray-Novey and Haili Kong, *Beijing: From Imperial City to Olympic City* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 171- 208.

41 Liu, Zixian. Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art, Volume 4, Numbers 2-3, 1 September 2017, pp. 269-285(17)Intellect, https://doi.org/10.1386/jcca.4.2-3.269_1

the main seat and person of power; Hitler and both characters had grand designs for the architecture of their respective political entities. However, quite differently from Kim Jong Il, Speer had to comply and had his ideological ambitions checked by the Nazi party officials or needed to be approved by Hitler. Kim on the contrary, was unrestricted (or at least we are led to believe as such) in his plight as the architect of North Korea and Pyongyang. Perhaps because Juche doctrine rested on one single person and one single state ideology and it was (or we are led to believe) not contested upon, and homogeneous. Nevertheless, Speer like Kim Jong Il, and like Hitler believed that Nazi ideals and architecture must be built at a grand and vast scale as observable in the Zeppelinfeld Stadium present at the Nazi Party Rallies, and the Cathedral of Lights, and the German Pavilion at the 1937 International Exposition in Paris. Speer was also commissioned by Hitler to transform Berlin into a showcase Nazi city, however, the start of Second World War II cut this ambitious project.⁴² Perhaps, if the second World War had not occurred, Berlin's landscape would look a lot like Pyongyang's.

Precedents of Pyongyang

As we have learned in the previous section, China, North Korea and the Soviet Union had an intricate political, historical, social and economic relationship with each other. This relationship transcended the above categories and manifested themselves not only in ideology and leadership but also in urban reform and planning. Before speaking of Pyongyang, an overview of the changes of Moscow and its Public Spaces under the Soviet Union and Beijing under Mao, is imperative to discuss since these did have influence on Pyongyang and the city's public spaces transformation under Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il.

42 Lane, Barbara Miller. "Architects in Power: Politics and Ideology in the Work of Ernst May and Albert Speer." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 17, no. 1 (1986): 283-310. Accessed March 10, 2020. doi:10.2307/204134.

The Soviet Union

Moscow under the Soviet Union, transformed itself in a frenzy of industrialization processes after the Russian Revolution. In 1928, the city began one of its first five year plans (plans that would be later echoed in China and in North Korea) to massively industrialize Moscow to catch up with the rest of the Western Powers. Much like Beijing and Pyongyang, the population of the city was bursting at the seams due to the influx of the countryside population moving in the city to take their own place inside this industrialization plan, food and electricity was rationed.⁴³ The industrialization planned for the city included a Metro⁴⁴ and the building of new factories or expanding old ones. Red Army propaganda decorated windows of shops, while military propaganda music was played in a few streets through loudspeakers. Gruliov in *The Great Cities: Moscow* explains that the changes that the city went through practically transformed Moscow into a brand-new city ⁴⁵. The old roads of Moscow were widened for “traffic that did not exist”⁴⁶ and blocks were removed. Although the plans for the construction and opening of the Metro had begun during the Russian Empire they were postponed because of the Revolution, and World War I, it was only after these events had occurred that the construction, design and opening could take place. Now of course the design and the construction took on a whole different meaning than it was originally intended for. The Metro stations of Soviet Russia which began opening in the 1930’s had elaborated and magnificent marble stations decorated beautifully with mosaics, statues and gold details, extravagance that was equally mirrored in the fancy machinery that factories imported from overseas. Gruliov describes that in a disturbing fashion, the people of Moscow were adamant to keep living in terrible conditions while making extravagant places that they themselves would not use, and lightly implies that

⁴³ Leo Gruliov, *The Great Cities: Moscow* (Amsterdam: Time-Life Books, 1977), 6.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 7.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 11.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 14.

they had been brainwashed by the propaganda blasting in the speakers.⁴⁷ Lenin, Marx and Engels as forefathers were revered in every aspect of Moscow.⁴⁸ The second five-year plan saw the easing of the food rationing, and the first urban plan for the city. However, this time of calm was short-lived, for in 1936, the great political purges began, and the red city became red with fear.⁴⁹ After World War II a University was built on Lenin Hills as well as a new stadium.⁵⁰ Party members were in charge of city planning, and allowed the ebb and flow of party influence over the city unchecked.⁵¹

The most well-known public space of Moscow under the Soviet Union is the Red Square. The plan of the Red Square is widely known. Surrounding the rectangle's open space, you have the Kremlin, Saint Basil's Cathedral with the Lenin mausoleum in the front, GUM Department store and the Kazan Cathedral. The Red Square was and has been the heart of Moscow since the middle ages. Here people watched proclamations of the Czar being read, witnessed public executions, as well as the Russian Revolution and the return and departure of the triumphant red army over the Nazis in World War II. It became a propagandistic scene for the military, and North Korea would follow this example with Kim Il Sung Square in Pyongyang. The significance of the Red Square changed drastically after the rise of the Soviet Union. We see this with the granite mausoleum which enshrines Lenin's body and places it on display in the Red Square. After Stalin died, his body was embalmed like Lenin's and put on display next to his, but his body was removed in the process of de-Stalinization. This embalming and displaying of political leaders would be echoed in Pyongyang.⁵² Additionally, statues of Seventeenth Century Russian heroes who used to be on display in the center of the red square, were removed during the Soviet Era to make way for military parades on the square.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 15.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 38.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 21.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 44.

⁵¹ Ibid, 180.

⁵² Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012).

On special occasions, the Red Square was home to ceremonies that involve rallying marches and banner waving. The Red Square was the place of power for the Soviet Army and they were present relentlessly in these spaces, while military and weaponry displays were often made in the square by the Soviet Army. The Red Square was home to the celebration of May Day. May Day being International Workers Day. The parade involved military marching, red flags being held aloft and political figures being represented by pictures.⁵³

The Metro built in Moscow must be discussed for it serves as a very important precedent for the Metro in Pyongyang. The Metro in Moscow was imagined by Stalin himself, and built between 60,000 men and women. Its stations are filled with awe striking cavernous spaces, complete with marbling, mosaic, gold leafing, pillars, columns, stained glass panels, ostentatious decoration (Gruliov calls them “church-like”) and of course history commemorating. Take for example the Revolution Square Station which has bronze statues of idealized soviet citizens crouched in the magnificent arches of the station, or the Komsomolskaya Station, which pays tribute to the Communist League⁵⁴.

China

Like Moscow, Beijing had for centuries been not only the traditional capital, but the traditional center of power. Therefore, when faced with the possibility of where to put the new capital of new Communist China, Mao Zedong chose Beijing. The task at hand seemed simple: transform Beijing into an industrial powerhouse and rewrite the city to meet the demands of the working class. Beijing like Moscow and Pyongyang would become a de facto palimpsest. For this, the Beijing Municipal Government was created directed by Mao, Liu Shaoqi and Premier Zhou Enlai, no change would be made in Beijing without their (mostly Mao’s) approval. The Capital City Planning Commission was formed in 1949 with soviet advisors, military officers and for

⁵³ Leo Gruliov, *The Great Cities: Moscow* (Amsterdam: Time-Life Books, 1977), 22-33.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 56-67.

four years this group debated on how to reconstruct a city with so much rich history. Nevertheless, their arguing was futile, for Mao had already begun rebuilding Beijing on his orders. He started with demolishing the old walls of the city, claiming that there was no room to keep the burdened past within the development of the new city. Government and new offices were built with monumental and modern splendor, seeking to highlight the image of the new China under the CCP. The main boulevard of Beijing was expanded to 90 square meters wide to allow a military parade to pass through it on the anniversary of the foundation of Communist China. During the First Five Year Plan (1953-1958), 950 million yuan were invested into constructing new industries in the city. Twenty-one new factories were built and those that already existed were expanded. Beijing also saw the transformation of roads and of its transportation. 154 miles of street roads were added to the city, and the main boulevard Chang'an was expanded, widened and reinforced to allow parades to pass through it.

In 1958 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Communist China, Mao and the central government decided to build ten new construction projects (known as the Ten Grand Buildings) that were finished within a year because of the unlimited power of the government to acquire hands for labor. These were the Great Hall of the People in Tiananmen, the Cultural Palace of Nationalities, the Beijing Train Station, the Military Museum of the Chinese People's Revolution Army, the Overseas Chinese Hotel, the Hotel of Nationalities, the Beijing Worker's Stadium, the National Agricultural Exhibition Hall, the State Guest House at Diaoyutai, the expansion of Tiananmen Square, and the Museum of Chinese History and Revolution. In front of these massive construction projects, stood statues of soldiers, farmers and workers. Street axis were massively widened. Tiananmen Square had already gone through an expansion in 1949, but the second expansion was aimed at making it the greatest and largest square in the world (according to Mao) modeled after the Red Square in Moscow. After the process, the square came to measure a total of 99 acres, and with the Great Hall of the People it measured

136 acres. Many houses and buildings around the original square were torn down and demolished. Along with the expansion, an enormous Monument to the People's Heroes in granite was constructed in the middle of the square. The Monument on Tiananmen Square also became the new zero point on the central and south axis of Beijing, the previous place had been occupied by the Imperial Palace. Tiananmen Square held two annual celebrations during the time Mao was in power, International Labor Day (May 1) and National Day (October 1).⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Lillian M. Li, Alison J. Dray-Novey and Haili Kong, *Beijing: From Imperial City to Olympic City* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 171- 208.

Section III: Designing Power in Pyongyang's Public Spaces

Pyongyang's public spaces such as monuments and memorials, sport, educational, art and entertainment facilities, and infrastructure were stages of power authority building within North Korea totalitarianism in Juche. After the Korean War, roughly between late 1950s to 1990s, with some exceptions built in the early 2000s, Pyongyang was the selected space for representing Kim Il Sung's and Kim Jong Il's achievements as well as their power structure, political stronghold and rewriting of North Korean History. This section draws its information from the *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang*, edited by Phillip Meuser, *Construcción en Corea*, published by the DPRK and articles from *Rodong Sinmun*, Pyongyang's Newspaper taken from the Rodong Sinmun Online Archives (<http://rodong.rep.kp/en/>). A word of caution however, must be established. The information that we know of Pyongyang, thus far has been provided by North Korea, since it is, right now, impossible to conduct proper research in North Korea. This is not only because of the country's isolation but also because of the propagandistic nature of the sources which are available to us. This is especially true when we see the description of these spaces in the Rodong Sinmun and *Construcción en Corea*. However, it is important to understand that this propagandistic nature of sources is of vital interest for this thesis for it provides us with a more highlighted background of these public spaces.

Monuments and Memorials

Monuments and Memorials in Pyongyang are designated to create and preserve a collective memory of the people of North Korea. Which is reminiscent of the process that Maurice Halbwachs describes in *La Memorie collective*. Addressing architectural imagination within the totalitarian regime in Korea, demands exploring, first of all, the Chollima Monument. The Chollima Monument is a good example of how the Kim regime took traditional symbols of old, brought them to the present and appropriated them and turned it into a Juche symbol. There is a Korean legend about a winged horse called Chollima who was so fast that he could fly up

to 250 miles. The Kim regime took this horse and converted it to represent the stamina and in a certain way the drive of the never-ending social reconstruction process of North Korea. The Chollima monument, unveiled in 1961, is a triangle column with Chollima at the top being ridden by a peasant woman and a worker. The peasant woman is carrying a bundle of rice in her hands while the worker is carrying the red letter, a document of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea. The Chollima Monument in total is 5,000 meters squared while it sits at a 34-meter height (including column and bronze statue). Chollima is between the Arch of Triumph and Mansu Hill, all three of them have the road Kaesong passing in front of them.⁵⁶ If the North Korean state is focused on rebuilding, and doing away with the old, why does it bring forward this ancient traditional Korean myth into the Juche vocabulary, out of all the myths that Korea has? We can infer that it's either because it serves a purpose within Juche ideology or because the Kim Regime needed to ensure to tell the public that they were also in charge of Korea's past. Bringing it into historical context, the unveiling of the Chollima Monument coincides with period of the Five-Year Plan (1956-1961) in North Korea which was dedicated in moving the mass to rebuild and grow North Korea's economy as well as the Chollima Movement, which urged workers to spend extra hours, and forgo basic needs to reach maximum industrial production such as Chollima the horse did in speed and space.

The Grand Monument on Mansu Hill built in 1972 is located in central Pyongyang, on the left side of the Taedong River. From the monument, you can observe the Juche Tower across the river to your right, and the Arch of Triumph and Kim Il Sung Stadium. The Monument has four distinctive features. The first is the 20-meter statue of Kim Il Sung in the center of the monument, which is roughly half of the height of the Statue of Liberty. The statue is made of bronze and it depicts the great leader with one hand on his waist and the other up above as if presenting the view of the city from the hill. The second distinctive feature is the

⁵⁶ Ibid, 118-119.

wall mosaic located behind the bronze statue. The mosaic portrays Baekdu Mountain, considered one of the most holy and significant sites for Korea since ancient times. The mosaic is 70 meters wide (approximately 230 feet) and 12.85 meters high, meaning that you could almost fit the Statue of Liberty horizontally at the width of the mosaic. This mosaic is very important. Baekdusan is considered one of the holy mountains of Korea, since it is here that it is thought that Korean civilization began with the kingdom of Go-Joseon and King Tangun. By placing Baekdusan in this space, not only is North Korea claiming to be the heir to Go-Joseon but as well as the heirs of Tangun, especially when we consider that Kim Jong Il claims to have been born on Baekdusan. The other two distinctive features of the monuments are located at the sides of the statue (leaving between a good amount of empty space between them and Kim). They consist of three carved stone flags each of North Korea descending from larger to smaller in a single line, the largest flags being the front most flags. Around the flags are 5 meter sculpted groups of people, some with weapons, some with flags and some empty handed celebrating the revolution. On each side Hangeul writing can be appreciated, the one to the right states “Kim Il Sung general, hurray!” (김일성장군 만세!). The flags on the right also include a globe of the world presenting the Asian side with North Korea in the center. The flags are 164 feet long and 74 feet high.⁵⁷ A bronze statue of Kim Jong Il was added when he died in 2011 next to that of his father’s. Behind the statues is the Korean Revolution Museum built in 1972, which includes 90 exhibition rooms.⁵⁸ The construction and unveiling of the Grand Monument coincides with the Six Year Plan (1971-1976) in North Korea, the cementation of Kim Il Sung as the sole political leader and with the adoption of Juche as State Ideology.

According to Philipp Meuser, the monument itself is meant to portray the victory of the Korean people’s fight against the Japanese Empire during Korea’s colonial period, the social

⁵⁷ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012). 111.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 38-39.

revolution of North Koreans, as well as the recognition of Kim Il Sung as the leader of this movement, and later on his son's Kim Jong Il's. According to the multitudes of articles of the *Rodong Sinmun*, The Grand Monument on Mansu Hill is mainly used as a site by the North Korean Government to bring in foreign dignitaries⁵⁹, Korean Youth Leagues⁶⁰, foreign people or overseas Koreans when they come to visit Pyongyang⁶¹, or commemorative events such as the death of Kim Il Sung. In commemorative events the whole monument is filled with Koreans. It seems that in most of the visits to the Mansu Hill visitors place flowers and bow at the feet of the statues. Articles such as "Italian Personage Visits Statues of President Kim Il Sung", "Chairman Kim Jong Il", "Home-visiting Group of Koreans in Japan Visits Statues of President Kim Il Sung", "Chairman Kim Jong Il and Lao Guests Visit Statues of President Kim Il Sung", "Chairman Kim Jong Il" (just to name a few). Flowers are also placed at the feet of the statues for commemorative events⁶². *Rodong Sinmun* makes it seem as the visitor's gestures are genuine and born from deep respect. However, when we look at Guy Delisle's description of his visit to the city in *Pyongyang, A Journey in North Korea* he clearly implies that he was taken to the monument (and several others) after he arrived in the city by his escorts, given flowers and made to stand in front of the statues. He states that he came to an understanding that they wanted him to place the flowers and give reverence to both Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il, this cautionary tale must be applied to other articles of the *Rodong Sinmun* who deeply participate in a propagandistic approach when reporting "visits" of important guests in public spaces in Pyongyang.⁶³ The emphasis that *Rodong Sinmun* gives to

59 Rodong News Team, "Italian Personage Visits Statues of President Kim Il Sung, Chairman Kim Jong Il" *Rodong Sinmun*, December 14, 2008 (Juche 107).

60 Rodong Sinmun, "Officials of Korean Youth League in Japan Visit Statues of President Kim Il Sung, Chairman Kim Jong Il", *Rodong Sinmun*, July 21, 2019 (Juche 108).

61 Rodong Sinmun, "Floral Tribute to Statues of Great Leaders Paid by Foreigners and Overseas Koreans", *Rodong Sinmun*, July 8, 2019 (Juche 108).

62 Rodong Sinmun, "Three Minutes' Silence Observed for President Kim Il Sung at Noon", *Rodong Sinmun*, July 9, 2019 (Juche 108).

63 Guy Delisle, *Pyongyang, A Journey in North Korea* (Quebec: Drawn and Quarterly, 2018). Guy Delisle is a French animator who worked in Pyongyang.

reporting the international visits to the Grand Monument on Mansu Hill (and others along the way as we shall see), specifically the statues of both father and son can be inferred to be as an effort to legitimize the influence and prestige that other countries “recognize” of North Korea and both Kims it is perhaps meant to be as a symbol that North Korea within Earth’s greatest nations and Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il within Earth’s greatest leaders.

Pyongyang lies at the base of Taesong Mountain, and at the top of this Mountain we find the National Martyrs Cemetery. The Cemetery was originally built in 1975, but expanded and given its formal setting in 1985. The enormous gate that precedes the ground of the cemetery is built with a magnificent stone setting with a traditional Korean tile rooftop, and after many, many stairs uphill you arrive at the cemetery itself. The grounds cover a total of 1,800 meters. 1,800 meters is roughly 1 mile. The cemetery includes monuments. At the foot of the cemetery lies a plaque inscribed with Kim Il Sung’s own personal handwriting, then the rows of tombs that belong to anti-Japanese fighters, each with its own bronze bust. Behind the tombs is a giant red marble flag. Two great stone sculptures dedicated to the fallen heroes are seen on either side immediately after finishing the ascending stairs.⁶⁴ This is another of the public spaces that is best appreciated through the lens of Google Earth, since it truly allows you to take in the scale and the size of this cemetery. It is important to remember that both in 1975 and the period between 1975 to 1985, North Korea was experiencing the Six Year Plan (1971-1976), the declining of the relationship between North Korea, China and the Soviet Union, the further implementation of Juche and of the Kim Family and energy and food shortages which was not only because of the loss of monetary aid but also because of the splurging of money on monuments and the military. We can infer that this splurging of money also includes the construction of the National Martyrs Cemetery.

⁶⁴ Won Yong Yong, *Construcción en Corea* (Pyongyang: Editorial de la Revista Ilustrada “Corea”, 1991), 38-41

Rodong Sinmun mentions two visits to the National Martyrs Cemetery, one in “Vietnamese Embassy Members Visit Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum” and one in “SPA Deputies Tour Pyongyang”. In the last one, it states that deputies of the Supreme People’s Assembly vowed to keep on learning from their anti-Japanese fighting ancestors in order to keep pushing for the socialist construction of the DPRK.⁶⁵ The Cemetery is also mentioned in “Wreaths Laid before Bust of Anti-Japanese War Heroine Kim Jong Suk” and “Bouquets Laid before Bust of Anti-Japanese War Heroine Kim Jong Suk”. Kim Jong Suk was, according to the articles (and according to Kim Jong Il’s agenda) a great leader in the anti-Japanese fighting in Mount Baekdu, one of the wives of Kim Il Sung, and the mother of Kim Jong Il. Both articles describe how flowers were laid at her bust on her grave in Mount Taedong to honor her memory. Other articles surrounding the cemetery (besides the countless “visiting” articles) mention the burial of more war heroes such as “More Martyrs’ Remains Buried in Fatherland Liberation War Martyrs Cemetery”.

The Tower of the Juche Idea is perhaps the most well-known public space/monument of Pyongyang. Meuser calls the Tower of the Juche Idea nothing more than the “lodestar of North Korea and a phallus shaped petrification of Kim Il Sung’s worldview”.⁶⁶ Built in 1982, the Tower of Juche Idea has a variety of components. The first is the 170-meter tower that stands in the center with the torched red flame on top. The flame is sculpted from metal and the torch itself is gold. The tower is made up of 70 granite blocks ascending from largest to smallest and in the front face of the tower you can distinguish Hangeul characters (Korean alphabet) which spell “Juche” (주체). This refers to the Juche Ideology of the North Korean government established by Kim Il Sung which has been discussed previously. The tower is modeled after a pagoda, the tiered tower structure prominent in East Asia that came through

⁶⁵ Rodong Sinmun, “SPA Deputies Tour Pyongyang”, *Rodong Sinmun*, April 12, 2019 (Juche 108).

⁶⁶ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 51-54.

India and has religious connotations with Buddhism. At the foot of the tower is a group of three statues measuring 42 meters. To compare it, the spire of the Notre-Dame in Paris was 91 meters, so the three statues at the foot of the tower measure roughly half of the spire of Notre-Dame, while the Juche Tower itself is almost twice the height of the spire. The three figures are a Korean peasant wearing a working Hanbok (Korean traditional outfit) , a worker and an intellectual. Each sculpted individual holds high above their heads a respective party emblem. The intellectual holds the calligraphy brush, the peasant woman holds a sickle, while the worker holds a hammer. The Juche tower and the sculpture lie in the middle of an enormous plaza on the left coastline of the Taedong river looking directly at Kim Il Sung Square. On either side of the Juche Tower are three granite monuments (six in total). They represent, Impenetrable Fortress, Juche Industry, Land of Learning, Land of Longevity, Harvest Time, and Juche Art. This plaza also includes two pavilions and two fountains. The fountains shoot up water to 150 meters.⁶⁷ The pavilions are surrounded by greenery and gardens.⁶⁸ Verses dedicated to the Juche Idea are engraved at the front base of the tower, while the back is decorated with various marble plaques in diverse colors sent from political leaders around the world. According to the DPRK's own publication, which was translated to Spanish, the Juche Tower was built to reflect the unanimous and steadfast will power of the people to keep faith with the Korean revolution till it reaches its victory.⁶⁹At the top of the Juche Tower there are 8 known platforms, that allow visitors to view Pyongyang from above, especially the grand public spaces built.⁷⁰ Every important public space in Pyongyang has a full view of the tower.⁷¹ This is important because it demonstrates the architecture genius behind the construction of the tower, and the effort that was given to its construction. It's no accident that you can view the Tower from every important

⁶⁷ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 112-113.

⁶⁸ Won Yong Yong, *Construcción en Corea* (Pyongyang: Editorial de la Revista Ilustrada "Corea", 1991), 31.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 24.

⁷⁰ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 22-39.

⁷¹ Ibid, 54.

public space in Pyongyang, its gives presence to the monument as well as a feeling that “it’s always there and its always watching you”, it increases its symbolism by a tenfold and makes it seem more looming than it already is. Historically speaking, the building and unveiling of the Tower coincides with the further implementation of Juche in North Korea.

The Tower of the Juche Idea is the most mentioned public space in Pyongyang along with Mangyongdae and Kim Il Sung Square in *Rodong Sinmun*. The newspaper highly focuses on “visits” to this public space by foreigners, important politicians from other countries, North Korean youth groups, or overseas Koreans. This insistence in reporting on these visits are meant to legitimize North Korea’s position in a global view and the support it has from other countries as well as Korea’s as well as lend credibility to North Koreans that outsiders (and insiders) like them are in awe and hold deep respect for the Juche way of life as well as the Kim family behind it. For example, in “Mongolian Delegation visits Tower of the Juche Idea”, the newspaper goes on to write how the Mongolian Secretary of State, D. Davaasuren, along with the Mongolian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, visited the Tower and the space around it, how Sir Davaasuren made an entry in the visitor’s book of the Tower, and how it was explained to the delegation how the space represents Kim Il Sung’s theoretical and physical achievements. The article includes a picture of the delegation being led by a North Korean woman dressed in Hanbok.⁷² Another article from another foreign “visit”, “Foreigners visit Tower of Juche Idea” concerns Palestine’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, and the Minister of Trade and Industry of Oman that visited the Tower.⁷³ Other political visits to the Tower are the Vietnamese Delegation of the Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences⁷⁴, a delegation from Japan that seeks the peaceful reunification of Korea⁷⁵, a visit from the

72 Rodong Sinmun, “Mongolian Delegation visits Tower of the Juche Idea”, *Rodong Sinmun*, April 20, 2019 (Juche 108).

73 Rodong Sinmun, “Foreigners visit Tower of Juche Idea”, *Rodong Sinmun*, September 9, 2018 (Juche 107).

74 Rodong Sinmun, “Vietnamese Delegation visits revolutionary museum of Kim Il Sung University”, *Rodong Sinmun*, July 23, 2018 (Juche 107).

75 Rodong Sinmun, “Japanese Delegation visits Mangyongdae”, *Rodong Sinmun*, July 4, 2018 (Juche 107).

delegation of the Islamic Coalition Party of Iran⁷⁶ and a visit from the Chinese Foreign minister⁷⁷. “Foreign Guests and Overseas Koreans visit Mangyongdae” mentions in passing that overseas Koreans who were descendants of Koreans who fought against the Japanese visit the Juche Tower along with other spaces of Pyongyang.⁷⁸ “Youth and Women vow to carry through tasks set forth in New Year Address” is an impressive article that speaks about how the Tower and the public space around it is so enraptured around the political meaning of it. The article expresses how youth vanguard groups and women union groups within the Plaza of the Tower vowed to carry on the mission set forth by Kim Jong Un expressed in his New Year’s Address, this included exhaustive efforts to keep pushing the revolutionary victory, defense of the leader, and devote patriotism through the mayor construction works planned around North Korea, such as the coastal tourist area of Wonsan-Kalma. The article includes pictures of enormous crowds of women standing at the base of the bronze statue of the Tower of the Juche Idea.⁷⁹

Although far less famous than Napoleon’s Arch of Triumph in Paris, Pyongyang’s Arch of Triumph built in 1982 is much more impressive. It stands at a total of 60 meters, while Paris’s Arch of Triumph stands at 49-50 meters. The height of the arch itself is 27 meters and the width is 18.6 meters. The ground plan of the Arch is a total of 2,210 square meters, which is approximately 7,250 square feet. The columns at the front of the arch bear the dates of 1925 and 1945, respectively in golden Arabic numbers. The years represent the start date of Kim Il Sung’s fight against the Japanese and its victorious ending.⁸⁰ There are sculptures

76 Rodong Sinmun, “Iranian Party Delegation visits Mangyongdae”, *Rodong Sinmun*, June 18, 2018 (Juche 107).

77 Rodong Sinmun, “Chinese Foreign Minister visits Tower of Juche Idea”, *Rodong Sinmun*, May 5, 2018 (Juche 107).

78 Rodong Sinmun, “Foreign Guests and Overseas Koreans visit Mangyongdae”, *Rodong Sinmun*, April 18, 2018 (Juche 107).

79 Rodong Sinmun, “Youth and Women vow to carry through tasks set forth in New Year Address”, *Rodong Sinmun*, January 10, 2018 (Juche 107).

80 Won Yong Yong, *Construcción en Corea* (Pyongyang: Editorial de la Revista Ilustrada “Corea”, 1991), 33.

corresponding to the events in each of the years. These are sculptures of soldiers, workers, peasants and intellectuals depicting Korea's social revolution and fight against the Japanese. Each group holds a flag behind them, the right flag says, "Kim Il Sung general, hooray!" (김일성장군 만세!) just like the Great Monument on Mansu Hill. Underneath the Arch the road Kaesong passes. The Arch of Triumph also has in the relief the first two stanzas of the Song Dedicated to General Kim Il Sung.⁸¹ The official title of the song is "General Kim Il Sung's song" (김일성장군의 노래).⁸² If you search for the Arch of Triumph in google maps you can observe that it stands to the left of the Grand Monument on Mansu Hill. If you keep going down Kaesong you will eventually pass by the front of Mansu Hill, Chollima Monument, and Kim Il Sung Square. The Arch passes over Kaesong Road, it is not meant for people to stop nearby and visit it by walking. Which implies that the Arch itself is a structure meant to awe and to represent what is unreachable to the general population, and awe and majesty that you can only observe far away and not be part of, it intimidates you to understand and observe the power of the Kim while implementing the observer to try and reach the impossible. Both the Tower of the Juche Idea and the Arch of Triumph were built during the period in which North Koreans were suffering from energy and food shortages because of the loss of monetary aid from the Soviet Union and China as well as the splurging of money by the government in building the military and monument construction.

Rodong Sinmun mentions the Arch of Triumph mostly in passing, and again, like the articles surrounding other spaces, it focuses highly on the propaganda approach. In other words, "visits" of foreign diplomats, politicians, youth groups and overseas Koreans. Additionally, these visits are summed up in one sentence in articles dedicated to the main public spaces such as the Tower of Juche Idea and Mangyongdae. For example, "Participants in Int'l Event visits

⁸¹ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 114-115.

⁸² Rodong Sinmun, "Sunday-Inmortal Revolutionary Hymn", *Rodong Sinmun*, April 15 2012.

Mangyongdae”⁸³, “Foreigners visit Tower of Juche Idea”⁸⁴, “Vietnamese Delegation visits revolutionary museum of Kim Il Sung University”⁸⁵, “Japanese Delegation visits Mangyongdae”⁸⁶. A unique article on the Arch of Triumph is “Pyongyang Ice Sculpture-2018 Opens”. This article relates how the Pyongyang Ice Sculpture Festival of 2018 held on Kim Il Sung Square, included ice sculptures of the Arch of Triumph and Mount Baekdu and how this “shows the army’s and people deep yearning and reverence for President Kim Il Sung and leader Kim Jong Il who devoted all their life to the revolutionary cause of Juche”⁸⁷. We can observe the significance and purpose of having the main road of Pyongyang pass under the Arch of Triumph in “Pyongyangites Welcome Participants in Military Parade”. Although the Arch of Triumph is never named, the pictures make it pretty clear that this military parade, which honored the DPRK’s military forces was carried out through Pyongyang’s main Kaesong road, passing under the Arch of Triumph and the Monument to the Immortality of Kim Il Sung, flanked by residents of Pyongyang dressed in Hanbok or daily clothes holding flags of North Korea aloft. The Military Parade also included portraits of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il and military tanks.⁸⁸

The Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Memorial was built in 1993 to commemorate the end of the Korean War on its 40th anniversary. Following previous examples this public space is made up of a lot of different components again placed together strategically in a vast open space. The components are a 27 meter bronze sculpture of a soldier holding the North Korean flag aloft, 12 groups of bronze sculptured soldiers divided equally on either side, in

⁸³ Rodong Sinmun, “Participants in Int’l Event visits Mangyongdae”, *Rodong Sinmun*, September 13, 2018 (Juche 107).

⁸⁴ Rodong Sinmun, “Foreigners visit Tower of Juche Idea”, *Rodong Sinmun*, September 9, 2018 (Juche 107).

⁸⁵ Rodong Sinmun, “Vietnamese Delegation visits revolutionary museum of Kim Il Sung University”, *Rodong Sinmun*, July 23, 2018 (Juche 107).

⁸⁶ Rodong Sinmun, “Japanese Delegation visits Mangyongdae”, *Rodong Sinmun*, July 4, 2018 (Juche 107).

⁸⁷ Rodong Sinmun, “Pyongyang Ice Sculpture-2018 Opens”, *Rodong Sinmun*, January 2, 2018 (Juche 107).

⁸⁸ Rodong Sinmun, “Pyongyangites Welcome Participants in Military Parade”, *Rodong Sinmun*, September 11, 2018 (Juche 107).

front of these two equal sculptures of a guard standing soldiers with the flag of the Worker's party behind them and the 14 meter stone gate that serves as the entrance to this vast space.⁸⁹ Google Earth is a good tool when it comes to researching public spaces like these, especially when the pictures don't exactly tell the whole story. When you search for the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Memorial on Google Earth you can really appreciate the size of the space as well as the location. It just so happens that the great pyramid shaped famous Ryu-Gyong Hotel of Pyongyang is fairly close to the Memorial. Gazing from up above through Google Earth you can really get a sense of the space. This space has a rectangular parking which has on one of its longer sides the arch. The arch leads to a fairly good size empty space, presumably laid with gravel, on two of the corners of this space are the two bronze soldiers with the flag of the Workers' Party. Behind them a vast open rectangular space begins, on each side you find 5 groups of sculpted soldiers with weapons in active war formation, in the center of this rectangular area a narrow lawn with paving within it. This paving has two five pointed stars. Behind this rectangular "hallway" you come to a square shaped area, with a raised granite plinth in the center and the North Korean soldier with the North Korean flag calling to war. On either side of this soldier are the other two groups of soldiers, and in the water, you can distinguish the USS Pueblo, captured in 1968 during the Pueblo incident. The picture of this public space included in *Architectural and Cultural Guide: Pyongyang*, does not do it justice, additionally, it includes an enormous amount of young people apparently in school uniforms inside the space but it does not say why this is so.⁹⁰

Rodong Sinmun follows this space focusing on the visits made to it. For example, "Vietnamese Embassy Members Visit Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum" explains how Le Ba Binh, Vietnamese ambassador to the DPRK, and his delegation visited the

⁸⁹ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 122-123.

⁹⁰ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 123.

Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum on the 55th anniversary of President Kim Il Sung's second visit to Vietnam.⁹¹ "President of World Federation of Democratic Youth Tours Pyongyang" recounts how Iacovos Tofari, president of the World Federation of Democratic Youth visited the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Memorial.⁹² "Venezuelan Guests Tour Pyongyang " explains how the Venezuelan vice minister of Foreign Affairs visited the Victorious Fatherland Memorial (as well as other sites in Pyongyang, including the Tower of Juche Idea).⁹³ However, among the visit articles we find "The Great History of a Victory in the Fatherland Liberation War Will Shine Forever". This article states that this space "is a center of education in the tradition of victory in the Fatherland Liberation War and a great treasure of the nation which bequeaths the immortal exploits of President Kim Il Sung for it to posterity for all ages"⁹⁴. Additionally, it states that Kim Jong Un in a visit to the Museum in 2012, called for another search of the Liberation fights against the Japanese to further integrate in this center and accumulate even more homage to Kim Il Sung. The North Koreans and descendants related personally with the struggle, moved by his calling dug even deeper into their families' history and found that (supposedly) Kim Il Sung went to as Kwangju (South Korea) after Korea was liberated in 1950 to restore and realign the Party and its government organs in South Korea.

Phillip Meuser in *Architectural and Cultural Guide: Pyongyang*, describes the Kumsusan Memorial Palace as being severely neo-classicist and as a temple to Juche ideology.⁹⁵ The name of the site has changed from the Kumsusan Memorial Palace, to the Kim Il Sung Mausoleum to the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun. Quite differently from the other public spaces, the Kumsusan Palace is located in northern Pyongyang, at a good distance from the

⁹¹ Rodong Sinmun, "Vietnamese Embassy Members Visit Victorious Fatherland Liberation War Museum", *Rodong Sinmun*, November 20, 2019 (Juche 108).

⁹² Rodong Sinmun, "President of World Federation of Democratic Youth Tours Pyongyang", *Rodong Sinmun*, November 2, 2019 (Juche 108).

⁹³ Rodong Sinmun, "Venezuelan Guests Tour Pyongyang", *Rodong Sinmun*, August 23, 2018 (Juche 107).

⁹⁴ Rodong Sinmun, "The Great History of a Victory in the Fatherland Liberation War Will Shine Forever" *Rodong Sinmun*, July 31, 2019 (Juche 108).

⁹⁵ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 120.

center, on the left side of the Taedong River. The Palace was originally built as the seat of government of Kim Il Sung in 1977, however when he died in 1994, his body was embalmed and placed on display in Kumsusan in a crystal sarcophagus, thus turning the building into a de facto Mausoleum. Russian experts were brought from Russia to Pyongyang so they could help in the process of conserving Kim Il Sung's body. After Kim Jong Il died, the process was repeated. The building itself has a moat on two of its sides, flags of North Korea surround the perimeter and a picture of Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il and Stalin are placed on the front facade of the building. The gates of the buildings are heavy in gold fittings, which open to an enormously marble floor room with two statues, one of Kim Sung II and Kim Jong Il.

The building also includes the Hall of Tears. The Hall of Tears is a hall of mourning which portrays how the Korean population and the international population mourned and wept at Kim Il Sung's death. The enormous complex also includes a huge plaza used for national rallies, with two green areas on either side with fountains, and a vineyard supposedly built by Kim Il Sung⁹⁶ on the other side of the Palace. The building is also filled with halls displaying all the national and international medals, honors and mentions that Kim Il Sung received during his lifetime (and now it includes Kim Jong Il). In a very Parisian fashion, the road to the Palace of the Sun has the same visual effect of the Champs Elysees as well as the tunnel effect of the Hospital des Invalides, also in Paris, both which I visited in the summer of 2016.

Following the propagandistic approach of other spaces, *Rodong Sinmun* does the same with the Kumsusan Palace, recounting the "visits" that foreign guests, international politicians and youth groups made to the palace, and there are dozens of articles that report these visits. Some of these are, "Chinese guests visit Kumsusan Palace of Sun", "Foreign Guests visit Kumsusan Palace of Sun", "Lao Party Delegation visit Kumsusan Palace of Sun", "Zimbabwean Military Delegation visit Kumsusan Palace of the Sun", and "Rural Youth

⁹⁶ Kim Jong Un, Kumsusan Palace of the Sun.

activists visit Kumsusan Palace of the Sun”. There are few articles that speak about how this space is used as a public space, like “WPK Birthday celebrated in DPRK” and “Koreans’ Celebrate New Year’s Day”, both describe ways in which North Koreans celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the Workers’ Party of Korea and New Year’s Day by visiting the plaza of the Kumsusan Palace of the Sun, the “sacred temple of Juche”,⁹⁷ and bow down in front of the portraits of both Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il⁹⁸. Again, we must be cautious with the propagandistic manner of *Rodong Sinmun* and take it with a grain of salt when it states the “North Koreans flock to these monuments” to celebrate these holidays, nevertheless it creates an image of faithful people who wish to celebrate every occasion with their leader in time. It lends to the myth of the immortality of Kim Il Sung, who even in death has and will keep having a faithful mass of believers with him, much like the Christian celebrations of the Church.

The Party Foundation Monument was built in 1995 to commemorate the 50-year anniversary of the establishment of the Political Party of the Workers’ Party of Korea. It lies directly across the monument of Mansu hill on the other side of the Taedong river. Following a similar pattern to the other public spaces, the Party Foundation Monument consists of a large plaza, with a raised round platform in the middle. In the 70-meter diameter platform three raised fists stand. This particular structural component of the platform creates a sense of levitation and demonstrates the audacity levels that the Kim regime was willing to achieve in their architecture. These fists, mirroring the statue found at The Tower of the Juche Idea, hold the three emblems of the party: the calligraphy brush, the hammer, and the sickle. The fists, with their respective emblems stand at 50 meters tall. Around the side of the stone circle facing the front, surrounding the platform and the wrists of the fists, gold Hangeul letters read

⁹⁷ Rodong Sinmun, “Koreans’ Celebrate New Year’s Day”, *Rodong Sinmun*, January 4, 2018 (Juche 107).

⁹⁸ Rodong Sinmun, “WPK Birthday celebrated in DPRK”, *Rodong Sinmun*, October 11, 2019 (Juche 108).

“조선인민의 모든 승리의 조직자이며 향도자인 조선로동당 만세!”, which translates to “Long live the leader and organizer of the victories of the people of Korea (Joseon), the Workers’ Party of Korea!”. Inside this stone circle there are three bronze reliefs, and each one depicts the progressive story of the Workers’ Party. The first relief represents the area of the party in the anti-Japanese struggles, the second represents the new generation under the Juche idea and the third represents the struggle of North Korea to be recognized globally and internationally. The complex itself also has a lawn and fountains, in total it measures 250,000 square meters.⁹⁹ Behind the Monument are two identical flag shaped buildings on either side, with nationalistic writings on top of them. In a certain way by using the name of Joseon, the Golden Dynasty of Korea, North Korea is claiming itself as their heir.

At the top end of Kumsong Street, lies the Monument to the Immortality of President Kim Il Sung, built three years after his death in 1997. The street goes under the Monument, and the structure itself is a 269-foot-tall obelisk built on a raised platform of 10 meters. On both sides of the obelisk bronze Hangeul characters read “The Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung will always be with us”. Additionally, the obelisk has 82 azalea flowers as well as two red three meter flags engraved on it.¹⁰⁰ The use of azalea flowers is very important because it has long been a traditional representation of Korea even if it's not the official flower. In a way, the engraving of the flowers within the Monument may portray the message that Kim, like the azalea flowers should be considered a symbol of the Korean Nation as a totality.

I have looked exhaustively in the online *Rodong Sinmun* archives, and no articles mention this monument by name. The only article in which this obelisk makes an appearance is in “Pyongyangites Welcome Participants in Military Parade”, it is clear through the pictures that the Military Parade (described earlier) passes underneath the Monument to the Immortality

⁹⁹ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 116-117.

¹⁰⁰ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 119.

of Kim Il Sung¹⁰¹, although a little inferring can help with this situation. First of all, this particular monument, like the Arch of Triumph is built over Kaesong road, meaning it was not purposely built as a site that you can walk to or visit, but we can be sure that it is mainly meant to impress as you go under it while driving on the road, whether you are a citizen of Pyongyang or a visitor.

Although not exactly built within the time frame of this thesis, the Arch of Reunification, opened in 2001 deserves to be discussed because it is relevant to understand and discuss the political process that exists behind all of these public spaces and monuments. This Arch is made up of two stone sculptures of Korean women dressed in Hanbok (traditional Korean costume), each on either side of a road that leads you to Kaesong (the main highway of Pyongyang), which is also the road that comes up from South Korea through the DMZ and to North Korea. We can say that the Arch is at the entrance of Pyongyang. These two Korean women hold aloft between them an emblem with a map of the whole peninsula of Korea in bronze with the Hangeul writing 3대 현장, which is in remembrance of the third charter passed by Kim Il Sung that began the reunification process with South Korea. At the base of either sculpture is a bronze engraving of Koreans, again dressed in Hanbok looking at this emblem. The arch is 61.5 meters wide and 30 meters tall. Within the arch of reunification, you can distinguish marble plaques given to North Korea by world leaders.¹⁰²

In my analysis, each monument and memorial built in Pyongyang during the time frame of this thesis, was built to portray an element of the Juche Ideology and together they represent Juche as a whole. As we have discussed previously, Juche calls the masses to follow a revolution in which the only person capable of leading is Kim Il Sung. Monuments and Memorials such as the one on Mansu Hill, the Kumsusan Memorial Palace, Monument to the

¹⁰¹ Rodong Sinmun, "Pyongyangites Welcome Participants in Military Parade", *Rodong Sinmun*, September 11, 2018 (Juche 107).

¹⁰² Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 124.

Immortality of President Kim Il Sung are mainly focused on exalting the figure of Kim Il Sung. The Monument to the Immortality of President Kim Il Sung takes that exaltation to a higher level, elevating his figure to almost immortality and holiness. Which coincides with the turn of the Juche Idea during Kim Jong Il's era to a more nationalistic and religious point. As explained before under the Juche Ideology discussion, Juche appropriates itself of religious cult and symbols to further cement the power of the Kim family. It is however, important to point out that in each monument and memorial built in Pyongyang although some not seemingly portrayed to exalt the figure of Kim Il Sung, they do, in one small way or another, play a part in this. For example, the Arch of Triumph also includes some of the lyrics of the song dedicated to Kim Il Sung and the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War memorial dedicates its museum to the exploits of Kim Il Sung. Monuments and Memorials such as the National Martyrs Cemetery, the Arch of Triumph, the Party Foundation Monument and the Victorious Fatherland Liberation War memorial are dedicated to representing the mass in revolution, its history, components and its achievements or what it can achieve (it also includes the party of the DPRK), which is part of the Juche Ideology. The National Martyrs Cemetery in particular elevates individuals which were part of the Anti-Japanese fight to become examples of how the masses in revolution should behave or how they should aspire to behave. It also exalts martyrs to create the idea of "the North Korean nation" that integrates itself with the totalitarian state of North Korea.

If we observe this through the lens of James C. Scott and Hannah Arendt, the National Martyrs Cemetery legitimizes and gives history to the creation of a Nationalist Totalitarian State, since it exalts the masses whose support is essential to the totalitarian states as well as exalt the undying loyalty of the faithful, another vital component in the building of a totalitarian state. The Tower of the Juche Idea is singular of all these monuments and memorials in which it represents Juche in of itself and is obviously meant to do so if we take into account, where it

was built, its components, and its viewpoints, for you can observe every monument and memorial in this section (with exception of the Arch of Reunification) from the Tower. The Tower is the binding point of all of these different monuments and memorials (and in fact all of the spaces, facilities and infrastructure we will discuss further on). It ties the city to Juche and Pyongyang in turn becomes the paradise of the Juche Ideology. The Chollima Monument lies at the border of representing the product of the mass in revolution and the Juche Ideology as a whole. If we analyze it further we come to the conclusion that it represents the revolution and Juche in motion, it established the philosophy of how the revolution and Juche must be carried out, swiftly, without stopping and progressively toward its destination. Which brings us to the last memorial on the list; the Arch of Reunification. While the Arch was not built during the time frame of this thesis, it follows the pattern of previous monuments and memorials in portraying aspects of the Juche Ideology while at the same time completing the message of all the monuments and memorials as a whole, for it is the only monument and memorial dedicated specifically toward the goal of the masses in revolution: the reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

The monuments and memorials are also careful to represent the history of both Juche and North Korea and they are also directed toward piecing together a history of the Kim Family within these historical components in order to give legitimacy to the power structure that the Kim Family built in Pyongyang and in North Korea. It's almost as if the monuments and memorials of Pyongyang are a page of the Kim Family/North Korea history book. They are also part of the intricate process of creating symbols, rituals and traditions that are vital components of building and legitimizing a nation-state. Much like Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger describe in *The Invention of Tradition*, the elite and the ruling class; the Kim regime invented traditions and symbols; rituals, monument and memorials surrounding Juche and themselves, to maintain a cohesive unity amongst North Korea that avoids that the power

structure they created come crashing to the floor, these traditions serve as the foundation as well as the support of the creation of the Juche Totalitarian State.¹⁰³ Additionally if we observe the monuments and memorials from a chronological aspect we can observe how their respective representation points in Juche develop as Juche develops from its beginnings of being an ideal military revolution to include the personality cult towards Kim Il Sung and elevate Juche to religious status. In terms of precedent examples, we can observe the influence of both the Soviet Ideology in the USSR and in China by the exalting of the particular father figure (Stalin and Mao) and the party, although it was taken a greater step forward in Pyongyang both in representation of the particular father figure and the party. The scale and grandiosity of Pyongyang's Monuments and Memorials follow the patterns of the enormous imaginative spaces, buildings and monuments that the Soviet Union wanted to build. Additionally, some precedence is also found in the Arch of Triumph. For like the Arch of Triumph in Paris is dedicated to the people who fought in the French revolution and the following Napoleonic Wars (and Napoleon himself), the Arch of Triumph in Pyongyang is meant to honor the people who fought in the Anti-Japanese fights and in the "revolution" as well as Kim Il Sung himself. The Architecture present in these memorials and monuments are made to place faith in Kim and in Juche.

Spaces

It is difficult to describe Kim Il Sung Square because of its vastness (it has an area of 807,293 square feet and it's the 37th largest square in the world, 3 times larger than St. Peter's Plaza) and multiple components. Its transformation took thirty years to complete from 1954 to 1984, but it opened officially in 1954. Kim Il Sung Square is located on the right side of the Taedong River opposite of the Juche Tower. Indeed, from the view downward from Google Earth, it seems as if both spaces are in fact just one. The stairs that begin Kim Il Sung Square reaches

¹⁰³ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge Press, 1983).

the bank of the river, after it is possible to distinguish a small rectangular plaza, Kaesong road, and across it, another, bigger square plaza. Behind the latter, there is another road and then the platform and bleachers that have depictions of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il in Soviet Union fashion, echoing the Stalin and Lenin depictions in Russia. Behind this platform is the magnificent Grand People's Study House.¹⁰⁴

In the square, first up we have the Korean History Museum. The concept of the museum and its collections have been in existence since 1945, right after Korea won independence and it had first been housed on Moran Hill until it was finally moved to a building on the north side of Kim Il Sung Square in 1977. Meuser describes the building, which was actually built in 1960, as being “neo-classicist”, the architecture movement that is mostly associated with government buildings of power all around the world like the United States Capitol Building. All of the surfaces inside the museum are made of marble. The museum houses 19 exhibitions of reproductive paintings, jewelry, weaponry and other times that date from Korea's stone age to the end of Korea's Colonial period.¹⁰⁵ Kim Il Sung Square also includes government buildings such as the Ministry of Foreign Trade and the seat of the Workers' Party of Korea. The Ministry of Foreign Trade has depictions of Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin on the outside of the building, while the seat of the Workers' Party of Korea has a depiction of young Kim Il Sung at the front with a flag of North Korea on top.¹⁰⁶ The Grand People's Study House from the ground up looks like a neo-classicist building, however, the roof of the building is distinctively Korean with its green roof tiles. The Grand People's Study House is mainly a library, which has the capacity to house 30 million books (according to *Construcción en Corea*). The interior of the building is complete with magnificent flooring, columns and

¹⁰⁴ Won Yong Yong, *Construcción en Corea* (Pyongyang: Editorial de la Revista Ilustrada “Corea”, 1991), 102.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 43.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 49.

chandeliers. The Study House has 600 rooms, each dedicated to reading or audiovisual learning activities.¹⁰⁷

The article of *Rodong Sinmun* that best represents how Kim Il Sung Square is used as a political, public space is “Torchlight Procession of Young Vanguard Marks 70th Anniversary of DPRK”. The article describes how the Young Vanguard celebrated at Kim Il Sung Square at night in torchlight, procession, marching and celebration to commemorate the 70-year anniversary of the birth of the DPRK (North Korea). These torchlight processions remind us of the Nazi’s fascists parades as well as the Soviet Union’s. In the Red Square of Moscow in times of the Soviet Union, the military would also carry out military parades light by torchlight at night. The pictures of this article speak more than the writing itself. Through them we can appreciate the vast amount of young people that were in the square holding the torchlights aloft and see that the procession included two large black cars that carried depictions of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il against two enormous red North Korean Flags. We can also see through the pictures that fireworks were displayed, and that the North Korean Youth Vanguard formed in different groups in order to display writing on the square that could be appreciated from high above. They sported messages such as “70th anniversary”, and other messages that are hard to distinguish but include the names of Kim Jong Un, Kim Il Sung, Kim Jong Il, and Joseon (the name of Korea’s most important dynasty and one of the longest dynasties in the world). Since the Square faces the Juche Idea Tower on the other side of the river, the effect that both plazas are connected is even more strongly appreciated.¹⁰⁸

Of all the newly built public spaces in Pyongyang, Mangyongdae is one of the most integrated with the political discourse of the Juche Idea along with the Tower of the Juche Idea. Although it's true that Kim Il Sung was born in Pyongyang a new site was generated as his

¹⁰⁷Ibid, 110-115.

¹⁰⁸ Rodong Sinmun, “Torchlight Procession of Young Vanguard Marks 70th Anniversary of DPRK”, *Rodong Sinmun*, September 11, 2018 (Juche 107).

birthplace within the city and turned into a sacred/public space site in Pyongyang. It even elevates the created birth house of Kim Il Sung as a relic. We can learn about the significance of this space while looking at *Rodong Sinmun*. Following the same pattern as the Juche Tower, *Rodong Sinmun* solely focuses on (it seems, listing) the foreign dignitaries, groups, politicians and delegations. To mention a few of these we can look at “Participants in Int’l event visit Mangyongdae”, “Japanese Delegation visits Mangyongdae”, “Iranian Party Delegation visits Mangyongdae”, and “Foreign Guests and Overseas Koreans visit Mangyongdae”. The first simply states that participants that are in Pyongyang to celebrate the international event of Kim Il Sung’s birth, visited Mangyongdae.¹⁰⁹ The second announces that Chairman Tomohiko Murayama, who is the leader of a Japanese Group supporting Korea reunification, and his entourage visited Mangyongdae (along with a picture).¹¹⁰ The third announces that Mahdi Soli, the leader for the Islamic Coalition Party of Iran visited Mangyongdae and looked around the “historical relics” preserved at the site.¹¹¹ The last one states that a group of foreigners and overseas Koreans who would take part in the 21st Kimilsungia Festival visited the birthplace of Mangyongdae.¹¹²

When we integrate these spaces within the language of Juche and power we can come to the conclusion that Mangyongdae does not only serve as another measure of exalting the figure of Kim Il Sung but also a space that represents a rift in the historical timeline of North Korea as in “the before Mangyongdae and after Mangyongdae”. Mangyongdae is not only the “birthplace” of Kim Il Sung but it's also the “birthplace” of North Korea’s new history and it seems to represent something similar as to what the birth of Christ does in the Western world.

¹⁰⁹ Rodong Sinmun, “Participants in Int’l event visit Mangyongdae”, *Rodong Sinmun*, September 13, 2018 (Juche 107).

¹¹⁰ Rodong Sinmun, “Japanese Delegation visits Mangyongdae”, *Rodong Sinmun*, July 4, 2018 (Juche 107).

¹¹¹ Rodong Sinmun, “Iranian Party Delegation visits Mangyongdae”, *Rodong Sinmun*, June 18, 2018 (Juche 107).

¹¹² Rodong Sinmun, “Foreign Guests and Overseas Koreans visit Mangyongdae”, *Rodong Sinmun*, April 18, 2018 (Juche 107).

It places Kim Il Sung in a religious position to elevate his authority to a level of omnipotence. There is before Kim Il Sung and Mangyongdae, and after Kim Il Sung and Mangyongdae, much like there is before Christ and after Christ. This comparison becomes even more relevant when we compare how Mangyongdae is portrayed. The Mangyongdae site is humble and simple, different from the grandeur of the memorials and monuments of Pyongyang, much like how the manger where Christ was born was simple and humble, quite different from the grandeur of the Vatican. So, if we go down this comparison, much like Christianity, Juche and Kim Il Sung had humble and simple beginnings and they would eventually grow into this majesty as it is portrayed in further representations like the Vatican or the Grand Monument on Mansu Hill. Just as Christ was born to save humanity, Kim Il Sung was born to save North Korea. Here the next space; Kim Il Sung Square comes into play. Kim Il Sung Square is the present and future of Juche as Mangyongdae is the past and the beginning. Kim Il Sung Square is the space where Juche and Kim Il Sung are celebrated, practiced, venerated and Juche is fomented to grow. We can see this through the various celebrations carried out in the plaza, the government buildings and most importantly in the Grand People's Study House, for it is here that the new generation studies, learns and grows in Juche and in Kim Il Sung's teaching. Especially when we take into account that the only books in North Korea available to the public are deeply cemented in Juche doctrine. Both Mangyongdae and Kim Il Sung Square are spaces that legitimize Juche, Kim Il Sung and the government system in North Korea and their power because both spaces give it a history and a legacy. In terms of precedence, there are obvious similarities between the Red Square in Moscow and the Tiananmen Square in Beijing to Kim Il Sung Square in Pyongyang. All three spaces are centers in which ideals were celebrated or represented the most. The only difference being that both the Red Square and Tiananmen were appropriated by the Soviet Union and the CCP respectively, both had already existed and had an earlier meaning. Kim Il Sung Square was built from the ground up, which incidentally

reinforces more the new beginning and the new birth of North Korea, Kim Il Sung and Juche that Mangyongdae is meant to represent.

Sport, Education, Art and Entertainment Facilities

Sports and arts for totalitarian countries are not merely personal expressions of fitness and health, or creative energy they are another way to manifest the power that the state has over the human body and its physicality. Sports and Arts are a demonstration of power inside, outside an and are tied intricately with the state. North Korea is no exception. This is similar to what Walter Benjamin describes in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Here Benjamin explains that a fascist state uses art to erase the individual, and we can see this happening in North Korea not only in art but in sports as well. There are two main Sports Facilities in Pyongyang. The first is the Kim Il Sung Stadium, and the second is the May 1st Stadium. The Kim Il Sung Stadium was originally the Moranbong Stadium built at the foot of Moran Hill, which, supposedly, is the spot where Kim Il Sung made his first public speech after returning to Korea in 1945 after the peninsula was liberated from Japan. The Stadium was modernized and extended and given the name Kim Il Sung in 1982. It is located on the left side of the Taedong River. ¹¹³ The Stadium has a capacity of 100 thousand people.¹¹⁴

Rodong Sinmun's articles on the Kim Il Sung Stadium, blend propaganda, sports and public space. Take for example, "Sport Games mark Day of Songun". Songun is a national holiday in the DPRK which celebrates the date of Kim Jong Il's ascendance as a military leader. The article explains how the celebration for this national holiday took off in Kim Il Sung Stadium through matches of Taekwondo, sparring and badminton.¹¹⁵ Another article, "29th Mangyongdae Prize Int'l Marathon Held" describes how the 29th Mangyongdae International Marathon was held in Kim Il Sung Stadium to commemorate the birthdate of Kim Il Sung.

¹¹³ Ibid,76-77.

¹¹⁴ Won Yong Yong, *Construcción en Corea* (Pyongyang: Editorial de la Revista Ilustrada "Corea", 1991), 176-177.

¹¹⁵ Rodong Sinmun, "Sport Games mark Day of Songun", *Rodong Sinmun*, August 26, 2019 (Juche 108).

Contestants included runners from Zimbabwe, DPRK, Uganda, China, Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Ethiopia.¹¹⁶ The May 1st Stadium is on an island in the Taedong River, near the Kim Il Sung Stadium. The Stadium can accommodate up to 150,000 people, and has facilities for sports such as soccer. It is the largest stadium in the World based on capacity. It took 11 thousand tons of steel to build the flower shaped roof of the stadium alone, and it was inaugurated on the 1st of May of 1989. The stadium was used for the World Festival of Youth.¹¹⁷ The stadium is also currently used to celebrate the Arirang Mass Games. Mass Games in totalitarian, fascist and nationalistic states are usually large demonstrations of performing arts that are meant to celebrate an image or an idea. In the case of the Arirang Mass Games, the performers celebrate the image of Kim Il Sung and Juche Philosophy.

Other Art, Education and Entertainment facilities built in Pyongyang during the early Kim regime were the Cultural Palace of the People, The 8th of February Cultural House, the Art Theater of Mansudae, Pyongyang's Circus, and the Children's Palace at Mangyongdae. Inaugurated in 1974, the Cultural Palace of the People has 500 rooms dedicated to study, banquets, and expositions.¹¹⁸ The 8th of February Culture House, inaugurated one year later has 7 floors, has more than 600 rooms and has two theaters that can supposedly house 6,000 to 100,000 people.¹¹⁹ The capacity of people is not truly appreciated until you compare it with other theaters around the world, such as the Bolshoi theater in Moscow, which has a capacity of 2,100 spectators. The Art theater of Mansudae houses facilities for actors, but perhaps the most impressive aspect of this building is the large and brightly colored "Juche" letters (주체) that sit at the top of the building.¹²⁰ Pyongyang's Circus facilities include equipment for

¹¹⁶ Rodong Sinmun, "29th Mangyongdae Prize Int'l Marathon Held", *Rodong Sinmun*, April 10, 2018 (Juche 107).

¹¹⁷ Won Yong Yong, *Construcción en Corea* (Pyongyang: Editorial de la Revista Ilustrada "Corea", 1991), 168-173.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 119

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 120-121.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 124-125.

Aquatic acrobatics, in a picture in *Construcción en Corea*, you can observe how the acrobats are lined in a star formation in the center of the pool, the star of the flag of North Korea.¹²¹ The Children's Palace in Mangyongdae has facilities for children to study the sciences and the arts, in front of the Palace, is a bronze sculpture of a chariot filled with children, being born into flight by two Chollimas.¹²² All of these buildings and facilities were built at a magnificent scale, and have extravagant decorations with a nod toward traditional Korean Architecture.

It might seem far-fetched or even exaggerated to seek a message of power within some of the presented facilities, especially when at first glance their creation and use seems genuinely directed toward the enjoyment and pleasure of the public. However, a closer look at how these facilities are used, their names, locations and in the circumstances *Rodong Sinmun* reports on them, reveal that their seemingly benign purpose starts to fade. Take for example Kim Il Sung Stadium. Not only was the name of this stadium changed from Moranbong to Kim Il Sung, it was built on the alleged spot where Kim Il Sung gave his first public speech. The articles of *Rodong Sinmun* surrounding the Stadium are in lieu with the athletic activities that are hosted in a culture and tradition created by Juche, like the Games on the day of the Songun or the 29th Mangyongdae Marathon. The name of the May 1st Stadium is not only integrated into the ideology of the Juche (since May the 1st is International Workers Day, and the workers in Juche are the masses who will be lead in revolution by Kim Il Sung) but also in Soviet Tradition, since May the 1st is May Day in the Soviet Union. Additionally, the purpose of the May 1st Stadium was to celebrate the World Festival of Youth, which is an international athletic activity sponsored by the World Federation of Democratic Youth mainly for ideology propagandistic uses, especially during the Cold War. The World Festival of Youth in Pyongyang was the largest celebration of the festival until the World Festival of Youth in Sochi

¹²¹ Ibid, 141.

¹²² Ibid, 142-143.

2017. The cultural facilities in Pyongyang are also explicitly built as representations of power. The Cultural Palace of the People has rooms dedicated to study, banquets, and expositions, but to study means to read and grow as an indoctrinated citizen of Juche for the only materials you are allowed to study are the ones that the government have already predetermined. The theaters of the 8th of February Cultural House are impressive, but they are used to showcase political plays or political speeches which are written within Juche Ideology, such as a play presenting the life story of Kim Il Sung or the anti-Japanese fighting during the Colonial Era. Furthermore, the 8th of February was the day the Korean People's Army was established. It's very nice that the Art Theater of Mansudae has housing facilities for actors, but the Juche sign on top of the building is reminiscent of their career's focus on acting out Juche political plays. The facilities and athletic structures that Pyongyang's Circus houses are indeed of a very professional caliber, but they are not used for spontaneous or carefully rehearsed artistic and athletic performances sprouting from the creation of imaginative individuals. Like the political plays in Pyongyang's theaters, the acts in Pyongyang's Circus are propagandistic in nature. This is reminiscent of what Benjamin Walter describes as aesthetization of politics, every artistic celebration in North Korea erases the individual and highlights the state, even if North Korea is not officially classified as a fascist state. The Children's Palace in Mangyongdae serves as the primary indoctrination phase for future NK generations who will not only be taught to follow the Chollima way of life but will constantly attend the Palace in the shadow of Mangyongdae.

Transportation Infrastructure and Urban Planning in Pyongyang

The Metro system of Pyongyang built during the Earl Kim Regime, has deep historical and political meaning. The cars of the Metro were bought from the Berlin Transport Authority in 1998, the government placed pictures of Kim Jong Il and Kim Il Sung in each car.¹²³ The Metro system has two lines, which are shaped in a cross underneath the city, and they only travel

¹²³ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 13-14.

through the most populated areas of Pyongyang. The Chollima Line (opened in 1973 and extended in 1987) has 9 stations, each with their own meaning within the Juche Ideology. Puhung represents Resurgence, Yonggwang represents Blooming Light, Pongwha represents Signal Fire, Sungri Station represents Victory, Tongil represents Unification, Kaeson represents Triumphant Return, Chonu represents War Ally and Pukkubyeol represents the Red Star of North Korea. The Hyoksin Line (opened 1975 and extended in 1978) has 9 stations each representing an aspect within Juche. Kwangbok station represents Liberation, Konguk represents Foundation of the State, Hwanggimbol represents Golden Field, Konsol represents Construction, Hyoksin represents Renewal, Chonseung represents War Victory, Samhung represents Three Awakenings, Kwangmyong represents Bright Light and Rakwon represents Paradise. Philosopher Christopher Posthofen in *Architectural and Cultural Pyongyang* understands that Pyongyang represents how architecture is used to control every aspect of spatial relationships between people and their surroundings and how Pyongyang's Metro System must be included within this area.¹²⁴ *Construcción en Corea* has pictures of Yongguang, Juanggumbol, Konguk and Konsol stations. The Yongguang station has magnificent marble columns and an oval roof illuminated by red chandeliers, the walls of the stations have painted murals of Pyongyang, Korean workers and of the holy site of Mount Baektu. Juanggumbol seems to be more on the modern and simple style, but nevertheless, gold tiles line the wall of the train track. The Konguk and Konsol stations also have chandeliers on their walls.¹²⁵

The urban planning rebuilding process of the city does not escape the political agenda nor representations of power. South Korean Historian and Architect, Ahn Chang Mo also discusses the urban planning that created modern Pyongyang. From Chang Mo's text, we can

¹²⁴ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 170.

¹²⁵ Won Yong Yong, *Construcción en Corea* (Pyongyang: Editorial de la Revista Ilustrada "Corea", 1991), 148-153

divide the urban planning of modern Pyongyang in four stages through the decades; the 1950's, the 1960's, the 1970's, the 1980's and the 1990's. The first stage continued principles of urban planning established after Japanese liberation and the most important task was to rebuild the city after being destroyed by war and revitalize the economy. These principles were: erection of provincial capitals in North Korea, avoiding a large concentration of people in large cities, developing a building complex for foreign nations, modernization of existing cities, building cultural and recreational facilities, internalization of the city, take security measures against crime, erection of expressive cultural sites that showcased socialism, and creation of historical sites and the country's historical heritage sites for the public. The urban renovation process was funded by the Soviet Union and China and carried out by soviet architects.¹²⁶ During early 1960's and after Stalin's death (1953) and the distancing between North Korea and the Soviet Union, urban planning in North Korea took on a different turn as two changes in urban designs exhibit: a return to Korean traditional architecture rather than being based in soviet architecture, as it happened with the constructions of Pyongyang Grand Theater and the celebration of the Second Joseon Conference of the Architects' Association in 1964, which decided to reduce influence of Soviet Architecture while building "socialist" buildings as facilities in "traditional" Korean style (which of course, is part of the process of invention of traditions). Nevertheless, the modernization process of Pyongyang that began in the 1950s was continued in the 1960's.¹²⁷ During the 1970's urban planning in Pyongyang began solely focused on building Pyongyang as the "city of the revolution" which coincides with the building of the Grand Monument on Mansu Hill and the National Martyrs Cemetery. Streets such as Chollima, Hyoksin, Nagwon and Bipa were widened for "revolutionary purposes".¹²⁸ Both Chollima and Hyoksin run very close to the city center and facilitate the traffic flow toward spaces such as

¹²⁶ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 111.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 119.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 112.

the Arch of Triumph and Kim Il Sung Square. During the 1980's the main purpose of urban planning in Pyongyang was to prepare it for the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students in 1989. Roads were widened, parks were enlarged and there was a massive effort to create both, spaces of North Korean cultural heritage and architectural projects that strengthened and showcased "socialism" via Juche. This coincides with the explosion of monuments and memorials in the 1980's that are meant to portray the grandeur of socialist/Juche thought while at the same time legitimizing its power such as The Tower of the Juche Idea, and the Arch of Triumph.¹²⁹ During the 90's, urban planning in Pyongyang was mainly focused toward finishing the projects begun in the past decade.¹³⁰

Phillip Meuser calls modern Pyongyang the world's best preserved open-air museum of socialist architecture. The individual is nonexistent in Pyongyang, living in a tiny corner of the shadow of Kim Il Sung. The three million populated city of Pyongyang has no other city in comparison.¹³¹ Meuser understands Pyongyang as a prime example of how state ideology is so embedded in a city, and in a country. For in every public building and space there is a plaque of the date of foundation which more often than not repeats itself since the dates are always the same, Kim Il Sung's birthday, other political leaders' birthday, and foundation dates of the state and the Workers' Party of Korea.¹³² Pyongyang's construction mirrors state national identity, an identity imposed from the top down. Meuser understands that even if the DPRK sees Pyongyang's architecture as being unique, in reality it can be characterized as post war Soviet architecture,¹³³ and is "nothing more than a revenge post-colonial device concocted by Kim Il Sung so that he can be the DPRK's Immortal Hero".¹³⁴

¹²⁹ Ibid, 114.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 115.

¹³¹ Ibid, 41.

¹³² Ibid, 46.

¹³³ Ibid, 47.

¹³⁴ Direct Citation of Phillip Meuser, Ibid, 64.

It must feel like taking a DPRK history lesson every time Pyongyangites use the Metro system in the city and this is neither a coincidence or a result of chance designing, but rather the result of meticulous planning. Cars in Pyongyang are scarce, and belong to the party elite, the wealthy and the inner circle of Kim's people and are used for international visits as a means to control visitors to not allow them to wander off in Pyongyang. Who uses the Metro System? The people of North Korea otherwise known as the "masses" in Juche Ideology, meaning that all citizens pass through a repetitive daily ritual of being exposed to historical narratives created by the Kim regime. State prompted history is constantly present when they go to work, when they go about the city, when they go home, when they go to visit the Tower of the Juche Idea, etc. This particular purpose of the Metro can be traced to Kim Jong Il's *On the Representations of Architecture* and Soviet Constructivist Architecture, which determine that architecture must educate the masses. Additionally, the grand scale, and ostentatious grandiose decoration of the Metro station are deeply embedded in both Kim Jong Il's ideals of architecture as well as Stalinist Architecture since both establish the need for outrageous scales of symbols of power of the State. Pyongyang is careful to incorporate nationalistic symbols and exalt Kim Il Sung as a father figure like Maoist Architecture. The 1950s-1990s urban planning in Pyongyang changed over time to integrate itself further within the political and historical time frame of North Korea. At the beginning, urban planning is very socialist in thought and in execution. However, as time went on, urban planning in Pyongyang became increasingly tied with Juche, the Kim Family power structure and nationalism. At first, because of the USSR's close ties with North Korea, urban planning in Pyongyang was fully socialist in the moment, not only in appearance but in construction. After the Korean War and Stalin's death, as North Korea and the Soviet Union grew further apart and Juche and the Kim Family influence began growing in North Korea this change would also reflect itself in Urban Planning Policies in Pyongyang.

Eventually, the embedding of Juche and the influence of the Kim Family in Urban Planning would eventually create the open air like museum city that Phillip Meuser describes.

Conclusion

Can a flower be considered a public space? This is a question for another time, and for another thesis. Nevertheless, to make a point, it is imperative to explore the Kimilsungia and the Kimjongilia flower hybrids and their spatial relationship within North Korea, so we can observe just how far the relationship of power and space blossomed in North Korea. The Kimilsungia is a pink hybrid orchid developed by an Indonesian botanist, who crossed two Dendrobium species of flower. The Kimjongilia is a red hybrid begonia cultivated in 1988 by a Japan Botanist, who was probably commissioned to do so by North Korea. German Philosopher, Christian Posthofen who has formed deep analysis concerning philosophy and the theory of architecture, understands that the integration of architecture with spatial relationship and meaning has captivated every space in Pyongyang, and that this relationship is also observable in the Kimilsungia and the Kimjongilia. He considers that these hybrid creations are meant to highlight the Kim Dynasty's reach of ultimate power; the domination of nature as a social pastime. In other words, the creation of these flowers, purpose, name and showcase, like the physical spaces in Pyongyang are also representations of power. The annual flower shows involve the whole nation, since government associations, industrial organizations and school groups are encouraged to send their own cultivated group of the flowers to the exhibition.¹³⁵ He also understands that the flowers represent the apotheosis of the rulers, and the ascent of power into a state of nature. He calls this relationship "presence of absence". Representation of both of these flowers on buildings and posters have been planned specifically by the propaganda officials in charge of urban design. Posthofen goes on to explain that even if the flowers seem like abstract symbols, they are in fact quite the opposite and far from any control of the public, because they were born as symbols, they weren't something else entirely before they were given their names and meanings.

¹³⁵ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 11.

This is explained by non-other than Kim Jong Il himself in a text written in 1999:

*“The Kimilsungia is a treasure of our country, and it is a source of great pride and fame for our people to have an unfading flower that bears our President’s name. We should cultivate the Kimilsungia with even greater care, hand it down from generation to generation, and allow it to bloom in its full magnificence everywhere in our country”*¹³⁶

At the annual Kimilsungia Festival, these hybrid flowers are often displayed in magnificent reconstructions of Kim Il Sung’s “birth house” in Mangyongdae. A custom that Posthofen says mirrors Christian representation of nativity scenes in Bethlehem. Kim Jong Il also writes further on the Kimilsungia, stating that the entire nation must participate in the cultivation of this flower, for it represents loyalty to the party and pays respects to the greatness of the eternal President. He calls the hybrid, the “flower of the sun” reminiscent of the “Day of the Sun”, which is the name used to call the birthday of Kim Il Sung.¹³⁷

The orchids are put on display in a ziggurat-like building called the Kimilsungia and Kimjongilia Exhibition Hall. The Exhibition Hall has (no question about it) a beautiful interior garden filled with these hybrids created florals and fountains. The Exhibition Hall also includes pictures and paintings of both Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il on their walls. The space holds annual flower shows. It is located on the right side of the Taedong River, close to the East Pyongyang Theater, Center Youth Hall and the Party Foundation Monument.¹³⁸

A detailed account of the Kimilsungia and the Kimjongilia annual flower exhibition can be found through articles of the Rodong Sinmun. The three articles that recount the Kimilsungia festival starts with “Poster for 21st Kimilsungia Festival Produced”, the article includes the poster for the 21st annual Kimilsungia flower festival to be held at the Exhibition

¹³⁶ Kim Jong Il, *Kimilsungia, Pyongyang Studies VI* (Nuremberg 2008), 12.

¹³⁷ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 163-170.

¹³⁸ Phillip Meuser, *Architectural and Cultural Guide Pyongyang* (Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2012), 40-43.

Hall on the Day of the Sun (Kim Il Sung's birthday).¹³⁹ The second, "21st Kimilsungia Festival Opens" recounts the festival itself. It states that the Exhibition Hall had 80 displays of Kimilsungia, each presented by a different group within DPRK society. It also states that the festival is meant "to propel the dynamic advance of the Korean people to build a socialist utopia by materializing the patriotic desire of President Kim Il Sung for building a power, and contribute to further deepening the friendly ties with the world progressives who love justice and peace"¹⁴⁰. The third, "21st Kimilsungia Festival Closes", states that the festival concluded.¹⁴¹ Three similar articles describing the Kimjongilia Festival "23rd Kimjongilia Festival Will Take Place", "23rd Kimjongilia Festival Opens", "23rd Kimjongilia festival Closes" follow the same pattern.

We have now reached the end of this thesis, which will remain an open research project until more sources are available to discuss its elements, especially from North Korea. It has addressed its purposes as established by the Introduction; include North Korea in a more global discussion of space and power, observe the precedents found in China and the Soviet Union, and understand how Juche, the rise of the Kim Family and their connection to North Korea's history is explicit in rebuilding Pyongyang's spaces. Spatialization of power is present in every urban rebuilding process, and Pyongyang in North Korea is no exception. We have observed how after the Korean War, Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il began building a power structure with them in the center, formulating and cementing a state ideology (Juche) and personality/family cult that would keep them in this position and construct histories that would legitimize Juche and their role as figureheads. The city of Pyongyang and its monuments and memorials, public spaces, sport, education, art and entertainment facilities and infrastructure are physical manifestations that legitimize Juche, the Kim Family and their newly constructed history within

¹³⁹ Rodong Sinmun, "Poster for 21st Kimilsungia Festival Produced", *Rodong Sinmun*, April 6, 2019 (Juche 108).

¹⁴⁰ Rodong Sinmun, "21st Kimilsungia Festival Opens", *Rodong Sinmun*, April 13, 2019 (Juche 108).

¹⁴¹ Rodong Sinmun, "21st Kimilsungia Festival Closes", *Rodong Sinmun*, April 20, 2019 (Juche 108).

and of North Korea. They are meant to indoctrinate and construct new North Korean citizens with Juche, this new history and the leadership of the Kim Family. Within their role of legitimizing, these ostentatious and grand scale nationalistic manifestations are also meant to showcase onto the world and onto the North Korean citizen the power, grandiosity, weight and presence of the Juche state and of the Kim Family. This, however is not solely born on North Korean soil, it draws examples of using architecture as a way to construct, impress and nationalize as is present in Constructivist and Stalinist Architecture in the Soviet Union and in Maoist Architecture in China. This showcasing, constructing and nationalizing process is not something that began right after the Korean War. As we have observed, it was a process that began in the early Kim regime whose designs and the constructions get more deeply assimilated within Juche and the rise of the cult of the Kim Family during the last stages of the early Kim regime.

The last thing to observe is to try and answer the question: Can we try and understand how the North Korean people live day to day in Pyongyang by observing their daily spaces, infrastructure and places in the city? Can we draw conclusions of a “Pyongyangite citizen” daily life in a city so explicitly immersed in spatialization of power? Infrastructure, spaces, roads, monuments and memorials are typical everyday elements that exist within our daily lives. Some may seek the meaning behind their construction, some may not even notice them, some may see them as symbols of the oppression surrounding them, while some may see them as symbols of pride. For the truth of the matter is, we cannot measure people. A historian cannot generalize and say, “the people of Pyongyang and North Korea feel oppressed by their constructed surroundings which are embedded in messages of power” or “the messages of power within the constructions and designs of Pyongyang have succeeded in brainwashing or indoctrinating the Juche Idea and the cult of the Kim Family to the people of North Korea, and the people live in perfect harmony with this”. We cannot categorize the population of North

Korea in neither, especially given the propagandistic nature of Rodong Sinmun and the North Korean Government. For all we know, they might be North Koreans who in their vibrant youth were deeply affiliated with the Juche system and as they grew older they became disappointed with it or vice versa. We also need to explore the possibility that some North Koreans might not even care about the messages of power written around them, both because of indifference or because their main purpose is to do whatever it takes to live or survive. Or some, and perhaps the majority having been raised in the system from birth may see it as we do our own systems...normal. This might seem like a "I gave up" stance but in fact it's not. For it is in the creation of "normality" that demonstrates just how successful Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il's process of spatialization of power was. Take a look at our own systems. Have you ever purposely ventured into your home city to observe how the current power structure and system is embedded into space? At the end of the day, if we go to North Korea (which is very difficult to do) and ask a Pyongyang citizen (which is also very difficult and highly impossible to occur) "what do the statues of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il on Mansu Hill mean to you?" we cannot assume or estimate their answer, and, most importantly not get angry if they neither understand the meaning of the question or if their answer is not one that pleases us. And if a historian tries to estimate their answer, we are no better than the government who purposely built a city immersed in ideological propaganda and blatantly spelling messages of power. So, can we understand for certain how a North Korean citizen lives day to day in Pyongyang? No, we cannot. Can we try? Perhaps, by placing ourselves in their shoes and looking inside their lives from their point of view while ignoring ours. A process that is extremely difficult because even then we cannot ignore our own upbringing. The best we can do is wait, and hope that one day we might be able to ask them and that they will be entirely free to answer.

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