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Sites of Memory and Postmemory of the 4.19 Revolution in South Korea¹

South Korea has experienced many socio-political milestones since 1945 and one of these was the April 19th Revolution of 1960 (4.19 Revolution). Through analysis of sites of memory, commemorative practices and images in school textbooks, this paper demonstrates the integration of the historical memory of the 4.19 Revolution into the political nexus. The paper considers memory of the 4.19 Revolution and other moments of South Korean struggle and transformation as 'postmemory.' The author concludes that the 4.19 Revolution's memory is cherished now because it helps to form South Korean national self identity as progressive and democratic contributing to sustaining participatory civic culture.

Keywords: historical memory, postmemory, the 4.19 Revolution, Lee Sŭngman, Pak Chŏnghŭi, South Korea, sites of memory.

Introduction

Today South Korea defines itself as a democratic state that strictly adheres to the principles of democracy and liberty in both its domestic policies and foreign affairs. However, South Korea's contemporary historical experience includes an experience of an extended period of authoritarianism that determined national development for nearly four decades. Established with aspirations to liberal democracy in 1948, the political regime of the Republic of Korea regressed to authoritarianism under the presidency of Lee Sŭngman (1948–1960). Through corruption, electoral falsifications, and the violent repression of political opponents Lee Sŭngman managed to rule South Korea for three presidential terms. The manipulation of presidential election results in 1960 inspired fury among the people and massive protests that finally brought about Lee Sŭngman's retirement and the establishment of a new democratic government. The events of April 1960 were later called the 4.19 Revolution due to the mass anti-governmental protests provoked by violence and bloodshed during peaceful demonstrations on April 19th of that year, in Seoul.

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The 4.19 Revolution is thus regarded to be the starting point of the long democratization process, the further development of which was prevented by the military coup d'état of 1961². A military junta led by Pak Chŏnghŭi grasped the power on May 16, 1961, and ruled the country until 1987, a moment when strengthened democratization movement overthrew it through the demonstrations of many millions of South Koreans³. The memory of the 4.19 Revolution is highly cherished in contemporary South Korea given its contribution to the processes of political democratization. The Constitution of 1987 which is currently in force emphasizes the importance of the 4.19 Revolution to the construction of progressive democracy in Korea. It states that the people of Korea upholding the cause of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea born of the March First Independence Movement of 1919⁴ and the democratic ideals of the April Nineteenth Uprising of 1960 against injustice, have assumed the mission of democratic reform and peaceful unification of our homeland⁵.

In modern South Korean historiography, the historical events of April 1960 are interpreted through the conceptual lens of revolution (혁명). In European historiography the term 'revolution' is usually applied to historical events that cause radical economic and political change like the Russian revolution of 1917 or the French revolution of 1789⁶. However, in South Korea the 4.19 Revolution did not cause drastic economic or political transformations. The form of governance was changed from a presidential to a parliamentary republic and a two-tier parliament was established to replace the single tier chamber. Many bureaucrats who had worked for the Lee Sŭngman administration held on to their

² Following the collapse of Lee Sŭngman's government at the end of April, 1960, Yun Bosŏn was elected President of the Second Republic dominated by the Democratic Party. However, economic difficulties, food shortages and political and institutional difficulties meant that the government was weak and unable to govern properly. Influential factions within the ROK Army constantly advocated for a coup during this period and when one did successfully occur on May 16th, 1961 it met little resistance. President Yun Bosŏn regarded it as a *fait accompli*.

³ After Pak Chŏnghŭi's assassination in 1979, South Korea had continued to be an unstable military dictatorship controlled by General and later President Chŏn Duhwan. Popular and international pressure (from the United States) to democratize had been expected to succeed in 1987, only for Chŏn Duhwan to announce his successor No T'aeu. Mass protests and public disruption, known as the June 10th Democratic Struggle, forced Chŏn Duhwan to agree to free and fair elections which were narrowly won by No T'ae-u in December, 1987.

⁴ Japan's colonial rule over Korea from 1910 to 1945 was at its outset very harsh and controlling but did not diminish Korean aspirations for independence. In 1919 on January 21st, King Kojong, the last King of the Yi dynasty died and many Koreans suspected that the Japanese had poisoned him. On March 1st, 1919, Korean independence advocates publically read aloud a declaration of independence and nationwide protests ensued. Though these protests were put down by the colonial authorities, the March 1st Uprising would spur the foundation of the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai and continued struggles for independence throughout the colonial period.

⁵ Constitution of the Republic of Korea of 1987. https://archive.md/20120710041912/http://korea.assembly.go.kr/res/low_01_read.jsp?boardid=1000000035#selection-557.257-557.398 (accessed December 3, 2020).

⁶ As Giddens defines it, revolution is "A process of political change, involving the mobilizing of a mass social movement, which by the use of violence successfully overthrows an existing regime and forms a new government. A revolution is distinguished from a coup d'état because it involves a mass movement and the occurrence of major change in the political system as a whole. A coup d'état refers to the seizure of power through the use of arms by individuals who then replace the existing political leaders, but without otherwise radically transforming the governmental system." See: Anthony Giddens and Phillip W. Sutton. *Sociology*. Bristol: Polity Press, 2017, p. 1130.

positions after the 4.19 Revolution. A small number of politicians directly involved in electoral fraud and the falsification of results were convicted in 1961. In spite of the moderate nature of political reforms that took place during 1960–1961, the term “revolution” was introduced to describe these events in public discourse soon after April 1960. In his New Year’s speech of 1962 Pak Chŏnghŭi, head of Supreme Council for National Reconstruction and President of the Republic of Korea from 1963–1979, said that we are celebrating the second year of revolution filled with hope and resoluteness for true democratic changes⁷. In his first inauguration speech in 1963, Pak Chŏnghŭi described both the 4.19 Revolution and the coup d’état of May 16, 1961, as revolutions. He said that historical task that was raised by both revolutions before the nation was to promote the modernization of the country in all areas of politics, economy, society, and culture⁸. To sustain the legitimacy of his political regime, Pak Chŏnghŭi tried to demonstrate by all the means available that he was firmly committed to the aspirations for democracy and freedom that had inspired Koreans to overthrow the unpopular government of Lee Sŭngman. He skillfully used democratic discourse to convince the public of his true adherence to democratic principles. However, in terms of historical significance the 4.19 Revolution had less meaning to him than the coup d’état of May 16, which Pak believed to be a true revolution. For this reason, in the amended preamble of the Constitution of 1963 the April Revolution was called the ‘righteous cause’ (의거) while the coup d’état of 1961 that brought Pak Chŏnghŭi to power was named a ‘revolution’⁹. Even the Memorial Day of the 4.19 Revolution which was established by the Pak’s government only in 1973 was officially called the Memorial Day of 4.19 Righteous Cause (4.19 의거기념일).

Until the middle of the 1990s, the events of April 1960 were referred to as the ‘righteous cause’¹⁰. Since that time, the democratic movement of April 1960 has been commonly described in academic literature, school textbooks as ‘4.19 Revolution’ (4.19 혁명). Although until the present the question of how to define the democratic movement of 1960 remains discursive in South Korean academic literature¹¹, officially memory policy towards those events has not drastically changed for the past 25 years and is still considered in terms of revolution. To sustain the memory of the April Revolution, the government holds annual commemoration ceremonies, supports the public activities of descendants of the 4.19 Revolution activists and governmental foundations and institutes who specialize in the

⁷ 1962 New Year’s Speech of Pak Jeonghui. <http://15cwnd.pa.go.kr/korean/data/expresident/pjh/speech5.html> (accessed December 3, 2020).

⁸ Pak Chŏnghŭi’s Inauguration Speech on December 17, 1963. <http://15cwnd.pa.go.kr/korean/data/expresident/pjh/speech.html> (accessed December 3, 2020).

⁹ 1963 Constitution of the Republic of Korea. [https://ko.wikisource.org/wiki/%EB%8C%80%ED%95%9C%EB%AF%BC%EA%B5%AD%ED%97%8C%EB%B2%95_\(%EC%A0%9C6%ED%98%B8\)](https://ko.wikisource.org/wiki/%EB%8C%80%ED%95%9C%EB%AF%BC%EA%B5%AD%ED%97%8C%EB%B2%95_(%EC%A0%9C6%ED%98%B8)) (accessed December 3, 2020).

¹⁰ In 1996, during the 6th revision of high school history textbooks the term “4.19 Right Cause” was changed to “4.19 Revolution.” // Seo Yeon-gyeong. A Study on Analysis on Political Story About Modern History in ‘Korean History’ and ‘Korean Recent and Contemporary History’ Textbooks in High Schools. On the 1st–7th Education Curriculum. Masters Dissertation, Graduate School of Education, Changwon National University, July 2007 (서연경. 고등학교 『국사』 및 『한국근현대사』 교과서의 현대정치사 서술내용분석 - 1 차~7 차교육과정을 중심으로) P. 21–22.

¹¹ Seo Joong-seok’s Story of Modern History. Volume 4. April Revolution, a Bloody Uprising against the Dictator (서중석의현대사이야기 - 4. 4 월혁명, 독재자와맞선피의항쟁). Seoul: Maybooks (오월의봄출판사), 2016.

history of the democratic movement. Thus, the state constructs collective images of the 4.19 Revolution and transmits them through the generations. In this paper, I will examine what sites of memory were created to preserve the memory of the 4.19 Revolution and how the representation of it in the Korean high school textbooks has changed over the past decades?

Sites of memory of the 4.19 Revolution

To preserve the memory of the April 19th Revolution, the government of the Republic of Korea opened the 4.19 Revolution Library in 1960 and established the 4.19 National Cemetery and the 4.19 Democracy Revolution Association in 1961. Between the 1960 and 1980s, these institutions and sites of memory functioned with different names¹². In the 1990–2000s, to stress the continuity of the democratization movement and revolutionary spirit of the 4.19 Revolution, the government suggested renaming the 4.19 Library the 4.19 Revolution Library and the 4.19 Revolution Association the 4.19 Democracy Revolution Association. The fact that these sites of memory were created soon after the revolution and functioned, although under different names through the period of military rule, shows that no matter which government held power in South Korea, they all recognised the heritage of the 4.19 Revolution.

The 4.19 National Cemetery is a unique memorial complex that was designed to commemorate the victims of the 4.19 Revolution. In the cemetery, there are various sites of memory such as the graves of 224 patriots who lost their lives during the revolution, the Memorial Tower of the April Student Revolution (4 월 학생혁명기념탑), memorial hall, sculptures, and monuments engraved with poems dedicated to the 4.19 Revolution¹³. Located at the foot of Bukhansan, the main facilities of the cemetery are surrounded by pine trees and maples which attempt to create a feeling of peace and tranquillity. The space of the cemetery is filled with symbols of the April Revolution: justice, democracy, dignity, and courage. The complex is designed in such a way that a person walking along the long

¹² During the 1960 and 1980s, the 4.19 Revolution Library was called the 4.19 Library. Since 1990s, it has been called the 4.19 Revolution Library. Perhaps, following the amendment of the preamble to the Republic of Korea's Constitution in 1987, the interpretation of the democratic movement of 1960 changed and the 4.19 Library was renamed the 4.19 Revolution Library. The 4.19 Democracy Revolution Association has been functioning with this name since 2005. Since its foundation in 1961, it has been renamed six times. The last time the Association was renamed because the government desired to stress the democratic spirit of the April 19th Revolution. Before it was called just 4.19 Revolution Association (in 1960s, 90s) or the 4.19 Righteous Cause Association (in 1970-80s). In 2006, the 4.19 National Cemetery was renamed the 4.19 Democratic National Cemetery (in Korean — 국립 4.19 민주묘지). But in English the name of the cemetery is translated as the April 19th National Cemetery. <https://419.mpva.go.kr/> (accessed February 3, 2020).

¹³ The monuments contains 12 poems written by 박목월 (죽어서 사는 영원한 분들을 위하여) Pak Mokwöl (*For Eternal People Living Dead*), 정한모 (빈의자) Chŏng Hanmo (*Empty Chair*), 이성부 (손님) Lee Sŏngbu (*Guest*), 유안진 (꽃으로 다시 살아) Yu Anjin (*Live Again with Flowers*), 송옥 (소리치는 태양) Song Uk (*Screaming Sun*), 장만영 (4.19 젊은넋들앞에) Chang Manyŏng (*In Front of Young Souls of 4.19*), 김윤식 (합장) Kim Yunsik (*Mass Grave*), 이한직 (진혼의 노래) Lee Hanjik (*Singing of Marriage*), 조지훈 (진혼가) Cho Jihun (*Married Singer*), 박화목 (4월) Pak Hwamok (*April*), ‘마산 희생자들을 위하여’ (no author) *For the Victims of Masan*, 윤후명 (역사를 증언하는 자들이여 4.19의 힘을 보아라) Yun Humyŏng (*Look at the Power of 4.19, those who Testify of History*).

path to the graves of patriots could access the spirit of the democratic revolution by reading poems and have time to consider the ideas behind the sculptures. The Memorial Tower of the April Student Revolution erected in 1963 is intended to emphasize the crucial role of students in the anti-government protests in April 1960. In Korea, this is a single monument focusing on the glorification and merits of students in the cause of the revolution. The Memorial Tower bears an inscription dedicated to the memory of thousands of Korean students who fought against injustice and eventually would change the course of national history; “186 young souls who shed blood on the democratic altar became holy guardians”¹⁴.

Unlike the 4.19 National Cemetery, which is located in Seoul, Democracy Park in Busan is a memorial site for the local province. As written on its web page, “We made [Democracy Park] to honor the sacrifices made by Busan’s citizens for democracy that are from the 4.19 Democratic Revolution, Busan & Masan democratic movement and the June Movement that contributed the development of modern Korean history. In addition, we are going to use Democracy Park as an educational place to inspire the pride of Busan citizens and raise the historical status of Busan, as a cradle of democracy”¹⁵. Although the tasks of Democracy Park are much broader than simply the keeping of memory for the 4.19 Revolution, within its bounds there are several sites related to the latter: the 4.19 Square, the Memorial Tower of Victims of the April Democratic Revolution (4 월민주혁명희생자 위령탑), and the Memorial Hall of Victims of the April Democratic Revolution (4 월민주혁명희생자영령봉안소). The Memorial Tower was erected in 1962 paid for by the donations of Busan citizens in memory of 19 victims of the 4.19 Revolution who were residents of the city. It was originally located in another park in Busan and moved to Democracy Park only in 2007. In that year, near the Memorial Tower a small memorial hall was built which contains 21 photos of the 4.19 Revolution victims and functions as a shrine. 19 of the 21 perished during the 4.19 Revolution and two more soon after it.

The 4.19 Democracy Revolution Association unites the participants of the 4.19 Revolution¹⁶. This is a state-sponsored organization that is significantly influenced by the government’s policy. The Association has affiliated societies that also aim to maintain living memories of the 4.19 Revolution. These include the 4.19 Revolution Victims’ Descendents Association (4.19 혁명희생자유족회), 4.19 Christian Association (4.19 선교회), the April Society (4 월회), 2.28 Democratic Movement Association (2.28 민주주의 거기념사업회), 3.15 Democratic Movement Association (3.15 의거기념사업회), and others. These organizations are engaged in various activities that are not simply limited to the preservation of the 4.19 Revolution’s memory. For example, the 4.19 Democracy Revolution Association, which is mainly responsible for the annual memorial ceremony held with the participation of the South Korean Prime Minister and other high ranking officials in the 4.19 National Cemetery, is engaged in charitable activities, public campaigns to support some politicians. For example, the Association supported president

¹⁴ Sculptures of the 4.19 National Cemetery. http://419.mpva.go.kr/419c/intro/intro04_03_02.jsp (accessed February 3, 2020).

¹⁵ Objectives and History of Democracy Park. http://www.demopark.or.kr/eng/Demopark/demopark_01.asp (accessed February 3, 2020).

¹⁶ 4.19 Democracy Revolution Association. Vision. Mission. Value. http://1960419minju.org/bbs/board.php?bo_table=board_01&sca=%EC%84%A4%EB%A6%BD%EB%AA%A9%EC%A0%81 (accessed February 3, 2020).

Pak Kūnhye (2012–2017) during the Candlelight Revolution¹⁷ and maintained its support for her even after her impeachment and imprisonment. The members of the Association forms a part of the extreme conservative fringe that continues to support the former President. The conservative stance of its members can be explained by the long-lasting ties with authoritarian governments: the Association for example, functioned throughout the regimes of Pak Chōnghŭi and Chōn Duhwan and was continuously funded by their governments.

The last but certainly not least significant topographic site of memory is the 4.19 Revolution Library that stores a large number of sources on the history of the 4.19 Revolution: books, audio and video sources, photos, and etc.¹⁸ It regularly organizes exhibitions, lectures, seminars and discussions on the history of the 4.19 Revolution and related events such as 2.28 Daegu Democratic Movement and the 3.15 Masan Democratic Movement, which proceeded to the mass demonstrations in Seoul in April 1960.

Public Memories of the 4.19 Revolution

The Memorial Day of the 4.19 revolution was established in 1973. Since that time, the government regularly holds the commemoration ceremonies on April 19 in Seoul and in all major cities in South Korea (Pusan, Taegu, Kwangju, Ulsan). In this section of the paper, I will examine the commemoration ceremonies of the 4.19 Revolution in the 21st century, and demonstrate what image of the 4.19 Revolution is sustained in public conscience and what purpose this memory policy has.

The central commemoration ceremony is held at the 4.19 National Cemetery in Seoul. The representatives of the government, participants of the April Revolution and their descendants, members of the 4.19 Revolution related associations take part in the ceremony. The ceremony starts with wreath-laying at the Memorial Tower of the April Student Revolution, and the kindling of incense. Following this, the President or Prime Minister, representatives of the 4.19 Democracy Revolution Association, and others give a speech commemorating the 4.19 Revolution victims and other people of merit. In 2013, the government established the 4.19 Revolution National Festival (4.19 혁명국민문화제). The program of the festival includes various events such as exhibitions, discussions, marathons, contests in calligraphy, drawings, and in English which are mainly held within the week (April 13–19) among South Korean students of schools (primary, middle and high school) and universities¹⁹. Students can apply for participation in one of these events through the festival's website. The winners are awarded a certificate and small amount of prize money (10–30\$). The topics for the drawing or speech-contests vary but are closely connected with democracy, the unification of Korea and students' involvement in the development of democracy in Korea. Having considered the submissions to the drawing contests in particular what is very clear is that the children's work, while it does manifest contemporary Korean nationalism and identity, there are no examples of any images which directly repre-

¹⁷ The “Candlelight Revolution” is a new term that widely spread in the South Korean media during a series of protests against President Pak Kūnhye from November 2016 to March 2017.

¹⁸ 4.19 Revolution Library. <http://library.419revolution.org/> (accessed February 3, 2020).

¹⁹ 4.19 Revolution National Festival Program. <http://festival419.org/> (accessed February 2, 2020).

sent the 4.19 Revolution itself. The choice of topics for contests and the products of those contests shows that they are aimed both at developing patriotism in young Koreans, and the forming civic identity based on the active participation of citizens in the development of South Korea's democratic institutions. Thus, these public contests seem to be an educational tool focused on and to be used in the development of civil society and participatory political culture.

In 2000, Kim Daejung visited the events for the 40th anniversary of the 4.19 Revolution held at the 4.19 National Cemetery in Seoul. Kim Daejung said that "The 4.19 Revolution is a historical event that awakened the true meaning and value of democracy... In order to transmit the spirit of the 4.19 Revolution the people's government created by the power of the people has made every effort to implement freedom, human rights, and justice"²⁰. He compared this revolution with a flower of democracy that bloomed during the revolution since the people's government of the Second Republic (1960–1961) guaranteed freedoms of assembly, demonstrations and human rights. The contribution of the 4.19 Revolution to South Korean democracy is continuously stressed in the addresses of other South Korean politicians at the commemoration ceremonies. On the 45th anniversary, the Minister of Education Kim Chinp'yo compared democracy in South Korea with a tree that could grow up due to bloody sacrifices of the 4.19 Revolution heroes and their commitments to democracy²¹. In the commemoration speech of 50th anniversary of the 4.19 Revolution, President Lee Myōngbak (2008–2013) said that "the 60 year long history of the Republic of Korea was a tough struggle against communism and poverty, in which Korea was divided into South and North and suffered a terrible civil war. Thus, Korea became found itself at the forefront of the Cold war and was obliged to take on a heavy burden of security expenses. In this historical context, democracy could not be achieved by itself. Democracy is a long, sometimes painful product of evolution. The history of democracy can also be called a struggle for freedom". The April Revolution was a huge first step towards democracy which was firmly rooted in Korea through the great national awakening and pure spirit of the 4.19 Revolution. "This spirit is transmitted in the preamble of the Constitution and has become a never-ending spring of democratic ideology in the glorious history of Korea", as mentioned by Lee Myōngbak²².

At a commemoration ceremony for the 58th anniversary of the 4.19 Revolution in 2018, Prime-Minister Lee Nagyōn said that "the 4.19 Revolution was the first successful civil revolution in Asia that became the world's historic achievement"²³. He noted that through the 4.19 Revolution the absolute power of the government was broken by the people for the first time in Korean history. However, contrary to previous politicians Lee Nagyōn pointed out the incomplete nature of the revolution. "Some people called the 4.19 Revolution a 'half

²⁰ 한국경제 (*Korea Economic Daily*), "김대통령, 4.19 기념사 (President Kim, 4.19 Memorial)," 20 April 2000. <https://www.hankyung.com/politics/article/2000041925881> (accessed February 15, 2020).

²¹ 한겨레 (*The Hankyoreh*), "제45주년 4.19혁명 참배행사 열려 (The 45th Anniversary of the 4.19 Revolution Worship Service is Held)". April 19, 2005. http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/27643.html (accessed February 15, 2020).

²² Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, "4.19 혁명 제 50 주년 기념사 (4.19 Revolution 50th Anniversary)". April 19, 2010. <http://social.korea.kr/archive/speechView.do?newsId=132020734&pageIndex=171&srchType=title&srchKeyword=> (accessed February 15, 2020).

²³ Prime-Minister Lee Nagyōn's speech at the commemoration ceremony for the 58th anniversary of the 4.19 Revolution. <http://www.korea.kr/archive/speechView.do?newsId=132030504> (accessed February 15, 2020).

success' or an 'incomplete revolution'. The 4.19 Revolution was hushed up by the May 16 coup, the Yushin dictatorship, and the military coup. There was also a time when the 4.19 Revolution was called not a "revolution" but a "righteous cause" (의거). But the spirit of the 4.19 Revolution did not die; it revived every time the democracy of the Republic of Korea was in crisis"²⁴.

The discourse on the significance of the contribution of the 4.19 Revolution to the development of democracy in South Korea has continued in the ceremony for the 59th anniversary and during preparation for the 2020 4.19 Revolution National Festival. In his address at the ceremony for the 59th anniversary, Lee Nagyōn highly evaluated the 4.19 Revolution. He said that it was a solid foundation for democracy in the Republic of Korea. "The democracy was obtained through a fierce struggle and with the terrible sacrifices over the years in the Republic of Korea", Lee Nagyōn noted. "We remember the history and preach to posterity, and Mun Jaemin's government is committed to fulfilling its obligations"²⁵. In tune with the Prime Minister's sensibilities is the fact that the number of people whose merits are officially recognized in the cause of the revolution is constantly increasing. At this same commemoration, Prime-Minister Lee Nagyōn announced that since more documents related to Masan Democratic Movement (1960) had been recently discovered, they had found 40 more meritorious people of the 4.19 Revolution (4 of 40 were wounded and 36 contributed to the 4.19 Revolution). Thus, a total number of the meritorious people who were officially awarded by the government has reached 1121 by 2019²⁶.

In 2020, the address of the chair of the Organizing Committee of the 4.19 Revolution National Festival also said that the democracy of the Republic of Korea originates from the 4.19 Revolution. This year, Koreans will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the 4.19 Revolution seeking to remember its spirit and meaning. The chair of the Organizing Committee has invited citizens to actively participate in the festival events because this will allow them to feel what the April Revolution truly was²⁷.

Alongside these practical commemorations of the 4.19 Revolution, Mun Jaemin's government (2017–present time) has sought to connect the 4.19 Revolution with the Candlelight Revolution in its memory policy. It aims to form an image of the Candlelight Revolution as an integral part of the democratization movement. In all public speeches focused on the commemoration of the April Revolution, the June Struggle (1987), the May 18th Kwangju Uprising (1980) and other watershed political events in the contemporary history of Korea, high-ranking officials of the Mun Jaemin administration deliberately stress the continuity of the democratization movement that lasted up to the Candlelight Revolution in 2016-2017. As Prime-Minister Lee Nagyōn noted, "After 29 years [since the June struggle of 1987], the Candlelight Revolution revealed the people's aspiration for substantive democracy". In 2018, at the commemoration ceremony for the 31st anniversary of the 10th June Democratic Struggle of 1987 President Mun Jaemin also mentioned the

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Overseas Cultural Affairs Office (KOCIS), "민주주의! 우리가함께가는길 (Democracy, the Way We Go Together)," April 19, 2019. <http://www.kocis.go.kr/koreanet/view.do?seq=1012599&RN=3> (accessed February 15, 2020).

²⁶ KBS News, "4.19 혁명 59주년...7 년만에 4.19 유공자포 (4.19, 59th Anniversary of the Revolution)," April 19, 2019. <http://news.kbs.co.kr/news/view.do?ncd=4183582> (accessed February 2, 2020).

²⁷ 4.19 Festival, "Understanding the April 19 Revolution," <http://festival419.org/%EA%B5%AD%EB%AF%BC%EB%AC%B8%ED%99%94%EC%A0%9C%EC%86%8C%EA%B0%9C%EC%9C%84%EC%9B%90%EC%9E%A5-%EC%9D%B8%EC%82%AC%EB%A7%90/>, (accessed February 2, 2020).

Candlelight Revolution which he metaphorically compared with a flower that sprouted over a generation after the June Struggle of 1987²⁸. Thus, the progressive government of Mun Jaein intentionally extends the history of the democratization movement up to the latest political events in South Korea, which are commonly determined today as the Candlelight Revolution. The current historical discourse defines the 4.19 Revolution and the Candlelight Revolution as one of the significant milestones of the democratization movement. If the first revolution inspired Koreans with democratic ideals and sparked the light of democracy, the second one demonstrates how Korean democracy works in practice²⁹.

It is clear from this section that each government in South Korea essentially produces its own version of the 4.19 Revolution through commemorative practices. While conservative and more autocratically minded governments might seem to have few if any connections to the aspirations and ambitions of 4.19, Lee Myōngbak's for instance, such administrations continued to formally remember the events of the Revolution. Just as the physical architectures focused on the memory of the events of 1960 have the various political transformations and overturns written into them, so these commemorative practices and events are also entwined with the political inclinations of past and incumbent administrations. The next section of this paper moves from the production and reproduction of memory in physical and commemorative space, to the production of knowledge and narrative around the 4.19 Revolution in the complicated and contested field of school text books and curriculum.

Images of the 4.19 Revolution in high school history textbooks

In 1954–1955 a Standard of Time Allocation for Curriculum (교육과정 시간 배당 기준령) and Curriculum Standard (교과과정) were adopted in South Korea. These standards prescribed the basic principles of school education: subjects taught, time allocated and content required. The history of Korea was a compulsory subject for elementary, middle and high school education. Due to internal factors, such as changes in the political regime and ideology, the Curriculum Standard has been revised seven times since its adoption³⁰. These revisions have significantly influenced history education and

²⁸ Mun Jae-in's speech at the commemoration ceremony for the 31st anniversary of the 10th June Democratic Struggle of 1987. <https://player.fm/series/ch2-92251/6-30> (accessed February 2, 2020).

²⁹ By the 30th anniversary of the 10th June Democratic Struggle Korea Democracy Foundation prepared a report on how Koreans remember the events of 1987 which caused a peaceful transformation of the political regime in South Korea. Along with citizens' memories on the 10th Democratic Struggle, the authors interviewed participants of the so-called "candlelight meetings" that were held across the country in 2016–2017. Although the authors do not use the term "Candlelight Revolution", they imply it because it was named due to the "candlelight meetings". Thus, memories of the South Korean citizens on the democratization movement in 1987 were intentionally united with memories of those who participated in the candlelight meetings. See: Survey on the Occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the June 10th Democratic Struggle. By Korea Democracy Foundation, 2017 (2017 년 6 월 민주항쟁 30 주년기념. FGI 조사결과보고서. 민주화운동기념사업회. 한국민주주의연구소). <http://www.kdemo.or.kr/book/data/page/1/post/8453> (accessed March 19, 2020).

³⁰ The 1st Curriculum Standard was valid in 1954–1963, the 2nd in 1963–1974, the 3rd in 1974–1981, the 4th in 1982–1987, the 5th in 1988–1995, the 6th in 1996–2001, and the 7th in 2002–2006. Since 2007 there have been some extra planned revisions of the Curriculum Standard in 2007, 2009, 2011, 2015. During each stage of Curriculum Standard revision the content of history textbooks varied slightly.

caused changes in school textbooks. Initially South Korean school textbooks were divided into two types: the *kukjŏng kyogwasŏ* (국정교과서) written by a state commission consisting of professional historians and published at the publishing house of the Ministry of Education, and the *kŏmjŏng kyogwasŏ* (검정교과서), written by historians and approved by the Ministry of Education, but published in the private publishing houses. During 1955–1974, both types of textbooks could be used for teaching Korean history at school. During the third revision of the Curriculum Standard (1974–1981) this two multiple-system for the publication of school textbooks was transformed into a unitary system in which there was a single stated approved set of state history textbooks. The third revision occurred soon after the *Yusin* (유신) regime was established in South Korea (1972). The government of Pak Chŏnghŭi aimed to strengthen the nationalist perception of Korean history which required the exclusion of variable views and the adoption of a single interpretation of history. Until 2002, when the 7th Curriculum Standard was adopted, Korean history was taught by the state published history textbook “Kuksa” (*kukjŏng kyogwasŏ*). According to the 7th Curriculum Standard the Korean history must be taught by the state published textbook at elementary, middle and high school (10th grade only), while for the 11th and 12th grade classes it is taught by the *geomjeon gyogwaseo* because history as a subject at this point becomes an optional course for students to select³¹. Due to extraplanned revisions of the Curriculum Standard in 2009, 2011, nowadays Korean History (*Hanguksa*) is taught as a compulsory subject and by the *kŏmjŏng kyogwasŏ* both in the middle and high schools. It is planned to introduce the *kŏmjŏng kyogwasŏ* for the elementary school since 2022.

In this section of the paper, I will examine how the image of the 4.19 Revolution has changed in the high school textbooks over the decades and what image of it is sustained in the 21st century. For this analysis, I chose high school textbooks published during the various revisions of the Curriculum Standard. Thus, I analysed high school history textbooks of the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th Curriculum Standards and the *kŏmjŏng kyogwasŏ* of 2011.

In the 1968 history textbook “Kuksa” (“History of Korea”) which belongs to *kukjŏng kyogwasŏ*, the history of the 4.19 Revolution is briefly described. The authors applied the term “the right cause” to the 4.19 Revolution as a historical event. Meanwhile, they recognized that it was the first people’s revolution in Korean history. The tyranny and unfaithful measures of the Lee Sŭngman’s government, including the falsification of the Presidential and Vice-Presidential elections on March 15th, 1960 generated anger among the people which lead to mass protests. The authors emphasized the tyrannical nature of Lee Sŭngman’s governance and approved of the demonstrations of Korean students, teachers and ordinary citizens who sought the implementation of freedoms and civil rights. The new government that was established after the “the right cause” occurred could not realize the people’s hopes and fell into factionalism. In order to prevent factional struggle, disorder and a potential threat of communist invasion (from North Korea) young Korean officers headed by the general Pak Chŏnghŭi organized a new revolution. Thus, the 5.16 Revolution became possible because of the unreasonable government policies of the Second Republic (1960–1961). The Revolution of May 16 continued the spirit of the 4.19 Right Cause. Moreover the May 16 Revolution could implement all those tasks that arose

³¹ Seo Yeon-gyeong. A Study on Analysis on Political Story about Modern History in 『Korean history』 and 『Korean recent and Contemporary history』 Textbooks in High schools. On the 1st~7th Education Curriculum. Master’s dissertation. Seoul, 2007. P. 4–10.

during the Second Republic but due to the disordered government had not been properly realized³².

In the 1979 textbook (*kukjŏng kyogwasŏ*), the authors wrote that the 4.19 Right Cause was organized by students outraged by the dictatorship of the government and election fraud. Citizens supported student protests and, thus, crushed the dominance of the Liberty Party and Lee Sŭngman's government³³. In the 1979 textbook the authors do not even mention the student demonstrations in Taegu and in Masan that preceded the demonstration in Seoul on April, 19th. They just state that students and citizens were dissatisfied with Lee Sŭngman's government that unfaithfully revised Constitution several times and suppressed the political opposition. The Democratic Party, which came to power after the 4.19 Revolution, lost the opportunity to maintain public order and increased the likelihood of communist aggression. Given this situation, revolutionary forces headed by general Pak Chŏnghŭi organized a new revolution and grasped power in order to build a truly democratic state that would "liberate the nation from corruption and trouble"³⁴.

The 1982 textbook (*kukjŏng kyogwasŏ*) contains the most truncated narrative of the 4.19 Revolution. In a few sentences, the authors describe the history of the 4.19 Right Cause, giving more attention to its background. They wrote that citizens were outraged by the election fraud, corruption and dictatorship of the government ruled by the Liberty Party³⁵. Neither evaluations nor details of the 4.19 Right Cause are given in this textbook. A distinctive feature of the narrative is that citizens were presented as the main force of the 4.19 Right Cause, while in previous editions of the history textbooks the role of students was emphasized. Taking into account a brief and superficial explanation of the 4.19 Right Cause, the authors obviously aimed to present it as a transitive historical event which was of little importance for the subsequent development of South Korea.

In the 1990 textbook (*kukjŏng kyogwasŏ*), the narrative on the 4.19 Right Cause is illustrated with two photos: one depicts a demonstration without specifying the place and time and the other depicts Lee Sŭngman leaving the Blue House in his car crowded by the people. The second picture is called "Retiring Ri President". This is the first time when the events of the 4.19 Revolution are illustrated with photos of demonstrations. The textbooks of 1968, 1979 and 1982 contained a single photo of the Memorial Tower of the 4.19 Revolution. Like in previous textbooks, the authors explained the reasons for the Right Cause as the anger of students and citizens dissatisfied with the dictatorship and electoral fraud of the Lee government. The authors stated that mass protests started from Masan (not mentioning Taegu) and then spread all over the country because of the police opening fire on protesters and causing many casualties. Although the government blamed communists for inciting protests and imposed an emergency regime, it failed to confront students and citizens enraged by the actions of the police. Due to continuous demonstrations of students and citizens, Lee Sŭngman had to retire. Thus, the Liberty Party power was destroyed, and a new atmosphere of freedom and democracy was created³⁶. It is worth noting that in this textbook for the first time the authors mention casualties incurred during the

³² History of Korea (국사), High School. Seoul: Ministry of Education, 1968. P. 190–192.

³³ History of Korea (국사), High School. Seoul: Ministry of Education, 1979. P. 296.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 298.

³⁵ History of Korea, upper (국사, 하), High School. Seoul: Ministry of Education, 1982. P. 169.

³⁶ History of Korea, upper (국사, 하), High School. Seoul: Ministry of Education, 1990. P. 181.

demonstrations. The 5.16 Revolution that followed the 4.19 Right Cause was caused by the factionalism within the governing Democratic Party and its failure to meet people's expectations³⁷.

Since the 6th Curriculum Standard, in the 1996 textbook (*kukjŏng kyogwasŏ*), the 4.19 Right Cause has been called the 4.19 Revolution and the 5.16 Revolution has been called a coup d'état. The narrative is illustrated with two pictures: one depicting how police beat students during the march, and the other depicting a demonstration of professors. The authors explain that citizens and students, driven by the desire to crush the dictatorial regime and condemning election fraud, rose to start the 4.19 Revolution. It began from protests in Masan and then spread to Seoul. The police opened fire against demonstrators in Masan and this sparked people's rage. In spite of the emergency regime imposed by President Lee Sŭngman in order to discourage demonstrations, they continued. As a result, Lee Sŭngman had to resign and the Liberty Party lost its dominance. Evaluating the significance of the 4.19 Revolution, the authors wrote that "it showed the world the democratic power of our nation which through democratic revolution and efforts of citizens and students was able to overthrow the dictatorial government"³⁸.

In the textbook of 2002 (*kukjŏng kyogwasŏ*), the narrative on the 4.19 Revolution is illustrated with only one photo depicting a student demonstration in Seoul. The authors emphasized the damage that Lee Sŭngman's government has done to democracy in Korea. They wrote that it could not accomplish democracy and just strengthened dictatorship. "The government has lost public support by abandoning people's expectations for democratic politics"³⁹. Students and citizens demanded the retirement of President Lee. In spite of the oppression of the demonstration and the imposition of an emergency regime, the government was not able to establish order and was forced to resign. The authors do not mention protests in Taegu, Masan and Seoul. They just state why students and citizens raised the protests against the governing Liberty Party and President Lee Sŭngman. In the year following the April Revolution, the government of Jang Myŏn was deposed during a coup headed by the general Pak Chŏnghŭi. Why? As the textbook states, "The Cabinet of Chang Myŏn was not only unable to inherit the spirit of the 4.19 Revolution, but it also failed to achieve political stability due to the factionalism of the ruling Democratic Party and continued social turmoil because of demonstrations"⁴⁰.

In the 2011 history textbook (*kŏmjŏng kyogwasŏ*), the 4.19 Revolution is described in a detailed manner. The narrative has a relatively rich illustration: it has five photos that depict the student demonstration against electoral fraud in Masan (1960.3.15), Korean women and men walking in groups to polling stations, university professors demonstration (1960.4.25), jubilant students and citizens climbing a tank (undated), and elementary school students marching under the slogan "Don't shoot at parents and brothers!" The narrative starts from the famous poem of Kang Myŏng-hŭi "I know" that tells us a sad story about boys and girls who went to school, but fell under fire and did not return home. The authors explain how Lee Sŭngman three times (in 1952, 1954, 1956) revised the Constitution in order to

³⁷ Ibid., p. 182.

³⁸ History of Korea, upper (국사, 하), High School. Seoul: Ministry of Education, 1996. P. 204.

³⁹ History of Korea (국사), Middle School. Seoul: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2002. P. 309.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 310.

maintain his power. They rarely apply the term “dictatorship” to Lee Süngman’s regime, while it was used more frequently in previous history textbooks. The authors tell that Lee Süngman’s authoritarian regime strengthened after the amendment of the National Security Law and suspension of the daily newspaper “Kyöngnyang sinmun” in 1959. However, mass protests were caused mainly by the Presidential and Vice-Presidential election fraud in March 1960. For the first time in the history textbook the authors mention the death of Kim Chuyöl whose corpse was founded on the seashore in Masan on March 11, 1960. The discovery of the dead student provoked protests all over the country. The authors do not mention the Taegu protests that preceded the student marches in Masan. They recognize that the first casualties among citizens occurred during protests in Masan when the police opened fire against peaceful demonstrators. Student protests from Masan spread to Seoul, where on April 19th police suppressed the demonstration with gunfire. The number of protesters began to grow rapidly: besides students, professors, citizens, even elementary schoolchildren joined them. Finally, Lee Süngman declared that if people desire him to resign he will do it (4.26) and he emigrated to Hawaii in the United States on May, 29. Evaluating the historical significance of the 4.19 Revolution, the authors repeat the idea which was first expressed in the 1968 history textbook. They state that it was the first democratic revolution in Asia during which the people, led forward by students were able to overthrow a dictatorial regime⁴¹.

Over the time evaluations of the students’ role in the Revolution 4.19 have changed. According to O Jeyön (Oh Je Yeon)’s research, high school students, rather than university students and the urban working class, were the initiators of the democratic movement that brought down the corrupt government of Lee Süngman. However, these high school students, particularly evening class students, gradually disappeared from the people’s memory. O Jeyön wrote that among all the students (58) who were killed during the anti-government protests there were 36 high school students. This number suggests that high school students mostly suffered but their merits are remembered less and less today⁴². Oh pointed out that Koreans do not distinguish high school students from university students. Today, historical memory preserves the memories of students, participants in the 4.19 Revolution, as a unified social group. This proves also a report of the Korea Democracy Foundation (민주화운동기념사업회) on how the history of the democratic movement is interpreted in Korean school textbooks. The authors analyzed elementary, middle and high school history textbooks published in 2007 and 2009. Privately, they analyzed 6 high school history textbooks of 2007 and 8 history textbooks of 2009. All these textbooks were *kömjöng kyogwasö*, written by a group of historians and approved by the Ministry of Education. The authors of the report concluded that, first, the 4.19 Revolution is remembered as a democratic revolution which aimed to crush authoritarianism of Lee Süngman. Second, the driving forces of the 4.19 Revolution were students (*haksæng*) and citizens (*simin*). But, as above mentioned, the authors of the *kömjöng* textbooks do not specify what kind of students participated in the anti-

⁴¹ History of Korea (한국사). Ed. By Han Cheol-ho 한철호 and others, High School. Seoul: 미래엔컬처그룹 (Mirae Culture Group), 2011.

⁴² Oh Je Yeon. Forgotten People from the Memory of the April Revolution in 1960, Korea — High School Students and Urban Working Class (오제연. 4월혁명의 기억에서 사라진 사람들 — 고학생과 도시 하층민) // 역사비평 (Critical Review of History), 2014. 2. P. 136–172.

government protests. Third, the 4.19 Revolution is presented as a foundation of the democratic movement in Korea⁴³.

As one can see, the narrative of the 4.19 Revolution in the *kōmjōng kyogwasō* significantly differs from the state published textbooks. As soon as the government abolished the unitary system of history textbooks for high school, it facilitated a private in-depth study of the contemporary history of Korea, including the 4.19 Revolution. Throughout all revisions of the Curriculum Standard, the state aimed to form a consistent image of the 4.19 Revolution as an expression of the democratic power of the Korean nation outraged by the corruptive and dictatorial government of Lee Sŭngman. It is hard to assess to what extent this consistent representation of the 4.19 Revolution in history textbooks influenced the collective memory, but if we put together an image of the 4.19 Revolution maintained through commemorative practices and that found in the history textbooks, we will see that they coincide. Koreans are taught to remember the 4.19 Revolution because of its contribution to the development of both national and global democracy.

Conclusion

The sustaining the 4.19 Revolution's memory plays a significant role in modern South Korean national self-identity's construction. The peaceful transition from authoritarianism to democracy accompanied by economic developmentalism allowed South Korea to present itself as a progressive democratic state in the early 21st century. This would not have been possible without the 4.19 Revolution which contributed to the crystallization and cementing of democracy and civic culture in South Korea. Soon after the revolution occurred it was proudly referred to as "the righteous undertaking of keen and courageous students", "the miracle of the century"⁴⁴. The democratic protests were also called Korea's liberation. If 1945's "first liberation" implied the colonial Japanese Imperial regime's liquidation, the second meant "victory against an unjust regime" of Lee Sŭngman⁴⁵. Thus, the memory of the 4.19 Revolution was initially based on a mixture of sentiments including patriotism, national pride, and people's beliefs around what was necessary to accomplish democracy. Along with positive sentiments towards April 1960's events, it's historical memory combined with traumatic memories for the Korean nation because of the number of sacrifices required of innocent victims of Lee Sŭngman's regime and because of Koreans failed aspirations for an immediate return to democracy. A year and a half later general Pak Chōnghŭi headed the military coup of May, 16, which brought the democratic triumph of the 4.19 Revolution to a conclusion. The state launched a propaganda campaign which aimed to rewire the 4.19 Revolution's collective image in order to generate approval of the military coup and to distract people from aspirations and desires towards democratic reforms. The democratic revolution occurred but was not completed. For the generation of

⁴³ Report on Description and Analysis of the Democratization Movement in History Textbooks, 2017 (민주화운동 관련 역사교과서 분석 및 서술방향 연구 보고서). Korea Democracy Foundation, 2017, pp. 133–146. <http://www.kdemo.or.kr/book/data/page/1/post/8450> (accessed March 19, 2020).

⁴⁴ Kim, Charles R. *Youth for Nation. Culture and Protest in Cold War South Korea*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017. P. 176.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

the 1940s who participated in the mass protests of February — April 1960 as well as the 1960s generation who made possible the democratic transition of 1987, the memory (postmemory) of the 4.19 Revolution contained nostalgic positive memories mixed with trauma. This trauma was of the incomplete deed that has to be finally achieved for the sake of a future national prosperity. The historical task that was set by students and citizens during the 4.19 Revolution was completed by the second generation during the June 10th Struggle in 1987. The memory of students who drove the 4.19 Revolution was immortalized in a series of Korean poems (Pak Mokwŏl, Chŏng Hanmo, Lee Sŏngbu, Chang Mangyŏng, etc.), sites of memories such as the 4.19 National Cemetery with graves of young patriots, the Memorial Tower of the April Student Revolution, archives, and textbooks.

This paper in particular has addressed memories, postmemories and sites of memory related to the 4.19 Revolution of 1960, but as the reader will have encountered these memories are not confined to the past, but continue to exist in the present. Sites of memory, postmemory and memorial narratives will continue to develop around South Korean political protest and social movements, intersecting with historical postmemories and indeed have done so around the Candlelight Revolution of 2016–2017. These events, just as the 4.19 Revolution will be integrated into a complex nexus and framework which involves politicians, social actors, public demonstrations, popular ambitions and produces physical places and spaces of memory and remembrance. The 4.19 Revolution like other moments of memory and postmemory in South Korean's democratization process will continue to be deployed to support the dreams and ambitions of political and social actors, a process in which new sites and frames of memory are generated and projected.

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