

The troubled 19th century

Sept. 25, 2014

Review

- Did any of the reform proposals we discussed on Tuesday sound very modern to you? Were they practical?
- Do you think there was such a thing as a “Sirhak school” (Practical Learning School)?
- Do you see “sprouts of capitalism” in 18th century Korea?
- Was Korea on the verge of modernization in the 19th century?

Discovering Korea

- A new turn toward greater interest in things Korean:
- Painters: Chŏng Sŏn, Kim Hongdo, and Shin Yunbok.
- Korean-language poetry: Sijo
- Fiction with a Korean setting: Hong Kildong chŏn
- New forms of Korean entertainment: P'ansori and mask dance-drama
- And a new interest in Korean history.

A sijo of drink

- Yesterday I was dead drunk
and today it's wine again.

Was I sober the day before yesterday?
The day before that I cannot recall.

Tomorrow I have asked a friend to West Lake;
Shall I be sober, perhaps?

A Sijo of love

- *I will break the back of this long, midwinter night,
Folding it double, cold beneath my spring quilt,
That I may draw out the night, should my love return.*

Social Tension

- Problems (corruption?) in the tax system, especially the ever-normal granary
- unequal land ownership
- blurring of class distinctions
- How much of this is new to the 19th century?
- unrest: Hong Kyōngnae rebellion of 1811 and the Chínju uprising of 1862

In-law government

- Sunjo-1800-1834 king at age 10
 - Andong Kim
- Hönjong 1834-1849 king at age 8
 - P'ungyang Cho
- Ch'öljong 1849-1863 king at 18 -Andong Kim
- Kojong 1864-1907 king at 11
- His dad, the Taewön'gun, is in control from 1864 to 1873

The Taewŏn'gun

- 🔊 Why did he close most Confucian academies?
- 🔊 Why did he rebuild Kyŏngbok Palace?
- 🔊 Why did he change the grain-loan system?
- 🔊 Why did he mint 100-weight coins?
- 🔊 What problems did Kang Wi think Korea faced? (Sources, pp.213-216)
- 🔊 Did Pak Chehyŏng like the Taewŏn'gun's policies? (Sources, pp. 216-220)

Korean Identity

- Did the average Korean think of him- or herself as a member of the Korean national community?
- What is nationalism?
- the country is not one family's personal property, the people identify their interests with their nation's interest, and the survival of the nation politically in a community of nations is more important than cultural preservation.

Unwelcome visitors

- What is happening in China and Japan at this time?
- Western ships survey waters around Korea
- 1866 French attack Kanghwa Island
The General Sherman sails inland near P'yöngyang
- 1868, Oppert, and the attack on a royal tomb
- 1871 The US attacks Kanghwa Island.

responding to cultural challenges

- ◆ Nativistic: resist change by asserting the continued vitality of traditional beliefs and values and clinging to traditional institutions
- ◆ Progressive: adopt new institutions and even new beliefs and values even if that leads to a drastic alteration in traditional institutions and requires abandoning traditional beliefs and values.
- ◆ Sometimes nationalism and modernization can pull in contradictory directions.

The Rise of Tonghak

- ◆ Why did Ch'oe Cheu call his teachings "Eastern Learning"? (Sources, pp. 232-33)
- ◆ What was his incantation? Ultimate Energy being all around me, I pray that I feel that Energy within me here and now. Recognizing that God is within me, I will be transformed. Constantly aware of that divine presence within, I will become attuned to all that is going on around me."
- ◆ Why was Ch'oe Cheu executed?

Tonghak Underground

- ◆ What was the Tonghak concept of God? Sangje, Ch'ŏnju, and Hanullim—different names for God in Tonghak
- ◆ What is Kaepyŏk? A “Great Transformation” in which both the material and the spiritual worlds are totally changed for the better.
- ◆ What did Ch'oe Sihyŏng contribute to Tonghak? He created a strong religious organization.

The Japanese enter Korea

- ◆ 1868 Meiji Restoration begins Japan's modernization.
- ◆ 1871 Feudal domains, including Tsushima, are brought under the direct control of the central government.
- ◆ 1872 Japanese steamship sails to Korea demanding a change in relations.
- ◆ 1875 Japanese ship is fired on off the coast near Seoul
- ◆ 1876 Korea signs the Kanghwa Treaty with Japan.
Korea's first unequal treaty

Korea Begins to Modernize

- ◆ 1882 rebellion of regular army against the special treatment for a new Japanese-trained special unit of Korean army.
- ◆ Chinese troops arrive, take the Taewŏn'gun away, and try to take charge of Korea's modernization. Yuan Shikai is in charge.
- ◆ 1884 Korean progressives (The Enlightenment Party) seize the government in a coup, but fall after 2 days. Why did they fail?
- ◆ What did Kim Okkyun and Park Yŏnghyo think Korea needed to do?

What happened after the failure of the 1884 coup?

- Yuan Shikai controlled the Korean court
- The British seized Kömundo island for 2 years
- the Progressive cause was set back for ten years
- Yet some modernization projects continued:
- Missionaries opened schools in Seoul
- China established a modern customs service, and a telegraph line (all under Chinese control).
- Korea had two Western "foreign ministers"