

The Formation of the Nation-State and Education Policy in Modern Korea (1876~1910)

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Abstract

This study examines the correlation between the formation of the nation-state and education policy in modern Korea (1876-1910). Modern education in Korea was begun as a part of the efforts for nation building. This study also focuses on the difference of the goals in modern education between King Gojong(高宗) and Kaehwapa (開化派; Enlightenment Party) in the process of modernization reform, and how Gojong and Kaehwapa each understood the concept of nation. Gojong and Kaehwapa thought that modernization was important to deal with internal and external crises, and tried to achieve it by national education. Gojong aimed to train skilled technical manpower by modern education and pursued the goal that anyone could gain expertise through industrial education and work as professional bureaucrat regardless of his status. Kaehwapa was also concerned with the cultivation of modern manpower, but their focus regarding education policy was a little different from Gojong's. Kaehwapa thought that the most important aspect in the process of establishing a modern state was to limit the power of the monarch and to make people responsible for their own governance by giving them the right to vote. Kaehwapa put an emphasis on nation building and public intellect for the right to vote. However, after the Russo-Japanese War, Japanese imperialists established the Residency-General in Taehan Empire (大韓帝國), and began to launch colonial education. As such, Korean national education, which started to form modern people and nurture talented people for the nation state in Korea, was replaced by education under Japanese colonial rule.

Key words

Korean modern education, education policy, nation-state, nation building, enlightenment Party, Kaehwapa(開化派), King Gojong(高宗), Taehan Empire (大韓帝國), modernization reform, patriotic enlightenment movement

Introduction

Korea's movement to establish a modern nation-state was triggered by external shock of siege by imperial powers even before the emergence of bourgeois political power that would lead to the formation of a nation-state. A nation-state integrates an economically fragmented traditional society into a homogeneous national community and single market as a national institution and instrument. It can be said that the process of nation building overlaps with the process of forming modern people (Park, 1992, p. 36). In case of leading capitalist countries in the west, the movement of nation building was led by bourgeoisie who represented the mode of production in capitalism. In underdeveloped countries, however, the traditional ruling class, which intended to achieve change with improvement, emerged to lead top-down modernization reform, and the Korean model belongs to this category (Lee, 1989, p. 20).

The concept of modernity is very complex in non-western societies such as Korea. Since the opening of its ports, Korea tried to build a modern state based upon western modernization. There is much controversy surrounding the concept of modern state in the academia of Korean History as well as in western academia. The building of modern state in non-western societies is a knotty subject together with the concepts of modernity, modernization, and westernization. Moreover, after Korea was colonized, "modernity" became synonymous with "coloniality," and "western" and "tradition" were intermixed without embracing each other. Thus, it is very difficult to present precise standards for "modern state" and "modernity" in Korea, so I thought that I would not explore them in earnest in this paper.

In western academia, a modern state is generally defined as a political organization, which exercises centralized power in a certain region by means of a standing army, bureaucracy, and tax system, and maintains exclusive autonomy distinct from other countries externally (J. S. Kim, 2011, p. 14). Because the possible government systems of modern states are diverse, for example, democracy, authoritarianism, and one-party dictatorship (J. S. Kim, 2011, p. 22), it is difficult to offer standards for the establishment of a modern state only based upon democratic forms of government. In particular, it is much more difficult to set up standards for the modern state in Korea, where modernization, which meant

westernization, was begun by the shock of the encounter with the west, and was in deep conflict with the system of the traditional state. Furthermore, the concept of the modern state in Korea was re-imported from Japan, where it had been translated from the western model of the modern state. The concepts of “state (國家)” and “nation (國民/民族)” were also understood through a very complex process (Kang, 2009, pp. 280-282). The formation process of the concept of modern nation-state is the process of grafting the western idea of sovereignty and the concept of modern state onto the traditional Asian concept of state (S. B. Kim, 2012, p. 93).

However, I do not intend to start a complex conceptualistic debate in this paper. Among three components of modern state, which were territory, sovereignty, and nation, based upon how the idea of “nation” had been built, I intend to focus on how the modern Korean state was pursued through modern education.

In top-down reform projects, education for forming modern people plays a critical role in establishing a modern national system. King Gojong(高宗), who pursued modernization reform, opened a port in 1876, following a Japanese request, and subsequently signed commercial treaties with western countries and pushed for an open-door policy. He tried to cultivate men of talent for the establishment of a modern state by support of modern education, which was established by government or by protestant missionaries. He aimed to train skilled technical manpower by modern education and pursued the goal that anyone could gain expertise through industrial education and work as professional bureaucrat regardless of his status.

Kaehwapa(開化派) is an Enlightenment Party in modern Korea, which actively pushed for the adoption of western civilization since the opening of the ports. It entered political circles under the auspices of King Gojong originally, and was alienated from King Gojong due to its support of the expansion of the people’s rights to participate in government (Suh, 1995). Kaehwapa helped Gojong to promote the enlightenment policy in the beginning, and they went their respective ways after the Reformist Revolution (Gapsin coup; 甲申政變) in 1884 (Suh, 1999, pp. 79-88). Kaehwapa’s focus on education policy was a little different from Gojong’s. They put an emphasis on nation building and the minimum public intellect, which was a prerequisite for the right to vote.

They thought that the most important aspect in the process of establishing a modern state was to limit the power of the monarch and to make people responsible for politics by giving them the right to vote. In this paper, I intended to show the difference of goals in Korean modern education between King Gojong and Kaehwapa in the process of modernization reform. As a result, this paper intends to demonstrate that practical, technical education for enhancing the wealth and military strength, and education for national building as political entity were emphasized. Also, I intend to demonstrate that Korean modern education was transformed from “national” education to education for colonial subject people during the period of the Residency-General, in which the modernization reform of the two political powers ended in failure.

The Open Door Policy and the Beginning of Modern Education

Korean modern education began during the enlightenment movement period. Gojong dispatched Kim Gi-su(金綺秀) to Japan as a foreign envoy in 1876¹ and instructed him to inspect Japanese government offices including the Naval Department, the Department of Army, the Department of Engineering, and modern school facilities. And he asked to Kim about western technological civilization in detail, including Japanese modern military, electrical wires, minting, steamship, farming tools, and was concerned with whether Korea could learn about these things.² In 1880, the enlightenment policy was set to work in earnest, and students were sent to Qing and the study plan for the production technology of military appliances was made. Gojong’s recommended criteria for students were proficiency in disposing a matter, intelligence in handling machines, ability to repair and manufacture a warship, and skillfulness in arithmetic.³ Gojong’s new standards outlined a pragmatic man of talent who could enhance the wealth and military strength of modern state. In 1881, a large-scale inspection team was sent to Japan,

¹ Kim Gi-su. *Ildonggiyu* 日東紀遊 (In *Haebaengchongjae* 海行摠載 sokpyon 續篇 vol. 10, Minjokmunhwachuginhoe 民族文化推進會)

² *Susinsailgi* 修信使日記, In *Susinsakimok* 修信使記錄 vol. 1, Gojong 13(1876, June 1), Kuksapyonchan wiwonhoe

³ *Seungjeongwon ilgi* 承政院日記:高宗 Gojong 17(1880, July 22), Kuksapyonchan wiwonhoe

and a number of students studying leather manufacturing and customs affairs were sent to Osaka and Nagasaki. Shin Bok-mo(申福模) and Lee Eun-dol(李銀弔) were sent to the Japanese military academy. Thirty-eight students who were sent to Qing to study in Tianjin(天津) for nine months returned and were appointed at newly established organizations to put forth modernization, including the Machinery and Tools Office, and the Telegram Office.

However, a military mutiny(壬午軍亂) occurred in 1882, which was an uprising of junior military members opposing the Enlightenment policy. Gojong lost his power for a short period of time, and recovered it with the help of Qing, and announced several reform measures. On July 22, Gojong announced the abolition of the aristocratic family, and the appointment to high office of men from west and north(西北人), men from Songdo(松都人), seoeol(庶孽; concubines' sons), men engaged in middle class(Chungin中人; medical or foreign language specialist), junior clerks, and soldiers.⁴ It was an announcement to open participation in government to marginal men, who had been blocked from participating in politics under the Yangban(兩班) system, and to accelerate the dismantling of the traditional caste system. Gojong opened government posts to them because he needed middle class men with practical abilities rather than Yangban ruling class to put forth his modernization policy for establishing modern state. On December, he announced the message that everyone could be rich regardless of whether he was from the common people or the lowly, and children from farmers, merchants, and craftsmen could be admitted to schools.⁵ It laid an ideological cornerstone to start modern national education by jumping over the caste system.

The first modern education institute, Wonsanhaksa(元山學舍) was established in 1883. After the port opening, local citizens raised the funds and asked the local government to establish a school, as they recognized the need for new education to develop modern talents in response to the entrance of Japanese merchants. In its initial stage, the school recruited 50 people for liberal arts education and 200 people for martial

⁴ *Gojong sillok* 高宗實錄 [*Annals of Gojong*]. (1882, July 22).

⁵ *Gojong sillok* 高宗實錄 [*Annals of Gojong*]. (1882, December 28).

arts education and taught arithmetic, physics, agriculture, sericulture, mining, foreign languages, laws, geography, and international laws. Wonsanhaksa is meaningful in that it is the first modern school established by funds raised by citizens, not by the government.

In the meantime, the government established Dongmunhak(同文學) in 1883 to nurture translators. Initially, Dongmunhak appointed a Chinese teacher but T. F. Halifax from Britain was later invited to teach English. Yugyoung Gongwon(育英公院) was established in 1886, where American missionaries G. W. Gilmore, D. A. Bunker, and H. B. Hulbert taught English, natural science, mathematics, economics, and geography. Yugyoung Gongwon was divided into a left department and right department. Young government officials enrolled in the left department and children of noble families enrolled in the right department. However, children from noble families were not interested in study. Gojong paid much attention to modern education at Yugyoung Gongwon and conducted tests for students (Son, 1985, pp. 36-42). Gojong delivered the message in 1882 that even children of farmers, merchants, and craftsmen could learn at school, but still only children from noble families could enroll in schools established by the government. Children from ordinary families could learn at mission schools, which began to be established around 1885 by western missionaries.

After Gojong experienced the Gapsin coup, which radical reformists attempted with Japanese support in 1884, he broke with reformists and tried to accept western technology via the US. He approved the propagation of Christianity by American missionaries, and sponsored their establishment of schools. For example, Gojong bestowed the title Baejae(培材), meaning the cultivation of men of talent, to Baejae Hakdang(培材學堂), and Queen Min bestowed a beautiful school name, Ewha(梨花), meaning pear flower, to Ewha Hakdang(梨花學堂), which was the first school for women. Baejae Hakdang was established by Methodist missionary Appenzeller in 1885, and Ewha Hakdang was established by Ms. Scranton in 1886. Presbyterian missionary Underwood established orphanage type mission school(former entity of Gyungshin School [儆信學校]) in 1886, and those schools had few students in their initial stage so they accepted vulnerable people, including orphans and gisaeng(妓生) to learn English and new studies. Basically, the establish-

ment of schools and education provided by western missionaries were aimed at propagation of Christianity, but the schools played a role in adopting modern education in Korea. However, the education at that time was very limited to a certain class so modern education didn't begin in full swing.

Idea of Nation Building and National Education Policy by the Enlightenment Party

As an enlightenment party, Kaehwapa which was another principal body of top-down reform in Korean modern history, undertook to establish the national system for realizing national sovereignty, and to help the capitalist economic system to take root. Kaehwapa had a sense of crisis regarding the global situation, and thus aimed to achieve national prosperity and military power. It intended to establish the capitalist economic system led by landowners in a top-down manner after seizing power through political regime change. And Kaehwapa's idea of nation building, which is based on its logic of modern transformation, had the meaning closest to the concept of modern people on the premise of equality among members and the concept of nation-state. Compared to other social powers, Kaehwapa strictly stuck to the people's sovereign right and constitutionalism, and it was also active in breaking down the caste system. It emphasized public enlightenment through education to form equal modern citizens. Their idea of national sovereignty also had limitation in that the scope of people did not include all classes, and only included a certain class with modern knowledge, that is, civilized people. However, Kaehwapa was more progressive than Gojong, in that they insisted on the right to vote, while King Gojong insisted on absolute monarchy.

At first, Kaehwapa tried to limit absolute monarchy and to implement a constitutional monarchy that would be based on "public governance" for transforming the political regime. They argued that public participation in politics made people responsible for the nation, leading naturally to national prosperity and military preparedness. Guaranteeing the right to vote for the public could be achieved only when equal modern citizens were established through the abolition of the caste system and education. Kaehwapa understood that a genuine modern state could on-

ly be established when a modern nation was formed. Educating unenlightened people, and granting freedom and equality to them, would also inculcate the populace with a sense of their responsibilities to recompense the state, which could lead to the efflorescence of civilization. Kaehwapa had an idea that if freedom and equality were granted to people, the modern nation-state could be built by increasing the people's rights and decreasing seigniorship.

Park Young-hyo (朴泳孝) from Kaehwapa, who participated in the Gapsin Coup (甲申政變), believed that basically all men were given natural rights by Heaven (天)⁶ and argued that Asian custom of dividing the offspring from the same ancestor into high class and low class and prohibiting marriage of different classes should be removed as soon as possible. He thought that America was a good model, in that people did not interrupt the freedom of others and slavery had been abolished. He praised Gojong's declaration of the statute in 1886 as an unprecedented great achievement, which allowed private slaves for one generation only. Park Young-hyo had the idea of the right to vote in mind by abolishing the feudal caste system and guaranteeing the participation of all people in politics (at least superficially). He thought that the government existed to solidify natural rights; if the government could not protect these rights, then the public could establish a new government through a coup.⁷

However, what he meant by "people who can participate in politics" was "people who had become enlightened through education." The concept of "new people (新民)" promoted by Park Young-hyo was not about ignoring people as if they were stupid but about enabling people to be "born again" through education. In short, Kaehwapa emphasized education and enlightenment to form modern citizens. In his paper to the King Gojong in 1888, Park Young-hyo proposed compulsory public education for the first time by arguing that boys and girls over the age of 6 should be enrolled in schools by building elementary and middle

⁶ Park Young-hyo. (1888). *Sangsomun* 上疏文. "天降生民億兆皆同一而稟有所不可動之通義 (It is an unwavering principle that Heaven granted equal rights to all people)"

⁷ Park Young-hyo. (1888). *Sangsomun* 上疏文. "八曰使民得當分之自由以養元氣必變革其政府而新立之(8th. If people are granted natural rights, and refreshed, they will reform and reestablish the government)"

schools. This was a very advanced idea as he included women as targets of compulsory education.

Yu Kil-chun(兪吉濬), who had studied abroad, was the first person to use the word “state” actively among Kaehwapa, and was familiar with the western concepts of “state” and “nation.” He also argued natural rights given by Heaven(天) saying “there is no distinction between the wise and the fool, rich and poor, high and low and strong and weak among people from emperor to ordinary man” in his book *Seoyugyeonmun*(西遊見聞; Observations on Travels in the West). He had the concept of modern people and citizens, recognizing all people in Korea shared the name of “Korean People” regardless of their wealth and status and that a social position given after birth was an artificial classification.⁸ As a gradual reformer, however, Yu Kil-chun stressed public enlightenment through education more than anything else. Even though he had studied in the US, he opposed a revolution or a coup, standing up for hereditary monarchy rather than republicanism. Instead, he argued for gradual political reform on the premise of education for the public. He said that great confusion could be caused if people with a lack of knowledge were given political rights suddenly, so political governance should be discussed after educating people to prepare them to participate in politics. He also said that political regime of a nation was established according to the level of its people, so there is no evil government based on good citizens and no good government with evil citizens regardless of political form⁹. He thought that the most important thing to ensure a good government is education through which ignorant people who don’t know the basis of a nation could be removed, and he stressed the importance of a government role in education¹⁰.

However, Kaehwapa’s idea of nation building and national education policy could not be accomplished because the Gapsin Coup failed. With Japan’s help, it was realized specifically in the Gabo Reform in 1894 (Suh, 1995). In 1894, Japan started the Sino-Japanese War by invading

⁸ Yu Kil-chun. *Seoyugyeonmun*西遊見聞. Seoul: Gyounginmunhwasa. pp. 114-115, “the right of people”

⁹ *Seoyugyeonmun*西遊見聞, pp. 151-152, “the kinds of governments”

¹⁰ *Seoyugyeonmun*西遊見聞, p. 209, “the tax use by government”

the Korean peninsula to suppress the Donghak(東學) peasants war. In the meantime, Kaehwapa established a pro-Japanese government with support from Japan. Members of Kaehwapa, including Yu Kil-chun and Park Young-hyo turned their concept of nation building and modern education into practice.

The Establishment of the Department of Education in the Gabo Reform Period

The Gabo Reform was an opportunity for Kaehwapa to realize the idea of a modern state, which had been considered since 1880s, although it was supported and intervened by Japan (Yu, 1990; 1993). The Japanese modern state system after the Meiji Reform was a model for Kaehwapa, and the Chosun dynasty's administrative organization was significantly amended and revised to consist of eight modern administrative departments, including interior, foreign affairs, judicial affairs, educational affairs, engineering works, military affairs, and agricultural, commercial, and industrial affairs. Also, royal family affairs were separate from state affairs and undertaken by Gungnaebu(宮內府), which was established separately(Suh, 1990).

The important point regarding the revision of administrative organization was that the monarch was restricted from participating in state affairs, and cabinet members of Kaehwapa seized power. Social reform was accomplished, which included the abolition of public and private slaves, the prohibition of the sale of slaves, and the abolition of the feudal caste system that discriminated among Yangban, the common people, and the lowly. The highest-level state examination to recruit ranking officials was abolished, as the examination was based on traditional Confucian scriptures, and new bureaucratic elites were selected based on modern pragmatic learning. Kaehwapa thought that traditional education was not helpful in nurturing practical talents. The new subjects for examination were not notes on Confucian scriptures and composition ability, but subjects of modern culture and practical ability, such as the Korean alphabet, Chinese writing, arithmetic, domestic politics, and foreign affairs.

And the Hakmuahmun(學務衙門; Ministry of Education) was installed for modern education. The Hakmuahmun was in charge of overall edu-

cation and had a special management bureau, a common management bureau, and an editorial bureau. The special management bureau was in charge of middle school, university, technical school, foreign language school and college. The common management bureau was in charge of primary school and teacher training institute. The editorial bureau was in charge of Korean spelling, foreign language translation, and textbook editing.¹¹

In addition, the government announced a system to recruit those who had completed modern education as government officials. The Hakmuahmun said in its announcement that “all systems should change in accordance with a new era and the most urgent area to be changed is education.” It announced that a primary school and a teacher-training institute would be established first in Seoul and a university and a college would be established gradually. In addition, it removed the limitation to school enrollment related to one’s caste by saying, “all children from high-ranking officials to ordinary people are welcomed at school to study day and night.”

In “Exemplary Rules 14(洪範14條)” declared by King Gojong in January, 1895, it was stated that smart children should be recruited to teach foreign studies and technique, and “Royal Doctrine for building State by Education(教育立國詔書)” released in February stressed the importance of education, saying that more schools should be established to nurture talented people.

As a result, huge number of students were sent to Japan to study for the purpose of nurturing people who completed modern education, and in April 1895 Hansung(漢城) Government Normal School was established. The school nurtured teachers with its fast-track curriculum for 6 months and its regular course for 2 years. 50 students aged between 18 and 25 were provided with lodging and food from the government. Nurturing teachers was a prerequisite for providing education.

Primary education started in July, 1895, with the declaration of the primary school decree. Primary schools were divided into government schools(national), public schools(local government, provincial govern-

¹¹ *Kwanbo*官報. (1894, June 2).

ment established), and private schools, and education was provided for 3 years for lower grades and 2 to 3 years for higher grades. School age was determined as 8 years (from 8 to 15) and each province ordered to establish public primary schools to accommodate children within its responsible area. Girls were also subject to school enrollment. By 1905, about 10 primary schools were established in Seoul and 50 in provincial areas(Son, 1985, p. 89). However the number of students was very small, as a national compulsory education system was not implemented.

In the meantime, a foreign language school system was declared in May, 1895. A Japanese school (1891) and an English school (1894) already existed, and a French school (1895), Russian school (1896), Chinese school (1897), and German school (1898) were established one by one. These foreign language schools were very actively managed to develop talented people necessary for communication with other nations as contact became more frequent with the start of modernization. As graduates from foreign language school had a better chance to get a job, the number of students in these schools was higher than that of other schools.

Modernization Reform and Education Policy of the Taehan Empire

In 1895, the government supported by Kaehwapa collapsed as Japan stepped back from the Korean Peninsula due to the Triple Intervention (三國干涉)¹² and the Ulmi Incident(乙未事變).¹³ King Gojong declared the Taehan Empire (大韓帝國¹⁴; 1897 to 1910) in 1897 and started modernization reform, led by an absolute monarch. The Independence Club(獨立協會), which succeeded the civil rights movement of the Enlightenment Party, demanded popular political power that could

¹² The Triple Intervention was a diplomatic intervention by Russia, Germany, and France on 23 April 1895 over the terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki signed between Japan and Qing China that ended the Sino-Japanese War.

¹³ The Ulmi Incident was the assassination of the Korean Empress Myongseong who was King Gojong's wife by Japanese invader in 1895.

¹⁴ Taehan Empire(大韓帝國) was a state, where King Gojong, who was the last king in the Korean Dynasty, Chosun, called himself the emperor and tried to establish a modern state in response to the western shock in 1897. It was annexed by Japan in 1910. See Do, M. H. (2003), Hwang, K. M. (2006) and Suh, Y. H. (2012).

counter balance the emperor's power, but Emperor Gojong strengthened his power as an absolute monarch. Under this political regime, people could not be called modern people, as they were subjects without political rights.

However, Gojong promoted the appearance of a nation-state¹⁵ by making a national flag and a national anthem. The Gabo Reform(甲午改革) of 1894 abolished the caste system so all people became equal before the law. The process of transit to modern state around the world varied from country to country, and the process of transit to modern state in Korea proceeded under a particular regime, which was an imperial regime. Gojong, who was a key figure among the traditional ruling class, took the initiative in modernization again, because there was outside pressure, and the Korean bourgeoisie, who would take the lead in modern nation building, did not yet exist. Thus, unlike the process of modern nation building in western countries, where the creation of national identity and modern nation building were achieved simultaneously, the formation of Korean national identity was begun to bud from an imperial regime in the Taehan Empire. As the principal body for the protection of sovereignty, Emperor Gojong laid the cornerstone for modernization by conservative modernization reform in terms of material and personnel resources.

As shown in the rule “regardless of the exam results, talented people suitable for tasks would be recruited” announced in June 25 1898¹⁶, the basis for recruitment in the Taehan Empire was not Confucian scriptures but practical modern knowledge. In addition, many modern education institutes were established everywhere to improve the practical knowledge of the people. In particular, many schools were established to nurture people with practical knowledge to lead modernization reform in production increase and industrial prosperity. In 1897, schools to nurture people handling postal service were established (Umuhakdang 郵務學堂 and Jeonmuhakdang 電務學堂), and a school for business education (1899) and schools related to mining (1900), cocoonery, and technical institutes were also established. The school for business education

¹⁵ The notion of modern nation-state is based on Tilly, C. (1990), Tilly, C. & Ardent, G. (1975), Nishigawa & Matsumiya. (1995) and Oh, H. M. (2014)

¹⁶ *Chochik* 詔勅 pp. 121-122

was changed into a school for agricultural and business education in 1904, and professional skills were taught for 1 year in a preparation course and 3 years in regular courses by dividing the school into an agricultural department, a technical department, and a commercial department. A school related to mining was established by the government to teach practical knowledge on mining and 3-year course was provided. In this period, imperial powers demanded for mining rights to Korea's gold and silver mines and the government needed people to deal with modern mining development on its own.

A medical school was also established in 1899 to nurture western medicine professionals. Western medicine was first introduced in 1884 when American missionary H. Allen entered Korea and the first western style hospital was established in 1885, which was called Gwang Hae Won[Jejungwon]. Gwang Hae Won, which started its western medicine education in 1886, is the mother entity of Yeonsei University[Severance Medical School]. The medical school offered a 3-year course, and those who graduated from middle school and aged between 20 and 30 were qualified to apply for entrance but there were few students, as medical techniques were not regarded as important skills. As Gwang Hae Won faced difficulties in operation, O. R. Avison from North Presbyterian Church mission headquarter supported the hospital. With the fund donated from L.H. Severance in 1899, new hospital buildings were established and medical education was expanded in 1904. In 1908, the 7 first graduates from the school obtained licenses (Son, 1985, p. 70).

Emperor Gojong argued in his statement emphasizing vocational training in 1899 that "Korea has not taught agricultural and technical knowledge, so national property has been decreasing. Thus, the establishment of a school for business and industrial education should be a priority."

In the meantime, many foreign language specialists were nurtured from foreign language schools, including the English school which was originated from Yugyoung Gong-won(育英公院), Japanese school, French school and Russian school. In August 1898, it was determined that government official positions would be given to graduates from each of these schools: foreign schools, foreign language schools, medical schools, and middle schools¹⁷. The judicial school, which was established in 1895, had many students, as graduates from that school had

a better chance to land a job, and in 1903, the course period for that school became one and a half years. In 1900 a military officer school was established. Modern education institutes played an important role in nurturing professionals required for modernization reform.

During the Taehan Empire period, powerful officials close to Emperor Gojong were not from the Confucian elite class but from practical fields, such as Lee Yong-ik(李容翊), who was a mining expert but not from the noble class. Young officials close to the Emperor were intellectuals who had learned a foreign language, such as Hyun Sang-gun(玄尙健), and those intellectuals were in charge of interpretation and translation of foreign affairs documents for the emperor and served as envoys for foreign affairs. Because the feudal caste system and the civil servant examination were abolished in the period of Gabo Reform, power elites in the Taehan Empire were not from prestigious families, but were composed of practical bureaucrats, many of whom were marginal men, the sons of concubines(庶孽), and military officers(武官). Unlike the Yangban(兩班), who had a predilection for engaging in power struggles and palace intrigues, these new men would not give rise to a political conflict with Emperor Gojong, and showed their loyalty to Emperor as his royal guards and made Gojong an absolute monarch.

Gojong was an enlightened monarch, who ardently pursued westernization and modernization, but on the other hand, he reinforced his despotic power. Then he removed the influences of the aristocratic class or enlightenment party and increased control over the people, rather than giving them the right to vote (Suh, 2003). Thus Gojong's education policy in the Taehan Empire did not evolve into universal compulsory education for modern nation building. His education policy was only focused on technical education for rapid modernization. He was not concerned about nation building education.

So, even though the political elites and government officials began to turn to practical knowledge in the Taehan Empire, the enrollment rate of the general public was still low because national compulsory education had not been instituted. According to the document on middle

¹⁷ *Gojong sillok*高宗實錄. (1898, Aug 2 & 1900, Oct 25)

school released in April, 1899, middle school was intended to provide secondary education to students who want to work for industry. A total of 7 years of education were provided, which were divided into 4 years for lower grade and 3 years for higher grade. According to the education system, Hanseong(漢城) Middle School was established in 1900, but the number of students was a mere 60 and middle schools both public and private were not established in provincial areas.

The Patriotic Enlightenment Movement and Private schools under the Japanese Invasion

After Japan won the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, it forced the Ulsa Treaty(乙巳條約) and included the Taehan Empire under its protection. When Japanese imperialism started to dispossess the Taehan Empire of its sovereignty, popular enlightenment movement, which included the press, publication and academic activities, was begun, recognizing the need for the enlightenment of the mass and modernization for the establishment of modern state in opposition to Japanese imperialism. This patriotic enlightenment movement started to oppose the plunder of sovereign rights, and starting from this period, about 5,000 private schools were established because enlightenment movement activists thought that the best way to respond to Japanese's invasion was to enlighten the public through education. Intelligent people and Christians who were skeptical about military opposition preferred the enlightenment movement through education.

The pioneering private school was Heunghwa School(興化學校), which was established in 1895 by the high-ranking official Min Young-hwan(閔泳煥). The school taught English, Japanese, and measuring skills. As the Taehan Empire conducted national land measurement using modern methodology, the founders of the school thought to provide necessary people to perform the work. In 1899, Ahn Chang-ho(安昌浩) established a school for the first time in Pyungan-do(平安道), which was the first co-education school. In 1904, pastor Jeon Deok-ki(全德基) established the Academy for the Youth, a school in which many Christian leaders and independence movement activists were nurtured. In February, 1905, Uhm Ju-ik(嚴柱益) established Yang Jeong Ui Suk(養正義塾) and Emperor Gojong's second wife Queen Um(嚴妃)

granted about 2 million pyung(坪) of land to the school in 1907. Queen Um also donated property to Jinmyung(眞明) Women's School (1906) and Sookmyung(淑明) Women's School (1906). In May, 1905, the closest official to Emperor Gojong, Lee Yong-ik, established Boseong(寶城) School(present Korea University). He had prepared the establishment of the school by looking around modern education institutes when he was abducted to Japan and purchased books and printing machines and came back to Korea. In May, 1906, Min Young-hwi(閔泳徽) established Hwimoon Ui Suk(徽文義塾) by donating his personal property, and in December, Shin Kyu-sik(申奎植) established Joongdong(中東) School. Ahn Chang-ho, who came back to Korea from the US in 1907, made a speech on the restoration of sovereign right through nation-wide education and established Daeseong(大成) School in Pyungyang(平壤). Impressed by Ahn Chang-ho, Lee Seung-hun(李昇薰) established Osan(五山) School in Jeongju(定州), Pyungan-do(平安道). In addition, many private schools were established in many provincial areas. All of these schools had the aim of saving the nation through education.

Like the National Education Council, which was organized for the purpose of school establishment and education in 1904, many societies were organized and private school establishment became a fever. Private schools were even established in Manchuria, Yunhaeju(沿海州), and Vladivostok, to which people had moved to join the independence movement.

Mission schools established by missionaries took root and mission schools for girls were established in major cities in the provinces. The mission schools for girls include Jeongui(正義) Women's School (1894), Sungui(崇義) Women's School (1903) in Pyungyang(平壤), Jeongsin(眞信) Women's School (1895), Baehwa(培花) Women's School (1898) in Seoul, Lucy Women's School in Wonsan(元山, 1903), Jeongmyung(眞明) Women's School in Mokpo(木浦, 1903), Hosoodon(好壽敦) Women's School (1904) in Gaesung(開城), Spear Women's School (1907) in Gwangju(光州), Kijeon(畿全) Women's School (1907) in Jeonju(全州) and Youngsang(永生) Women's School (1908) in Hamheung(咸興). Most women's schools (including the oldest, Ewha School) were schools established by the US North, South Methodist Church and the North Presbyterian Church mission headquarters. Among women educated in these schools were the first Korean female doctor, Esther Park (after

graduation from Ewha School, she studied at Johns Hopkins University), and women leaders including Nancy Ha, who graduated from Ohio Wesleyan College in the US.

However, the women's school that the government had planned to establish could not be established even though the curriculum and organization had been decided in May, 1899, and expenses allocated from the national budget. The women's school was designed to offer a 3-year course for higher education and a 2-year course for even higher education, allowing girls from 9 to 15 to enter the school to learn sports, writing, arithmetic, sewing, geography, history, science, and art. However, the establishment of the school was delayed due to opposition from conservative government officials. Later, Japan promulgated the decree on women's high school for secondary education in 1908, and Hansung(漢城) Women's High School (present Gyeonggi 京畿 Women's High School) was established.

Japan installed the Residency-General(統監府) in Korea in 1906 to intervene in Korea's foreign affairs and internal affairs and dispatched a Japanese advisor to the education sector. First, the Japanese abolished the 6-year primary school system and shortened the primary education period to 4 years in 1906. Even though Japan had initiated compulsory education in 1872 to achieve an enrollment rate of 53.5% for boys and 22.5% for girls, it shortened the Korean education period. In addition, Japan limited the establishment of private schools by announcing the private school decree in 1908. In 1908, the number of schools was 5,000 with 200,000 students, including 100 schools in Seoul. The fact that the 3,000-school increase in the number of private schools established after 1907 by the private sector reflects the people's wish to win back sovereign rights. However, after the Japanese colonial rule, the number of private schools permitted was 2,250, including 823 related to religion, 1,402 related to various types of education, 16 related to common schools, 2 related to high schools and 7 related to vocational schools according to statistics of May, 1910. In addition, Japan deployed Japanese teachers not only to public schools but also to private schools to provide pro-Japanese education. It banned the use of textbooks that were used by patriotic enlightenment movement activists for national education. In 1908, a textbook screening regulation was established to ban education on nationalism and patriotism. Thus modern education,

which was initiated to form modern people and nurture talented people for the nation-state establishment in Korea, was replaced by education for colonial subject people under Japanese rule.

Conclusion

Modern education in Korea was begun as a part of the efforts for modern nation building. Gojong and Kaehwapa thought that nation building was important to deal with internal and external crises, and tried to achieve it by modern education. Because Gojong, who was a monarch, was not concerned with the idea of the right to vote, he aimed to train skilled technical manpower by modern education. He wanted to cultivate technical manpower immediately and utilize them for the wealth and military power of the country. Besides modern educational institutions built by government, private schools founded by missionaries were supported to train modern men of talent in various ways.

From the 1880s to the Taehan Empire period, Gojong's modern education policy stipulated that anyone could have an industrial education, gain expertise, and work as a professional bureaucrat regardless of his status. Gojong, who pursued westernization and modernization, did not value the Confucian knowledge of the ruling class, but placed an emphasis on modern industrial education, including subjects such as foreign languages, commerce, mines, the military, and medicine. Most of the power elites around Gojong were of obscure origin in the Taehan Empire, and they were appointed to carry out Gojong's modernization projects with practical knowledge.

Kaehwapa was also concerned with the cultivation of modern manpower, and their focus of education policy was a little different from Gojong's. Kaehwapa thought that the most important factor in the process of modern nation building was to limit the power of the monarch and to make people responsible for the politics by giving them the right to vote. Kaehwapa put an emphasis on nation building, which was a prerequisite for the right to vote to form the minimum public intellect. Kaehwapa had the concept of a modern nation based on equality among its citizens, and tried to establish a modern nation state based on the idea of popular sovereignty and legalism. Thus, they emphasized a universal educational agenda for nation building education in

addition to practical and expert knowledge for modernization projects. Their idea of nation building was shown in the establishment of a national education system in the period of Gabo Reform in 1894. Primary, junior high, and vocational schools were established as a national education system in the Gabo Reform period, and normal schools were built to train teachers. National compulsory education system was not yet established, but a modern education system was established on the national level. However, the Gabo Reform stopped when the Kaehwapa regime collapsed after the withdrawal of Japanese military support.

In the Taehan Empire, in which Gojong reigned as Emperor, more emphasis was put on professional industrial education than on universal national education. Modern men of talent, who were educated in vocational schools, pursued the modernization projects with which Gojong was concerned. However, the Taehan Empire became a Japanese protectorate as the result of the Russo-Japanese War, before Gojong's avid modernization projects could come to fruition.

Japanese imperialists established the Residency-General (統監府) in the Taehan Empire, and began to substitute Korean nation building education with pro-Japanese education, suppressing patriotic education. In resistance to Japanese imperialism, patriotic enlightenment movement advocates established thousands of private schools around the country, and launched the restoration of sovereignty movement through patriotic national education. They believed that modern education was the method to restore Korean sovereignty in resistance to Japanese imperialism. In the end, this movement ended in failure, and colonial education was launched after Japan's forced annexation of Korea in 1910.

However, modern education laid a cornerstone for Korean nation building in this period (1876-1910), and the recipients of modern education became the principal body of independence movement against Japanese colonial rule. After liberation from Japanese rule in 1945, they formed the underpinnings of a democratic Republic of Korea.¹⁸

¹⁸ Author's Note: Primary historical sources are in the footnotes.

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