Introduction

Examining the influence of Japanese publications on Korean readers in the last decades of the 19th century provides us with numerous insights into both nations’ experiences of struggling to come to terms with Western thought as a hegemonic force. For example, Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901) was a leading Japanese scholar, writer, and educator who eagerly introduced Western thought to Japan during the late 19th century, and this new knowledge contributed to establishing Westernized Meiji society. Among Fukuzawa’s books, *Gakumon no susume* (An encouragement of learning), published in 1872, persuaded youth to embrace Western learning, and became a best seller in both Japan and Korea.¹ Many Korean writers cited the following paragraph in their writings: “People are not born exalted or base, rich or poor. It is simply that those who work hard at their studies and learn much become exalted and rich, while those who are ignorant become base and poor.”² In the late-19th century Korea was a hierarchical society; thus, new Korean elites, who came from the lower classes, regarded this message as good news.

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Just as Japanese elites received concepts of modernity that originated in the West through translation, new Korean elites also used the translation of Japanese books as a framework within which to criticize traditional Korean conventions.

However, while translation may be one kind of communication among different languages, it is by no means a neutral or mutual process. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the translation of Western books had been a unidirectional process in the East. In particular, translation was a decisive source through which Western thought was introduced into China, Japan, and Korea. Through the process of translation, Western thought and concepts of modernity that originated in the West could be adapted and used to construct a sense of self identity in the East using terms initially dictated by others (those in the West). In other words, the translation of Western books had been a key way in which concepts of modernity and nationalism were established in East Asia. Key Western terms such as the Enlightenment, Industrialism, and Capitalism were important external influences in establishing Asia’s modernity. Lydia Liu calls this process a “translated modernity.” According to Liu, the notion of translated modernity is “useful because it allows me to identify and interpret those contingent moments and processes that are reducible neither to foreign impact nor to the self-explanatory logic of the indigenous tradition.” The historical process of modernization was uneven and different among East Asian countries. East Asia’s translators and readers continuously negotiated, contested, and recreated their modernity using Western modernity as their initial framework, and it is through an examination of this process of translation that we can begin to imagine how “translated modernity” was experienced in the East.

Scholars Lydia Liu and Douglas Howland have both provided us with works detailing the translation of Western thought in East Asia. Respectively, these authors focus on the process of translation and the introduction or negotiation of new Western concepts in China and in Japan. However, the translation of Western concepts of modernity in Korea was more complicated than in either the Chinese or Japanese
situations, because Korea experienced the introduction of Western thought and the extensive translation of both Western and Japanese works while simultaneously experiencing both a colonial modernity and an anti-colonial nationalism. Because Korea was colonized by Japan in 1910, and because the threat of colonization existed in the decades prior to this, Korea’s reception of translations of Western ideas was mainly mediated by the colonizer, Japan. Therefore, unlike both Japan and China’s translated modernity, it can be argued that Korea experienced a multiply-translated modernity, which originated from the relationships between the West and the East, the colonizer (Japan) and the colonized (Korea), and the process of translation and re-translation.

Among Western translations in the latter half of the 19th century and early 20th century, I will focus here on Samuel Smiles’ (1812-1904) Self-Help, initially published in 1859. Self-Help was received with considerable favor in England and translated in various forms in the West. It was also translated by Chinese, Japanese, and Korean translators respectively. In this article, I will closely examine both the initial Japanese translation, Nakamura Keiú’s (1832-1891) Saikoku risshi hen (The book on Western righteous determination), published in 1871, and the Korean version, Ch’oe Namsŏn’s (Choe Namseon) (1890-1956) Chajoron (Jajoron; Essay on self-reliance), published in 1918, as a means of accessing some of the issues raised by the experience of what I am arguing can be called a multiply-translated modernity. In the Japanese translation of Self-Help, Earl Kinmonth scrutinizes the Japanese translator and his aims, and argues that in Japan Self-Help “had a greater influence over young men in the early [1870s] than other books of the day.” Kinmonth also focuses on the main Japanese readers, who were members of the samurai class, and asserts that that Japanese version “was even more of an ethical treatise than was Self-Help.” Although his concerns here are mainly focused on the society of early Meiji Japan, they serve as a relevant framework by which to examine the Korean translation. There are major differences which emerge not only between the original and each translation, but also which emerge due to the different times and
circumstances under which each translation was published, and the fact that the Korean translation used the Japanese translation rather than the original English text as its source. The Korean version (*Chajoron*) was published in 1918 and was a secondhand translation of the Japanese translation. Comparing these two translations of *Self-Help* helps us to understand the characteristics of *multiply-translated modernity* in Korea.

In general, I have approached this theme with an attempt to answer the following questions: what kinds of books were translated; who was the translator; what was the purpose of the translation; how did they translate; and what was the effect of these translated books? Through *Self-Help* and its translations, I will focus on translators, readers, and the effects of translation. First, the intentions of the Korean translator were different from those of the Japanese translator. Second, Korean readers and what they wanted to read about in the 1910s were different from those of the Japanese readers of *Saikoku risshi hen* when it was originally published in Japan in the 1870s. In this article, I will examine the Korean readership of the translation of *Self Help*, a younger generation of Koreans, and how they were different from the older generation in the 1910s. Also, I will focus on the contents of this book, on the manufacturers, scientists, and engineers highlighted therein, whom Ch’oe calls “modern heroes” and whose achievements he strove to disseminate to colonized Koreans. I will argue that issues of translation overlap with the different characteristics of nationalism and modernity in both Japan and Korea, and that a close examination of *Self-Help* reveals how radically the objectives of translators can differ even when the text with which they are working is ostensibly the same.

**Self-Help and the Role of the Translator**

After the turn of the century, both China and Japan eagerly embraced translations of Western knowledge as a means of building greater national power. Translators believed that the more they introduced Western
practical learning such as military structure, natural science, and medicine, the more they were aiding their nations on a quest to hold onto power in East Asia. Alexis Dudden calls this situation “the connection between words and power.” Dudden’s analysis reveals how creating new terminology also reflected the relationship between words and power in the international arena. Japan’s translation of international laws had historically been based on China’s, but after the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), many kinds of Japanese translations were re-introduced to China, and Japan instead began basing its translations of international law on English source materials, thus deliberately signaling a shift in its relationship with China and in both nations’ relative positions in the face of international law. Thus, we see here how even the innocuous-seeming act of choosing a source language among several possible options came to be fraught with political meaning. During the late 19th century, Japanese translators chose different texts ranging from Denmark to England, but tended to focus on those from the West for political purposes. For example, Fukuzawa Yukichi confessed the reason why he had started learning English instead of Dutch in 1859:

I had been striving with all my powers for many years to learn the Dutch language. And now when I had reason to believe myself one of the best in the country, I found that I could not even read the signs of merchants who had come to trade with us from foreign lands. . . . Those signs must have been either in English or in French—probably English, for I had had inklings that English was the most widely used language. . . . As certain as day, English was to be the most useful language of the future. I realized that a man would have to be able to read and converse in English to be recognized as a scholar in Western subjects in the coming time. In my disappointment my spirit was low, but I knew that it was not the time to be sitting still.10

Five years after the opening of the ports, Fukuzawa decided to learn English because of its power and usefulness. Japan’s translations of
Western knowledge ranged from military technology to scientific technology like chemistry required for gunpowder and the fiber industry, and to the international laws, which delineated the interactions between foreign countries. In addition, the Japanese eagerly delved into Western histories and geographies for the purpose of information. The final use of translation was the introduction of Western literature and art. One of the translators of these Western books was Nakamura Keiu. He studied in England from 1866 to 1868, translated not only *Self-Help*, but also John Stuart Mill’s *On Liberty* into Japanese in 1872, Samuel Smiles’ *Character* in 1871, and George Gustavus Zerffi’s *The Science of History* in 1879. In the case of Korea, after the Sino-Japanese War and Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), the Chinese lost their cultural hegemony on translation and re-imported Japanese translations of books. Korea also primarily imported Western books via Japan from 1905.

Among the Japanese translated books of Western thought re-translated into Korean, one of the most popular books was *Self-Help*. Japan’s translated version was also used as the text for the Korean version. According to Briggs, who wrote an introduction to *Self-Help*, Samuel Smiles’ *Self-Help* is “a skillful blend of precept and anecdote, the references being drawn from art and music as well as from industry and engineering, from the aristocracy as well as from the middle class and the ranks of the skilled artisans.” This book was received with considerable favor and translated in various forms in the world. Now we will examine the purpose and intention of the author and of both the Korean and Japanese translators of *Self-Help*.

The social status of *Self-Help*’s author and his book’s translators were somewhat different. Smiles was born at Haddington, in southern Scotland, in 1812, and was the son of a paper maker and general merchant. Nakamura, the Japanese translator of *Self-Help*, came from Kyoto, and was the son of a low samurai. When he studied in England from 1866 to 1868, he was highly influenced by English morality based on Christianity and was baptized in 1874 through the missionary George Cochran. Ch’oe Namsŏn, *Self Help*’s Korean translator, came from the middle
people (*chungin*), literally a middle class family. Ch’oe worked as a journalist, publisher, and historian throughout his whole life. Even though these three men’s status was different, they changed their social status from lower to higher by themselves. Ch’oe eagerly agreed with Smiles’ assertion; “Great men of science, literature, and art-apostles of great thoughts and lords of the great heart have belonged to no exclusive class nor rank in life.” Nakamura’s *Saikoku risshi hen* also emphasized “high and low in human society were entirely a product of education and self-improvement.” That is to say, *Self-Help* gave hope to those in the lower classes, who were eager for individual equality as opposed to the traditional Korean and Japanese social hierarchies.

The act of translation is a cultural intermediary among countries, and the translator is its main agent. Moreover, translation is not an equal exchange between advanced and underdeveloped countries. The translator is also an active participant in translation. *Saikoku risshi hen* was not a literal translation of *Self-Help*. Nakamura translated selectively, making some deletions and adding passages of his own creation. According to Kinmonth, *Saikoku risshi hen* was twenty percent shorter than *Self-Help*. Based on the Japanese version, Ch’oe also added some comments about his reasons for translating the text, and his requirements for his readers. I will compare the differences in the purposes and emphases among the original author, the Japanese translator, and the Korean translator. Smiles explained the purpose of *Self-Help* as follows:

> Although its chief object unquestionably is to stimulate youths to apply themselves diligently to right pursuits— sparing neither labour, pains, nor self-denial in prosecuting them— and to rely upon their own efforts in life, rather than depend upon the help or patronage of others, it will also be found, from the examples given of literary and scientific men, artists, inventors, educators, philanthropists, missionaries, and martyrs, that the duty of helping one’s self in the highest sense involves the helping of one’s neighbours.
While Smiles addressed the morale of English youth in the Industrial Period, Nakamura’s purpose of translation was different. There were clear social differences that existed between Japan in 1871 and England in 1859. In case of *Saikoku risshi hen*, Kinmonth states that “neither the political issues nor the social classes to which *Self-Help* had been addressed existed in Japan. There was no industrial bourgeoisie, no industrial labor force, no franchise, and no parliament. The issue of legislated aid versus *Self-Help* had no meaning in Japan.” For all that, Nakamura’s intention in translating the work was to have it serve Japanese youth and the Japanese nation.

Nakamura connected the prosperity of the individual with that of the nation in early Meiji. There was a different emphasis on the nation between *Self-Help* and its Japanese translation. Smiles said, “The spirit of *Self-Help* is the root of all genuine growth in the individual; and, exhibited in the lives of many, it constitutes the true source of national vigour and strength.” Nakamura translated this part as follows: “What is self-help? It does not rely upon other’s help but on one’s self-reliance and self-independence. . . . If the lives of many do it well, their country will also flourish.” Like Nakamura, Ch’oe emphasized the role of the masses rather than the individual. According to Sukehiro, self-help “did not stop at the personal level for Meiji youths but became associated with preserving Japan’s independence in the face of Western encroachment” and traditional Japanese values were reinforced by those found in the Japanese translation of *Self-Help*. Ch’oe also emphasized the national strength based on individual self-cultivation. Therefore, both Nakamura and Ch’oe’s versions stressed moral responsibility and national interest, while the English original emphasized material success and the individual.

Ch’oe initially read *Saikoku risshi hen* in 1904 as an overseas student at Waseda University and used the Japanese reprinted book in 1913. Before Ch’oe’s translation, *Self-Help* was introduced by the Korean magazine *Choyangbo* (Joyangbo) in 1906. This magazine’s preface mentioned *Self-Help* and some characters like Schiller, Bacon, Shakespeare, Robert Burns, and Ben Johnson. Moreover, Ch’oe
introduced a part of Smiles’ *Character* in his magazine *Sonyŏn* (Sonyeon; The boy) in 1909.\textsuperscript{29} However, the complete Korean version of *Self-Help*, *Chajoron*, was published in 1918. The reason why Ch’oe published *Chajoron* in 1918 was due to complexities in the Korean kingship system. The following passage from Smiles’ original was not permitted under the Korean absolute monarchy:

> Caesarism is human idolatry in its worst form—a worship of mere power, as degrading in its effects as the worship of mere wealth would be. A far healthier doctrine to inculcate among the nations would be that of *Self-Help*; and so soon as it is thoroughly understood and carried into action, Caesarism will be no more.\textsuperscript{30}

Moreover, even though Ch’oe followed the Japanese version exactly, he was confronted with complicated circumstances for its translation. In his preface, Nakamura asserted that “Western nations were strong because their people followed the way of heaven, they had the right of autonomy, and they enjoyed benevolent government.”\textsuperscript{31} For the strength of the Korean nation, Ch’oe sought to pursue the model of developing Western countries. However, he did not imagine the Governors-General (Sōkan) of Korea as representing a “benevolent government” and recognizing “the right of autonomy” for colonized Koreans. Under Japanese censorship, Ch’oe did not translate the sections of *Self-Help* that referred to these concepts. However, he asserted that Korean readers of *Self-Help* should always engrave the material and spiritual enlightenment of the “New Japan” in their minds.\textsuperscript{32} In spite of these difficulties, Ch’oe was fascinated by *Self-Help* because of his status, desire for Korean modernity against the traditional Korean hierarchy, and Korean nationalism in the face of Japanese imperialism.
The Reader and the Relationship of Words and Power

Publishers and writers do not neglect commercial profit. Thus, they consider the readers as their consumers, and publish books based on the perceived needs of readers. Translators, likewise, also carefully choose target languages and subjects thought to appeal to readers. The taste of readers closely corresponds to the word-power relationship. Lydia Liu argues that “[T]he needs of the translator and his/her audience together determine and negotiate the meaning (i.e., usefulness) of the text taken from the guest language.” For the “usefulness,” the translators have to select one among the guest language books and elaborate their reasoning through the translator’s preface. We also must examine published books because the publisher and the translator reflect the perceived needs of the readers, and thus provide us with a partial window into literary tastes in this period. However, in case of Korea, it is difficult to find the actual demands or reactions of the readers. The illiteracy rate of Koreans was over 80% at the time when the translation of *Self-Help* was published in Korean, and Korean readers scarcely expressed their impressions of translated books in the 1910s. Thus, I assume that the main Korean readers were composed of educated males. For the purpose of examining multiply-translated modernity in Korea, I will examine the general situations of Korean readers in the 1910s and then the readers of *Self-Help* specifically.

The contact of Ch’oe Namsŏn, translator of *Self-Help* into Korean, with Western knowledge provides us an example of the Korean readership and of the word-power relationship in Korea. Ch’oe’s experience was similar to that of other Korean elites who were interested in Western thought and culture. For many intellectuals, Chinese and Japanese translations provided the common route through which they received new and modern Western knowledge. Ch’oe developed his educational background by mastering first the Korean alphabet, then the *Chinese Classics*, and then Japanese. After he studied the Korean alphabet as a 6-year-old boy, he could read Korean traditional novels, as well as translations of
Ecclesiastes and Pilgrim’s Progress. At the age of 8, he learned the Chinese Classics and at the same time read imported Western books such as Tai xi xin shi (The 19th Century: A History). When he studied Japanese in 1902, he read Osaka Asahi Shinbun (The Osaka Asahi newspaper), the magazine Taiyo (Sun), and Waseda bungaku (Waseda literature). Through these Chinese and Japanese publications, he knew for the first time “the world and numerous people of outer worlds, and complicated current events.” Moreover, his experience of exposing himself to modernized Japanese culture was important. When he went to Japan to study, Japan was at war with Russia (1904-1905). Much influenced by the power he witnessed in Japan, Ch’oe said, “Thanks to the Japanese triumph in the Russo-Japanese war, Japan won an international reputation and her society made rapid advance in every field.” However, the aspect of Japan’s new civilization which was the most impressive to Ch’oe was Japan’s printing and publishing culture. He commented often on this, saying:

When I stayed in Japan, the cultural development of and the abundance of publications in Japan were amazing to me. Compared to my former days reading books like Chinese classic texts or Ecclesiastes written in Korean, I felt the changing of insight as though passing from short-sightedness to a bird’s-eye-view.

Upon returning to Korea at the age of 18, Ch’oe founded his own publishing house, Sinmunkwan (House of new culture) in 1908, and published the magazines Sonyŏn and Ch’ŏngch’un (Cheongchun; The youth) from 1908 to 1911 and from 1914 to 1918, respectively. Through his publishing, we will examine the needs of readers. His publisher published not only Korean traditional novels like Ch’unhyang chŏn (Chunhyang jeon; Story of Chunhyang), Hong Kiltong chŏn (Hong Giltong jeon; Story of Hong Kiltong), but also Jonathan Swifts’ Gulliver’s Travels, D. Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe, Victor Hugo’s Les Misérables, Harriet B. Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin, and Louise de La
Ramee’s *A Dog of Flanders*. The readers of Ch’oe’s books and magazines came mainly from the northwestern area of the Korean peninsula, where Christianity was first introduced and widely followed among Koreans. These Christians were not hesitant to learn new knowledge based on Western thought and culture. They, the so-called *new generation*, were the main readers of the Korean version of *Self-Help*, which was published by Ch’oe’s publisher in 1918.

In the case of the *Self-Help*’s translations, the title of *Saikoku risshi hen* emphasized *risshi* (righteous determination) and the Korean version highlighted *chajo* (self-reliance). To enhance this concept, Ch’oe turned towards Korean tradition, and sought to use elements of tradition as an instrument for forging a new moral code for the younger generation. For example, he republished Yi I’s *Kyŏkmonyokyŏl* (Kyeongmong yogyeol; Fundamentals for spiritual enlightenment), which was a moral treatise written in the late 16th century, because he saw it as providing an excellent framework for training the spirit of the young. At the same time, however, he chose not to republish the book as it was originally written. Instead, he abridged the text and included not only Western adages but also Fukuzawa’s articles in the new publication. This provides an excellent example of the complexity of Korean publication practices. In order to give added credence and relevance to what might otherwise have been considered an outdated work, Ch’oe edited and revised the original text, and updated it with imported foreign translations. In other words, for works to be considered marketable in late 19th century Korea, traditional texts had to be given new legitimacy by situating them contextually with moral writings from other more “modern” nations. This new way of legitimizing traditional texts for modern readers, in turn, was made both possible and necessary by the new relationship between translation and perceptions of modernity and Korea’s place within it.

Moreover, at the same time, a civil library also illustrates another characteristic of multiply-translated modernity. In 1910, *Sonyŏn* included a list of books donated to a local library. This library owned Chinese books such as *Hanwen xing shi su song fa lun* (The criminal procedure...
code of Chinese writing) and Chinese translations of Western books, such as *Hanwen manguo ditu* (A world geography of Chinese writing). This library also owned Japanese reference books such as *The Japanese English dictionary*, Japanese translations of *The Bible*, and books by Japanese authors on topics of Western knowledge, such as geology, geometry, international history, and commercial bookkeeping. Also, included in the collection were English books such as Frye’s *Elements of Geography*, T. Sampson’s *Conversation Grammar*, Ernest Ruse’s *Youth and Culture*, S. G. Goodrichs’s *A Pictorial History of England*, and so on.37 From this list, we can assume the library sought to serve Korean readers interested in Western languages, history, geography, and ethics. After the Russo-Japanese War, the library, predictably, acquired a great number of Japanese books. However, the partial book list cited above reflects a complex readership composed of the needs of the three dominant types of Korean readers: traditional elites, Christians, and young radicals. Therefore, the transformation of tradition through the act of translation and a complex and sharply divided reading public can be seen as distinctive features of translated modernity in colonized Korea.

As for the readers of the original English version of *Self-Help*, Briggs claimed that Smiles gave healthy lessons to a rising generation, and that this book’s readers were mainly “ordinary” men and women.38 Not only *Self-Help*, but *Saikoku risshi hen* and *Chajoron* targeted readers of the new generation. Nakamura wrote that he intended “to translate this book to give the new pillars of Japan the lessons of self-determination and comportment.”39 Ch’oe, too, addressed the younger generation directly by saying “you must read this book not as quick reading, but must read it closely to absorb the essence of the contents earnestly.”40 Ch’oe also asserted that Korean readers would like to take after the Japanese readers, the “able workers of New Japan.”41 However, *Self-Help*, *Saikoku risshi hen*, and *Chajoron* were published in various years and in different social situations. Japanese readers were mainly members of the samurai class, wealthy peasants, and wealthy merchants,42 but Korean readers were mainly youths. Also, due to the gender imbalance in literacy in both Japan
and Korea, unlike with the original English text, neither translations of *Self-Help* were apparently aimed at women, “ordinary” or otherwise, in either place.

Nakamura diagnosed that Japanese society had a huge defect, namely that: “the relationship between senior and junior is temporarily disturbed and youth drift away with the trends of the time.” He regarded himself as a forerunner who called upon older members of society to reflect and give youth hope. However, the colonized Korean situation provided even more radical social upheaval than could be found in Japan. Because of rapid modernization, Ch’oe sensed that traditional moral and common sense had been abruptly overthrown. The twenty-four year-old Ch’oe asked, “Who is our guide post, and who will serve as a pioneer for our future?” Although Ch’oe was young, he severed his relationship with the former generation and he took on the role of enlightening the younger Korean generation. Because of the disruptive effects of colonization, Koreans in the 1910s experienced a sense of mutual incomprehension and disconnect between different generations, and this was reflected in Ch’oe’s work.

Meanwhile, the translations of *Self-Help* offered readers a sense of “muscularity” as well as a window into English culture. *Self-Help* and its translations mainly considered men, not women, as its primary readers. “Muscular Christianity” is one of themes of this book. Smiles regarded men as his main readership, and strove to enhance their conduct. In Smiles’ introduction, Nakamura focused on “[T]he most important thing for discharging their duty is to do their best with honesty and sincerity. It is the dignity of men’s moral conduct.” Smiles also hoped that boys would be brought up to become gentlemen. Besides, Smiles mentioned Tocqueville’s view of his wife: “He believed that a noble-minded woman insensibly elevated the character of her husband, while one with a groveling nature certainly tended to degrade it.” Moreover, in the preface of the first chapter, Nakamura also indicated this book’s main readers were like “virile men.” Ch’oe’s emphasis on masculinity can be seen in his magazine’s title, *Sonyŏn* (The boy), and in his admiration of
the adventurous spirit in *Robinson Crusoe*.

A great number of translations from Western literature were made during the Meiji period. Among them, D. Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* as well as Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* created a sensation. In the case of Korea, after *Pilgrim’s Progress* in 1895, two books were translated in 1908 by Ch’oe and were published by Ch’oe’s publishing company. He called these books adventure stories. For Ch’oe, maritime expeditions served as metaphors for the inception of civilization. He declared that “new modern civilization was based on maritime expedition, which was called the discovery of the New World.” He also eagerly inspired boys to keep in mind the adventurous energy of the maritime spirit. These translated novels also presented positive images of young Englishmen trying to overcome hardship through stubborn determination. *Self-Help* provided many examples of positive narratives of both England and Englishmen. Smiles said “the spirit of *Self-Help*, as exhibited in the energetic action of individuals, has in all times been a marked feature in the English character, and furnishes the true measure of our power as a nation.” Moreover, he described the English upper classes as follows: “It is to the honour of the wealthier ranks in this country that they are not idlers; for they do their fair share for the state, and usually take more than their fair share of its dangers. … [M]any a gallant and noble fellow, of rank and estate, having risked his life, or lost it, in one or other of those fields of action, in the service of his country.”

Through this work, tales of the Englishmen’s morality and adventurous spirit made a strong impression on not only Ch’oe, but also on the younger generation, from which came the main consumers of books about English culture and knowledge.

The emergence of radical young readers in the late 1910s originated with critics of Christianity. Even though it is difficult to generalize about these readers, Kang Kirak (Gang Girak; 1905-1938), a Korean communist, provides us with a good example. He came from the northwestern area of Korea and had believed in Christianity since his boyhood. According to his memoirs he, “attended church regularly. I had never questioned the
fact that the Christian church was the best institution in Korea as I thought praying futile. After this debacle my faith was broken. I thought there was certainly no God and that the teachings of Christ had little application for the world of struggle into which I had been born. . . . Millions of Christians killed each other in the Great War.”56 After the First World War, Kang searched for an alternative to Christianity and became an anarchist and then a socialist. In the late 1910s, revolutionary young Korean elites were shifting from reading British works to reading Russian ones.

The Rosy Dream of the Modern Hero

The text of Self-Help is mainly composed of anecdotal illustrations of manufacturers, scientists, or engineers. The use of these characters as examples is closely connected to the establishment of nationalism. Benedict Anderson emphasizes “print-capitalism” and “new reading publics” as the formative elements of an imagined community. 57 Translation, which was led by nationalist elites, took a great role in helping to establish nationalism. While Anderson applies invented nationalism to non-Western societies, Partha Chatterjee asserts that Western nationalism is not a modular form that can be easily and unchangingly transported to non-Western societies. Chatterjee divides the world of social institutions into two domains—the material and the spiritual. He also argues “the material is the domain of . . . the economy and of statecraft, of science and technology, a domain where the West had proved its superiority and the East had succumbed. . . . the spiritual . . . is an ‘inner’ domain bearing the ‘essential’ marks of cultural identity . . . anticolonial nationalism creates its own domain of sovereignty.”58 His conception of the “material/ spiritual domain” is useful in understanding the political battle between the colonized and imperial power. However, I think, tensions also exist simultaneously in the material domain between colonizer and colonized, and the spiritual domain is also flexible when it
comes to nationalist elites (the middle class) and lower intellectuals. Ch’oe introduced the “modern hero” in *Self-Help* as a means of challenging Japan in the material domain.

The image of a hero usually plays a great role in establishing nationalism. To overcome national crisis, Korean elites eagerly translated tales of Western war heroes and works of great minds. Liang Qichao’s *Itali jianguo sanjie chuan* (Biographical sketches of Mazzini, Garibaldi, and Cavour) was translated in 1907 by Sin Ch’aeho (Sin Chaeho; 1880-1936). He was the pioneer of nationalist historians, and wrote many biographies of Korean generals. In the introduction of *Itari kon’guk samgŏl chŏn* (Itari kon’guk samgeol jeon), Sin regarded Mazzini, Garibaldi, and Cavour not as idealists but as men of action (patriots), and argued that they made unified Italy stronger and more flourishing than it had been before. Through these heroes, Sin expected Korean people to follow their example and contribute to the revival of Korea. Ch’oe Namson also introduced the biographies of men such as Peter the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte, and George Washington during the 1900s. These military heroes contributed to combating imperialism in the spiritual domain. However, since the 1910s, Ch’oe strove to propagate the achievements of Leo Tolstoy, Abraham Lincoln, Muhammad, James Watt, Martin Luther, and Immanuel Kant. That is to say, his focus changed from military heroes to cultural and modern heroes. Moreover, *Self-Help* introduced the great success of Western superiority through the material domains of the economy and of science and technology. Why did Ch’oe focus on practical Western lessons that emphasized the material domain rather than the spiritual domain? I would argue that he hoped to provide Korean entrepreneurs with a new economic model in the 1910s.

*Self-Help* introduced anecdotal illustrations of over three hundred people, such as technologically innovative manufacturers, scientists, and engineers. Even though Smiles criticized Caesarism, he also emphasized the role of great men. He said that “Biographies of great, but especially of good men, are nevertheless most instructive and useful, as help, guides, and incentives to others.” His assertion was that the great
mind was not a military hero but a *modern hero* such as an engineer or a scientist. Modern heroes can be thought of as industrializing heroes, figures who contributed to their country’s modernization. Nakamura also disagreed with the activities of military heroes and emphasized that Western strength was based on the character of its people and on other peaceful virtues.\(^{63}\) In addition to Nakamura’s narrative, Ch’oe asserted that *Self-Help* was “a collection of various heroes among the commoners. They are the forerunners of modern civilization, and a very practical type of a modern hero who stays with us.”\(^{64}\) After 1910, for the purpose of modernization, colonized Koreans longed for modern heroes to emerge from the ranks of commoners. Through embracing the model of the Western hero, Koreans hoped to find a shortcut by way of importing a modular form of heroism from the West. Moreover, national strength was also closely connected with nationalism. Korean nationalist elites believed that the nation’s destiny depended on national strength. Smiles said “National progress is the sum of individual industry, energy and uprightness, as national decay is of individual idleness, selfishness and vice.”\(^{65}\) However, it was not easy for colonized Koreans to reach not only Japanese modernity but also Western modernity. They were very far away from approaching the character of developing countries.

Korean nationalist elites regarded the development of industry as the key to the nation’s civilization and survival. They emphasized that economic development was closely connected with the nation’s destiny. However, the Governor-General of Korea announced some laws which ran counter to these desires in the 1910s. The Company Law required permits for Korean-owned businesses and restricted Korean entrepreneurship. Therefore, “Korea was increasingly dependent on imported manufactures and faced growing rural poverty and rising tenancy rates. Although Korean landlords prospered, opportunities for investment in the modern sector, already dominated by Japanese companies, remained scarce.”\(^{66}\) Moreover, Korean elites had few chances to get proper jobs because there were no high official positions for colonized Koreans. Yi Kwangsu’s (Yi Gwangsu) novel, *Kaech’ŏkcha*
(Gaecheokja; The pathfinder), published in 1917, provides a good example of this situation. The hero of this novel is an amateur chemist who enthusiastically searches for new chemicals. Unlike other novels of that period, which usually concluded with a happy ending, the chemist repeatedly fails, and is finally bankrupted. Nakamura’s version of *Self-Help* in the 1870s encouraged the Japanese younger generation’s success. However, in a colonized situation, the hope of a modern hero’s success was a rosy dream. The novelist Yi cynically tried to manifest not success but instead the effort the protagonist invested in his endeavors. In addition to those who despaired because of the lack of opportunities for success, critics of the modern hero also appeared among the inner members of the Korean elites.

The First World War (1914-1918) and the Russian Revolution (1917) provoked a search for an alternative to the international and social problems of the world. Human experience of the injurious effect of war caused the search for an international peace plan, and some looked for an alternative to capitalism, which many saw as the cause of war. After the Russian Revolution, some Korean elites introduced socialism as a counter-discourse to both capitalism and colonialism. The acceptance of revolutionary thought was accompanied with the critique of Anglo-Saxon values. The above-mentioned Kang Kirak’s case is an example: “The idea of Korea independence and democracy came directly from America. . . . When Japan occupied Korea in 1910, all the nationalist intellectuals fled to America. . . . Most of them were Christians. They represented a middle-class political group, nearly all were teachers, students, journalists, lawyers, or doctors.” Even though these statements are somewhat exaggerated, new Korean intellectuals originated from the lower classes, and they were very different from Korean middle-class nationalists. Kang mentions “communist sympathizers,” such as those below:

Most of those who return from Japan, Germany, and Russia would like to be party members. Those who study in America and France are not in this class—they are “gentlemen” and only want good positions
and the “Christian” type of activity. . . . Before 1919 the nationalist leaders were mostly returned students from America. And most of the higher-educated intellectuals went to school either in America or Japan. After 1919 all the leadership came from Japan. The communists are nearly all Japanese-returned students. They learn their theory in Tokyo and their tactics in organization and action from China.68

This new class of intellectuals was distinct from the established nationalist elites. Ch’oe argued against negative interpretations of the capitalist hero and demonstrated the new morals of wealthy men, by saying: “The old-time millionaire usually handed down his estate to his descendants. In many Western countries, there were wealthy men who were ahead of their time in the way that they invested their money in public institutions like schools, libraries, and hospitals.” 69 Ch’oe, idealizing Carnegie as an entrepreneur, thought highly of him as a “social administrator for the needy.”70 He strove to apply Smiles’ view of Victorian values to the Korean situation. In the late 1910s, the struggle in the material domain changed into a duel among colonized Koreans in the spiritual domain. Sin Tae’ak (Sin Dae’ak), a socialist, called the period from 1920 to 1923 “an epoch of translation”71 because the original texts of Marxist and Leninist thought, along with Japanese research materials, were directly translated into Korean without a time lag.

As a consequence of this boom of socialism and anarchism, the demand for the translated version of Self-Help dwindled in Korea. Ch’oe had hoped his version would be used as a textbook. However, his version was only the first half of the entire book. Of the thirteen chapters in total, only chapters one through six were translated by Ch’oe. His translation was not completed because he was put in jail after the March First Movement in 1919. In addition, a growing number of new Korean readers in the late 1910s sought for books about revolutionary socialism and anarchism rather than British capitalist ideology.

Since the late 1910s, translated books of socialism, mainly Karl Marx’s writings, and of anarchism were popular among radical or revolutionary
young Korean readers. Therefore, there existed three kinds of readers in Korea of 1910s: traditional Confucian elites, a new generation of moderates (mainly Christians), and revolutionary young men who followed socialism. Not only the compositions of readers, but also the compilations of books available through bookstores and libraries show the characteristics of a multiply-translated modernity.

Conclusion

Did Smiles know of the Korean translation of his book? According to Smiles’ autobiography, he was proud of his book’s translations in other languages. When he received a copy of Saikoku risshi hen in 1873, even though he did not read Japanese characters, he evaluated that, “The characters stood apart, like insects in a case at the British Museum; but, on closer scrutiny, they seemed to represent, not the lower creatures, but familiar objects, such as a house, windows.” Even though he did not know Ch’oe Namsŏn’s Chajoron, this Korean version of Self-Help had a big impact on Korean society during the period of time between 1910s and 1920s.

Many of the issues discussed in this article continue to be relevant to Korea today. Since the 1960s, South Korean students have been on the vanguard of social struggles against despotic governments. Under the National Security Law, they were prohibited from accessing revolutionary socialist thought. As a theoretical weapon for political democracy and social equality, Korean students thus studied Japanese re-interpretations of Marxist books. After the late 1980s, it became possible to freely discuss sensitive political issues because of the growth of civil power. Instead of the translation of Japanese books, the original texts of Karl Marx, V. I. Lenin, and Mao Zedong were directly translated into Korean. Since then, student movements’ participants, who had a chance to read these books, increased significantly. As more originals were translated, more Korean students became revolutionary. In the 1910s, translated
books gave Koreans a chance to oppose Japanese imperialism. Korean readers used these books to establish their anti-colonialism and colonial modernity.

During the late 19th century and early 20th century, the translation of Western books was closely connected to East Asia’s modernity and nationalism. Choosing which foreign texts would be translated and in what way were also dominated by a “word-power relationship.” I apply the concept of “translated modernity” in China and Japan to the idea of multiply-translated modernity in colonized Korea because translation of texts originated from relationships between the West and the East, among China, Japan, and Korea, between the colonizer (Japan) and the colonized (Korea), and in the process of translation and re-translation. Through Self-Help and its translations into both Japanese and Korean, I have examined the translators, readers, and contents of this book, the so-called “modern hero.” The characteristics of multiply-translated modernity in Korea are as follows. First, the translation of Western thought, sometimes in combination with traditional texts, was used by translators to invoke Korean modernity. Secondly, the needs and desires of Korean readers in the 1910s were multiple, based on their social status and political opinions. Thirdly, translated books were utilized for opposing imperialism in the spiritual domain as well as in the material domain. The notion of the hero was useful for resisting imperialism in the spiritual domain and the notion of a “modern hero” specifically was useful in the material domain.

Unfortunately, there are several elements that I have left unsettled in the scope of this article. First is the question of reader response. Throughout the article, I focus on the intentions of translators rather than the desires of readers. I do not fully delve into the needs of the translator and his/her audience. While considering the translator’s intention, we also need to examine the reaction of the readers because they “negotiate” the meaning of books with the translators. Secondly, I have neither examined the Chinese version of Self-Help, nor compared it with both the Korean and Japanese versions. Comparing these three versions would give us an even greater understanding of the characteristics of East Asia’s modernity.
Thirdly, I did not analyze the transformation of England’s image in Asia from the 1910s to the Second World War. Nakamura and Ch’oe both had a positive image of the English. Yet, during the World War Two, Britain was a principle antagonist against Japan’s Great East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Last is the relationship between nation and individual. Both Nakamura and Ch’oe eagerly argued for national strength instead of individual success, and thus we need to examine when the discovery of the individual was possible in non-Western societies and the different understanding of individualism between the colonized Koreans and the colonizing Japanese.

Notes:


4 Liu, *Translingual Practice*; Douglas R. Howland, *Translating the West* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2002). Douglas especially scrutinizes the establishing of neologisms such as liberty, rights, sovereignty, and society to which traditional Japanese Confucian elites were not accustomed.

5 For studies on the *Self-Help*’s translation in Korea, see Ch’ŏe Kyŏnghŭi, “Han’guk kŭndae chisikin kwa ‘Chajoron’” (Modern Korean elites and *Self-Help*) (PhD Dissertation, Sŏgang University, 2003). See also, Kim Nami, “1910 nyŏnda Ch’ŏe Namsŏn ŭi ‘Chajoron’ pŏnyŏk kwa kŭ hamŭi” *Minjok munhaksya yŏn’gu* 43 (2010).

6 Kinmonth, 10.

7 Ibid., 26.


11 Maruyama and Kato, 149-151.


14 Briggs, 11.

15 Ogihara, 80, 222.

16 Chungin refers to members of a secondary status group, between the ruling class (yangban) and commoners. They were a hereditary class of specialists who functioned as interpreters, clerks, or medical doctors.


18 Howland, 14.

19 Kinmonth, 26.

20 Smiles, 33.

21 Kinmonth, 20.

22 Smiles, 35.

23 Nakamura, 1-2.

24 Ch’oe Namsŏn, *Chajoron*, in *Yukdan Ch’oe Namsŏn chŏnjip* 13 (Collected works of Ch’oe Namsŏn), ed. Yukdan chŏnjip p’yŏnch’ŏn wiwŏnhoe p’yŏn (Seoul: Hyŏnamsa, 1974), 412-413.


26 Ch’oe, 403.

27 Ibid.


30 Smiles, 37.

31 Nakamura, quoted in Kinmonth, 20.

32 Ch’oe, *Chajoron*, 402.
33 Liu, 27.
34 Ch’oe Namsŏn, "Simnyŏn" (Ten years), Ch’ŏngch’un 14, June 1918.
35 Ch’oe Namsŏn, "‘Sonyŏn’ ŭi kiwang kwa changnae” (The Past, the Present and the Present of Youth), in Yukdan Ch’ŏe Namsŏn chŏnjip 10, 134.
36 Ch’oe Namsŏn, "Sŏjae handam” (A leisurely conversation at a library), Yukdan Ch’ŏe Namsŏn chŏnjip 5, 440.
37 Sonyŏn 8, October, 1910, 62-63.
38 Briggs, 9-10, 
39 Nakamura quoted in Ch’oe, Chajoron, 402.
40 Ch’oe, Chajoron, 405
41 Ch’oe, Chajoron, 402
42 Kinmonth, 34.
43 Nakamura, quoted in Ch’oe, Chajoron, 402.
44 Ch’oe Namsŏn, “A kwan” (My View),” Ch’ŏngch’un 4, January 1915, 17-19.
45 Quoted in Nakamura, 10.
46 Briggs, 15.
47 Smiles, 56-57.
48 Quoted in Ch’oe, Chajoron, 409.
49 Sukehiro, 76.
50 Kim, 7-14.
51 Ch’oe Namsŏn, Yukdan Ch’ŏe Namsŏn chŏnjip 13, 211.
52 Ch’oe, Namsŏn, “Haesang Han’kuksa” (Maritime Korean history), Sonyŏn 1, November, 1908.
53 Sukehiro, 80.
54 Smiles, 38.
55 Smiles, 51.
56 Nym Wales, Song of Ariran (San Francisco: Ramparts Press, 1941), 80.
59 Sin Ch’aeho, It’ari kon’kuk samgŏl chŏn (Biographical sketch of Mazzini, Caribaldi, and Cavour), in Sin Ch’aeho chŏnjip 2 (Collected works of Sin Ch’aeho), ed. Tanje Sin ChaeHo sŏnsaeng kinyŏm saŏp hoe (Seoul: Hyŏngsŏl, 1972), 183.
60 Ibid., 184.
61 Kinmonth, 15.
62 Smiles, 39.
63 Kinmonth, 20-21.
64 Ch’oe, 404.
65 Quoted in Briggs, 15.
67 Wales, 86.
68 Ibid., 92-93.
69 Ch’oe, *Simun tokpon* (A reader on current style of writing), *Yukdan Ch’oe Namsŏn chŏnjip* 8, 573.
Abstract


Ryu Si-hyun

During the late 19th century and early 20th century, the translation of the Western books was closely connected to East Asia’s modernity and nationalism. Choosing which foreign texts would be translated and in what way was also dominated by a “word-power relationship.” I apply the concept of “translated modernity” in China and Japan to the idea of multiply-translated modernity in colonized Korea, because translation of texts originated from relationships between the West and the East, between both China and Japan and Korea, between the colonizer (Japan) and the colonized (Korea), and in the process of translation and re-translation.

Through Self-Help and its translations into both Japanese and Korean, I have examined translators, readers, and the contents of this book, the so-called “modern hero.” The characteristics of multiply-translated modernity in Korea are like this: First, the translation of Western thought, sometimes combining it with traditional texts, was used by translators to invoke Korean modernity. Second, the needs and desires of Korean readers in the 1910s were multiple, based on their social status and political opinions. Third, translated books were utilized for competing with imperialism in the spiritual domain as well as in the material domain. The notion of the hero was useful to resist imperialism in the spiritual domain and the notion of a “modern hero” specifically was useful in the material domain.

Keywords: Translation, Re-translation, Self-Help, Namsun Ch’oe, Translator
중역된 근대: <자조론> 번역을 중심으로

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19세기 말~20세기 초반, 서구 사상의 번역은 동아시아 근대와 민족주의 형성과 밀접하게 연관되었다. 어떠한 서양 책을 선택해서 번역하는가에 여부에는 서구 열강의 정치적 영향력과 밀접하게 연결되었다. 일본의 경우 페리에 의한 ‘개항’(1854년)을 전후해서 서구 사상의 주된 번역 대상이 되고 있는 화란어가 아닌 영어였다. 리더이 리우는 이를 ‘번역된 근대’라고 규정했다.


번역은 번역자와 독자의 의도에 따라 완역, 축역, 변역 등의 방식으로 이루어졌으며, 이는 이 책의 한글 번역본인 <자조론> (1918년)에도 적용될 수 있다. 번역가인 최남선은 영어 원전은 물론 일본어 번역본과 달리 번역자의 의도를 강하게 투영했는데 첫째, 식민지 조선의 전통적인 요소를 부가하고 둘째, 일제의 점령을 염두에 두었으면 셋째, 개통의 차원에서 생산자와 공장 경영자 등 ‘경제적 영웅’을 강조했다. 이를 통해 일제와 정신적인 측면뿐 아니라 물질적이고 경제적인 측면에서도 경쟁하고자 했다.

주제어: 번역, 중역(中譯), 자조론, 최남선, 번역자