

Korea, China, Japan
and
The Drive to Create
A Modern Korea

Sept. 30, 2014.

Review

- Did anything you heard about the Taewŏn'gun in the last lecture surprise you?
- Did the definition of nationalism change your mind about the existence of nationalism in pre-modern Korea?
- Did anything else in the last lecture surprise you or strike you as particularly significant?
- What are some distinctive features of Korea's culture?

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 (later)
- ◆ 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 solid religious organization.
- ◆ Note: Tonghak was primarily a religion, not a political movement.

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"

Responses to Modernization

- Nationalism -a determination to keep the government in Korean hands at all costs
- Culturalism (nativistic)—the determination to preserve Confucian values even at the cost of national sovereignty
- Modernization first (Progressive) —whatever will improve the lives of the people even if national independence is lost.

Confucian Morality instead of Independence

- Yi Hangno: “The Westerners’ causing injury to morality is to be worried about the most. Between heaven and earth there still remains a line of yang-element in our Eastern Land [Korea]. If this were to be destroyed, how in the world could the Heavenly Mind suffer this? ...The being or not being of a nation is rather a matter of secondary importance.” (Translated by Chung Chai-sik from Hwasŏjip)

Public welfare instead of independence

- Yun Ch'ihō: “To me the question of Korean independence is of secondary importance. With a government like the present one independence will bring no relief to the nation. On the other hand with a better government—a government that will take patriotic and sympathetic interest in the welfare of the people—even dependence is no real calamity”
Translated by Vipin Chandra from Yun Ch'ihō's diary, 1889.