

The Japanese Colonial Rule and the Changes in Korean Society: Research Trends and Prospects from a Sociological Perspective

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Introduction

In Korea, social history,¹ a field of research led by sociologists, appeared in the 1980s, aiming to reconstruct the theory of sociology based on the theorization of historical research and to counter the prevailing Western bias of viewpoint.² The main concerns of research in social history were originally social status, the family, rural communities, religion and so on, but from the time of the opening of the country to foreign trade to the time of colonization, modern social history³ has focused on the typical concerns of sociology; class, social strata, ideology and social movements, in a historical context. Recently research into disciplinary power and knowledge and women and the family is thriving and new interpretations of colonial rule are being developed.

Most research into social history has been done by the researchers affiliated with Korean Social History Association, so this thesis too is based on their achievements and I have tried as far as possible to categorize the recent trends and subjects of research. I must make it clear, however, that this thesis has been written according to the personal viewpoint of the author and does not represent the opinions of sociologists or of the members of Korean Social History Association who are researching this period.

The leading areas of social research on Korean society during the period of colonization can be divided into several broad themes. For convenience in this thesis, I will use the following three themes to comment briefly on trends in research and topics and prospects from now on.

1. Trends and Topics in Different Fields

1) Class/Social Strata and Social Movements

In the 1980s Korean historical research was focused on social economic history and the history of the nationalist and socialist movements. In the field of social history too, this was the mainstream of research until the mid-1990s. Especially in the world of sociology, as part of the “controversy over the social formation” that began in the latter half of the 1980s, scholars were absorbed in the study of class and social strata and so research into class and social movement was vigorously pursued. Research into the period of colonization focused on the agricultural class. Historical and economic studies focused on the study of rural economy and the national peasant movement, but sociologists focused on analysis of the nature of class and social strata and the role of organization among peasants, including landowners, as well as analyzing the main causes of the successes and failures of the peasant movement. As a result, research relating to the daily lives of the peasants and the correlation⁴ of social status and participation in the peasant movement, as well as appraisal⁵ of the communist peasant union and the tenancy dispute became the objects of research.

It cannot be denied that understanding the agricultural class, which comprised 80 percent of the population at the time of colonization, is of vital importance to the understanding of Korean society. This is because their living conditions and unionization and their experience of the peasant movement is inseparable from the problem of the national constitution after Liberation. Moreover, at the time of colonization the peasant movement developed vigorously and it is agreed that it should be grasped as the peasants’ energetic agent. As for the strength of the peasant union, however, differences of interpretation can be seen with regard to which stratum should be focused on and what gave rise to its formation. Some attach great importance to the socialist workers’ movement centered on the poor peasants,⁶ while others focus on the part played by the middle class of peasants.⁷ Especially in the case of the latter, the middle class joined the peasant union movement for social and political concerns rather than for the sake of the socialist movement and its ideology and from the 1930s its subsumption to the Establishment was stressed. This kind of research into

the “historical structure seen from below” shows that there are many interpretations, but rather than whether the peasant union movement was mainly composed of the poor class or middle class of peasant, the topic to be more deeply researched from now on is the difference between the living conditions and the involvement in the peasants’ movement of each class.

Also, research into workers and the urban poor focused on the problems of class conditions and class structure (class consciousness and ideology, the problems of unions) has developed vigorously.⁸ This research has made a detailed study of the daily lives and union activities of workers and the urban poor and investigated the formative process of modern class and social strata in Korea.

However, since the 1990s the paradigm of focusing on class suddenly lost its influence and so interest was gradually lost in the formation and development of the classes of workers and peasants and what part they played in the workers’ movement after Liberation. From the mid 1990s, apart from a small number of researchers, no one was investigating class and social strata and social movements. With regard to research into class, how to interpret it and how to go beyond the existing methodology that has been rather formulaic is undoubtedly a problem in many ways. Nevertheless, this kind of research enables us to reconstruct the history of the “people” of that time from the ground up in a vivid way and it goes without saying that it is an important field of research in social history. We hope that there will continue to be many more kinds of research, not only concerning workers and peasants, but groups and individuals outside these categories.

2) Women and the Family

Recent research into the social history of the period of colonization has focused mainly on women and the family. Research into women during this period was previously focused on women workers⁹ and on rural families,¹⁰ but when considering women of this period, the indispensable study related to “comfort women”¹¹ during the war has also been continued.

From the latter half of the 1990s there were changes in the study of women and the family. Firstly, it was stressed that the idea of the family in

the modern sense was “formed” during the period of colonization, and discourses connected with the formation of the family, such as “child” and the “role of the mother” were investigated, while trying to deconstruct the customary classification of traditional and modern, the way in which the traditional idea of women was formed was made clear.¹² These studies concentrated on the consciousness and the idea of women and the family, and the results of Foucault-style genealogical methods of research and anthropological studies of the period of colonization were combined with the study of women and the family in this period.

Research into the comfort women at first attempted to find the “facts,” but as the work progressed change was brought about in two ways. Firstly, the importance of oral history was rediscovered. Research was begun on the “volunteer corps” (*chǒngshindae*), and in order to investigate the facts, the Japanese government was asked to make public the writings that would reveal the “truth.” However, amid the endless debate as to who was responsible, researchers realized the meaninglessness¹³ of asking the perpetrators to hand over the documents that they thought would reveal the “truth” and they began to search for the people who had been comfort women. Finding such people in Korea and other countries who had been silent for so long, they started to record their experiences and found that they could reconstruct the conditions of the time from a different angle. This also caused them to reconsider the customary method of reconstructing the society of the colonial period using only written documents.

Another problem was how to represent these women and their experience. Recently researchers have begun to realize the limitations of previous research with its image of the women as powerless victims, turning them into objects. They began to look not only at what happened at that time to those who were sacrificed as “comfort women,” but to show the way that they had lived since that time, to see how Korean society had guided and controlled them.¹⁴ Relative to an alternative (“subaltern”) method of reproducing the past, which has recently been debated not only in the field of research into the problem of comfort women, but also in the field of women’s history and the social history of the colonial period, this process of groping for a new methodology and the public debate it engendered will probably be a great stimulus to the creation of a new methodology.

Next, I will briefly introduce the change in subject matter. A theme which has been widely taken up in women's studies recently is the "new woman."¹⁵ The appearance of a new generation that had received a modern education is an important theme in colonial period history, and "new women" form one of the representative groups. The history of the new women's attempts and failures in their exploration of new possibilities amid the lively debate about free sex and love and women's liberation in the 1920s and 30s appeared as a new theme, together with a new concern with women's history. However, as the changing times brought about changes in consciousness and lifestyles, not only new women but also married and unmarried women in the countryside who had not received an education came to have something in common with them. It is hoped that much research will be done in this field.

3) Colonial Rule and the Problem of Modernity

This theme includes many area of research, but here I will deal only with the trends of recent research. The debate about modernity in the period of colonization was one of the major themes of scholars of social history and of Korean history from the 1990s. Researchers in the past took colonialism and modernization to be opposing terms, with modernization meaning liberation and progress and colonialism meaning the hindering of modernization, confiscation of property and suppression. Scholars of Korean history developed the "theory of immanent development," which made clear the attempts and failures of the Korean government to encourage modernization from before the time of colonization, but the question of what modernization consists of had not been adequately considered.¹⁶ From the 1990s the concept of modernization was understood as being the underside of Liberation, namely, discipline and control, suppression and surveillance, and research elucidating colonialism and modernization began to thrive.

The period of colonization had been described up to this time as one of "cruel confiscation and violently repressive rule and of unending national opposition to this," which has been ceaselessly challenged and disputed. Scholars of economics have expressed doubt about the word "confiscation" in "The Theory of Colonial Modernization," just as scholars of sociology have attempted a new interpretation of "violently repressive

rule.” Such re-interpretations have a deep connection to the problem of the subject under colonial rule.

Kūndae chuch'ewa shingminji kyuyul kwōllyōk [The Modern Subject and Disciplinary Power]¹⁷ is the representative literature that brings forward the problem of the “rule” and the formation of the state during the colonial period, attempting to find a standard answer. In short, in order to understand Japanese rule during the colonial period, and whether the usual idea of “forced rule from above” and in opposition to this, the “resistance of the people” is always correct, it is stressed that those who were subject to colonial rule, while opposing Japanese imperialism trod a similar path and that this attitude was promoted by the colonial authorities. Accordingly, the process through which those who were the object of the ruling power, at the same time became subjects who supported the system of colonial rule and reproduced it, was explained by the internalization of the regulations of the system through schools, factories, concentration camps and the army.

This thesis, while heightening interests in “rule,” stimulated many studies into how to grasp the modernization and the colonization of Korea. The studies related to modernization are mainly in the field of economic history and are concerned with either development or confiscation, and as a result of this research society was studied in many different spheres. Recently there is increasing interest in urban life and modernization under colonial rule, the yearning for a different culture and at the same time the feeling of alienation as Koreans and the group mentality of the citizens of Seoul at that time who felt “repudiation as an outsider.” There were also investigations into crime and the changes in the system of punishment in the cities.¹⁸

Because the problem of modernization is related to the changes in society after Liberation, in *Kūndae chuch'ewa shingminji kyuyul kwōllyōk* [The Modern Subject and Disciplinary Power], the relations of the modern and present period are divided into the “theory of positive continuity” and the “theory of negative continuity.” The latter point of view stresses that the Total Mobilization System under colonial rule was reproduced at the North and South Korean border.¹⁹ When analyzing the process of modernization in every section of Korean society, one big problem is how to grasp and evaluate the continuity of the period of colonization and

“after.” At present the most important thing is to look again at the modern period in the context of its connection to the present, it is a question of asking again very carefully, what did modernization (rule of colonial lands) that developed in many fields mean to the people of South and North Korea (both psychologically and physically). This problem of continuity, as against the tendency of existing research, which takes Korea’s modern and present ages to be separate, is a new topic that has been thrust before us.

I will also briefly introduce two other themes connected to colonial rule and modernization, “tradition” and the “system of knowledge.” As a new trend from the 1990s onwards, there have been many studies of the way of ruling through the production of knowledge and the process of change in the system. Recent studies in “knowledge” have concentrated on elucidating the reversal of the hegemony of tradition over modern knowledge and its control.²⁰ In particular they made clear the way in which Western systems of knowledge that had been introduced through Japan in the colonial period had been substituted for the traditional knowledge and world view and everyday conceptions. Research into the Western system of timekeeping and the medical system, the sense of family and the relationship between the Imperial University system and the Korean language is related to this.²¹

Also, research²² taking notice of the fact that modern consciousness did not just completely drive out traditional consciousness, but was newly blended with it, investigated how “custom” changed (as “invention”) under the title of “respect” and whether it was established as a new concept. In general, tradition, amid the drive towards modernization under colonial rule, was largely denied and considered to be extinct. However, in recent years research is being done with the understanding that tradition is not something from the past that has remained unchanged, but something that was selected by the ruling side and interpreted anew.

Research into modernization during the period of colonization, with the above mentioned problems in mind is continuing to carefully investigate and make clear generalizations, so I think that more will be discovered. If this kind of work is neglected, half of the significance of the research into control and modernization under colonial rule will be lost.

2. Research into the Social History of the Colonial Rule and How to Develop and Expand It

I have tried to categorize the trends in research in social history as above. Among them are many groundbreaking studies that have not yet been addressed, but there are some areas that have not yet been sufficiently developed. I will present three problems that could become topics of research.

Firstly, comparative studies need to be actively pursued. The comparative historical studies carried out by Western sociologists, have the advantage of throwing a very clear light on a particular time or society. However, at present, most Korean scholars of social history in the period of colonization use primary sources to do research based on proof, because there is still far too little path-finding research in the area that sociologists are concerned with. In this situation, although a huge amount of effort has been poured into comparative history, the results have not been successful and so comparative history is going so slowly that it is making no progress.

In order to get a general grasp of colonial society, it is necessary for comparative studies to take very positive steps forward. In Korea today, interest in East Asia is growing, but there is not nearly enough knowledge of recent modern history. In particular, studies of the areas that were also under Japanese rule, such as Taiwan, Manchuria, Sakhalin and so on can be compared to Korea's experience under Japanese rule, and a general image of Japanese colonial rule and the East Asian areas can be given. In Japan at present, this kind of research²³ is relatively advanced and its achievements need to be carefully investigated.

Secondly, attention needs to be given to the change in generations. While Korean society was being propelled forward by the opening of its ports to foreign trade and experiencing such great social changes as colonial government, the generations were of course changing. In particular, those who were born after Korea was colonized and received a modern education as they grew up would have had a different identity and sensibility from their parents. Some research of the "modern boy" and "modern girl" had been done, but these could not be said to be representative of their generation. This new generation must have been the moving force behind South and North Korean society since Liberation and

research into their experience and their group disposition under colonial rule should be an essential element of modern historical research.

Lastly, the corpulent organization of the colonial government and the system of rule in Korea is a topic that must be squarely faced when putting together the experience of colonial rule. Colonial rule should not be treated as just a thirty-six year experience in the "past" at which we look back, but as a kind of "structure" that continued after Liberation. During the long history of military control, Korean society unfortunately made positive efforts to use and reproduce the anti-democratic system of rule and the totalitarian means of mobilization under Japanese rule. When investigating the structure of rule in Korean society in the 20th century, not only the army, the police and the prisons must be researched but also the places of work, the schools and so on.

The system of rule was mostly reorganized to modernize it during the colonial period and so through analysis concerning these areas of recommended study, not only the system and its changes in policy during different periods but also the way in which the colonial rule and the control affected each individual member of society will be elucidated. This is an extremely important subject to be working on. Until now social history has taken a critical stance towards political and national history, and had a negative attitude towards research into the policy of rule and use of the relevant documents, but in order to realize the above mentioned research there must be an active recognition of the importance of official documents.

However, when this kind of research is being carried out, we must be very careful to remember that social structure is not just a one-way system that influences each individual. The opposition of the general public to the social structure must also be sufficiently elucidated. The research that until now has been concerned only with the policy of the government must be transcended and a new methodology created.

In Korea today interdisciplinary research is relatively vigorous. The distance between historical and sociological studies has decreased and there are now more opportunities than there used to be for joint studies. However, in Korea, those who study the period of colonization as sociologists must realize "the dissension with the age."²⁴ Even so, within the entire field of

achievement in sociology, the importance of research into the period of colonization has certainly not diminished. In recent years in the field of cultural and social sciences, as interest in the colonial period has increased, the area in which sociologists can make a contribution to research into the colonial period will I think increase even further. For the time being, not just as a popular study, but as the breaking of fresh ground for a new field of study and a new methodology, it is hoped that research can be continued that will make plain the original form of modern Korean society.

NOTES

- 1) Some historians prefer the term, “historical sociology,” to emphasize social identity, but I use “social history” in this thesis because it will help me to include studies of social history.
- 2) Shin Yong-ha. “Han’guk sahoesaüi taesanggwa ‘iron’üi’ munje” [The Subjects of Korean Social History and the Question of “Theories”], *Han’guk hakpo* [Journal of Korean Studies], vol. 25, 1981.
- 3) The latest theses focused on the trend of social history research include: Pak Myöng-gyu. “Han’guk sahoesa yon’guüi saeroun panghyang” [A New Direction for Research into Korean Social History] in *Han’guk sahoe sahakhoe ich’öninyöndo chönggi haksuldaehoe nonmunjip* [Collected Treatises for the Conference of the Korean Social History Association in 2002], 2002; Chi Süng-jong. “Han’guk sahoesaüi hangmunjök sangt’aewa chihyang—Sahoehakchök chönt’ong’ül chungshimüro” [Academic Status and Directions of Korean Social History: Focused on the Sociological Tradition] in *Han’guk sahoe sahak wöllye palp’yohoe palp’yomun* [Monthly Presentations of the Korean Social History Association] (to be published), 2001; Pak Myöng-gyu and Kim Kyöng-il. “Han’guk kündae sahoewa sahoesa yön’gu” [Korean Modern Society and Social Historical Research], *Han’guk hakpo* [Journal of Korean Studies], vol. 80, 1995; Kim P’il-dong. “Ch’oegün Han’guk sahoesa yon’guüi söngkwawa kwaje: Pangbömnonchök söngch’al” [Achievements and Prospects for the Latest Researches on Korean Social History: Retrospect on Methodology] in *Sahoesa yon’guüi iron’gwa kwaje* [Theories and Tasks of Social History Research], Moonji Publishing Company, 1990.

- 4) Macro studies conducted to explain the structure of Korea's social hierarchy include: Paek Uk-in. "Shingminji shidae kyegŭp kusŏng'e kwanhan yŏn'gu" [A Study on the Social Hierarchy in the Colonial Period], *Han'guk sahoeŭi shinbun kyegŭpkwa sahoe pyŏndong* [Social Ranks and Changes in Korean Society] in *Collected Theses of the Korean Social History Association*, vol. 7, 1987; Pak Myŏng-gyu. *Han'guk kŭndae kukka hyŏngsŏnggwa nongmin* [The Birth of the Modern Korean State and Peasants], Moonji Publishing Company, 1997.
- 5) Han To-hyŏn. "1930nyŏndae nongch'on shinhŭng undong'ui sŏnggyŏk" [Characteristics of the Rural Revitalization Campaign in the 1930s] in *Han'guk kŭndae nongch'on sahoewa ilbon chegukchuŭi* [Korean Modern Rural Communities and Japanese Imperialism], Moonji Publishing Company, 1986; Kim Hyŏn-suk. "Ilchehaŭi min'gan hyŏptong chohap undong'e kwanhan yŏn'gu" [A Study on the People's Cooperative Union Movement during the Japanese Colonial Rule], *ibid.*, 1987; and Yi Jongmin. "1930 nyŏndae ch'oban nongmin chohabŭi sŏnggyŏk yŏn'gu" [A Study of the Characteristics of the Peasant Union in the Early 1930s], *Yŏnse sahoehak* [Yonsei Sociology], vols. 10 and 11, 1990.
- 6) Yi Jun-shik. *Nongch'on sahoe py'ŏndonggwa nongmin undong ilche ch'imnyakki Hamgyŏngnam-doŭi kyŏng'u* [Changes in Rural Communities and the Peasant Union Movement: A Case of Hamgyŏngnam-do in the Japanese Colonial Period], Minyŏngsa, 1993; and Yi Jun-shik. "Segye taegonghwanggi hyŏngmyŏngjŏk nongmin chohap undong'ui kyegŭp kyech'ŭngjŏk sŏnggyŏk" [Characteristic Social Classes and Ranks in the Revolutionary Peasant Union Movement during the Great Depression], *Yŏksawa hyŏnshi* [History and Reality], vol. 11, 1994.
- 7) Shin Gi-wook. "Nongmin'gwa nongmin undong—Ilcheha nongmin t'ujaeng'ŭl ponŭn shigage kwanhayŏ" [Peasant and the Peasant Movement: On a View of the Peasant Struggles during the Japanese Colonial Period], *Yŏnse sahoehak*, vols. 10 and 11, 1990; Shin Gi-wook. "1930nyŏndae nongch'on sahoe pyŏnhwawa kaltŭng: Kŭ kiwŏn'gwa yusan" [Changes and Conflicts in Rural Communities in the 1930s: Their Origins and Legacy], *Tongbang hakchi* [Far Eastern Studies

Journal], vol. 82, 1993; Shin Gi-wook. *Peasant Protest and Social Change in Colonial Korea*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1996.

- 8) Shin Yong-ha. “Chosŏn nodong kongjehoeŭi ch’angnipkwa nodong undong” [The Foundation of the Chosŏn Workers Beneficial Association, Nodong Kongjehoe and Labor Movement] in *Han’gugŭi sahoe shinbun’gwa sahoe kyech’ŭng* [Social Status and Stratification in Korea], Moonji Publishing, 1984; Shin Yong-ha. “1922 nyŏn Chosŏn nodong yŏnmaenghoeŭi ch’angnipkwa nodong undong” [The Foundation of the Chosŏn Workers League in 1922 and the Labor Movement] in *Han’guk kŏnhyŏndaeŭi minjok munjewa minjok munje* [National Issues and Labor Issues], Moonji Publishing Company, 1989; Kim Chun. “Ilcheha nodong undong’ŭi panghyang chŏnhwan’e kwanhan yŏn’gu [A Study of the Changes in the Direction of the Labor Movement during the Japanese Colonial Period] in *Ilchehaŭi sahoe undong* [Social Movement in the Japanese Colonial Period], Moonji Publishing Company, 1987; Kim Yŏng-gŭn. “1920 nyŏndaeŭi nodongjaŭi chonjae hyŏngt’ae’e kwanhan yŏn’gu” [A Study on the Forms of Workers’ Existence in the 1920s] in *Ilcheha Han’gugŭi sahoe kyegŭpkwa sahoe pyŏndong* [Social Class and Changes in Korean Society], Moonji Publishing, 1988; Kim Kyŏng-il. “Ilcheha toshi pinminch’ŭng’ŭi hyŏngsŏng” [Formation of the Urban Poor during the Japanese Colonial Period] in *Ilchehaŭi sahoe kyegŭpkwa sahoe pyŏndong* [Social Class and Changes in Korean Society], *Collected Theses of the Korean Social History Research Institute*, vol. 12, 1986; Kim Kyŏng-il. *Ilcheha nodong undongsa* [The History of the Korean Labor Movement during the Japanese Colonial Period], Ch’angbi, 1992.
- 9) Chŏng Chin-sŏng. “Shingminji chabonjuŭihwa kwajŏng’e issŏsŏ yŏsŏng nodongjaŭi pyŏnmo” [Changes of Women Workers in the Process of the Colonial Capitalism], *Han’guk sahoehak* [Korean Sociology], vol. 4, 1988; Yi Chŏng-ok. “Ilcheha Han’gugŭi kyŏngje hwaltong’e issŏsŏ minjokpyŏl ch’aiwa sŏngbyŏl ch’ai” [National and Gender Differences in the Economic Activities in Korea under the Japanese Colonial Rule] in *Han’guk sahoeŭi yŏsŏnggwa kajok* [Women and Family in Korean Society], Moonji Publishing, 1990; Sŏ Hyŏng-shil. “Shingminji shidae yŏsŏng nodong’e kwanhan yŏn’gu” [A Study of Female Labor in the

- Japanese Colonial Period], *ibid.*; Mun So-jöng. “Ilche shidae kongjang nodongje kyegübüi kajokchök paegyöng’e kwanhan yön’gu” [A Study on the Family Background of Factory Workers in the Japanese Colonial Period], *Han’gugüi sahoewa munhwa* [Korean Society and Culture], vol. 14, 1990; Kang I-su. “Ilcheha myönbang taegiöbe issösö nodong kwajönggwa yösöng nodongjaüi sangt’ae” [Labor Processes and Women Workers in Large Cotton Companies during the Japanese Colonial Period] in *Han’guk künhyöndaeüi sahoe chojikkwa pyöndong* [Social Structures and Changes in Modern Korea], Moonji Publishing, 1991; Yi Hyo-jae. *Han’gugüi yösöng undong: Öjewa onül* [The Feminist Movement in Korea: Yesterday and Today], Chöng’usa, 1991; Kang I-su. “1930nyöndae yösöng nodongjaüi shilt’ae” [A Report on Women Workers in the 1930s], *Kuksagwan nonch’ong* [A Collection of Treatises by the National Institute of Korean History], vol. 51, 1994.
- 10) Mun So-jöng. “Ilcheha nongmin kajoge kwanhan yön’gu” [A Study on Rural Families during the Japanese Colonial Period] in *Ilchehaüi sahoe kyegüpkwa sahoe pyöndong* [Social Class and Changes during the Japanese Colonial Period], Moonji Publishing, 1988.
- 11) Chöng Chin-söng. “Ögaptöen yösöng’üi chuch’e hyöngsönggwa kun wianbu tongwön” [The Formation of the Identity of Suppressed Women and the Mobilization of Military Comfort Women], *Sahoewa yöksa* [Society and History], vol. 54, 1998.
- 12) Kim Hye-gyöng. “Shingminji shigi kajoge kwanhan kyebohakchök yön’gu” [A Genealogical Study of Families during the Japanese Colonial Period: Focused on the Formation of Motherhood], *Sahoewa yöksa*, vol. 58, 2000; Yang Hyön-a. “Shingminji shigi han’guk kajokpöbüi kwansüp munje 1” [The Question of Customs in Korean Family Law during the Japanese Colonial Period: 1], *ibid.*
- 13) It does not mean that I doubt the document’s value as an item of objective evidence.
- 14) Yang Hyön-a. “Chüng’ön’gwa yöksa ssügi” [Testimony and Writing History], *Sahoewa yöksa*, vol. 60, 2001.
- 15) Cho Ün and Yun T’aek-rim. “Ilcheha shinyösönggwa kabujangje—Kündaesönggwa yösöngsöng’e kwanhan shinmin tamnonüi chaejomyöng” [“New Women” and Patriarchal Society in the Japanese Colonial Period: A Review of the Colonial Discourses on Modernity and Women] in

- Kwangbok oshipchunyön kinyȫm nonmunjip* [A Collection of Treatises for the 50th Anniversary of the Liberation], 1995; and Kim Kyȫng-il. “Ilchehaüi shinyösȫng yön’gu” [A Study of New Women in the Japanese Colonial Period], *Sahoewa yöksa*, vol. 57, 2000.
- 16) Pak Myȫng-gyu. “Han’guk sahoe yön’guüi saeroun panghyang” [A New Direction in the Study of Korean Society] in *2002 nyȫndo hugi sahoehak taehoe palp’yo nonmunjip* [Collected Treatises for the 2002 Conference of the Korean Social History Association], 2002.
- 17) Kim Chin-gyun and Chȫng Kün-shik. *Kündae chuch’ewa shingminji kyuyul kwöllyök* [Modern Subject and the Disciplinary Power], Munhwa Kwahaksa, 1997.
- 18) Kim Yȫng-gün. “Ilcheha shingminji kündaesȫng’üi han t’ükching—Kyȫngsȫng’esȫüi toshi kyȫnghȫmül chungshimüro” [A Study on Characteristics of Colonial Modernization during the Japanese Colonization of Korea: Focused on Urban Experiences in “Keijo” Area], *Sahoewa yöksa*, vol. 57, 2000; Yi Chong-min. “Shingminji shigi hyȫngsa ch’öbörüi kündae hwae kwanhan yön’gu” [A Study on the Modernity of Criminal Punishment during the Colonial Period], *Sahoewa yöksa*, vol. 55, 1999; and Yi Chong-min. “Kyȫngsȫng chumindürüi ‘choe’wa ‘pöl’—Kyȫngbömjoe ch’öbörül chungshimüro” [Crime and Punishment of the Residents of Kyȫngsȫng: Focused on the Control of Minor Offences], *Seoulhak yön’gu* [Seoul Studies], 2001.
- 19) Kim Chin-gyun and Chȫng Kün-shik. “Shingminji ch’ejewa kündaejök kyuyul” [The Colonial System and Modern Disciplines] in *Kündae chuch’ewa shingminji kyuyul kwöllyök* [Modern Subject and the Disciplinary Power of the Colonial Authority], p. 22.
- 20) Kim Kyȫng-il. “Chwajöldoen chungyong: Ilchehaüi chishik hyȫngsȫng’e issösȫ pop’yönjuüiwa tüksujuüi” [Obstructed Middle: Universalism and Particularism in Colonial Korea], *Sahoewa yöksa*, vol. 51, 1997.
- 21) Chȫng Kün-shik. “Ilchehaüi sȫyang üiryo ch’egyeüi hegemoni hyȫngsȫnggwa tongsȫ üihak nonjaeng” [The Establishment of Hegemony by the Western Medical Service System and Debates on Eastern and Western Medicines during the Japanese Colonial Period] in *Han’gugüi sahoe chedowa sahoe pyȫndong* [Social Systems and Social Changes in Korea], Collected Treatises from the Korean Social History

Research Institute, vol. 50, 1996; Chŏng Kŭn-shik. “Han’gugŭi kŭndaejŏk shigan ch’egyeŭi hyŏngsŏnggwa ilsang saenghwarŭi pyŏnhwa 1—Taehan chegukkirŭl chungshimŭro” [The Formation of the Modern Time Scheme in Korea and Changes in Daily Life, pt. 1: With the Focus on the Great Han Empire Period], *Sahoewa yŏksa*, vol. 58, 2000; and Yi Chun-shik. “Ilche kangjŏmgŭi taehak chedowa hangmun ch’egye—Kyŏngsŏng chedaŭi chosŏnŏmunhakkwarŭl chungshimŭro” [Higher Education Systems during the Japanese Colonial Period: Centered on the Department of Korean Language and Literature in Kyŏngsŏng Imperial University], *Sahoewa yŏksa*, vol. 61, 2002.

- 22) Yang Hyŏn-a. “Shingminji shigiŭi Han’guk kajokpŏbŭi kwansŭp munje 1—Shigan ũshigŭi shilchong’ŭl chungshimŭro” [The Question of Customs in Korean Family Law during the Japanese Colonial Period, pt. 1: Centered upon the Loss of the Sense of Time], *Sahoewa yŏksa*, vol. 58, 2000. This treatise concludes that the fact that the “tradition” from the researches of customs performed by the Japanese colonial authorities became a basis for the family law that strengthened the traditional ideology of male superiority has some affinity with the project of modernity.
- 23) “The Japanese Colonial Rule: Korea and Taiwan,” a research project organized by the Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University, with the participation of Korean and Taiwanese researchers, was focused on similarities and differences between the two Japanese colonies. There are plans to publish the project results in book form sometime soon. In addition, the newly emerging academic interest in the Japanese Empire among Japanese historians is expected to help shed new light upon the modern history of East Asia.
- 24) One reason might be that scholars of sociology today tend to regard the existing researches on the social history of colonial society as being distanced from the rapidly changing issues of the real world, raising questions concerning their practicality. Chi Sŭng-jong. “Han’guk sahoesaŭi hangmunjŏk sangt’aewa chihyang” [Academic Status and Directions of Korean Social History] from “Han’guk sahoe sahakhoe wŏllye palp’yohoe palp’ybun” (Monthly Presentations of the Korean Social History Association).

Summary

The Japanese Colonial Rule and the Changes in Korean Society: Research Trends and Prospects from a Sociological Perspective

The latest research projects conducted by Korean sociologists on Korean society in the colonial period are largely focused on such issues as the period of Japanese colonial rule, modernity, women and family. Since the early 1990s significant changes in research themes and methods have occurred, because in the earlier period scholars were more interested in such subjects as the social hierarchy in colonial society, social movements, organizational experiences, social thought, and religion.

In the 1990s, humanities scholars in Korea initiated extensive research projects aimed at conducting a closer examination and reinterpretation of colonial modernity, and sociologists continued their efforts to reach beyond the well-worn researches on the cultural and economic exploitation and the burden of political oppression imposed by the colonial authorities. Their interest was now turned to the specific mechanisms of the colonial rule, focusing on how the Japanese colonial rulers controlled the public via schools, medical institutions and jobs as well as oppressive state instruments, such as prison, the police, and military force. Their efforts led related studies from the analyses of modernity based on the economic system to the colonial rule that overwhelmed both people's body and spirit, eventually creating a new viewpoint for the academic world to explore. Recently, scholars have begun to pay more attention to the creation of knowledge for securing hegemony, the use of traditional concepts, and the changes brought about in daily life by urbanization.

An increasing number of scholars have recently turned their attention to women, and not to working class women—including rural women—who had once been at the center of their academic interest, but to the “new women” and their role in the modern family. Such scholars have also introduced various viewpoints to their research on the “comfort women.” It seems that such changes are related with the transition in academic interests brought about under the influence of post-colonialism.

The latest sociological studies have extended the discussions on

colonial modernity, which had largely been focused on the dichotomy of the colonial economy, i.e. whether it was development or exploitation, to researches that help to cast new light on the wider aspects of the colonial rule. In addition, scholars have raised new questions that challenge the conventional division between tradition and modernity, colonialism and modernism, and the early modern and modern histories. These questions and the effort to answer them are expected to lead to fruitful results.