Raising the Issue of ‘Modernity’
- ‘Colonial modernity’ theory as advanced by Japanese Korean Studies scholars and the background thereof

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Introduction

The manner in which the relationship between the colonial rule/period and ‘modernity’ should be perceived has been a hot-button issue in studies on the colonial period in Korea. Particular attention has been paid by some scholars to the issue of the historical image and perception of the notions of ‘modernization’ and ‘modernity’ during the colonial period,¹ and to their importance beyond the field of Korean historical studies. In addition, attempts have also been made to establish a historical image of the colonial period that extends beyond the narrow sphere of historical studies. This trend has been facilitated by the spread of the cultural historical studies that have sprung up to replace the focus on the nation-state and the influence of post-colonial theory. These tendencies have been particularly evident in the movement to discuss colonial modernity. Attempts have already been made to introduce and summarize this trend.² However, what in essence is the discourse on ‘colonial modernity’ about? The differing interpretations of this term have resulted in the discourse being marked by a sense of chaos and entanglement. Although in large part motivated by the inherent characteristics of ‘colonial modernity,’ this situation is also related to the fact that there have been few instances in

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which these issues have been approached based on an in-depth analysis of concrete historical facts. This study begins by reviewing the trends in the related studies so as to summarize the main issues. Thereafter, in order to develop a more concrete image of the acceptance and criticism of ‘colonial modernity’ in the field of Korean historical studies in Japan, the focus is shifted to the characteristics of the March 1st Independence Movement and the issues related to Korean intellectuals’ ‘pro-Japanese’ activities and opinions in the aftermath of the Sino-Japanese War.

**The background of the nation-state theory and the study of imperial history**

While the study of the colonial period developed in manifold directions in the late 1970s – 1980s, a new trend emerged in the late 1980s that caused a ‘critical groundswell’ in the study of the colonial era. Meanwhile, the 1990s was marked by a diversification of study interests and viewpoints. Okabe and Yanagisawa have evaluated this period as one in which the methodological position of researchers was expanded from the traditional perception of history based on ‘imperialism and colony’ to various frameworks such as the global system theory, imperial theory, nation-state theory, cultural imperialism theory, and social history and gender theory.

The study of Korean modern history has not been an exception to this trend. The 2000s has seen a significant diversification of research interests, with studies conducted in various areas such as the history of thought, history of national and independence movements, ruling policies (education, language and media, etc), history of women, history of overseas Koreans (Koreans residing in Japan and Manchuria). These new fields have been added to existing themes, such as socioeconomic history, political history, and diplomatic history. Relatively new fields have included language and media policies, as well as the history of women and that of Koreans residing in Manchuria. While a concrete summary of these
various study trends represents an arduous task, special mention should be made of the influential theory of the nation-state. The nation-state theory facilitated the expansion of the study of the formation of the Korean modern state (opening period) to criticism of a view of history that equates the nation-state with ‘national history,’ and provided the foundation for the criticism of the dominant focus on the national liberation struggles in Japan and on the Korean peninsula before and after the war. This new vantage point was rooted in the belief that the ‘nation (minjok)’ was an artificial historical creation that functioned as an entity designed to exclude others. Furthermore, studies in fields such as sociology, anthropology, literature, and linguistics that focused on the colonial period also greatly stimulated the advancement of historical studies.

Meanwhile, the ‘study of imperial history’ exercised a great influence during the 1990s. Iwanami kōza kindai Nihon to shokuchi [Iwanami series on modern Japan and its colonies], published during 1992-1993, transformed the various colonies and occupied territories within the ‘Empire of Great Japan’ into research subjects by paying attention to the unique contexts of each area. This can be considered as outcomes that exhibit the diversification of historical studies to the point where studies based on Japanese imperial history have now been combined with post-colonial theory.

One of the most influential studies on Korean history during this period was Komagome Takeshi’s Shokuchi teikoku Nihon no bunka tōkō [Cultural integration of the Japanese colonial empire]. This study analyzed the structural relationship between Japan and its colonies (Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria) from the standpoint of the history of educational policy, with a special focus on the ‘imperialization’ of the ‘nation-state’ known as Japan. A researcher in the field of educational history, Komagome identified four overarching characteristics of the study of imperial history: the perception of the structural relationship between the multiple colonies & occupied territories and mainland Japan as part of a cross-sectional approach; the propensity to focus on the impact of the situation in colonies on mainland Japan as well as of the situation in Japan on colonial
rule; the attachment of great importance to the spheres of political and cultural history (or cultural history as part of political history); and the highlighting of the historical processes of formation and transformation of the Japanese people, Japanese language, and Japanese culture in lieu of the blind acceptance of such concepts as constants. Komagome defined the imperialization of the nation-state as a process through which to explain the general problems occasioned by the internal contradictions inherent in the colonial policy and the contacts between ruler and ruled, and highlighted the need to view these interactions without being trapped within the binary framework of ‘assimilation policy’ and ‘national liberation struggle.’

In addition, Komagome identified the ‘trap’ of ‘imperial history’ as being the following.

The selection of the issue called imperial history is embedded with questions regarding the significance of colonial rule for the Japanese and the significance of colonial studies in the study of Japanese history, and this regardless of whether answers to such questions are desired or not. These may not be essential questions. However, ethno-centrism cannot be overcome as long as one remains at the stage where these questions are unresolved. The study of imperial history will simply go back to being the study of Korean and Taiwanese history conducted for Japanese people by ‘Japanese people’ as long as attention is not focused on the question of the actual significance of colonial rule for the Korean and Taiwanese people.

Komagome also focused on new facts or interpretations based on the results of studies on other histories such as those of Korea and Taiwan that are shielded from sight by the institution known as ‘Japanese history.’ Komagome maintained that, given its characteristics as a transitional stage, a vantage point rooted in the study of imperial history could in fact play an effective bridging role. As previously mentioned, one of the characteristics of the study of imperial history has been the focus on the
historical process of formation and transformation of the ‘Japanese people, ‘Japanese language,’ and ‘Japanese culture.’ In much the same vein, there is a need to develop new integrated perceptions of the formation and transformation of ‘Korean people,’ ‘Korean language,’ and ‘Korean culture.’

The politicalization of ‘modernity’ and colonial rule
– the matter of historical perception

The logic that Japanese colonial rule contributed to the modernization of Korea has always been at the root of the historical perception of colonial rule developed by the Japanese conservative media. No new opinions regarding this matter can be found in the field of the study of imperial history. However, I’d like to quote Nishio Kanzi because I feel that it helps to develop a better understanding of this logic.

_Shortly after the annexation of Chosŏn, the Government General of Chōsen engaged in betterment activities such as a census, land survey, forest and water conservation efforts, irrigation and agricultural improvement, the improvement of the tenant system, and the introduction of education and unbiased legal systems. Before that, Chosŏn was a poor land in which the tenant farmers were exploited and the aristocratic class used the legal system based on their own arbitrary decisions. The Han’gŭl system adopted by Korea as its writing system was an artificial language developed during the 15th century. However, this system was largely unused for centuries because it was scorned and disregarded by the yangban (aristocratic class) who had adopted Chinese characters as the proper system. The Han’gŭl system was first streamlined by the Government General of Chŏsen, which also introduced the elementary education system. How many Koreans know all of this?_9
Nishio Kanji’s assertions are typical of those who believe that Korea benefitted from colonial rule and the ‘modernization’ implemented by the Government General of Chōsen in all aspects of life in Chosŏn. However, his assertions do not reflect the power of the Government General of Chōsen or the means it took to implement the modernization of Chosŏn, the transformations Chosŏn underwent as a result of modernization, and how Chosŏn society responded to these changes. Viewed from this standpoint, Nishio Kanji’s assertions have little to add to the pertinent debate within the study of history. Nevertheless, because his assertions have the potential to be easily accepted within a Japanese society that is easily influenced by the government, they cannot simply be ignored. Such ‘benefit theories’ have also been spread through various forms of media such as the Internet and anime. As such, historians must do something to cope with these issues.10

The issue of historical perceptions of ‘modernity (modernization)’ is one that has created problems not only in Japan but also in Korea. This is the historical view possessed by the neo-conservative (New Right) movement. There are several organizations that symbolize the New Right in Korea. Inaugurated in November 2004, ‘Liberty Union’ was tasked with spreading awareness of the Roh Moo-hyun [No Muhyŏn] government’s pro-North Korea and anti-American foreign policy and carrying out activities such as a review of Korea history textbooks. One work that greatly influenced the New Right Movement in Korea was Haebang chŏnhu sa úi chaeinsik [New perception of history before and after Liberation], by Pak Chihyang, Yi Yŏnghun, Kim Ch’ŏl and Kim Ilyŏng. Published in 2006, this book consists of a collection of essays and includes papers from researchers from countries such as Japan and the United States. Although not all of these essays are based on the philosophy of the New Right, the book thoroughly criticizes existing nationalism-based historical descriptions, such as the dichotomous perception of ‘rule-resistance’ and punishment of the ‘pro-Japanese’ group. In this regard, this book features historical methodologies developed after the nation-state theory. This book also shares commonalities with ‘colonial moder-
nization’ and ‘colonial modernity’ theories in terms of problem awareness.

In fact, An Pyŏngjik, who was an advocator of ‘colonial modernization’ theory, was one of the founders of the ‘New Right’ Foundation in April 2006. An Pyŏngjik praised the achievements of the New Right Movement as follows.

_In terms of political thought, the New Right Movement has contributed 1) to proving that the establishment of the Republic of Korea and the country’s economic development was indeed worthy of being trumpeted to the world by revealing the truth about the foundation of the country in 1948 and the industrialization that occurred from the 1960s onwards, a truth whose legitimacy has been denied by the democratization forces currently holding the reins of political power; 2) to revealing that the sunshine policy implemented by the unification seekers was a figment meant to cover up the fact that the improvement of human rights and the change in the political system of North Korea constitute the root cause of problems on the Korean peninsula by making the lies that is the sunshine policy known to the international community; 3) to suggesting that the growth-oriented liberalist economic policy based on the ‘small government-big market’ constitutes the right path that must be undertaken to establish a true market economy and mitigate the poverty problem, not the control and interference policy that has been implemented by the government in the name of distribution._

_In terms of social movements, the New Right Foundation has contributed 1) to implementing a liberalist student movement capable of countering the influence of existing left-wing student movements such as the Hanch’ongnyŏn (Federation of Korean University Student Councils); 2) to establishing the Korea Liberal Teachers' Union in opposition to the Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union (KTU) representing the biggest obstacle to the advancement of education. Based on these achievements the New Right Foundation intends to further deepen and develop its movement from the stand-
point of thought.\textsuperscript{11}

An Pyŏngjik then added.

The deepening and development of New Right Thought begins with a new perception of Korean modern and contemporary history. The democratization forces currently holding the reins of political power have asserted that Korean modern and contemporary history should be an independent and internalized entity. To this end, their goals were based on independence, self-reliance, and self-defense. However, this historical perception is a fabrication that cannot be empirically supported by Korean modern and contemporary history. Korean modern and contemporary history is rooted in and developed under international relations. This fact is evident to anybody who is willing to face up to reality.

However, the democratization forces currently holding the reins of political power perceived these international relations under the lenses of imperial encroachment and national independence movement (invasion and resistance). Invasion and resistance are one aspect of Korean modern and contemporary history. Another aspect is that of development and cooperation. This includes the institutional reforms and developments during the Japanese colonial period, the introduction of liberal democracy and economic aid under the USAMGIK, and the introduction of institutions, technology, and capital from advanced countries during the industrialization period. Today’s freedom and prosperity were not achieved purely based on invasion and resistance. The development and cooperation that took place as part of these international relations cannot be ignored.\textsuperscript{12}

It is clear that An attempted to reevaluate the history of the colonial period and post-liberation in a manner that rejects the dominant historical perceptions after liberation. Furthermore, such reevaluations of the history after the foundation of the Republic of Korea have been positively
evaluated from the viewpoint of economic development after the colonial period; meanwhile, they have also helped to begin to deconstruct the negative image of the dictatorial regimes of Syngman Rhee [Yi Sŏngman] and Pak Chung-hee (Pak Chŏnghŭi). In addition, attention should also be drawn to the fact that North Korean evaluations of modern history remain negative. An’s assertions imply a certain continuity between economic development during the colonial period and after liberation; this may overlap with the theory of the benefits of Japanese colonial rule. In fact, such worries have already been expressed within some quarters of Korea. In this sense, the historical perception of the New Right Movement can be considered a political construct akin to historical revisionism in Japan.

These trends in historical perceptions in Korea and Japan indicate that the themes of colonial rule and ‘modernity’ have failed to create a specific historical image akin to the one that has revolved around the ‘indigenous development theory.’ How has the theme of ‘modernity’ been approached with regards to the study of the Korean colonial period after the diversification of study viewpoints? This study analyzes the current state of this trend in the study of history.

**The scope of the ‘colonial modernization’ theory**

The ‘modernization’ theory asserted by historical revisionists in Japan seeks solely to justify Japanese colonial rule and promote nationalism. It has never been worthy of an academic review. However, the issue of how the ‘modernity’ of the colony is perceived has become a very important element of the analysis of recent trends in Korean historical studies. As such, this section revolves around a summary of how ‘modernity’ has been transformed into an issue in the field of Korean historical studies.

The first thing that must be addressed in any discussion of this issue is the existence of the so-called ‘colonial modernization theory.’ However, this study only summarizes this theory, those desiring a more thorough explanation should refer to Namiki Masahito and others.¹³
The ‘colonial modernization theory’ seeks to find the seeds of the rapid economic growth achieved during the 1960s-1970s and of democratization during the 1980s in the modern developmental reforms carried out during the Japanese colonial period. An Pyŏngjik can be viewed as a leading proponent of this theory. An refused to identify Korea’s developmental transformation as being rooted in the ‘indigenous development theory,’ which attempts to attach purely internal origins to such growth. The origin of Korean capitalism in fact can be traced back to the external introduction of capitalism, with the industrialization advancement of the 1930s, growth of Korean capital, and the formation of human resources under colonial rule, regarded as having been particularly important. An maintained that these elements became the foundation for economic growth after liberation.\(^{14}\)

The origins of this line of reasoning can be traced back to the study on the history of the formation of East Asian capitalism conducted by Nakamura Satoru and Hori Kazuo.\(^{15}\) An’s arguments have been criticized by a group of scholars led by Sin Yongha for suggesting a positive acceptance of Japanese colonial rule. Based on the ‘indigenous development theory,’ which rejects the notion that Japanese colonial policy made modernization possible, Sin Yongha asserted that the growth of the seeds of capitalism that began to emerge during late Chosŏn was in fact retarded by Japanese colonization.\(^{16}\) This line of reasoning, which stands in stark contrast to the ‘colonial modernization’ theory, has also been referred to as ‘exploitation’ theory.

As previously mentioned, the ‘colonial modernization theory’ has led to the politicization of the historical perception of the character of Japanese colonial rule. The economic historian Yi Yŏnghun has presented his own interpretation of the significance of the ‘colonial modernization theory.’ Yi asserted that the dissolution of the social class system, modern economic growth, and the establishment of a private property system carried out in Chosŏn during the colonial period were all based on the principle of personal freedom under civil law (in reference to the Chosŏn Civil Code, promulgated in 1912); moreover, these elements were incor-
porated into the Korea that took shape after liberation. This perception of continuity does not entail a positive interpretation of colonial rule. Rather, it is rooted in the belief that Japan sought to acquire the resources and industrial facilities on the Korean peninsula by investing in various spheres that yielded ‘the fruits of actual exploitation undertaken in conjunction with the assimilation policy.’ Based on this logic, Yi asserted,

Many people regard the ‘colonial modernization theory’ as beautifying the Japanese colonial rule over Chosŏn. However, this is a totally erroneous interpretation. The colonial modernization theory seeks to properly analyze the true face of the exploitation and discrimination that took place, and the mechanisms that were used to do so. Modernization was literally carried out in a colonial manner.

As such, Yi presented a counterargument to the criticism of the positive aspect of colonial rule.

However, as discussed above, the focus of the colonial modernization theory has been on the perception of history after liberation. In this regard, Yi Yonghun argued that while North Korea took over Japan’s industrial facilities after liberation, South Korea inherited high-quality human capital based on modern laws and institutions, as well as a market economy system. In addition, North Korea inherited an ‘abundant physical legacy, but discarded the modern laws and institutions introduced via Japanese imperialism’ in the name of socialist reform. Yi also maintained that North Korea’s refusal of modern civilization had in fact led it to down a civilizational dead-end. Ultimately, the ‘colonial modernization theory’ seeks to establish the ‘history of the Republic of Korea’ based on an evaluation of modernism. Viewed from the standpoint of the perception of colonial rule, it is necessary to keep in mind the current state of study trends characterized by the achievement of a perception of economic history are based on statistical analyses; however, there remain problems regarding the perception of the correlation between colonial moderniza-
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The debate and criticism of the ‘colonial modernization theory’ in Japan

The ‘colonial modernization theory’ and ‘exploitation theory’ share a commonality of having a positive perception of ‘modernity.’ During the late 1990s however, a new study trend that rejected these positive characteristics of ‘modernity’ began to emerge. This study trend was exemplified by a series of studies undertaken under the banner of the ‘colonial modernity’ theory. Herein, let us simply focus on summarizing the colonial modernity theory. For a more concrete analysis of this study trend, please refer to the positions of Namiki Masahito, Itagaki Ryuta, and Matsumoto Takenori.22

While called the ‘colonial modernity’ theory, this perception actually touches various spheres. It can be regarded as a critical perception of ‘modernity’ that is based on the examination of elements such as the formation of urban culture, women’s history, and everyday life history via various spheres that include educational history, cultural history, and the history of thought.

Gi-wook Shin and Michael Robinson refused the historical perception of an ‘exploitation’ theory based on nationalism. They emphasized that it was important to not separate the concepts of colonialism, modernity, and nationalism, but rather view them as part of a mutual relationship.23 The main point of argument surrounding the ‘colonial modernity’ theory is the extent to which ‘modernity’ (= the ruling class perception of values and order) originating from the Western world infiltrated colonial society. Gi-wook Shin and Michael Robinson argued that the main feature of modern rule was the seeping of cultural hegemony beyond the political and economic spheres into everyday life.24 The main actors in this ‘modern culture’ were the public (= intellectuals) who found themselves captured by ‘modernity.’ In this regard, the ‘colonial modernity’ theory pays close
attention to the trends amongst these intellectuals. The assumption that the ‘modernity’ originating from the Western world was transplanted in Chosŏn through Japan and its colonial rule opens the door to a debate over ‘inclusion’ in modernity, and more specifically, with regards to the inclusion of Chosŏn people in the political mechanism from the standpoint of political history. In his discussion of the participation of Chosŏn people in politics and cooperation with Japan, Namiki Masahito stated the following.

One can regard ‘modernity,’ and more specifically, ‘colonial modernity,’ as the basic rule used to form the relationship between the ruler and ruled that was embraced in the broad and flexible ‘public areas’ that lay between the opposing poles of resistance and submission. This conclusion is based on the fact that the colonial government actually engaged in unfair and illegal rule but consistently sought to secure consent under the guise that its actions were undertaken in the name of rationalization, legalization, and efficiency. This was a situation in which the ruled was always jostled to establish a political process based on the logic of the ruler that was designed to support this rationality, justification, and effectiveness.25

In other words, the discussion of the ‘inclusion’ of the people of Chosŏn in modernity is linked to that of the mechanisms of consent (spheres or colonial publicness) employed by the colonial power. Yun Haedong identified this sphere as the gray zone in which resistance and cooperation intersected.26 To paraphrase Namiki, it was the establishment of publicness that stabilized colonial rule.27

Cho Kyŏngdal has strongly disagreed with Yun’s arguments. Cho has maintained that there existed an ‘autonomous world of the public (min-jung)’ that lay outside of the ‘modernity’ of colonial Chosŏn society.’ To this end, he stressed that the premodern order that included the premodern political culture and the perception of a Confucian order had in fact survived. Cho perceived this sphere as one in which the colonial power could
not derive consent, it had no choice but to transform it into a sphere go-
verned via violent rule. Cho Kyŏngdal emphasized the fact that this
sphere existed at the crossroads between the logic of ‘modernity’ devel-
oped by the colonial power and the notions of enlightenment constructed
by modern intellectuals.

Matsumoto Takenori sought to mitigate these conflicts by approaching
the situation from the standpoint of deviations in the degree of penetration
of ‘modernity.’

The notion of lagging behind constitutes a stage that appears
when comparisons are made with Western countries and Japan us-
ing the high ratio of people who had not experienced discipli-
nary power mechanisms, popular culture, and modern media as the
demarcation point. From an identification standpoint, this ‘lagging
behind’ should rightfully be seen as the result of a colonial economic
and political structure that alienated, from a decision making stand-
point (political process), the majority of Chosŏn people characte-
rized by low income levels from matters related to capital accumula-
tion and the redistribution of the financial resources of the state.

However, despite the ubiquity of public culture, disciplinary power
mechanisms, and modern media, Matsumoto perceived these entities as
having been established under colonial rule as a form of hegemony
amongst the Chosŏn people. Thus, it becomes necessary to analyze the
sphere that existed outside of the hegemonic construction known as
‘modernity.’ Matsumoto responded to Cho Kyŏngdal’s criticism of ‘co-
lonial modernity’ theory by stating, “it is important to analyze the process
through which the hegemonic structure known as ‘modernity’ was dy-
namically (albeit, not completely) diffused into the ‘spiritual world of the
people (minjung).” Meanwhile, Namiki asserted that the concepts of
‘colonial modernity’ and ‘colonial publicness’ should be approached from
the vantage points of hegemony and directedness rather than volume and
area and that the violence and modernity (or publicness) inherent in the
ruling structure of the Government General of Chōsen were never dichotomous issues nor mutually exclusive ones. Namiki further asserted that the inevitable movement towards the formation of ‘modernization’ and ‘publicness’ was rooted in the colonial period. Namiki criticized Cho Kyŏngdal by pointing out that the focus should not be on simple quantitative expansions, but rather on the important historical ramifications of these facts. However, Cho Kyŏngdal did not agree with Namiki’s opinions. As such, the gap between the two parties has not been bridged.

**Detailed study trends**

Related to the characteristics of the March 1st Independence Movement

Based on the above discussions, let us now consider the characteristics of ‘colonial modernity,’ as well as the criticism of this line of reasoning, by relating it to the issue of the perception of facts. First, let us analyze the characteristics of the March 1st Independence Movement of 1919. The March 1st Independence Movement has been perceived from two overarching vantage points, namely the process that unfolded from the foundation of the Declaration of Independence to the demonstrations in downtown Seoul, and the various movements that were subsequently implemented in local provinces. The contradictions in the study of the March 1st Independence Movement are related to the issue of the embedment of ‘modernity’.

Cho Kyŏngdal has perceived the existence of a clear gap between the representatives of the nation and public (minjung). Cho presented the representatives of the nation’s perceptions of the ignorant masses to support his line of reasoning. Furthermore, Cho also reviewed the characteristics of the violent movements that broke out amongst the people (minjung). The first point he identified was the diversity that existed in terms of the types of movements. The representatives of the nation had an intricate relationship with the northwest area (P’yŏnan Province), where nu-
umerous organized movements led by religious groups such as the Ch’ŏndogyo [Cheongdogyo] and Christianity were implemented. The students and intelligentsia also played an important role in urban areas. On the contrary, farmers, which Cho identified as the backbone of the minjung movement, became the main actors in rural areas. Interestingly, a virtuous man-centered order in which the yangban mobilized minjung through intermediaries such as the heads of towns, petty functionaries, or village leaders prevailed in rural areas. In addition, the uprising methods adopted consisted of the types of revolts in markets on market days that had prevailed since the late Chosŏn era. These demonstrations were related to the everyday complaints of minjung caused by issues such as the regulation of burial grounds, intensive control of slash-and–burn farmers, the Japanese’s scorn toward Chosŏn people, and the heavy burden of tenant farming. These movements, which may have looked chaotic at first glance, were in fact embedded in the autonomous logic of minjung. Min-jung were described as being limited in terms of their awareness of their role as the main liberation actors. While they were easily overcome by a sense of righteous indignation vis-à-vis the Government General of Chosen, they nevertheless hesitated to openly take up the mentality of the struggle of commoners. Cho referred to this awareness amongst the min-jung movement as ‘original nationalism.’ Cho singled out the existence of this autonomous world of minjung, which was not captured by the concept of ‘modernity’ inherent in the modern nationalism of the intelligentsia.

Yun Haedong also sought to find the causes of the March 1st Movement in the coercive nature of militarism and the internal changes within Chosŏn society. Yun specifically focused on the burial plot policy designed to stem the move towards the privatization of common land that had existed since late Chosŏn, and thereby force a change in ancestor worship rituals. Yun asserted that this became the main reason for resistance. In addition, Yun also claimed that the response of rural communities followed the communal methods prevalent in rural areas; the majority of demonstrations took place at local markets. This line of reasoning can
be regarded as akin to that of Cho Kyŏngdal. However, Yun Haedong perceived the minjung movement as having provided impetus for the formation of a Korean modern nationalism that boasted strong ‘primal’ characteristics. Yun focused on the fact that the minjung used elements of modern print culture, such as manifestoes, declarations, newspapers, and placards, as implements to spread their movement from Seoul to provincial and then local areas. Thus, Yun’s opinions mark a clear departure from those of Cho Kyŏngdal, who discovered the foundation of the minjung movement in rural areas and the autonomous world of minjung. Furthermore, Yun Haedong described the nationalism in rural areas as follows:

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\text{The forced dismantling of autonomy and traditional norms led to the ideology of resistance being combined with these traditional norms. As such, the minjung movement can be characterized as a paradox in which while the tools of resistance were based on modern civilization, the methods of resistance consisted of traditional community responses. Here, one can see the characteristics of how modernity was accepted and identify the primal characteristics of Korean modern nationalism.}^{37}
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Yun also concluded that the March 1st Independence Movement diffused a form of nationalism with tribal and organic characteristics that took the form of a broad mass movement. Yun’s logic, namely that modern nationalism was diffused into the minjung world, runs contrary to that of Cho Kyŏngdal. In other words, Yun’s colonial modernity theory is clearly critical of Cho Kyŏngdal’s ‘colonial modernity’ theory.

In short, this can be regarded as a method to approach minjung society and behavioral patterns from the standpoint of ‘modernity.’ In this regard, Tsukiashi Tatsuhiko perceived the prototypical behavioral pattern of minjung that was front and center during the March 1st Independence Movement as that of involvement in the affairs of the state. He pointed out that the minjung’s involvement in the affairs of the state could be
traced back to the enforcement of royal authority suggested during the Kabo Reforms, and the move towards a top-to-bottom *Ilgun manmin* (one emperor leading the masses) structure established against the backdrop of the political culture formed by the Independence Club.\(^3\) This opinion is contradictory to Cho Kyŏngdal’s assertion that an attempt was made to actualize a *Ilgun Manmin* system that would be led by the emperor’s will yet based on guidance from the bottom during the Taehan [Daehan] Empire, via the Kabo [Gabo] Peasants’ War.\(^3\) However, Tsukiashi also pointed out that the Independence Club did not incorporate *minjung* in its activities, and that *minjung* also had anti-modern leanings that ran contrary to the notion of ‘civilization’ inherent in the creation of the ‘nation.’\(^4\) Viewed from this standpoint, Tsukiashi can be said to share Cho Kyŏngdal’s problem awareness. As such, although they have different opinions regarding the method of perceiving the world of Chosŏn *minjung*, their respective arguments have helped to shed some light on the character of the *minjung* movement.

The degree of penetration of ‘modernity’ differed at the individual local community level. Let us now analyze this point in a more detailed manner using education (schooling).

Cho Tonggŏl focused on Kangwŏn [Gangwon] Province. He paid attention to the role of education organizations as the organizational basis for the March 1\(^{st}\) Independence Movement.\(^4\) Cho singled out the heavy Confucian climate, establishment of *sŏdang* (*seodang*; private village schools) before and after the annexation of Korea that occurred against the backdrop of the anti-Japanese attitude of the Confucian group, diffusion of nationalist thought through the new educational system at public schools, and the establishment of night schools before the March 1\(^{st}\) Independence Movement. Of course, Cho’s focus was on the function of the educational sphere (schools) as the basis of the independence movement. He did not take into account ‘colonial modernity’ and did not grant any specific significance to the coexistence of pre-modern and modern values.

Meanwhile, in his study on the March 1\(^{st}\) Independence Movement in Sangju, Kyŏngbuk [Gyeongbuk] Province, Itagaki Ryuta asserted that the
momentum in Seoul was subsequently diffused to local provinces. In support of his argument, he pointed out that four of the six main stakeholders in Sangju had received a modern education, and that two of them were in fact studying in schools located in Seoul. This can be linked to Yun Haedong’s viewpoint with regards to the diffusion of the *minjung* movement. However, this theory cannot and should not be universally applied. Cho Tonggŏl pointed out that the absence of any organic contacts between the March 1st Independence Movement in Kangwŏn Province and the central movement resulted in fewer instances in which the Declaration of Independence was either read or diffused during demonstrations. This proves that regional deviations did emerge during the process of diffusing the *minjung* movement from Seoul to local provinces. More attention should be paid to this fact in future debates regarding the March 1st Independence Movement and colonial modernity.

Intelligentsia theory, and the issue of ‘conversion’ during wartime

The issue of the ‘pro-Japanese tendencies of Korean intelligentsia and the ‘conversion’ of socialists after the Sino-Japanese War has been most frequently debated in conjunction with ‘colonial modernity’ theory and ‘colonial publicness.’

Namiki Masahito perceived this as a means of ensuring a soft landing for those who challenged the colonial system by granting them ‘appropriate’ status within the system rather than causing new conflicts by decimating their ranks or banishing them. For his part, Tobe Hideaki maintained that this was in fact a resistance strategy that encompassed the preservation of independence and nationality and a desire for social reform. Cho Kyŏngdal responded that there were in fact many members of the intelligentsia who chose to remain silent without converting, and that the very existence of those who never converted cannot be ignored. Furthermore, he maintained that the generalization of the opinions of those who superficially analyzed the media during the colonial period was in and of itself problematic. Cho also stressed the fact that the socialist
discourse did not contain any clear logic with regards to continuous reforms and resistance. As far as the sphere of the intelligentsia was concerned, Cho stated that nationalism had helped establish ‘the publicness of the Government General of Chôsen = media sphere (≠ colonial publicness)’ and formed a collaborative relationship with the colonial power. With regard to the minjung world, Cho asserted that the minjung movement was rooted in the explosion of suppressed everyday emotions, and that the logic of the minjung movement was based on the cultural traditions and modes of thought of minjung. Cho emphasized the fissures that emerged between the intelligentsia and minjung, and maintained the fact that the logic of multi-layered exclusion that had been applied and embedded in the minjung world ensured that colonial people could never be equal to one another. Furthermore, Cho identified ‘original nationalism’ as the sphere of resistance of minjung, and as one that was separated from the nationalism of the intelligentsia. The question thus became, what is ‘original nationalism’? This question is related to the characteristics of the March 1st Independence Movement that were touched on above. Cho pointed out that ‘original nationalism’ was clearly separate from the nationalism advanced by nationalists seeking to create a ‘nation-state’ because it was rooted in everyday criticisms of the modernization policy of the Government General of Chôsen, and strongly tinged with the fantasy of the emperor and desire for utopia. Cho asserted that ‘original nationalism’ was created by the fact that colonial residents experienced acts of discrimination and violence in their everyday life that helped to create, albeit temporarily, a national awareness. Moreover, he maintained that resistance against the colonial structure inevitably resulted in the emergence of a sense of nationality. Hong Chonguk criticized Cho’s opinions as follows:

As Cho Kyôngdal has pointed out, modernity excludes traditional culture and folklore and enforces civilization in a violent manner. What is important is that this goes beyond simple violence so that a qualitative difference is generated between the suzerain state and its
colonies. In the colony of Chosŏn, the ‘traditions’ of Chosŏn in all aspects such as religion, language, and customs, were despised. On the contrary, the ‘traditions’ of Japan were encouraged and enforced. Given this situation, the resistance of minjung should be seen as having originated from the destruction of their traditions rather than their cultural traditions and modes of thought... In other words, the resistance of minjung in colonial Chosŏn was not an anti-modern phenomenon unrelated to the nation, but rather very modern and nationalistic. This resistance was the result of colonial modernity and not ‘original nationalism’.

Thus, the question is that of whether the resistance of minjung should be perceived as stemming from their cultural tradition and modes of thought or the colonial power’s destruction of traditions. This question in turn raises other ones regarding the interpretation of minjung, nation/nationalism, and definitions of modernity.

**Conclusion**

This study introduced the major trends in historical studies and as such did not derive any clear conclusions. However, several points should be mentioned and implications suggested.

The contradictions surrounding the notion of ‘colonial modernity’ have revolved around the differences in the basis of discussions and the manner in which terms should be interpreted. Cho Kyŏngdal’s criticism was carried out based on a ‘colonial modernity’ theory that only pays attention to the degree of penetration of and inclusion in ‘modernity.’ Furthermore, the difficulties in internalizing modernity led Cho to focus on the spiritual sphere of the minjung world as a ‘fortification of the mind’ that the hegemonic colonial power could not easily infiltrate. However, Hong Chonguk responded as follows:
... Cho Kyŏngdal also seems to perceive modernity solely as a specific form or pattern. Cho focuses exclusively on the ‘colonial modernity’ theory and the degree of penetration or inclusion in modernity. Consequently, they are placed on the same horizon. The present study (footnote 34) not only views this as a form of modernity, but as colonial modernity in the sense that it includes the contradictions and conflicts that emerged during the infiltration process.55

These two historians possess decisively different perceptions of ‘colonial modernity’ (criticism). In addition, as seen above, other scholars (Namiki Masahito, Yun Haedong, etc.) have adopted positions that emphasize the significance of the impetus towards introducing ‘modernity’ while leaving aside the degree of penetration of modernity and questions (Cho Kyŏngdal) regarding how the top-to-bottom modernity was implemented. At this point, it remains too early to tell whether these discussions are simply contradictory in nature or complementary. Put differently, although differences exist with regards to the focus on the relationship between the colonial power and intelligentsia or the relationship between the colonial power/intelligentsia and minjung, the practice of approving or disapproving theories based solely on these contradictory factors is neither constructive nor sound.56 Much as is the case with the intersection of the perception of ‘modernity,’ the use of the term ‘(colonial) modernity’ at the abstract level makes it look like the conflict revolves around a specific common logic. However, there are significant differences in the perspectives of the two parties. Attention should also be paid to the fact that the standards for the determination of whether two lines of reasoning are contradictory or complementary in nature have been established in accordance with the positions of the debaters. This does not mean the debaters’ logic and interpretations are arbitrary. Rather, there is a need for some traffic control undertaken from the standpoint of a third party to these debates. Because the debates around ‘colonial modernity’ have spread beyond the sphere of Korean history, historians must continuously seek to establish the structure needed to avoid the seeping of chaos into
such debates.

Notes:

1 For a recent study on this discourse, please refer to Kim Nangnyŏn, “‘Shoku-
minchi kindaika’ sairon” [Reanalysis of colonial modernization], Hajime Imanishi, Seikai sisutemu to tō Ajia – Shōkeiei kokunai shokuminchi ‘Shoku-
minchi kindai’ (Tokyo:) Nihon Keizai Hyōronsha, 2008).

2 Namiki Masahito, “Chōsen ni akeru ‘shokuminchi kindaisei’ ‘shokuminchi kōkyōsei’ taiichi kyōryoku – shokuminchi seiji shi shakai shi kenkyū no tame
no yobi teki kōsatsu” [Colonial Modernity, “Colonial Publicness,” and Col-
aboration in Korea: A Preparatory Review of the Political and Social History of
Colonial Korea, Kokusai kōryū kenkyū 5 (2003); Cho Hyŏnggún, “Ananke’
to shite no shokuminchisei kara mondaikei to shite no shokuminchi kindaisei
e” [From Coloniality as "Ananke" to Colonial Modernity as “problematique”)],
Kuadorante 6 (2004); Itagaki Ryuta, “Shokuminchi kindai’ o megutte –
Chōsen shi kenkyū ni okeru genjyō to kadai” [On the ‘Modern Colony’ – Current status and issues in the study of Korean
history], Rekishi Hyōron 654 (2004); Takenori Matsumoto, “Shokuminchi
teki kindai’ o meguru kinnen Chōsen shi kenkyū—ronten no seiri to saikōsei
no kotoromi” [Recent studies on <Colonial Modernity> in Korean history -
Organizing and reconstructing the issue], in Shokuminchi kindai no shiza—
Chōsen to Nihon, eds. Hiroshi Miyajima, Yi Sŏngsi, Yun Haedong, and Im
Chihyŏn (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2004.)

3 Yanagisawa Asobu and Okabe Makio, “Kaisetsu— Teikoku shugi to shoku-
minchi” [Imperialism and Colonialism], in Tenbō Nihon Rekishi 20 (Tokyo:

4 Ibid., 8.

5 Mention should also be made of the compilations of new historical materials
in the fields of political and diplomatic history, such as the publishing of the
verbal records of the former officials from the Government-General of Chōsen
carried out by the Research Institute for Oriental Cultures at Gakushuin Uni-
versity, the study of Japan’s annexation of Korea, and the active discussions
carried out between Korea and Japan. However, no detailed discussions on
these matters will be carried out in this study. A separate study will be con-
ducted on these matters.
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6 Komagome Takeshi, “‘Teikoku shi’ kenkyō no shatei” [Research range of ‘History of the Empire’], *Nihon Shi Kenkyū* 452 (2000), 224.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., 229.

9 Nishio Kanzi, *Kokumin no rekishi* [National history] (Sankei Shinbun Nyū Sabisu, 1999), 708.

10 In this regard, one of the most serious crises was caused by Yamano Sharin’s *Manga gen Kanryū* [Anti-Korean Wave Cartoon] (Shinyusha, 2005). For criticism of this book and other related works, please refer to Osamu Ota and Park Il, *Manga gen Kanryū’ no koko ga detarame* [‘Anti-Korean Wave Cartoon,’ Here is Bullshit] (Komonsu, 2006); Hiroshi Tanaka and Itagaki Ryuta, eds., *Ni Kan Shin aratana hajimari no tame no* (Iwanami Shoten, 2007).


12 Ibid.


14 An Pyŏngjik, “Han’guk kŭnhyŏndaesa úi saeroun perŏdaim” [A new paradigm of Korean modern and contemporary history], *Ch’angjak kwa pip´yŏng* 98 (1997).

15 Many related studies have been produced. Examples include Nakamura Satoru, “Kindai tō Ajia ni okeru jishusei no seikaku to ruikei” [The nature and types of landlord systems in modern East Asia], in *Chōsen kindai no keizai kōzō*, eds., Nakamura Satoru, Hideki Kajimura, An Pyŏngjik, and Yi Taegūn (Nippon Hyoron Sha, 1990); Hori Kazuo, *Shokuminchi kōgyōka no shi teki bunseki—Nihon shihon shugi to shokumin keizai* [Historical Analysis of Korean industrialization: Japanese capitalism and the colonial economy] (Tokyo: Yuhi-kaku, 1995).
16 Sin Yongha. “‘Singminji kindaehwa’ ron chae chongnip ui sido e taehan pip’an” [Criticism of the attempt to reestablish the ‘Colonial Modernization’ theory], Ch’angjak kwa Pip’yong 98 (1997).

17 Yi Yonghun, Taehan Min guk iyagi (Story of the Republic of Korea) (Seoul: Kip’arang, 2007), 83-94.

18 Ibid., 94.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., 170-179.

21 Ibid., 173-174.


24 Ibid.


28 Cho Kyōngdal, Chōsen minshū undō no tenkai—to no ronri to kyūsai shisō [Development of Korean public movements, logic, and thought], (Iwanami Shoten, 2002); Shokumin ki Chōsen no chishikijin to minshū—shokuminchi kindaisei hihan [The intellectuals and public of Korea during the colonial period – Criticism of colonial modernity] (Yushisha, 2008).
29 Matsumoto Takenori, *Chōsen nōson no ‘shokuminchi kindai’ keizai* [The Experience of Colonial Modernity in Rural Chosŏn] (Shakai Shorinsha, 2005), 24-25.

30 Ibid. 27.

31 Matsumoto Takenori, “Shokuminchi Chōsen ni okeru eisei iryō seido no kaihen to Chōsen jin shakai no hannō” [Reform of the health and medical systems in colonial Korea and the reaction of Korean society], *Rekishi Gaku Kenkyū* 834 (2007), 5.


33 Namiki Masahito, “‘Shokuminchi kōkyōsei’ to Chōsen shakai—shokuminchi ki kōhanki o chūshin ni [Colonial publicness and Chosŏn society – with a special focus on the late colonial period], in *Bunmei ‘kaika’ ‘heiwa’—Nihon to Kankoku*, eds. Pak Ch’ugnsik and Hiroshi Watanabe (Keio Daigaku Shuppan, 2006), 242.

34 *Shokumin ki Chōsen no chishikijin to minshū—shokuminchi kindaisei hihan* [The intellectuals and public of Korea during the colonial period – Criticism of colonial modernity] (Yushisha, 2008).

35 Cho Kyōngdal.

36 Yun Haedong, “Mudan kwa munhwa ūi sai: 3•1 undong kwa singminji kūndae(sŏng)” [Gap between the military government and culture] (Seoul: Academy of East Asian Studies, Sungkyungwan University); “1919 nyŏn tong Asia kūndae ūi saeroun chŏn’gae,” Paper presented at 3•1 undong mit 5•4 undong 90 chunyŏn kinyŏm kuch’xe haksul hoeŭi [International academic conference to commemorate the 90 year of the March 1st movement and May 4th Movement, 2009].

37 Ibid. 112.


40 Tsukiashi Tatsuhiko, 207.

41 Cho Tonggŏl, “Samil undong ūi chibangsa chŏk sŏnggyŏk – Kangwŏndo chibang ūl chungsim ūro” [Characteristics of the March 1st Independence
Movement as viewed through local provincial history – special focus on Kangwŏn Province], Yŏksa Hakpo 47 (1970).


46 Cho Kyŏngdal, Shokuminchi Chŏsen no chishikijin to minshū – shokuminchi kindaisei hihan [The intelligentsia and minjung of Chosŏn during the colonial period – criticism of colonial modernity] (Tokyo: Yūshisha, 2008), 164.


48 Ibid., 23.

49 Ibid., 14.

50 Ibid., 26-27.

51 Ibid., 27.


53 Cho Kyŏngdal, Shokuminchi Chŏsen no chishikijin to minshū – shokuminchi kindaisei hihan, 5.

54 Ibid. 23.

55 Hong Chonguk, 21.

56 Kotani Hiroyuki’s review of Cho Kyŏngdal’s Shokuminchi Chŏsen no chishikijin to minshū – shokuminchi kindaisei hihan is one that views Cho’s arguments as being based on the ‘dualism or binary of the intelligentsia and minjung’ and the ‘binary of intelligentsia nationalism and minjung nationalism’ Kotani Hiroyuki, “Shohyō: Cho Kyŏngdal shokuminchi ki Chŏsen no chishikijin to minshū” [Book review: Cho Kyŏngdal’s The intellectuals and masses in Korea during Japanese colonial rule-, Rikishi Gaku Kenkyū 867 (2010).
Although I will reserve judgment on the question of whether Cho intended to create such a dichotomy, his emphasis on the existence of ‘anti-modern’ min-jung made it harder to see the internal deviations within the intelligentsia. It is also unclear how those who oppose the ‘colonial modernity’ theory or Cho Kyŏngdal’s thoughts perceive this point. The opinions presented in this study are mine and not based on any thorough analysis. A more detailed review of this matter will be undertaken in a separate essay.