

## De-centralizing China: Reading Chinese books in Korea, 1882–1910

### Introduction

The traditional political and economic network in East Asia faced transformative moment in the late nineteenth century. As Andre Schmid vividly demonstrated in his book *Korea Between Empires*, Koreans openly questioned the validity of China as the “Middle Kingdom – the center of the world” Western countries and Meiji Japan became the new model of civilization and goal of enlightenment, while China and Korea often represented as old and barbaric nations. Hence, instead of calling China as *chungguk* (central kingdom), *Chi-na*, a Japanese transliteration of China’s western name began to appear in Korean public media. Andre Schmid showed how Korean discourse of “civilization and enlightenment” was deeply interconnected with Japanese colonial discourse on Korea and was hard to distinguish nationalist discourse from Japanese colonial discourse under the rubric of “enlightenment” and “strong nation.”<sup>1</sup>

In this paper, through the investigation the social and economic materiality of knowledge and discourse, I will show how this critical transformation was mediated by Chinese books, not Japanese books. What I mean Chinese books here not only designate books written by Chinese authors, but also includes books originally written or published by foreign author, translated in Chinese language and published in China. Compared to book written in other languages, Korean readers found that Chinese language was much readable, and regarded books published from China had more credibility and appealing. These Chinese books of new learning flourished by the collaborative works of Western and Chinese publishers in Chinese treaty port, especially in Shanghai. And through a broad survey of book list in Korea existed between 1880 and 1910, I found that these Chinese books consisted majority of the book titles circulated in Korea during this decisive juncture in Korean history when Korean people began to search for new knowledge.

### Dissemination of Knowledge from the West in Late Imperial China and Chosŏn Korea

Since the first century books from China have influenced Korean culture and society. These include books related to Confucianism and Buddhism and their impact on the development of states in the Korean peninsula. The bureaucratic system of the state was constructed upon the ancient system established by the sage-kings of the Three Dynasties, and civil examination system educated and trained literati elites who filled the government positions with Confucian learning.

Of course it was not only Confucian learning from China that dominated the intellectual and cultural activities in Korea, but also other multiple intellectual and religious traditions from China inspired philosophical and cultural developments in Korea. Moreover, in China Confucian learning did not totally block out other teachings, especially the influence of Western learning by Jesuit missionaries since the sixteenth century. As Benjamin Elman addressed in his study of natural studies in late Ming China, Chinese literati had relatively successful path along with Western science under the slogan of investigating things and extending knowledge (*kyŏkmul ch’iji*).<sup>2</sup> Under a different political and social circumstances, despite the fact that there were numerous brutal purge of missionaries and Korean convert at the stake for heresy, Western learning in Chosŏn Korea was yet considered as an object of study and curiosity for Korean literati as their counterpart in China did.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002),

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550-1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 281-351.

<sup>3</sup> Im, Chong-t'ae. *17, 18-segi Chungguk kwa Chosŏn ūi sŏgu chirihak ihae: chigu wa tasŏt taeryuk ūi uhwa* [China and Chosŏn’s understanding of Western geography in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century: a fable of globe and the five continents] (Kyŏnggi-do P’aju-si: Ch’angbi, 2012).

## The Advance of Western Imperialism and the Rise of Modern Print Culture in Shanghai

After the First Opium War (1839-1842), the Qing government signed the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842. Through the treaty the islands of Hong Kong became Britain's perpetuity, while five treaty ports were established along the Chinese southeastern coastline. The defeat in the Second Opium War (1856-60) made easier for Western imperialism to freely infiltrate into Chinese society and economy. While the newly opened treaty ports became the symbol of imperial exploitation, it also served as a gateway for intellectual and cultural exchange between China and Western countries.

Among other open-treaty ports in China, Shanghai became the center of modern print culture in China. Shanghai had geographical advantage as a river mouth of the Yangzi River, and it had well-established legal protection for the activities of missionaries and merchants. The London Missionary Society Press (*Mohai shuguan*), one of the oldest and most influential Western translation offices established in China, moved to Shanghai from Ningbo in 1860. It produced 150,000 copies of the Chinese Bible and 171 religious and scientific books.<sup>4</sup> The translation project in the London Missionary Society Press also impressed Guo Songtao (1818-1891), a scholar-official and one of the leaders of the Self-strengthening movement (*Yangwu yundong*) in the late Qing.<sup>5</sup> The Qing began to build arsenals and shipyards to make modern firearms and naval vessels to strengthen defense against Western invasion via the Chinese coastal line. In 1867, the Translation College of the Jiangnan Arsenal (*Jiangnan jiqi zhizhaoju*) was established, which translated 160 kinds of Western books related to science, technology, current affairs of the Western world, and military weapons and tactics.<sup>6</sup> The Translation College of the Jiangnan Arsenal hired both Western and Chinese professionals, and one of them was John Fryer (1839-1928).<sup>7</sup> Through the Translation College, John Fryer published 158 titles. Including John Fryer, these Westerners translated book with the aid of Chinese assistant. When the Westerner first read out the Western book in their poor Chinese language, then the Chinese assistant discussed the incomprehensible points and wrote down the translation.<sup>8</sup> This method was widely accepted because the lack of skilled bilingual translators and lack of systemic knowledge of translation.

Later, in 1887, a group of American missionaries, Young J. Allen (1836-1907), William Martin (1827-1916), and Timothy Richard (1845-1919), established the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge Among the Chinese (*Guangxuehui*) in Shanghai. Young J. Allen also worked as a translator at the Translation College before he worked in the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge Among the Chinese. It published at least 56 books before 1900. Among the published books was the *New Summarized History of the Western Countries* (*Taixi xinshi lanyao* 1895) that Richard Timothy translated. The original version was Robert Mackenzie's *The 19th Century: A History* (1880). Because of its up-to-date information on the Western world, more than 30,000 copies were sold.<sup>9</sup> The Chosŏn government quickly reprinted it in 1897, and translated into Korean at the same time to use it as school textbooks.

In addition to the efforts of missionaries and government, thanks to the growing book market in China, the book publishing industry flourished. In 1897, Commercial Press (*Shangwu yinshuguan*) was established, and in 1902, the Civilization Press (*Wenming shuju*, later *Zhonghua shuju*) was opened. They

<sup>4</sup> Ryū, Kenki, *Mato Shanhai: Nihon Chishikijin no Kindai Taiken* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2000), 76-77.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 89-90.

<sup>6</sup> Xiong, Yuezhi, *Xixue Dongjian yu Wanqing Shehui* [The Dissemination of Western Learning and the Late Qing Society] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1994), 500.

<sup>7</sup> Adrian Arthur Bennett, *John Fryer: the Introduction of Western Science and Technology Into Nineteenth-Century China* (Cambridge, Mass.: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University; distributed by Harvard University Press, 1967). The complete list of John Fryers's translation is in 82-102.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 29.

<sup>9</sup> Xiong Yuezhi et al., *Shanghai Tongshi* [Comprehensive History of Shanghai] (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1999) vol. 6, 150-167.

first started their work of publishing and distributing the textbooks that were used in newly established schools, but they later expanded to covering various genres of books.<sup>10</sup> Including Commercial and Civilization Press, numerous presses began to emerge in Shanghai since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Xiong Yuezhi, a renowned historian of the history of modern Shanghai, estimated that about 77 percent of all Western titles translated into Chinese were produced in Shanghai city.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Impact of Shanghai books in East Asia**

The Western books published in Shanghai not only influenced the entire China, but also other countries in East Asia. Russia's southward advance toward Sakhalin and as US approached Japan via the Pacific Ocean agitated Japanese society. It soon turned into a demand for the secrete the military strength and national wealth of the Western countries. Japanese translated Western books by themselves, but they did not ignore the existing pile of Western books translated into Chinese. Like Korea, Japan also had had imported a large sum of Chinese for centuries.<sup>12</sup> And the books published in modern Shanghai continued it flow to Japan and reprinted from 1850 to 1870.<sup>13</sup>

And this was also witness by Korean envoy in Japan. In 1876, Korea signed her first modern international treaty with Japan in 1876. The same year Chosŏn dispatched delegation to Japan to see and learn what Japanese were doing. Kim Ki-su (1832–?), the representative of Korean delegation saw and recorded the translation process in Japan in the 1870s.

...Cutting woodblock have no leisure time to rest all day. The work is so ingenious and quick, so even if the pile of books reach the ceiling, it is done in a single day. Because Chinese books are reprinted immediately as soon as they arrive, so if one wants to get a book, there is no need to go to the bookstores in Yanqing (Beijing). Hence, the reprinted [ones] are neatly printed on sturdy papers, so at some point these [reprinted] are rather superior [than the Chinese one].<sup>14</sup>

Beijing was no longer matchless political and cultural center. When Kim left his record of the politics, economics, culture, and social conditions in Meiji Japan, Kim was surprised by how the Japanese had kept importing books from China since medieval times, and even nowadays. However, after Japan had an exchange with Western countries, it put away the old classics and cherished only crafts of national prosperity and military power. However, the Japanese continued to import books from China because even the books about Western technology and theories were first translated into and published in Chinese by the translators in Shanghai. Whether pursuing classical learning or “new learning,” the flow of books from China to Japan continued. And it was not only Japan but also Korea benefitted from the Shanghai book culture starting in the late 19th century.

### **Defending the Country with Western Science and Technology Books: 1880–1890**

The news of China and Japan opening their ports to Westerners spread to Korea, and similar attempt to breach in the coastline of Korea by French (1866) and US naval fleet (1871) raised the awareness of crisis.

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<sup>10</sup> Xiong, *Xixue Dongjian*, 667–669.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Peter Kornicki, *The Book In Japan: A Cultural History From the Beginning to the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

<sup>13</sup> Ryū, *Mato Shanhai*, 94-101.

<sup>14</sup> Kim, Ki-su, “Haksul Ch’il Ch’ik” [Seven Academic Logics], *Yildong Kiyu* [Travelogue to the East], accessed August 30, 2016, [http://db.itkc.or.kr/itkcd/text/nodeViewIframe.jsp?bizName=MK&seojiId=kc\\_mk\\_h033&gunchaId=av003&muncHeId=07&finId=011](http://db.itkc.or.kr/itkcd/text/nodeViewIframe.jsp?bizName=MK&seojiId=kc_mk_h033&gunchaId=av003&muncHeId=07&finId=011).

There was a strong need to solve the problems inside and outside of Korea. The nineteenth century Korea faced internal crisis in various aspect: first in political realm, a few powerful elite families monopolized the political power which resulted in great disturbance in state governance. In social level, there were numerous riots and peasant rebellions occurred in multiple areas. It was mainly due to the economic hardship that Korea experienced during the 19th century. There was a high inflation resulted from the depletion of the land and decreases of productivity, and followed by the collapse of local markets.<sup>15</sup> Soon after China and Japan signed unequal treaties with Western countries, Chosŏn Korea faced the same fate. After Meiji Japan's armed protest in Kanghwa Island, Chosŏn Korea signed the its first international treaty with Japan. Soon Korea also signed treaty of commerce with Qing China and other Western countries.

In order to face the increased military threat, the Chosŏn government sent envoys to China and Japan to learn how their neighbors were doing. In 1881, Kim Yun-sik was sent to Qing to learn new technology with a group of engineers. Kim and his people visited the military arsenals in Tianjin and Shanghai. When Kim returned, he brought 67 books about Western science and technology: physics, chemistry, mathematics, astronomy, mechanics, ship building, defense strategy, and current affairs in the Western world.<sup>16</sup> Some of the books were unable to identify, but among 67 titles, 39 were work of John Fryer and from the Translation College of the Jiangnan Arsenal in Shanghai.

Imported books were not only for the need inside the government. They were introduced to wider range of people through Korean newspaper. In 1882, with the aid from Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901), the Chosŏn government invited Japanese printing technicians including Inoue Kakugoro (1860-1938) and modern printing machine from Japan. Next year, the government established the Bureau of Spreading Words (*Pakmun-guk*) and began to publish *Seoul Ten-Days Reports* (Hansŏng sunbo), the first modern newspaper in Korea. The publication of *Seoul Ten-Days Reports* was halted because of the political turbulence Kapsin coup (1884), but soon resumed as a *Seoul Weekly Reports* (Hansŏng jubo) from 1886.

The newspaper not only delivered daily reports inside and outside the country, but also published knowledge about Western science and technology which they gained from Western newspapers and books translated in Chinese. *Seoul Ten-Days Reports* was broadly divided into two sections: domestic news and foreign news. Through the foreign news section, Chosŏn government spread recent world affairs and scientific knowledge to the people. Although the printing technology and engineers were transferred from Meiji Japan, the contents of the newspaper were mostly filled with information from Chinese media. The newspaper was broadly divided into two sections: domestic news and foreign news. Through the foreign news section, Chosŏn government spread recent world affairs and scientific knowledge to the people. In her study of analyzing articles in the foreign news section, Han Bo-ram found that a majority of foreign news was cited from Chinese newspapers.<sup>17</sup>

Although the first Korean newspaper emerged with the aid of Japan, the content of that newspaper was filled with information from Chinese media. In addition to collecting foreign newspapers, the Bureau of Spreading Words imported Western books to introduce them in the newspaper. In 1886, the bureau received Western books from Herman Budler, a German diplomat who was the acting consul general in Seoul. He imported books via Behn, Meyer & Co (Korean branch name was *Sech'ang*

<sup>15</sup> Yi, Yŏng-hun et al., *Suryang Kyongjesa Ro Tasi Pon Chosŏn Hugi* [Revisiting the late Chosŏn period from the econometrics history of Korea] (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 2004).

<sup>16</sup> Kim Yun-sik listed the books he brought from China in his diary the *Records of Rain or Fine Days* (Ŭmch'ŏngsa) on April 26 and October 14, 1882. The total number of titles are 73, but if we ignore the titles that appear twice, the total number is 67. Accessed August 30, 2016, [http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa\\_007\\_0020\\_0020\\_0010\\_0010](http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_007_0020_0020_0010_0010), [http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa\\_007\\_0020\\_0020\\_0010\\_0070](http://db.history.go.kr/id/sa_007_0020_0020_0010_0070).

<sup>17</sup> Han, Bo-ram, "1880 Nyŏndae Chosŏn Chŏngbu ũi Kaehwa Chŏngchaek ũl Wihan Kukje Chŏngbo Sujip: Hansŏng Sunbo ũi Kwallyŏn Kisa Punsŏk" [The Chosŏn Dynasty Government's Gathering of International Information for the Enlightenment Policies during the 1880s – Analysis of the Articles in the Hansŏng Sunbo], *Chindan Hakpo* 100 (2005): 109-164. The table of the list of cited foreign newspapers is on pages 117 to 120.

*yanghaeng*),<sup>18</sup> a shipping company that had a branch in both China and Korea. 25 book and magazine titles were in the import list, and among them, 15 were titles published in Shanghai, while one was from Beijing.

Despite these early attempts to introduce new knowledge to defend the country from external threat and encounter internal crisis, these efforts did not result in a significant change in the Chosŏn government and society. As Kim Yeonhee addresses in her research on the Chinese translation of Western scientific books in the 1880s, these early efforts to introduce Western knowledge to Korea via books from Shanghai did not last long because of the political turbulence and diplomatic crisis that the Kapsin Coup (1884) caused.<sup>19</sup> A number of young officials from powerful families plotted the Kapsin Coup, which tried to establish a reform government modeled on the Westernization of the Meiji government. The failure of the coup resulted in the collapse of the existing body of reformative officials in the Chosŏn government, and it also halted activities related to Westernization efforts, including efforts to modernize military weapons. And the government could not openly embrace imported books of Western knowledge from Shanghai like before.

### **Educating Korean People with Chinese Textbooks: 1890—1900**

In 1894, the Chosŏn government initiated the Kabo reform. The Kabo reform adopted Western political and bureaucratic system. The affairs of the Royal House was separated from the State affairs, and the judicature was separated from the administrative power, and the traditional civil examination system was abolished. All the barriers which prohibited lowborn people were lifted. Education of new knowledge became the key to obtain high status, and a new demand for book emerged. The government established public schools and foreign language schools equipped with a new curriculum. The bureau of education (*hakbu*) was the core organ of this educational reformation.

The bureau of education also published textbooks for those public school, but at the beginning the bureau did not have ability to accommodate this change and new demand. However, with limited technology and a lack of professional book editors and translators, the production of textbooks in Korea was far from enough, so the bureau of education first directly used textbooks imported from China and also translated them into the national-sinitic style (*kukhanmun che*) or Korean (*ŏnmun*) so that people without enough training in classical Chinese could also read and use them.

We can see how the Chosŏn government used Western books translated into Chinese as supplements for school textbooks more clearly in the case of Richard Timothy's *New Summarized History of the Western Countries*. It came out in 1895 in Shanghai, and two years later, the Bureau of Education reprinted it in Korea. The Korean translation version also came out at the same time. Because it was one of the most popular textbooks at the time, *New Summarized History of the Western Countries* also had a list of textbook titles on the back of its book so that readers could continue their studies relying on these books. Two booklists are attached: One is the list of titles that the bureau of education published, and the other features the titles published by the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge Among the Chinese (*Guangxuehui*), a translation office that American missionaries in Shanghai operated. While the bureau of education has only 21 titles listed here, the Society for the Diffusion provided 44 titles, which was about two times that of the bureau of education. That is, although Korea began to produce textbook by itself, yet a large portion of curriculum of the school system heavily relied on textbooks from China.

A new book market for textbook also began to emerged in this time. However, bookstores in the 1890s were mostly street vendors, and most of the bookstores also served as chandleries or paper shops.

<sup>18</sup> Asea Munje Yŏn'guso, ed., *Ku Han'guk Oegyo Munsŏ* [Diplomatic Records of old Korea] (Seoul: Koryŏ Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1965), vol. 15, 166-167.

<sup>19</sup> Kim, Yeonhee, "1880 Nyŏndae Sujip Toen Han'yŏk Kisulsŏ ūi Yihae: Kyujanggak Han'gukhak Yŏn'guwŏn Sojangbon ūl Chungsim ūro" [Survey of Chinese Translations of Western Books on Science and Technology Collected by the Chosŏn Government in the 1800s], *Han'guk Kwahaksa Hakhoeji* 38, no. 1 (2016): 71-119.

While books were high-value products, the market was yet not large enough to gain enough profit. Separate and professional bookstores with larger capital began to appear only after 1905.<sup>20</sup>

Another reason of the small book market was that there were not enough Korean publishing companies that could feed the market. The first private book printing shop with modern printing facilities in Korea was founded in 1884, but it did not continue in the 1890s, and private publishing companies began to flourish only after 1900.<sup>21</sup>

### Learning Japanese Empire through Chinese Books: 1900–1910

The book market began to flourish during the first decade of the 1900s. Since the introduction of the general education system after the Kabo reform in 1895, the number of literate individuals increased dramatically. Private schools were also established in the 1880s, and after 1905, the number of private schools increased dramatically. According to the statistics, the number of private schools that received certification from the government was 2,250.<sup>22</sup> These schools dramatically increased the number of readers in the whole population.

The Japan-Korea protectorate treaty in 1905 had significant impact on the rise of book market in Korea. The boom in education represented by the increased number of private schools in Korea indicates the national scale of the reaction to overcome the national crisis through education. While nationalistic newspapers shouted for education to foster national strength and prosperity, even those who did not buy into the nationalist rhetoric's found their own ways of surviving after the state collapse, when nothing was left on which to rely.

In addition to schools, academic societies and educational organizations emerged after 1905. These included the Korean Self-Strengthening Society (*Taehan chaganghoe*, established in 1906), Northwest Academic Society (*Sōbuk hakhoe*, 1908), Metropolitan Society for Promoting Education (Kihohūnghakhoe, 1908), and so on.

The increase of literacy and the increase of the book demand were also reflected in newspaper articles. On October 12, the *Korea Daily News* (*Taehan maeil sinbo*) published an article entitled "Books are the Compass to Develop People's Wisdom." It addressed that books are the foundation of developing knowledge, a knowledge for strong nation.

As investigating the situation of the nations of world, their enlightened, wealthy, and powerful nationals all have enthusiastic patriotic spirit, and regard national affairs as their own, being active and forward looking as their prime object. If their nation's power is one step behind other nations, then all people make a duty, which is altruism. [Their] knowledge is enlightened so they acknowledge state affairs as their own work.<sup>23</sup>

Sin Ch'ae-ho, a famous nationalist writer, also contented that book is the basis of nation-building. On a different day in the same newspaper, wrote:

<sup>20</sup> Maurice Courant, a French diplomat and the author of *Bibliographie Coréenne; Tableau Littéraire de la Corée, Contenant la Nomenclature des Ouvrages Publiés Dans ce Pays Jusqu'en 1890 Ainsi que la Description et L'analyse Détaillées des Principaux d'entre ces Ouvrages*, stayed in Korea from 1890 to 1892 and left notes on the bookstores he had visited. The bookstores were all gathered in the city center and were located on the broad street between Chonggak and the capital's southern gate. In Yi, *Paek Tu-Yong*, 120–122.

<sup>21</sup> Kim, Bong Hee, *Han'guk Kaehwagi Sōjōk Munhwa Yōn'gu* [A Study of Book Culture in Korea during the Enlightenment Period] (Seoul: Ihwa Yōja Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1999), 36–37.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 21–22.

<sup>23</sup> "Sōjōk i wi Kaebal Minji ji Jinam" [Books are the Compass to Develop People's Wisdom], *Korea Daily News*, October 12, 1906, cited in Kim Bong Hee, *Ibid*, 18.

Book is a womb produces country's public feeling, custom, politics, industry, culture, and military power. [Book is] also a photo album of a lineage of sages, heroes, ancients, patriots, and gallants. If there is no book, there will be no nation.<sup>24</sup>

The explosive demand for books and the increase in the number of readers were accompanied by the flourishing numbers of new bookstores. According to Yi Min-hui's extensive research on the names of bookstores that began to appear in modern Korea, between the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and 1910, at least 140 bookstore names appeared in this time period. While 75 bookstores of them are able to trace their dates of foundation, the 65 remaining bookstores were not able to find when they were founded. Among these 75 bookstores, 74 were all established between 1900 and 1910.<sup>25</sup>

Because of the lack of the printing facilities needed to fulfill the current need for textbooks and the demand for new learning in Korea, many textbooks and other books were still imported from China or Japan.<sup>26</sup> Thus, an article appeared in the *Imperial Gazetteer* complaining about the current situation of the lack of good books.

When you look at bookstores, there are nothing but books written in Chinese and imported from Shanghai. Those books only can be read by people who know Chinese language. Moreover, all books are crude and outdated except a few number of books. There is nothing worth to read. When it comes to books written in Japanese, occasionally people went abroad to get good books. And when it comes to Japanese books, occasionally because of those pioneers who went abroad to get good books. But how many people know the basic grammar of Japanese language? Even though the Bureau of Education produced some translations, they are nothing but old-fashioned and negligible ones, such as Okamoto's *History of All Nations*, coarse and rough writings, such as *New Summarized History of the Western Countries*, and so on. Alas! After several decades of reformation, undertaking the development of people's knowledge came only this far. What a shame! What a pity!<sup>27</sup>

At the end, the article urged the government and schools to establish more translation offices and to produce more books. Compared to the books that recently came from Shanghai, he found that the only available translation of the world history was all outdated. Numerous nations colonized and disappeared from the world map after Okamoto Kansuke's *History of All Nations* (1879) was written, and Timothy Richard's *New Summarized History of the Western Countries* (1894) was no longer "new" and needed to be updated by incorporating the world history of the past ten years. At least the author acknowledges the need for more translated books compared to relying on the quality of the books imported from China. To the author, this imbalance of knowledge looked obvious, and for him, for the sake of spreading knowledge, more books needed to be translated into Korean to make them readable to more Koreans who did not know how to read Chinese texts.

So, what kinds of books might Koreans have had access to at the time he wrote the article? According to an advertisement that appears in the *Imperial Gazetteer*, about 3,200 kinds of books were imported from Shanghai, but the book list only has 396 titles of them.<sup>28</sup> The books were organized under 17 categories: elementary, advanced elementary, middle school, high school, history, geography, politics

<sup>24</sup> "Kuso Kanhaeng ui Ron Sojok Ch'ulp'an'ga Chessi Ege Koham" [Discourse on Publishing Old Books, a Word to Book Publishers], *Korea Daily News*, December 18, 1908, cited in Yi, *Paek Tu-Yong*, "Acknowledgement."

<sup>25</sup> Yi, *Paek Tu-Yong*, 123–129.

<sup>26</sup> The list of book titles of the Great Harmony Bookstore (*Taedong sŏgwan*) was in the advertisement section of the *Imperial Gazetteer* on June 1, 8, and 16, 1906, and in the *Korea Daily News* on June 5, 10, and 13, cited in Kim, *Kaehwagi Sŏjŏk Munhwa Yŏn'gu*, 291.

<sup>27</sup> "Oejŏk Yŏkch'ul ūi P'ilyo" [Need to Translate Foreign Books], *Imperial Gazetteer*, June 28, 1907, cited in Kim, *Kaehwagi Sŏjŏk Munhwa Yŏn'gu*, 129.

<sup>28</sup> *Imperial Gazetteer*, "Oejok," June 5, 1906.

and legal studies, sociology, philosophy, economic studies, agricultural studies, business, industry, medicine, military science, and biographies. Through examining the names of the categories, we quickly realized that the category structure itself adopted a new educational system as a bone of the learning structure. It divided educational subjects and levels based on learners' ages and learning experiences. There is no doubt that such a system was first introduced in Meiji Japan and that it influenced the academic map, which we can see from this book leaflet.

Japanese imprint on Chinese books looks more vivid when we look at the major publishers that appears in this book leaflet: The Expanding Knowledge Press and the Expanding Knowledge Press. And these publishers reflect the Chinese increasing interest on Japan as a model of reformation.

The Expanding Knowledge Press (*Guangzhi shuju* in Chinese *Gwangji sŏguk* in Korean) was established in 1901 in Shanghai. While the director of the press was Ma Jingyu, Liang Qichao was really leading the press. Some of Liang's early works were published through here, but most of the books published were translated books that Japanese authors had written or translated. So many of the translators were also staying in Japan just as Liang did, including Mai Zhonghua, Mai Dinghua, and Zhao Bizhen. Most of these translators were students of Kang Youwei.<sup>29</sup> After their failure to promote reformation within the Qing government, Liang and Kang both went to Japan as an exile. They continued their task of enlightening Chinese people via media by publishing Chinese newspapers in Japan, and also establishing the Expanding Knowledge Press company in Shanghai to continue their influence on Chinese people in the mainland.

The Civilization Press also translated a lot of Japanese textbooks into Chinese. established in 1902 and published many of the textbooks. The government ordered that Civilization Press should be the major publisher for elementary school textbooks, and a large portion of these elementary books were exported to Korea.<sup>30</sup> A large portion of the Civilization Press books imported to Korea were also Japanese books. In addition, many of those textbooks were also translated works, which originated from Japan. While China became an "old empire" and Koreans began to de-centralize, ironically, such an effort was in many cases built upon the authoritative voice of influential Chinese writers, books, and publishers.

Unlike the Translation College of the Jiangnan Arsenal, books related to science were very few. Instead, a lot of books were under the category of social and political theory, history, and philosophy. Among the 98 books for which I was able to find information about their publishers, 34 titles were published by the Expanding Knowledge Press, and among them, 28 were from the Civilization Press. As we look at the authors of each book, we find that these two publishers were the transmitters of Japanese academic works to China and Korea. And in fact, majority of the books published by the Expanding Knowledge Press and the Civilization Press were work of translation, and the original version is in Japanese, or some cases a double translation of Western book. For example, in case of Ōuzhōu wàijiāoshí, the diplomatic history in Europe, the original title was *Histoire diplomatique de l'Europe depuis l'ouverture du Congrès de Vienne jusqu'à la fermeture du Congrès de Berlin* written by Antonin Debidour (1847-1917), and it was translated into Japanese by Sakai Yūzaburō, and then translated by Mài Dīnghuá and published by the Expanding Knowledge Press in 1905.

### **Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, and Expanding Knowledge Press: Implanting Japanese Books to the Sinographic World**

Both Kang and Liang encouraged the Chinese to read Japanese books, and Expanding Knowledge Press was their organ to make Chinese read Japanese books. Because of their popularity and fame in Korea, books from Expanding Knowledge Press aroused more of an echo in Korean society. Before establishing a professional translation office, Kang published the *Catalog of Japanese Translated Books* (Ribēn shūmù zhī) in 1898. The *Catalog of Japanese Translated Books* categorized Western books

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<sup>29</sup> Xiong, *Xixue Dongjian*, 643-5.

<sup>30</sup> Xiong, *Xixue Dongjian*, 645.

translated by Japanese under 15 categories. The catalog also included detailed bibliographic information, such as the title, volume number, author, and price of the book, with his own notes and comments attached to each book.<sup>31</sup>

Liang also expressed his opinion on the advantage of learning Japanese. On April 1, 1899, Liang published an editorial essay in *Qingyi Bao* titled “The Advantage of Learning Japanese.” In the essay, Liang addressed how the current Western books translated into the Chinese language were too heavily concentrated on certain topics, such as military science and technology, while the Japanese translated Western books in all fields, including politics, economic, and philosophy. Learning the Japanese language is even better than learning English directly because for Chinese, it takes 50–60 years to master English, while it takes only a few months to master the Japanese language.<sup>32</sup>

Although newspapers and booksellers cherished Liang’s works, not everyone in Korea were pleasant with Liang. People quickly realized the usefulness of Liang’s work for buttressing their efforts to promote new learning. However, Confucian scholar Cho Kŭng-sup (1873–1933) from Kyōngsang province openly criticized Liang and his work. Although Cho still believed the need to hold onto traditional learning of principle (*tohak*), he actively compared the different theories from the East and the West, which were compiled in his *Difficulty of Words* (Kon’ on, 1910). Cho criticized Liang for his faddish sophistry (*kokhak ase*) and his losing his basics learning from the ancient sage kings, overwhelmed by Western civilization, mesmerizing the minds of Korean youth by his fine writing and by the free and bold hand on historical events to which he alludes. However, Cho Kŭng-sup could not deny the fact that there were a crowd of Koreans admiring Liang, and that is why Cho was so concerned about the influence of such distorted ideas.<sup>33</sup>

The intellectual and cultural shift characterized by seeking knowledge and wisdom from Japan was indeed a tremendous change, but as we look at it closely, there was still a continuing tendency that China was the source of such books. Before 1905, when the Japanese Protectorate forced putting the Japanese language in the school curriculum, direct access to Japanese language materials were limited, and without proper training on a foreign language, the best source for “new learning” was yet the Chinese language.

### **Chinese Accommodation of Modernization: The Case of *Thirty Years History of Japanese Reformation* in Korean Newspaper**

Books mediated by Chinese translators not always preserved the original text. Sometimes, a part of the book was transfigured. Among the book titles imported from the Expanding Knowledge Press, the *Thirty Years History of Japanese Reformation* (*Riben weixin sanshinian shi*, 1903) shows how the Japanese text was reinterpreted by a Chinese translator and set in the Korean context with its transfigured form. By tracing how translated text changes the original meaning of the text, we can understand how Koreans familiarized themselves with Japan as a model, with the aid of the Chinese interpretation of the history of Meiji reformation, which ultimately transformed the image of Japan from a potential adversary to a model country.

The original text was a series of essays that appeared in the *Sun* (Taiyo) in 1898, a Japanese literary criticism magazine that Hakubunkan published.<sup>34</sup> Those essays were written to celebrate the 30

<sup>31</sup> Xiong, *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> “Chōngguk Chisa ka Ilbonmun ūl Sōnhak Nonsōl ūl Yakki Hanora Cho Ch’ōngūibo” [Here is a Summary of Qing Patriot’s Editorial of Learning Japanese Language First, Copied Down from Qingyi Bao], *Imperial Gazetteer*, April 29, 1899.

<sup>33</sup> “Tok Ŭmbingsil Munjip” [Read the Collection of Liang Qichao’s Writings], accessed August 30, 2016, <http://db.itkc.or.kr/index.jsp?bizName=MM>.

<sup>34</sup> Tarumoto, Teruo, “Ryokeicho no Tanehon: Zasshi Taoyo no Bai” [The Original Script of Liang Qichao: The Case of Magazine *Sun*], *Shomatsu Shosetsukara* 50 (1998), cited in Lee Yeaan, “Taehan Chegukki Yusin ūi

years after the Meiji restoration. Hakubunkan published those essays in a separate book in the same year. This was translated by a Chinese translator Luo Xiaogao, a Chinese student at Waseda University majoring economic, and an admirer of Kang.<sup>35</sup> Luo worked as an editor of *Qingyi bao* and *Xinmin congbao*, Chinese magazines that Liang led. Chinese translation came out in 1903 by the Expanding Knowledge Press. In Korea, it did not appear as a printed book, but eight among twelve chapters were introduced in the *Imperial Gazetteer*.

<Table 1. Chapter titles in the *Thirty Years History of Japanese Reformation*:  
Japanese, Chinese, Korean version >

	Japanese Title	Chinese Title	Korean Title
Chapter	眞都三十年 (1898)	日本維新三十年史 (1903)	日本維新三十年史 (1906)
1	Comprehensive survey (總論)	History of Academy and Ideology (學術思想史)	Academy (學術)
2	Politics (政治)	Politics (政治)	Politics (政治)
3	Military (軍事)	Military (軍事)	Military (軍事)
4	Diplomacy (外交)	Diplomacy (外交)	Diplomacy (外交)
5	Finance (財政)	Finance (財政)	Finance (財政)
6	Jurisdiction (司法)	Jurisdiction (司法)	Jurisdiction (司法)
7	Religion (宗教)	Religion (宗教)	Religion (宗教)
8	Education (教育)	Education (教育)	Education (教育)
9	Literature (文學)	Literature (文學)	n/a
10	Transportation (交通)	Transportation (交通)	n/a
11	Industry (産業)	Industry (産業)	n/a
12	Society (社會)	Society (社會)	n/a

Hakubunkan. *Tento sanjūnen: Meiji sanjūnenshi meiji sanjūnenkan kokusei ichiran*. Tōkyō: Hakubunkan, 1898.  
Hakubunkan. *Riben weixin sanshinianshi*. Translated by Luo Xiaogao. Shanghai: Guanzhi shuju, 1903.  
Imperial Gazetteer. “Ilbon Yusin 30 Nyōnsa.” *Imperial Gazetteer* April 30 – December 26, 1906.

As we see in the table 1, in the Japanese version, title of the first chapter is “Comprehensive survey” (*Sōron*). The Chinese version changed it into “History of Academy and Ideology” (*Xueshu sixiangshi*). And the Korean one, shorten the Chinese title into “Academy” (*Haksul*). The Chinese translation changed not only the title of the first chapter but also all of the content of the first chapter, and the motivation for the change became more clear in the Korean version. In the Japanese original version discussed the “Japanese Ideology,” whose origin could be traced back to the political reformation, which was first initiated in 1876. The Japanese original version regarded the academic change and ideological goal as a historical outcome first sparked by the political upheaval.

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Chōngch’ihak: Kaenyōm ūi Ch’ihwan Kwa Ilbon Yusin 30 Nyōnsa” [The Politics of Yusin in the Taehan Empire Period: Changes in the Concept and Thirty Years of Japanese Reformation], *Kaenyōm Kwa Sotong* 14, no. 12 (2014): 61–94.

<sup>35</sup> Heo, Jae-Young, “Chisik Suyong Ch’awōn Esō Pon Hwangsōng Sinmun Ilbon Yusin 30 Nyōnsa Yōksul Kwachōngkwa Kū Uimi” [Viewing *Imperial Gazetteers* Translation of Thirty Years History of Japanese Reformation from the Level of Knowledge Reception and Its Meanings], *Hanminjok Omunhak* 70 (2015): 139–165.

However, the Chinese translation tried to theorize this historical chronology toward reformation as “academy,” a set of systemic knowledge which can be studied, analyzed, and finally applied to other specific historical conditions. While the content of the first chapter in Korean version is a direct translation of Chinese version, the Korean version of the title deleted “history” and “ideology” in order to represent Japanese “academy” as a concrete theory or a program, and removed its specific history. Lee Yeaan address that this is the point when the traditional concept of “reformation” (*yusin*) was eventually neglected, and at last “the Meiji Reformation is elevated from a specific historical event to universal civilization process.”<sup>36</sup> In her conclusion, Lee stated that through this process the discourse of “reformation” (*yusin*) during the Taehan Empire period was deeply connected to the experience of Meiji Reformation with strong emphasis on nation, patriotism, morality, and education while the discourse alienated from the ideas of fundamental political reform.<sup>37</sup>

While other chapters of the three versions did not show significant differences, a drastic change appears in the first chapter, which shows how the Chinese translation tried to lead readers to use this text to make them engage in “new learning” (*Xinxue*) and model the patriotism that the Japanese people had. The political and social changes that accumulated during the 30 years were compressed into a single chunk of “Japanese Ideology,” as a model of modernization for late-followers, such as China and Korea.

## Conclusion

Throughout the paper, I emphasize the role of Chinese modern print culture and the translation project in Shanghai as the main source of new learning for Koreans. Moreover, I show that the “decentralization of Sino-centric world” often addressed in Korean media starting in the 1890s did not mean actively moving away from China. After the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) Japan served as the new model for Korea’s path to civilization. However, partly due to the linguistic barrier to Japanese materials as well as to the relatively reliable amount of new learning that could be fulfilled by using books mainly from Shanghai, the route for cultural and intellectual exchange changed more gradually. The third point made in this paper is that Chinese authors, books, and publishers mediated the cultural and intellectual transition from pursuing “China” to pursuing “Japan.” This Chinese interpretation of Western (Japanese) texts will contribute significantly in understanding the various facets of modernity pursued in Korea in the early twentieth century.

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<sup>36</sup> Lee Yeaan, “Taehan Chegukki Yusin ūi Chōngch’ihak: Kaenyōm ūi Ch’ihwan Kwa Ilbon Yusin 30 Nyōnsa” [The Politics of Yusin in the Taehan Empire Period: Changes in the Concept and Thirty Years of Japanese Reformation], *Kaenyōm Kwa Sotong* 14, no. 12 (2014): 79-80.

<sup>37</sup> Lee Yeaan, *Ibid*, 88-89.