From Ritual to History: Kojong’s Funerary Procession in Ûigung and Photography

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Abstract:
This presentation compares the visual records of the funerary procession of the late king Kojong in Ûigung and photography. The funeral of Kojong, the last king of the Chosŏn dynasty, was held according to the royal custom but not without modifications made by Japanese colonial government. Given the fact that the funeral took place at the backdrop of a landmark mass protest for Korean independence on March 1, 1919, this presentation inquires into how an age-old ritual was re-staged as a modern spectacle under the colonial government, and how photography reframed it as an event in the modern historical narrative. Therefore, this presentation will discuss how the depiction of ritual -- repetitive and ephemeral -- gave a way to the singularity of event in the freeze frame of photography and the linear narrative of panoramic cinema in modern times. Through this comparative analysis, it hopes to show how Ûigung depicted the dead’s journey to a holy place, making the place of the dead relevant in history through the sacralization by ritual, and how the eternality of the past in Ûigung was turned into the virtual, memory, and nostalgia by photography.

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1. Introduction

This paper examines the funerary rituals of the late king Kojong. The death of Kojong on January 21, 1919 marked an end of an era. He was the last king of the Chosŏn Dynasty who attempted to establish a modern nation, the Taehan Empire (1897-1910), under the treacherous climate of Western imperialism, Japan, and China vying for power in the Korean peninsula. He had been demoted from the throne after the Hague Incident in 1907, and had only maintained a nominal existence as King Yi since the annexation in 1910. Speaking of a king who has lived through such volatile historical periods is a
challenging task. He represents not only a 500-year old dynasty in its full complexity, but also Korea’s own attempt at modern nationhood at the turn of the century and its unstable subjugation in the early years of Japanese colonialism. To make matters worse, rumors surrounded the cause of his death. The sudden death of the king was attributed to hemorrhage or heart attack, but a theory of death by poisoning loomed large, which became a catalyst for the March First Movement. This mass protest movement was orchestrated to take place on March 1, 1919, two days before the state funeral (인산일) of Kojong. The streets of Seoul were filled with the protesters and the police suppressing the movement with military force. In the midst of chaos and violence, the funeral of Kojong took place on March 3 as tens of thousands of people flocked to watch the late king’s journey to his grave outside the East Gate.

The significance of the March First Movement is manifold, and Kojong was at the center of this display of resistance to colonial oppression by the crowd who gathered with a shared sense of national sovereignty. The death of Kojong is significant in this regard. It marks at a moment when the perishing of the monarch was eclipsed by the birth of a modern public. It was not simply an opposition to Japanese colonialism or an articulation of the Korean nation. The king was at the center of modern nationalism, and his memory and history were being resurrected on the streets of Seoul with people shouting “Long live Korea’s independence.” The performativity of the funeral was very much tied to the performativity of the protest. For this reason, the spread of the movement would not have been possible without the spectacular occasion of the king’s bier passing through the heart of the city for many people to witness.

Considering how Kojong’s funeral was being co-opted by a nationalist agenda for Korea’s independence, it begs a question as to why the colonial government planned the funeral as a state funeral and went ahead with it in such a public way only a few days after the outbreak of the March First Movement. Visibility is the point in question. Takahishi Fujitani has done an influential study on the construction of modern Japanese nation through public imperial peasantry during the early Meiji period.\(^1\) In this, he argued that imperial rituals and ceremonies, including the funeral of the emperor, in Meiji Japan were re-invented according to Western models, and the emperor was re-envisioned as a visible modern monarch whose visual domination of the landscape in imperial and military progresses produced a sense of a disciplinary modern society. These official cultures of rites, symbols, and customs constituted what Fujitani called the folklore of the regime — mnemonic sites where materiality of signs was as important as verbal means. In the end, what Fujitani argued is the production of a shared sense of a national community and simultaneity.

This notion of public peasantry such as imperial progress and funeral procession cannot be easily applied to the dead king Kojong. It is not an understatement to say that the purpose of this funeral did not lie in reinforcing the king as the overseer of the nation or elevating him as a national symbol. Then, what else was in play to render him as a figure to be venerated but to check his power and relevance to

\(^1\) *Splendid Monarchy* (University of California Press, 2006).
the Korean nation? In order to probe these questions, this paper will look into visual representations of the funerary rites and procession in photographic mediums. In the colonial context, photography has been often discussed for its central role in the construction of imperial archives and colonial production of knowledge. Some of photographic records of the funeral do fall into these categories of imperial archiving, but this paper hopes to challenge the boundary of such discussion to answer aforementioned questions of how the colonial government dealt with the nationalist potential of the funeral. Instead of approaching photography in terms of the problems of archives, this paper hopes to explore how photographic images write history. The question is not how images represent a historical event, but rather has to do with how they produce a historical event and a notion of history. This is a pertinent question given the fact that the photographic records of the funeral existed in parallel with the age-old ritual performance, a visual medium in itself, and its own genre of recording called òigwe. òigwe deals with the realm of the ritual (the eternal), while photography deals with the realm of history (the secular). Likewise, the former exists in the realm of performance, and the latter in the realm of memory. This means that the funeral of Kojong as a rite and as an event were in tension with each other. By examining how these two aspects were constructed through different visual mediums, this paper hopes to show how the photographic representations of the funeral attempted at de-activating the nationalist potential of Kojong not through colonial archiving but rather through history writing.

2. The Rites and Its Signs

Rites and rituals occupied an important place in the Chosŏn dynasty as a means of governance equal to the laws. It propagated Neo-Confucian values through practice, and ensured the continuation of the ideological stability of the dynasty. It also had a role in visualizing the ideal principals of the dynasty through visual and material symbols. Its routes of communication were, therefore, multiple and multifaceted, all of which contributed to the production of specific practices as well as language of symbols, customs, and performances. Royal funerals were no exception in this regard, and exclusive rituals designated only to royal families involved prolonged duration and elaborate rituals. Royal funerals normally took place in three stages: The first phase immediately following the death of the person lasted until the corpse was prepared and placed in the mortuary hall. During this time, the succession matters were handled and the gravesite was prepared. The second phase involved the departure of the bier from the mortuary hall to the gravesite as well as the burial, and the third phase was a three-year long period of mourning at the ancestral shrine. Each phase of the royal funerals strictly observed the instructions detailed in the Supplementary Treaties on Funerary Rites 国朝喪禮補編국조상례보편. When the king died, a bureau called dogam 都監 was established and officials were selected. Under the direction of the prime minister, three branches of the bureau were established: kukjang dogma 國葬都監 that oversaw the entirety of the funerary rites, binjŏn dogma 殡殿都監 that managed the mortuary hall, dressing of the corpse, and funerary clothing, and sanrŭng dogam 山陵都監 that was responsible for the burial site. The funeral was proceeded in the sequence of the establishment of the dogam, preparation of the mortuary hall,
donning of the mourning garments for the chief mourner, departure of the coffin, lowering of the coffin, bringing back of the mortuary table to the palace, and finally disbanding of the dogam.

Kojong died on January 21, 1919 at the age of 67 in his residence at the Tŏksu Palace. His funeral was being prepared in accordance with the royal rites immediately after his death, but an edit was issued on January 27, stating the necessity of a state funeral for him. The edict said: “The funeral of the Great King Yi, recipient of the Supreme Order, shall be a state funeral.”² In this, he is referred to as the Great King Yi 李太王, a title given to him after the dethronement, instead of Kojong 高宗, his reign title, or the Emperor Kojong 高宗皇帝 as he was known since the foundation of the Taehan Empire in 1897. It is a term that connotes the demoted status of Kojong as a nominal king, devoid of any significance of the former political power from the Chosŏn dynasty or the Taehan Empire. More interestingly, he is referred to as a recipient of the Supreme Order 大勲位 (대훈위, taikun-i) a highest rank given in the imperial bureaucracy of Japan. The title of the Great King Yi hangs on a precarious balance between referring to him as the head of a state and subjugating him to the imperial order of Japan. This shows how Japanese colonial government negotiated the political potential of a king by affirming and negating his status at the same time.

With Japan’s intervention, the funeral was arranged by the Office of Funerary Rites in the Imperial Household Agency 宮内省 and in accordance with the Japanese imperial rites. Instead of the three branches of dogam mentioned above, three chugam -- őjangjugam 陵葬御監, binhonjŏnjugam 빈전혼진주감 墓殿魂殿御監, and sanrŭngjugam 산릉주감 山陵御監-- were established under the directives of the Imperial Household Agency. These offices were headed by Japanese officials with the exception of the Vice Chief of Funerary Rites Cho Tong-yun assisting the Chief of the Funerary Rites Ito Hirokuni. With this change, the mortuary hall 함녕전, where Kojong passed away, was redecorated in Japanese style, and a Japanese imperial funerary ritual houkokusai 奉告祭 was performed on February 9, 1919 with Japanese dignitaries in attendance. The part of the funeral that somewhat followed Chosŏn laws was the procession from the Tŏksu Palace to the Kungok Hongrŭng, the burial site in Namyangju of the Kyŏnggi Province. It was the most spectacular and public part of the funeral, taking place from the Taehan Gate of the Tŏksu Palace to the burial site via Chongno and the East Gate. While the procession followed the traditional route and kept some of Korean elements, it was heavily participated by Japanese officials including the head of State Official’s Committee 정무총감 Yamagata Ishiburo.³ Therefore, it had some modern and Japanese elements added such as Japanese naval vessels, army, military marching band, and transport by railway. After a modest ceremony 영결식 at

²Kim Eun, 대한제국 황제릉 소와당. 2010.

outside of the Eastern Gate, the bier entered the burial site. Only the last part of the procession from the ceremony site to the gravesite was observed according to Chosŏn laws.

In the end, the funeral of Kojong took place with Japan taking over the rights over rites from attires to rituals, and in much less that five-month period usually reserved for a royal funeral. The funeral in this hybrid form was ultimately a downgraded ritual as its name ᄄ챵 어장 suggests in place of ᄕxCEحفang 국장 dedicated to a monarch. It is not to say that this is the first time that changes occurred to a royal rite. In fact, the question regarding rites was an ongoing debate as Korea entered the modern era and struggled to redefine itself as a modern nation. Yi Uk’s study on the sacrificial rites 제례 in modern Korea shows that the Kabo Reform of 1894 was a turning point for many royal rituals. The Kabo Reform, according to Yi, excluded the branch of royal affairs from the state administrative branches and put it under the control of the Royal Household Agency 공내부. In doing so, it re-organized the governing structure between the king, State Council 의정부, and Six Ministries 육조 into a structure of the Royal Household Agency, State Council and Eight Ministries 팔아문, which functioned in essence along the divide between royal affairs and state affairs. Yi explains this as a measure that checked the king’s involvement in state affairs, as the state took the form of the modern bureaucracy. The Kabo reform also abolished several sacrificial rites, a measure that was restored by Kojong through the Kangmu Reform during the Taehan Empire, and retracted again by the protectorate government 통감부 in 1905.

In observing these fluctuating changes, Yi argues that during the period of 1894 and 1907, a complete eradiation of royal ritual is unseen partly because a denial of the deity was never part of the reform, but also because performance of rituals were effectively tied to the political role of the king. Therefore, even in its diminished role, rites still defined the royal family and their place in the state. This relationship between the king and rites would be a limited one, however, because a gradual separation between royal affairs and state affairs eventually weakened the importance of the rites on the national stage.

Similarly, the funeral of Kojong was handled as a royal affair, rather than as a national affair. This means that many elements of the rituals, intact or modified, were not supposed to yield powers venerating the king as a national figure, but demonstrate a royal tradition. The magnificent spectacle staged in front of thousands of spectators was not supposed to be an occasion of re-affirming and reproducing a national community through a kingly figure, dead or alive, but presented a complex set of signs that needed to be deciphered in terms of locating exactly where the kingly power lied and in what ways. In the end, the elaborate demonstration of spectacles in the funerary rites only confirmed the demoted status of Kojong through an awkward juxtaposition of the familiar and unfamiliar. The eventual

\footnote{이욱, “근대 국가의 모색과 국가의례의 변화: 1894-1908 년 국가 제사의 변화를 중심으로.” 정신문화연구, 제 27 권 제 2 호 (통권 95 호), 2004. 여름호.}

\footnote{See Christine Kim, “Politics and Pageantry in Protectorate Korea (1905–10): The Imperial Progresses of Sunjong,” The Journal of Asian Studies, 68.3 (2009).}
demise of Kojong’s status is well illustrated in the fate of the Tŏksu Palace after the funeral. The main residence of Kojong since he returned from the Russian Legation in 1897 was already under a great pressure by the new urban reform projects, as much of the area near the Taehan Gate had to be demolished. But after the funeral of Kojong, the palace was virtually emptied out as his ritual shrine 선원전 was moved to a new shrine 신선원전 at the Ch’angdŏk Palace. As the funeral structures were taken down in the Tŏksu Palace, Kojong’s daughters and concubines were also moved to the Ch’angdŏk Palace, and the ownership of the palace ground was divided. In this way, the end of Kojong’s funeral marked a drastic transformation of his residential palace, and the Ch’angdŏk Palace, which grew in function shortly after Kojong’s funeral, would also meet the same fate after Sunjong’s death in 1926.

2. Funeral as a Media Event

When the ritual performance mainly focused on re-writing the signs 기호 and symbolic significance of the royal funerary rites by delicately charting the way between the royal, national, and colonial/imperial, the visual records of the funeral tell a story of how they wrote different temporalities into the funerary rite. In the Confucian dynasty of Chosŏn, rites and rituals were important aspects of the moral universe, state ideology, and governance, and this is well illustrated in the hundreds of documents called The Records of Rites and Ceremonies 儀軌, that recorded important rites and ceremonies of the court. These events include royal life-cycle rituals as such as wedding and funeral, and other repeatedly occurring court events such as royal banquet, construction of a building, and reception of foreign dignitaries. Ŭīgwe chronicled in detail the processes of preparation, implementation, and conclusion of the event, such as the preparation and organization of administrative branches, people and resources involved, inventory of equipment, details of the budget, design and construction of architecture and equipment, and distribution of responsibility for the participants. Whenever there is a ritual or ceremony in the court, the bureau 토감 was established, and when 토감 was disbanded, a bureau for ŭīgwe was established for the publication of the rite. We can think of ŭīgwe as a comprehensive set of records 기록 for a rite that also included different genres of documents ranging from the royal orders, letters of request from the court officials, documents exchanged between bureaus and offices, figures of income and expenditure, plans for the articles and equipment, and seating charts and diagrams of the hierarchical orders for the participants. Therefore, many of ŭīgwe were highly visual in nature, and offer important sources for understanding the elaborate and extravagant rites of the Chosŏn court.

Typically, royal funerals yielded three ŭīgwe published by three 토감 mentioned above. The three ŭīgwe were: 『국장도감의궤(國葬都監儀軌)』, 『빈전도감의궤(殯殿都監儀軌)』, 『산릉도감의궤(山陵都監儀軌)』. Since no 토감 was established for Kojong’s funeral, 침관 were

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6 장필구, 전봉희, “고종 장례 기간 신선원전의 조성과 덕수궁, 창덕궁 궁역의 변화, 대한건축학회논문집, 제 29 권, 제 12 호, 2013 년 12 월
put in charge of publishing ŭigwe: 고종태황제어장주감의궤, 고종태황제빈혼주감의궤 and 고종태황제산릉주감의궤 (1919). Since the funerary rites themselves were altered quite a bit for Kojong, the content of the ŭigwe also differ from the previous ones and tend to lack in its rigor of detailed and meticulous record keeping. Nonetheless, these three ŭigwe contain a great deal of information as to the people involved, decision making processes, items in use, and details of the rituals. Some of the details are organized by type, but the process of funerary rituals and decision-making are organized chronologically, as these ŭigwe record daily logs of what took place. One major difference for Kojong’s ŭigwe is the lack of visual depiction of the funerary procession called panch’ado 반차도. The diagram of funerary procession was the most visually detailed past of the ŭigwe, a tradition kept until the ŭigwe of Queen Myŏngsŏng’s funeral (Fig.1). This absence is quite unusual given that other types of image do exist in these ŭigwe. In place of panch’ado, only diagrams of placement of procession appear with texts standing in for images. They give information as to who the participant was and where he was placed in the procession, but not the kind of information that can be easily transmitted through visual means such as the color and types of the clothing he was wearing. As many details of these ŭigwe were organized chronologically, the procession chart also creates a temporal experience of reading. ŭigwe is done in a book form, so each page of ŭigwe contains only a partial view of the procession. And as the reader turns the page, s/he would follow the procession from the beginning to the end. These fragmented views were put together only by the act of the reading, and by completing the book. Reading book is a linear experience, and through book reading, the procession is experienced to the reader as a moving image. A recent mural installation of the royal procession from Chŏngjo’s ŭigwe along the Choengyecheon Stream replicates this reading experience in a panoramic view of the procession. Here, a passerby can see the whole procession in an undisrupted sequence of images put together one after another. A viewing experience here would entail the viewer to move from one end of the image to the other, simulating a sense of moving images through the movement of the viewer. The spectator of the procession in actuality would be in a static position, so the time of the movement is determined by the procession itself. On the contrary, these visual renditions depend upon the spectator-reader to create an illusion of movement, either by physically moving from one end of the mural to the other, or by turning the pages of the book. Here, the temporal experience of book reading or walking is supposed to correspond to the temporal movement of the procession and simulate a time-motion. However, this does not mean that panch’ado created a real-time experience of proto-cinema. The background of the image is a blank space, and offers no contextual information as to when and where the ritual took place. Rather, the image-text without the context was designed to be applicable to all places and time and to be universal. In other words, the descriptions of the procession paintings/diagrams were intended to be more prescriptive. Although these visual records based on singular events in history, these rituals and ceremonies were repeatedly-occurring events. Therefore, the purpose of recording was to serve as a reference for the posterity. This notion of
repeatability collapses the temporal boundary between the past and the future, as the ritual serving as a model renders itself as an eternal event however paradoxical the term may sound.

Figure 1. The ŭigwe of the State Funeral of Queen Myŏngsŏng

In addition to three volumes of ŭigwe, Kojong’s funeral is recorded in other mediums, most notably in photography. There are journalistic photographs published in newspapers, and some photos were published in collectable albums. Maeil sinbo, the Korean-language official newspaper of the Governor General of Korea, featured articles almost daily updating the progress of the funeral preparation. The kind of detailed information listed in ŭigwe such as the names of the personnel, budget figures, and items used did appear though not to the extent in which they appeared in great details in ŭigwe. They also reported the death of Kojong, the decision to have a state funeral, administrative branches responsible for the funeral preparation, progresses of their business, and preparation of the funeral sites. The kind of information that Maeil sinbo shows in great detail is the decisions making process. In terms of the budget, the initial budget set out for the funeral was 60,000 won, but the decision to have a state funeral by the colonial government raised the budget to 100,000 won. In the end, the total expense climbed up to 250,000 won, and the articles published throughout February announced where the money was being spent by different categories. Another point of contention reported in Maeil sinbo was the choice of funerary attire. It was an important element in deciding whether the funeral was going to be in Korean or Japanese style, and it reported that most participants were to wear Japanese military uniform, but the route from Hunryŏnwŏn to the Hongrŭng was to allow Korean style items and clothes. Deciding the burial site was also not easy. Kungok Hongrŭng was the burial site for Queen Myŏngsŏng, and Kojong prepared his burial site there while he was alive, but a potential of the Ch’ŏngryangri grave was also raised. All these paint a picture of different actors involved in contested decision-making processes, as daily movement and progresses add a sense of contingency to otherwise a

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8 Maeil sinbo, January 24 and 26, 1919.  
9 Maeil sinbo, February 3, 1919.  
10 Maeil sinbo, March 2, 1919.
routine affair for the monarchy. The kind of prescriptive element presented in ŭigwe in this way gained a journalistic dimension.

However, visually the newspaper made an interesting editorial choice of only publishing photographs of the officials involved. There were photographs of the office of King Yi’s state funeral 이태황국장사무소 published on February 3, and the officials involved in the houkokusai ritual on February 10 including the famous photo of Cho Tong-yŏn following Ito Hirokuni in Japanese attire. The sense of contingency subsided a bit with the visually imposing presence of the authorities involved, or rather, the photographs published alongside the painstaking details of funeral preparation had an effect of reverting the power back to the colonial government instead of the unfolding events. One photograph that did not feature Japanese officials or offices was the photo of Hunryŏnŏn on February 4. In this, an empty ground of the training field is spread behind a figure who is wearing a hanbok and a straw hat (Fig. 1). This figure is unidentified and his face is obscured from the shade from the hat. Moreover, Instead of looking at the field, which could have conveyed a surveyor’s perspective, the person in this photograph awkwardly turned toward the camera, making himself as the object to be viewed with his returning gaze obscured in the undistinguishable face. Likewise, the issue of January 21, 1920, on the first anniversary of Kojong’s death, reported the news of Sunjong paying the visit to the mortuary hall in Korean funerary garment. The article is the first article to be appeared on the top right column, the most important news of the day, and is titled as “In preparation of Great King Yi’s first anniversary of death: The king visits in Korean funerary garment, and the queen wails at the Changdŏk Palace 고이태왕전하일년제준비.

왕전하께서 조선식 제복으로, 비전하께서 창덕궁에서 국배.” However, a photo of either of the king or the queen is conspicuously missing. Instead, it published a photograph of Yi Kŭn-sang who used to serve as an Imperial Household Agency official on the left in well-decorated military uniform as his health was deteriorating. Alongside, an even bigger news told visually was a fire in Myŏngdong as two oversized photographs showed a burnt building and spectators. What was achieved by the newspaper coverage of the funeral was a sense of real-time reporting. Its claim of objectivity was only a matter of claim, however, because photographic images told a different reality that authorized the colonial government and de-authorized Korean participants involved.
An extensive coverage of the funeral procession appeared in the *Mael sinbo* coverage on March 3, 1919. The headline included a lengthy song of lamentation: “Ah, the third day of March. This is a day filled with grief, an inconsolable grief. The funeral of Great King Yi took place today. A state funeral was bestowed by the emperor; the whole country showed respect; and all households lowered the flag to half-staff. On the path of the passing bier, all the people wept. How sorrowful. How sorrowful. 아, 삼월삼일이여 한없이 슬픔 날은 야속히다하라 바라와왕전하의 국장식은 이날로써 거행되도다. 터제가 진도하사 특별히 국장의례를 나서시고 전국이 예도를 표하야 조기는 만호에 걸리도다. 땅여의 지나가시는 길에 단일이 귀휘를 일코 백성이 오열하는곳에 초목인들안이 슬흐려오. 아 – 이 슬픔을 염지하라 이 슬픔을 염지하라.” An extensive coverage of the funeral procession appeared in the *Mael sinbo* coverage on March 3, 1919. The headline included a lengthy song of lamentation: “Ah, the third day of March. This is a day filled with grief, an inconsolable grief. The funeral of Great King Yi took place today. A state funeral was bestowed by the emperor; the whole country showed respect; and all households lowered the flag to half-staff. On the path of the passing bier, all the people wept. How sorrowful. How sorrowful. 아, 삼월삼일이여 한없이 슬픔 날은 야속히다하라 바라와왕전하의 국장식은 이날로써 거행되도다. 터제가 진도하사 특별히 국장의례를 나서시고 전국이 예도를 표하야 조기는 만호에 걸리도다. 땅여의 지나가시는 길에 단일이 귀휘를 일코 백성이 오열하는곳에 초목인들안이 슬흐려오. 아 – 이 슬픔을 염지하라 이 슬픔을 염지하라.”

This article tells a chronological account of how the day’s event unfolded. It starts from describing the preparation of the officials inside the palace. Then at eight o’clock sharp in the morning, the procession began, which was described as the first state funeral that people have witnessed in its full glory accompanied by military marching band and flag holders. The mood of the funerary procession is described as solemn, and the articles goes on to detail the people involved, in what order, and what clothes they wore. In a separate section, it describes the crowd, also hour by hour from early morning to the end of the day. The crowd who have gathered from 4 o’clock in the morning on the streets of Chongno and near and outside of the East Gate were estimated to be tens of thousand, and the article reports that “the funeral processed as if water flowed in the midst of moving crowd.”

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12 Ibid.
The hour-by-hour narrative of the article offers a visually evocative experience of watching the procession passing by in front of the one’s eyes or better yet, of watching a film. Two photographs were published with the article. One is the view of the procession emerging out of the Taehan Gate, and the other is the scene of the bier entering the funeral ceremony site. The former shows a movement from left to right with the participants seen in frontal views. As the front rows appear in bigger sizes than the back rows, it creates a sense of forward movement. The latter is shown in the same direction, but taken from the back of the procession, it shows the front row smaller and farther away from the camera, as if they were disappearing in the horizon. Cinema would have been a perfect medium to capture these moving processions in moving images. In fact, the colonial government produced a film titled *A Panoramic View of Kojong’s Funeral* 고종인산전경 in 1919. Not coincidently, the other film that was made in the same year was *A Panoramic View of the City of Kyŏngsŏng* 경성시가지전경, both of which do not survive today. The *Maeil sinbo* article wove the events of the day in the continuum of narrative (and images), and in essence replicated a visual experience of the cinematic – one that collapses the motion-movement of the event and the time-movement of the narrative.

This narrative temporality of cinema contrasts sharply with the temporality of ūigae. Although reading ūigae also created a sense of motion-movement, the fact that it did not simply function as a report but as an instruction for the future rendered the event as something eternal. In other words, the funeral was a ritual, which collapsed the past and the future in the ritual performance of the present, and that transcendence of the temporal boundary made the subject of the ritual sacred. On the contrary, these journalistic and cinematic narratives rendered the funeral as a singular event in the freeze frame of the photography and in the panoramic narrative of cinema. In this way, the eternality of history achieved by
ritual was turned into a representable reality. In his discussion of historical films, Jean Baudrillard remarked on history and cinema as: “Because cinema itself contributed to the disappearance of history, and to the advent of the archive. Photography and cinema contributed in large part to the secularization of history, to fixing it in its visible, "objective" form at the expense of the myths that once traversed it. Today cinema can place all its talent, all its technology in the service of reanimating what it itself contributed to liquidating. It only resurrects ghosts, and it itself is lost therein.” The paradox of historical film that Baudrillard discusses can lend an interesting insight into reading these journalistic photographs. The camera-reality can claim objectivity and authenticity of the event, but only after it has annihilated its myth. And they animate the chimerical desire to establish the continuum of physical existence as we saw in the cinematic presentation of images and narratives. As mythology collapses in the name of fantasy-reality, repeatability gives a way to singularity, the sacred to the secular, and eternity to presence.

3. History as Collection

What photography achieved in depicting the funeral as a media event was the de-sacrilization of the ritual by turning it into an event in the linear continuum of history. History here is presented in a secularized form, as its relevance only mattered in the real-time of the present. Photography, however, also produces memory. Therefore, in place of the lost sense of eternity by the journalistic rendition of singularity, a new sense of permanence was created. Of particular interest in this regard is a photo album called The Tŏksu State Funeral Photo Album published by the Keijo Newspaper Company in 1919. For days, Maeil sinbo ran advertisement for the pre-order of this photo album, which was to be published as a limited edition of 2,000 copies. It was a commemorative album published in the memory of a king who has reigned for sixty-eight turbulent years. The photo album, it says, is one way to remember (ch’emo) his talent, recollect (hoesang) his life, and commemorate (kinnymŏn) the state funeral. It is said to have edited the king’s portraits from different years, photographs of commemorative objects and places, and photographs about his death to the entire funeral into an album. The album itself was beautifully adorned with a silk cover, and printed in archival quality thick, ivory papers. It was sold at a pricey but not so inaccessible price of around 3 won, with special discount reserved for the limited time pre-orders.

The purpose of the album was to depict the whole panoply of experience that Kojong had during his lifetime along with the funeral, so editing became an important feature of compiling this photo album. It begins with various portraits of Kojong and his family. In each portrait, Kojong is seen in different attires. The very first portrait has him sitting on a chair in western attire with a painting of the traditional Korean landscape in the backdrop. The second portrait is a family photo of the Yi royal family,

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14 See for example, see Maeil sinbo, March 10, 1919
all member seated in a row in traditional attire. The third is a collage of his portraits in different Western, traditional, and military attire, accompanied by a photograph of Kojong on a palanquin wearing a black cape. Inserted between these photographs are photographs of Kojong’s own calligraphy, followed by the photos of different building of the Tŏksu Palace. This was to provide a biographical sketch of the king — what he looked like, who his family was, what he enjoyed, and where he lived. The presentation of his life is followed by photographs about his death and the funeral in the latter two-third of the album.

The ways in which the latter portion of the album is presented in comparison to the first part introducing Kojong was is worth noting. The event of his death is depicted through the special editions of Maeil sinbo announcing his death. The first one (Fig. 3) is from January 21, and reports that Kojong has fallen critically ill. It says that Kojong seemed in a good condition when the doctor visited at 11 pm the night before, but he suddenly fell ill at 1:45 am, prompting Sunjong to come into the palace along with two doctors to examine him. The second one (Fig. 4) is from January 22, announcing the death of Kojong and the time of his death as 6 am. Both of the newspaper inserts are accompanied by photographs. The former has a photograph of a wine wrapped in a package sent by the Japanese emperor, and the other a photograph of the crowd gathered in front of the Taehan Gate upon hearing the news. On one level, these images offer a documentary account of the funeral through the realism of photography and journalism, and emphasize the present-ness of the event. As discussed, the dates and time of the events, as well as the dates of newspaper publication, are important in making it a singular event — real and historical. It is also interesting in light of how his life in the earlier section was presented from an ahistorical perspective. According to the advertisement in Maeil sinbo above, the purpose of the album was to cover all aspects of his turbulent life, but the portraits, calligraphy and photos of the palace give a very static view of Kojong’s lifetime which lacks a sense of realism or immediacy of the ways in which his death is depicted. One would assume that life would be represented in a more dynamic way than death, but it seems to be quite contrary because the main event that the photo album is devoted to is not his life, but his death.

On another level, the realism created by photography and journalism seems to be mediated by the collage of images. The photograph accompanying the death announcement of Kojong depicts the crowd gathered in front of the Tŏksu Palace, so we can surmise that the photograph was taken after the fact that the newspaper was reporting as well as the reporting itself. But placed on the same page of the album, the moment of crowd gathering is described as the reaction to the death of Kojong, and as a simultaneous event to the news, when in fact they had a cause and effect relationship. By reporting two non-synchronous events side by side, the photo album is telling the story from a retrospective perspective of knowing what took place before and after the announcement of his death. In other words, while the newspaper inserts create a sense of real-time experience, it was done through an editorial intervention of an omniscient perspective. On the other hand, the image of the gift sent by the Japanese emperor creates a complex narrative to the ailing king’s condition reported in the newspaper. The suddenness of his death was what stirred up the rumor of his death by poisoning, a suspicion appearing even in an account by Yun.
Ch’i-ho’s daughter. Instead of muddling on the details of the circumstances surrounding his death, this collage tells a story of the benevolent act by the Japanese emperor, possibly exempting Japan from any accountability directed at them. The readers were supposed de-code this image accordingly. First, the content of the box is indicated on the wrapping in text, but the wine was not supposed to be interpreted as a drink but as a gift carefully wrapped and signaling the benevolence of the emperor. It was indeed read this way so that in the reprinted version of *The Photo Album of the State Funeral of Emperor Kojong of the Taehan Empire* of 1975, the photo of the wine package was replaced by a photo of Sunjong visiting the palace in the military uniform when the rest of the album appeared as it did in the *The Tōksu State Funeral Photo Album*.\(^\text{15}\)

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\(^{15}\) 대한제국고종황제국장화첩 (지문객, 1975)
This raises a question about what the purpose behind publishing this album was. Some clues could be found in the ways in which procession photographs are presented. The album contains a great number of photographs on the ceremonies, places where they occurred, officials involved, different clothing and items used in the ceremonies and procession, and the crowd gathered in front of the Taehan Gate and on the path of the procession. Striking is the ways in which the procession is photographed. In all procession photos, as seen in the bier passing through the crowd (Fig. 6), the camera is positioned on an elevated plain, allowing a wide shot and a panoramic view of the procession. This is a view of the surveyor—the possessor of the knowledge and authority. When many visual representations of imperial progresses in Japan replicated the overseeing and inspecting gaze of the emperor, the bier of Kojong captured from this perspective cedes that power to the camera eye of the invisible photographer. This contrasts with the ways in which some other photos were taken of the funerary procession. For instance, Albert W. Taylor, a UPA reporter residing in Seoul at that time, was by the Keijo Nippo building when the bier was leaving the Tŏksu Palace at 8 am. This is the same moment depicted in the Tŏksu album photograph, but Taylor’s photograph was taken as he was standing behind the military guards, so we see an almost voyeuristic view of someone who did not have a privileged position of an unobstructed view. (Fig. 7-1) Similarly, in a photograph of the bier passing, the crowd appears in the foreground because the photographer was positioned behind them. (Fig.7-2). At times, Taylor turned his attention to the crowd and photographed different views of them. Some showed the crowd on the side of the road looking at the jukannya passing, gathered on the side of the building, or watching from the balcony of a building. The crowd is an important aspect of the funeral that was considerably lacking in the Tŏksu album. The Tŏksu album made a deliberate effort to depict the crowd as the mourners, not as spectators. It is because mourners participate in the meaning making and story telling of the photography. Spectators are simply there.

Taylor’s photographs situated the photographer squarely in the moment of the event, neither privileged nor all knowing, but simply witnessing it as it unfolds. Therefore, his photographs delivered a sense of motion and captured unorchestrated moments. In one instance, we see one of the bier carriers in the center of the photograph slightly unbalance because he is wiping sweat off of his face. (Fig.7-3) This sense of movement is heightened by the linear lines marking the processional path by the streetcar positioned parallel to the bier, the electricity posts, and the wires. Movement connotes transience of time and a moment that was captured. Siegried Kracauer talked about the resemblance between camera-reality and historical reality as that of “partly patterned, partly amorphous—a consequence, in both cases, of the half-cooked state of our everyday world.” Contingency, randomness, and unpredictability are some key features of such photographs. “A genuine photograph precludes the notion of completeness. Its frame marks a provisional limit; its content points beyond that frame, referring to a multitude of real-life

phenomena which cannot possibly be encompassed in their entirety,” writes Kracauer. Albert Taylor’s photographs conveyed this sense of “being there” and endless possibilities of a real event. These were fragmented views of the event whose purpose was to testify to the actuality of the event rather than to explain what that event was.

Figure 6. 덕수궁국장화첩

17 Ibid. 59.
This contrasts sharply with the retrospective gaze of the Tŏksu photo album. Ultimately, the goal of the photo album was story telling. The sense of narrativity here is achieved by presenting individual images in one space to create relationships among them. This is only made possible by publishing the photos in a book form as a collection, and individual photographs gained meaning only in relation to each other. Chronology was an important criterion for this, as the ordering of his life, death, and funeral, as well as the sequential descriptions of the funeral processes, offer a sense of totality and unity. An image on its own had to create meaning in its own context or by its own referentiality. For instance, the cover of an Italian Newspaper, *La Domenica Del Corriere*, published an image of horse figurines used in the funerary procession. The description of the image appeared in the newspaper as follows: "Gojong (1852-1919) Emperor Gwangmu, twenty-sixth King of the Joseon dynasty and first Emperor of Korea (1897-1907); forced to abdicate by Japan on 21 January, 1907; the mourners accompanying the bier with the Emperor's coffin are dressed in robes of white hemp, the traditional dress for funerals in Korea; six horses accompany the Emperor on his last journey; made of wood and bamboo covered in paper and painted in white, grey and brown, four have saddles and two without to act as reserves; after the internment, the horses are burnt." It described how the horse figurines were used, what they were made of, and what happened to them. But also, it talked about the image as an icon that stood in for the event of Kojong’s death and abdication. Unlike this image, the photographs depicting the funerary procession in the *Tŏksu* album referred to each other, and created a narrative sequence in relation to each other. Therefore, the use of photograph in a photo album was not to simply report an event, but to narrate an event. That is to say, it constructed a reality rather than reflecting it. When this narrativity was achieved by putting individual photographs in sequential and narrative relation to each other through the medium of a book, narrativity became an interventional activity, not something inherent in an event.

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18 *La Domenica del Corriere* (June 1, 1919).
On the one hand, it points to the editorial intervention on the part of those who put together the photo album. Another photo album, *The Photo Album of Great King Yi’s Funeral*, in the care of the Seoul National University Museum shows less involved processes of editing. This album shows multiple images of the same scene and landscape, attesting to the fact that it was customary that multiple photographers contributed multiple photographs for a project like this. It shows different perspectives of the same scene and many repetitions. This illustrates that the Tŏksu album privileged the editorial voice at the expense of surplus images and contingency of the event. The multiplicity of the event that we see in this album disappears in the name of singularity and narrativity in the Tŏksu album. On the other hand, the readers of the photo album also participated in the narrative writing, but consuming the images according to the intension of the editor. Let us take a look at an one-page picture spread called “The Grand Ritual of the Great King Yi’s State Funeral 이태왕전하국장의성의.” This picture spread contains 14 photos randomly placed on the page. These individual photos depict the scenes of the crowd gathered at the burial site, the grave, various points of the funerary procession, a view of the Taehan Gate, the horse figurines, and the flag carriers. The readers upon looking at the images might recall a specific moment in the funeral rite and what they witnessed. But presented in one space as a collage, they prompt and urge the readers to connect the images and construct a narrative thread. It was a souvenir, and therefore was to function as a mnemonic device for the collector to tell how the event went and what it meant.
What is the role of narrative in producing memory? In a famous essay on photography, Siegfried Kracauer wrote how history is brought back through the medium of subjectivity. For him, photographs are only likenesses of objects, people, and landscapes that present a spatial continuum—a sum of what can be subtracted from the reality. For him, they fail to capture anything but a specific viewpoint at a specific time, and therefore cannot capture the truth in a way that memory does. Therefore, without the explanation of what it depicts, a photograph is void of meaning. The medium of subjective memory, however, can bridge the space continuum of photography and time continuum of history in order to piece together the fragments into a new meaningful order. The photography can only signify meaning in a narrative or through a narrative, resurrecting the dead and breathing meaning into images. This means that the narrativity presented in the Tôksu album and the narrativity born out of a reader’s engagement with the fragments of mnemonic images write a specific kind of history that transcends the space-time configuration. Photography and history (or historicism) concern themselves with separate matters: “Photography presents a spatial continuum; historicism seeks to provide the temporal continuum,” said Kracauer. “On the whole, advocates of such historicist thinking believe they can explain any phenomenon purely in terms of its genesis. That is, they believe in any case that they can grasp historical reality by reconstructing the course of events in their temporal succession without any gaps…According to historicism, the complete mirroring of an intertemporal sequence simultaneously contains the meaning of all that within that time.” Therefore, Kracauer argues that historicism is

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20 Ibid. 49
concerned with the photography of time. And narrativity presented in the memory object of the photo album is, like the chimerical desire of the cinema, what enlivens a historical writing.

5. Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I would like to compare three photographs of Kumgok Hongnûng, the burial site for Kojong. (9-1, 9-2, 9-3) The First photograph depicts the bier arriving at the gate. This perspectival view of the procession signals a moment of arrival in the long continuum of time staged by the funerary procession. The second photograph depicts a slightly more disordered view, in which the gate becomes a focal point in the midst of the dispersed crowd. The narrative content of this photograph is the place, not the moment of the event. But still both photographs situate the place of Hongnûng in the event of Kojong’s funeral. The third photograph is a little more confusing because it depicts a view of the gate with no indication of the funeral event or any other context. This contextual void offers no sense of event, but instead depicts a sense of timelessness in the stillness of the landscape. The only sense of time is hinted through the trees lined up toward the vanishing point in the horizon, so this frozen moment in that passing of the time shows Hongnûng in a recollecting, reminiscent, and reflective mood. The image of the first photograph as time-image reminds us of the ways in which real-time images of photo journalism de-sacralized and secularized the eternality of a rite. The second photograph of space-image, published in the Tôksu album, is void of its own temporal narrative. It was supposed to tell the end of an event, which inevitably requires a reflection on what the event meant. However, the participants scattered around the gate yield their narrative agency to the place of the grave, as the place becomes a symbol of death. The third image is memory image. It only harkened back to the past that is re-lived in the present as memory. History as an event, however singular it was, can resurrect its commemorative potential and make itself relevant to the present. Memory endows permanence to the image, and personalized history through nostalgia. The distance is created between the subject of memory and the subject of history. This might be the ways in which photography and its history writing and memory production attempted to check the collective possibility that we saw in the outbreak of the March First Movement. Thus, we can talk about the event and media-event of Kojong’s funeral as a strategy of history writing that disavows its mythology and replaces it with a singularity of an event and the history as memory. So if we are to answer the question of why Japan allowed the funeral to take place, we are re-directed to the question as to how images, historical reality, and history writing intersect with each other. The answer, therefore, would lie in the fact that the goal of the funeral and its image politics was not a denial of history, but writing of a specific kind of history.

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21 Ibid. 50
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