

Review of Kyung Moon Hwang's History of Korea

October 21, 2014

Chapters 8 and 9

Confucianism and the Family in the Early Chosǒn Dynasty

What kinds of taxes did people pay? (pp.73-74)

What was the impact of Confucianism on women? (p. 78)

The Great Invasions, 1592-1636

What role did factionalism play in Korea's response to the Japanese invasion of the 1590s? (pp. 82-83)

What role did factionalism play in the response to the Manchu invasions? (p .86)

How did Koreans react to the Manchu conquest of Ming China? (p. 87)

Chapter 10

Ideology, Family and Nationhood in the Mid-Chosǒn Period

Who were the Kisaeng? (p. 94)

What happened to Lady Chang? (pp. 90-91)

What does Hwang mean by the “hardening of the hereditary social hierarchy beginning in the seventeenth century”? (pp. 94-95)

What does Hwang mean by “secondary status groups”? Does that include *chungin*? (pp. 96-97)

Chapter 11

Intellectual Opening in the Late Eighteenth Century

There is a minor mistake on p. 101. Hong Taeyong argued that the world was round, contrary to the traditional East Asian assumption that it was square. And he said that the earth made once complete turn on its axis every day. However, he said nothing about the earth encircling a stationary sun.

Does Hwang think that Korea could have industrialized before Japan colonized it? Why does he say, on p. 104, that “Chosŏn Korea, despite some advances in productivity, was nowhere close to achieving the critical mass necessary to overturn the basic production modes”? Is he making the same point made in class that Korea did not have a large enough commercial activity to create the financial surplus necessary for industrialization?

What happened to the crown prince under King Yōngjo in 1762? (p. 106)?

Who is Tasan Ch'ōng Yagyong? (pp. 105-108)? Did he think morality or technology was more important for a good society?

(The book Hwang calls “Core Teachings for Shepherding the People” is available in English translation under the title “Admonitions on Governing the People.”

Chapter 12

Popular Culture in the Late Chosŏn Era

p.110. Another slight mistake. *The Tale of Hong Kiltong* is not a novel. At forty pages or so, it is not nearly long enough to be called a novel.

What examples of popular culture does Hwang cite? (Remember, popular culture can include fiction, certain types of paintings (depending on their subject), and certain types of performing arts.) (pp. 109-115)

Who does Hwang believe was most responsible for producing works of popular culture? (p. 115)

Chapter 13

Who was Ch'oe Cheu? (p. 121-122)

There is a slight mistake on p. 122. Hwang refers to “Tonghak theology.” While it is true Ch'oe proposed a new way for Koreans to think of God, theology was not their primary concern. Instead, their focus was on chanting and other rituals that Tonghak taught were the way to experience the dynamic energy (*ki*) that animated the universe and connected everything to everything else.

There is another mistake near the bottom of this page. It is true that thousands of Catholics were killed over the course of the 19th century, but only a few hundred were killed in 1801. Moreover, Hwang doesn't tell you that Catholics were killed not because they espoused social equality but because they put the laws of God ahead of the laws of their king when it came to using a spirit tablet for ancestor memorial services. Catholics challenged the ritual hegemony of the government, which claimed the authority to order them to use a spirit tablet in those rituals even in the privacy of their own homes. When Catholics, obeying orders from the Pope, refused to do so, they were killed.

What was the “uphold orthodoxy and reject heterodoxy” movement? (pp. 126-27). What did you learn in the lectures about Yi Hangno? Was he a nationalist (i.e., did he put the survival of the nation first) or was he more committed to the survival of Confucian culture than to the political entity called Chosǒn?

chapters 14 and 15

1894 A Fateful Year

What was the role of Yuan Shikai and the Qing in the 1880s? (pp.132-133)

What happened to slavery in Korea? (pp.135-36)

Why did the Kabo reform cabinet fall in 1896? (p. 137)

The Great Korean Empire

What is Social Darwinism? (p. 139)

Did Korea begin to modernize in the late 19th century? (pp.142-146)

Who was Sō Chaep'il (Philip Jaesohn)? (p. 147)

What was the Independence Club? (pp. 147-48)

Chapter 16

The Japanese Takeover 1904-18

Why did Chosǒn fall under Japanese control? What does Hwang think are the reasons? (pp.151-153) Does he give the same reasons I gave in the lectures?

Who was An Chunggǔn? What did he do? (pp.154--155)

What was the Ilchinhoe? (p. 159)

What explanation does Hwang give for the large numbers of Koreans who worked with the Japanese rather than resist them openly? (p. 160)

Chapters 17 and 18

The Long 1920s

What was the March 1 movement? (pp. 163-64) Does Hwang tell you protests against Japanese rule were so much more wide-spread than they had been in 1910?

What was the impact of the March 1 movement on the way the Japanese ruled Korea? (pp.164-65)

What was the impact of colonial rule on women? (pp.166-170)?

Nation, Culture, and Everyday Life in the Late Colonial Period

Did a modern Korean culture emerge under Japanese colonial rule? (pp.176-182)

What was the Korean Artists Proletarian Federation? (p.180)

chapter 19

Wartime Mobilization, 1938-1945.

Who was Yi Kwangsu? (pp. 183, 190-192)

What role did Manchuria play in the lives of Kim Il Sung and Park Chung Hee? (p.185)

Did Korea begin to industrialize under Japanese rule? (pp. 186-187)

In what ways did Japanese rule go more harsh after the mid-1930s? (pp.188-189)

Who was Kim Ku? (p. 193).

chapter 20

- We will explore 1945-50 on Thursday. When you read chapter 20, pay particular attention to
- Yǒ Unhyǒng, Syngman Rhee, Kim Ku, and Kim Ilsung
- the Korean People's Republic
- the discussion of trusteeship and of Cheju as well as the Yōsu-Sunch'ōn rebellion.
- Also ask yourself why Korea was split in two.