

Colonial Modernity and the Making of Mokpo as a Dual City

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Abstract

“Colonial modernity” refers to a particular articulation of the universal notion of “modernity” in the colonial context. Colonial modernity is best seen in the cities of a colony, in particular, where nationals of the imperial country migrate and settle down. Mokpo used to be a small fishing village, but upon its opening in 1897 it began to rapidly grow into an important port city through which rice and cotton produced in the Honam region were transported to Japan. After 1910, Mokpo developed into the biggest commercial and industrial city in the region.

However, Korean and Japanese residential areas in Mokpo were segregated into the South and North Villages with Mt. Yudal serving as the border. The two villages differed significantly in terms of their infrastructure, including roads, houses, water supply and drainage, street lamps, garbage disposal, and hospitals. Korean members of the Mokpo City Council frequently demanded improvements to the poor public facilities for the native residents, only to be rejected by the Japanese city authorities. The city authorities were generally indifferent to the poor conditions in the Korean areas, and were deliberately so to some extent. Japanese colonizers in Korea attempted to underscore the modernity they brought with them by maintaining wide gaps in living conditions between Japanese and Korean residential areas in cities such as Mokpo, where many Japanese lived. Imperial powers built “dual cities” in their colonies to that end; Mokpo was a model of them.

Keywords: Mokpo, colonial modernity, dual city, Japanese colonizers

* The work was fully supported by the research fund of Hanyang University (HYU-2009-T).

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Introduction

“Colonial modernity” refers to a particular articulation of the universal notion of “modernity” in the colonial context. Modernity is related to enlightenment, capitalism, democracy, and nationalism on the one hand, and to state violence, control, and imperial exploitation on the other. Given that modernity in a colony is deeply linked to the latter, it is often called “colonial modernity.”¹ Colonial modernity is best seen in the cities of a colony, in particular, where nationals of the imperial country migrate and settle down. Colonial cities in Korea first came into existence in open port cities in the latter half of the nineteenth century. This paper examines colonial modernity by focusing on the open port city of Mokpo, located on the southwestern tip of the Korean peninsula.

Mokpo used to be a small fishing village, but upon its opening in 1897 it began to rapidly grow into an important port city through which rice and cotton produced in the Honam region were transported to Japan. In addition, fueled by industrial development associated with trade since the 1910s, Mokpo developed into the biggest commercial and industrial city in the region. As a result, by the mid-1930s, Mokpo had become the sixth largest city in Korea in terms of population.

In the wake of the port city’s opening, Japanese migrants established a settlement south of Mt. Yudal and built modern facilities. Japanese settlements expanded southeastward from 1910 to constitute the center of Mokpo. Streets in Japanese districts were squarely demarcated and paved and even had street lights installed. Established in Japanese districts were public offices such as the city hall, police station, fire station, and chamber of commerce; financial and development institutions such as the branches of the Bank of Chosen (Joseon), the Oriental Development Company and other financial associations; schools and hospitals; large-scale factories; and shop-

1. On colonial modernity, see Shin and Robinson (1999), Kim G. (2003), and Jeong (2007).

ping malls and various entertainment and recreational facilities. Japanese streets in Mokpo looked like avenues exhibiting the “modernity” they brought with them.

Korean districts north of Mt. Yudal also had schools, hospitals, churches, youth halls, and theaters. “Modernity” did not evade them, either. Streets, housing, and piped water facilities in Korean areas, however, lagged far behind their Japanese counterparts, which caused serious grievances among Koreans.²

Mokpo thus bore the features of a “dual city,” where living spaces were ethnically divided and the urban infrastructure differed greatly according to ethnic groups. This duality was a general feature of colonial cities built by colonizers, and was also true for Mokpo. This paper reviews the historical backgrounds and socioeconomic conditions under which the “dual city” of Mokpo came into being during the colonial period.

Construction of the Colonial City of Mokpo: Migration of the Japanese

Mokpo was officially opened in 1897 under an edict issued by King Gojong. Before this, however, the Japanese had strongly demanded its opening and had already obtained a promise to that end at the time of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895. The 1897 imperial edict was issued for two purposes: to be relieved of Japan’s pressure and to collect customs revenues as a means of overcoming the financial predicament of the Great Han Empire.

Why did Japan demand the opening of Mokpo? The answer lay in Mokpo’s geographical advantages. Published in 1930, the “Geography” of the Mokpo section of the *Jeollanam-do sajeongji* (Reports on the Jeollanam-do Province) reads:

2. Details on the dualism shown in Mokpo’s residential space are available in Ko (2004).

Located in the southwest of the Korean peninsula, the tip of the Muan peninsula at the end of Jeollanam-do province, and the end of the Noryeong mountain range, Mokpo is a port at the mouth of the Yeongsangang river, one of Korea’s six largest rivers. Surrounded by 1,800-plus islands that comprise an archipelago in the front, Mokpo is located in the center, with Gunsan to the north and Yeosu to the east. Connected to the oceans and facing Shanghai and Qingdao, China, it can become a stronghold for trade with China or a strategic point in an international marine route. Northern Kyushu lies near in its south, with Jeju island situated in between. Possessed of hundreds of square km of fertile lands, Mokpo is a port that handles commerce in materials worth 209 million won.³

Mokpo was chosen as the first open port in the Honam region on account of its geographical advantages, which mainly had to do with connecting the Yeongsangang river with a number of plains in the region including the Naju plain, and being able to transport the rice produced there to Japan. Also important was the fact that Mokpo was able to function as an excellent post from which to explore the Jeollanam-do region as a market for Japan’s capitalist products. After its opening, Mokpo faithfully fulfilled such roles.

Prior to its opening, however, Mokpo was merely a small, seaside farming village, inhabited by about eighty households. Upon its opening, this seaside farmland was turned into a port. The Great Han Empire filled up the farmlands, rezoned them, and granted their occupation rights to the Japanese. Japanese migrants swarmed to the southern foot of Mt. Yudal, and reclaimed farmlands and the seashore by erecting a huge dike. In 1902, five years after the port was opened, the number of Japanese reached about 900. In the wake of the port opening, Koreans also began to flock to the port, many of which were stevedores. Koreans settled themselves not on the side facing the sea, but on the opposite side, that is, at the northern foot of Mt. Yudal.

3. Kakutaro (1930, 332).

Mokpo saw a rapid growth in trade after its opening. According to data on foreign trade in Mokpo in 1897-1910, both imports and export at the port of Mokpo grew sharply in 1903, but declined between 1904 and 1906, affected by the Russo-Japanese War. Imports and exports increased sharply again in 1907, stagnated in 1908, and recovered in 1909. The fluctuation was due to the local Righteous Army troops threatening to attack Japanese merchants in the port city. When the Righteous Army activities were weakened under the "1909 Great South Korea Conquest Operation" launched by the Japanese, trade came to life in Mokpo ports.⁴

Meanwhile, the number of Japanese migrants to Mokpo rose drastically. Between the 1897 port opening to the year 1910, the number of Japanese residents rose sharply in 1901 to reach over 1,000 in 1902, over 2,000 in 1905, over 3,000 in 1909, and about 3,500 in 1910. Although the number of Japanese did not exceed that of the native population, it was still astounding that a total of 3,500 Japanese had migrated to Mokpo in the span of only 13 years from the port's opening.⁵

This increase in the Japanese population was related to the steep rise in trade handled by Mokpo ports. Rice, the largest commodity item exported from Mokpo, rose on average 8.9% a year from 1898-1909. Cotton saw the biggest annual average growth rate of 55.5%. Mokpo's cotton export to Japan was expedited when the Japanese succeeded in their experiments with cotton cultivation on Gohado island, which lay in front of the port, and encouraged the raising of cotton around Mokpo. The exports of not only raw cotton but also ginned cotton saw a sharp rise from 1909.⁶

What was trade after 1910 like in Mokpo? Rice and cotton occupied an overwhelming portion of the exports that went through Mokpo, followed by cotton-seed oil, seaweeds, fertilizer, and cowhide. Rice and cotton accounted for 50.2% and 42.2% of the

4. Mokpo City (1930, 572-573).

5. Mokpo Chronicles Compilation Committee (1991, 226).

6. Bae (1994, 80).

exports in 1924 and 70.9% and 23.4% in 1928, respectively. Combined, they occupied 92.4% of Mokpo's exports in 1925 and 94.3% in 1928. It is thus no exaggeration to say that rice and cotton occupied most of the exports from Mokpo.⁷

Let us look at the trend in Mokpo port's trade volume after 1910. According to statistics, Mokpo ports always displayed an export surplus in the 1920s, with the exception of the early half of the 1910s. Exports, following a brief slowdown in the early 1910s, recovered from 1913 or so and realized as great as a 16-fold increase in 1929 compared with 1910.⁸ This indicates a drastic boost in the foreign trade handled by Mokpo ports during that period.

This also resulted in a drastic increase in population. Table 1 shows the changing trend in the Mokpo population between 1907 and 1936. The number of Japanese, following a sharp rise in and around 1920, did not increase much until 1922. In contrast, the number of Koreans continued to grow rapidly from the 1920s. The ratio of Koreans and Japanese changed substantially from 1:1.3 in 1917 to 1:3.2 in 1930 and to 1:5.7 in 1935. Namely, the population of Koreans rose much more sharply than that of Japanese. The population of Mokpo saw a drastic rise during the first half of the 1930s, surpassing 60,000 in 1936 and becoming the sixth largest city in the country.⁹ This owed to a substantial boost in the number of factories related to the ginning, spinning, and weaving of cotton, which was spurred by Governor-General Kazusike Ugaki's policy of "encouraging cotton cultivation in the south and sheep in the north" in the first half of the 1930s as well as by a drastic increase in cargo volume handled by Mokpo ports. The value of the port's outgoing and incoming cargo doubled from about 15.5 million in 1931 to about 32 million in 1936.¹⁰

The occupational distribution of Japanese and Koreans in 1929 is

7. Kakutaro (1930, 358).

8. Mokpo City (1930, 573-574).

9. "Mokpo City Population Reaches 61,000, an Increase of 5,000 from the Previous Year." *Dong-a Ilbo*, October 29, 1936.

10. Government-General of Korea (1936, 221).

Table 1. Changes in Mokpo Population between 1907 and 1936

Year	No. of Japanese	No. of Koreans	No. of foreigners	Total
1907	2,851	5,205	83	8,139
1912	5,323	7,645	160	13,128
1917	5,543	7,127	101	12,771
1922	5,685	12,096	164	17,945
1926	7,280	19,993	248	27,521
1930	7,809	25,056	379	33,244
1936	8,885	50,859	261	60,005

Source: Government-General of Korea (1911-1936).

shown in Table 2. According to the table, jobs accounting for the largest share of employment among both Japanese and Koreans were commerce and transportation, accounting for 58.1% and 42.9%, respectively. A contrast is seen in that 20.2% of Japanese were engaged in public affairs and free enterprise, while only 6.4% of Koreans were engaged in the same occupations. Another contrast is that whereas as many as 13.2% of Koreans were engaged in other self-employed jobs, only 7.3% of Japanese were engaged in the same business. Industry, transportation, and other self-employed jobs, from among the occupations given above, appear to employ a considerable number of laborers. According to the 1930 national tax census conducted by the Government-General of Korea, Mokpo had 6,348 Korean laborers and 1,742 Japanese laborers.¹¹ They accounted for 24.3% of the Mokpo population at the time. Korean laborers made up 25.3% of the Korean population and their Japanese counterparts 22.3% of the Japanese population, both quite a high percentage. In terms of the absolute number of laborers, however, Koreans were overwhelmingly numerous reaching 8,090 and accounting for 78.5%.

11. Government-General of Korea (1930), cited from Kim G. (1992, 48).

Table 2. Population Structure of Japanese and Koreans by Occupation (1929)

Classification	Japanese (%)	Koreans (%)
Farming and fishing	398 (5.0)	629 (2.9)
Industry	1,471 (18.5)	2,802 (12.9)
Commerce and transportation	3,399 (42.9)	12,609 (58.1)
Public affairs and free enterprises	1,602 (20.2)	1,387 (6.4)
Other self-employed jobs	578 (7.3)	2,870 (13.2)
Unemployed and unknown	483 (6.1)	1,410 (6.5)
Total	7,931 (100.0)	21,707 (100.0)

Source: Mokpo City (1930, 828-829).

Japanese-Centered Economic Structure

Traders, Agricultural Companies, and Land Owners in Mokpo

The economy of Mokpo during the colonial period was essentially based on the export of rice and cotton to Japan. Hence, it is no exaggeration to say that those engaged in trade with Japan held sway over the economy of Mokpo. The most influential Japanese traders in Mokpo during the 1920s were Manhei Uchitani, Tomekichi Inoue, Taikichi Morita, and Fukutaro Takatsu.¹² They operated the largest rice mills in Mokpo. Manhei Uchitani, the largest trader of them all, came to Korea and settled in Mokpo in 1910 and accumulated a huge fortune by trading in rice and cotton. In 1930, he chaired the Mokpo Grain Dealers Association and the Mokpo Trading Merchants Association and served as vice chairman of the Korea Cotton Traders' Association. He was also special councilor of the Mokpo Chamber of Commerce.¹³ As an owner of 3,768 km² or 931 acres of land in Jeollanam-do province, he was virtually the wealthiest man in Mokpo.

12. Kakutaro (1930, 408).

13. Kakutaro (1930, 427).

Also clustered in Mokpo were Japanese agricultural firms and landowners who owned large tracts of land across Jeollanam-do province. This was because in Mokpo they found it convenient to collect rent from tenant farmers and transfer their produce to traders. That is why Japan's agricultural capital began to enter Mokpo in earnest following the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904. Japanese agricultural firms that began moving to Mokpo organized the Mokpo Farming Society in 1912 for the purpose of exchanging information amongst themselves. There were eight member firms of the society in 1920: the Mokpo branch of Orient Development Company, Mokpo branch of Chosen Business Company, Mokpo branch of Kamata Industrial Company, Mokpo Management Office of Chosen Industrial Enterprise Company, Kunitake Farm & Company, Fukuta Agriculture Company, Mokpo Development Company and Mokpo branch of Dokuda Foreign Business Company.

The firm that owned and managed the largest area of land in the Jeollanam-do region was, unsurprisingly, the Oriental Development Company, followed by the Chosen Business Company, Chosen Industrial Enterprise Company, Dokuda Foreign Business Company, and the Kamata Industrial Company. The combined land owned by the eight enterprises reached as much as 193,766 km² or 47,880 acres.¹⁴

In and around 1930, there were fourteen Japanese landowners who kept their offices in Mokpo and owned land over 495 km² or 122.3 acres each in the Jeollanam-do region. Their combined land totaled 20,836 km² or 5,148.7 acres. Some began to purchase the land as early as 1903, but most did so in the 1910s, during which individual Japanese landowners began land management in earnest. The Japanese landowners owning more than 990 km² or 245 acres of land were Seitaro Nakamichi, Manhei Uchitani, Taikichi Morita, Seikichi Niki, Sakai Mori, Sinzo Nakata, and Sensuke Morita.¹⁵

There were nine Korean landowners in Mokpo who owned over 495 km² or 122.3 acres of land each during the same period. Mun

14. Gunsan Branch of the Keijo Rice Office (1930).

15. Gunsan Branch of the Keijo Rice Office (1930).

Jae-cheol, the biggest landowner among them, owned over 5,950 km² or 1,470 acres of land. Even including Japanese, he was the biggest landowner in Mokpo. Kim Seong-gyu was also a major landowner, owning 3,877 km² or 958 acres of land. Following them were Kim won-hui, Seo In-seop, Cha Nam-jin, Kim Sang-seop, Hong Se-byeong, Bak Jong-deok, and Choe Yang-sang. The lands owned by those nine Koreans totaled 17,067.8 km² or 4,217.5 acres, smaller than the 20,836 km² or 5,148.7 acres owned by their 14 Japanese counterparts.¹⁶

Land in the Jeollanam-do area owned by Japanese and Korean landowners and landowner firms residing in Mokpo totaled about 297,522 km² or 73,510 acres, accounting for about 7.5% of the 406,605 km² or 100,474 acres of rice paddies and upland fields in all of Jeollanam-do province. Twelve major landowners, including the Oriental Development Company, owned over 1,983.5 km² or 481 acres of land.

Industries and Japanese and Korean Capitalists in Mokpo

As mentioned above, Mokpo, an export window for rice and cotton, thus served as a city of traders and landowners. Beginning in the 1910s, however, the port town began to take the shape of an industrial city, and in the 1930s eventually rose to the status of the top industrial center in the Honam region.

It was the cotton ginning industry that kick-started Mokpo's industrial development. Cotton ginning refers to the separation of the seeds of the cotton plant from the cotton. Establishment of the Korea Cotton Industry Company in 1906, which aimed at cultivating, ginning, and exporting cotton, marked the start of the cotton ginning industry in Mokpo. Headquartered in Osaka, the firm had a branch in Mokpo, operating 30 cotton gins, and rechristened itself as Chosen Cotton in 1910. Denhei Cotton Company came into being soon after.

16. Gunsan Branch of the Keijo Rice Office (1930).

In January 1913, Mokpo cotton brokers set up Mokpo Cotton Company. Those three firms monopolized cotton purchases at the time. Chosen Cotton was later absorbed by Nippon Cotton Company, headquartered in Osaka, and became its Mokpo branch. Merged with Denhei and Mokpo Cotton in July 1919, Chosen Cotton rechristened itself Chosen Cotton Industry Company and boosted its capital to two million won. The company had its factories in 12 cities, including Mokpo, Yeongsanpo, Nampyeong, Gwangju, Yeosu, Busan and Masan, operating as many as 380 cotton gins. Finding it inconvenient to operate cotton ginning factories over a wide area, however, Chosen Cotton Industry Company gradually closed them and concentrated its properties in Mokpo. The number of cotton gins at its Haean Street factory was then increased to 200. In March, 1919, Nambuk Cotton Industry Company, which was capitalized at one million won, began operation with 50 cotton gins and gradually expanded its capacity to about 117 cotton gins in 1930. Private cotton ginning factories were consecutively launched from 1922 and numbered over 30 in 1928, with 302 cotton gins in total.¹⁷ Two Koreans—Seo Gye-haeng and Kwon Yeong-rye—ran cotton-ginning factories in Mokpo. The latter owner served as a member of the Mokpo City Council from 1931.

Meanwhile, cotton fabrics and cottonseed oil factories emerged in Mokpo. Chosen Cotton Company established a cotton cloth factory at Mokpo's Haean street in March 1924. With the raw materials for cotton yarn transported from Osaka and 128 looms, the factory weaved and supplied coarse cloth with the trademark of "eight trigrams" across the Korean peninsula. To meet mounting demand, the factory installed 30 more looms in 1927.¹⁸ With 200,000 won invested, a group of Koreans—Cheon Cheol-ho, Cheon Gil-ho, Kwon Yeong-rye and Cheon Dok-geun—founded Mokpo Textile Company in Yongdangni village in 1933.¹⁹

17. Mokpo City (1930, 627-629).

18. Mokpo City (1930, 632).

19. East Asian Economy News Company (1941, 144).

Chosen Oil Manufacturing Company, the only firm of its kind, was created in Mokpo in June 1918 with 500,000 won in capital. Chosen Oil Manufacturing refined cotton seed oil produced on the peninsula and supplied the end product of edible oil to kitchens in Japan and Korea. Merged with Nikka Oil Manufacturing Company, which was headquartered in Wakamatsu, Japan in August 1926, the factory became Nikka Oil's Mokpo plant.

While primarily operating as a rice export port, Mokpo also witnessed a substantial development in the rice milling and polishing industry. A total of 40 rice mills operated in Mokpo in 1927, with a total capital of 445,000 won and employed 915 workers who turned out around 7,216 cubic meters of rice worth over 10 million won. The capital exceeded that of cotton seed oil manufacturing, cotton ginning and cotton fabrics, and its annual production far surpassed that of other industries.

In 1927, large-scale rice mills were run by Manhei Uchitani, Taikichi Morita, Tomekichi Inoue and Fukutaro Takatsu, as well as the Asahi Rice Mill.²⁰ As mentioned above, all of them were major rice traders in Mokpo.

There were 16 Koreans, including Mun Jae-cheol, who ran smaller-scale rice mills in or around 1929.²¹ Rice mills run by Koreans expanded in scale later through partnership deals. Daeseong Company, a joint-stock firm of Kim Mun-ok, Yi Yo-cho and Jang Deok-jun, was set up in 1931 with 20,000 won in capital. The Honam Rice Mill, an unlimited partnership capitalized at 15,000 won was established in 1938 by the Im clan, led by Im Jong-mun. In 1939, Namseon Rice Mill Company came into being with 198,000 won in capital, contributed by Mun Jae-cheol, Yakutsuki Endo, and a few other Koreans.²²

Another noteworthy industry in Mokpo was rubber. The major rubber products at the time were shoes, tires, and toys. The rubber

20. Mokpo City (1930, 640).

21. Kakutaro (1930, 423).

22. East Asian Economy News Company (1941).

industry in Mokpo was launched when Japanese set up Mokpo Rubber Industry and Gonko Rubber Industry in 1924. And Koreans established Donga Rubber Industry Company, a manufacturer of rubber shoes in the main, in 1925. Its major shareholders were Kim Sang-seop, Kim Won-hui, Jo Hui-gyeong, and Mun Jae-cheol. Kim Sang-seop served as the chief executive officer of the corporation, capitalized at 300,000 won. Donga Rubber, effectively a Korean firm, was the largest scale among Korean-operated firms in Mokpo at the time, along with Mokpo Warehouse Financing Company.²³ Riding favorable business conditions that resulted from England lifting a raw rubber export embargo in 1928, Donga Rubber operated two 40-horsepower steam engines and manufactured 450,000 pairs of rubber shoes a year with 40 males and 150 females employed in its ranks. In 1930, the factory was capable of producing about 800,000 pairs of shoes per annum, importing raw material from Osaka and Kobe.²⁴

In addition, Mokpo was home to electricity, shipbuilding, brewing, distillation, casting, and printing industries, mostly operated by Japanese capitalists. Breweries and distilleries that produced Korean liquors, however, were mostly operated by Koreans. Mokpo had over 50 Korean liquor makers in the 1920s, most of which were withered out to leave one company and five individual makers in or around 1929. The liquor company was Mokpo Brewing Company, with Kim Sang-seop serving as the chief executive officer and Cha Nam-jin as the managing executive director. Capitalized at 100,000 won, Mokpo Brewing produced 4,000 *seok* or 72 cubic meters of unrefined rice wine, 100 *seok* or 18 cubic meters of refined rice wine, and 300 *seok* or 54.1 cubic meters of *soju* or distilled spirit a year. Mokpo Brewing supplied more than half of the unrefined rice wine consumed in Mokpo a year at the time, which amounted to approximately 1,353 cubic kilometers.²⁵

Industrial capitalists began to appear in Mokpo in line with

23. Nakamura (1925, 159-160).

24. Mokpo City (1930, 659-660).

25. Mokpo City (1930, 656).

development of the port city in the areas of cotton ginning, cotton textile, cotton seed oil, rice milling, rubber production, and the brewing and distilling industries. As major capitalists from Japan proper set up cotton ginning, as well as cotton textile and cotton seed oil industries in the port city, Japanese capitalists in Mokpo tended to invest mainly in rice milling, shipbuilding, and brewing. Korean capitalists primarily invested in rice milling, rubber, and the brewing industries. The most prominent Korean capitalist was Kim Sang-seop, who headed Donga Rubber Industry Company and Mokpo Brewing Company

As outlined above, Mokpo's economy was in effect controlled by the Japanese. This was evident from the status of various corporations in Mokpo. In 1930, Mokpo had a total of 43 banks and companies or their branches. Except for 11 banks and firms headquartered elsewhere, businesses by the Japanese in Mokpo stood at 23. In comparison, there were only nine established by indigenous businessmen.²⁶

Mokpo's Elites and the Mokpo City Council

After the massive uprisings in the spring of 1919, the Government-General of Korea changed the domination strategy from the "military rule" to the "cultural rule." The new policy was aimed at granting the limited degree of freedoms in the press, assembly, and association in a bid to lessen Korean resistance on the one hand, and to foster pro-Japanese Koreans on the other. The Government-General of Korea, in regard to the latter, reformed the local administration system in 1920 to establish advisory institutes called advisory committees or councils in provinces, cities, and townships. It co-opted Koreans into provincial, city, and township councils for the purpose of

26. They were Honam Bank (Hyeon Jun-ho), Mokpo Warehouse Financing Company (Kim Sang-seop), Donga Rubber Company (Kim Sang-seop), Namil Transportation Company (Mun Jae-cheol), Haeseon Transportation Company (Yun Cheol-ha), Jeonnam Joint-stock Company, Mokpo Malt Company (Yi Muk-yeon), and Sangseong Partnership Company (Kim Ik-jin). Mokpo City (1930, 783-785); and Kakutaro (1930, 396-406).

making them pro-Japanese. The city advisory committee had been in existence since the 1910s, but the number of its members increased and an appointment system was replaced by an election system. Eligible voters were limited to those who had paid five won or more in city tax a year.

Of the seven members of the Mokpo Advisory Committee from the late 1910s to the early 1920s, only two were native Koreans—Kim Sang-seop and Kim Yeong-hak. With the local administration system reorganized in the 1920s, the quorum of the city advisory committee rose to 14. The Government-General of Korea again reformed the local administration system in 1931, turning the city advisory committee into a deliberative organ and renaming it the city council. With the mayor serving as chair of the council, the posts of vice chairmen were created, elected from among the councilors, and their terms extended from three to four years. In addition, the quorum of councilors substantially rose to 27 in 1931 and again to 30 in 1933.

The total number of Japanese and Korean councilors of the Mokpo City Advisory Committee and the Mokpo City Council between 1927 and 1940 was 103 and 58, respectively, accounting for 64% and 36% of the total. The number of Korean councilors increased from four in 1927 to 15 in 1940, when it surpassed that of their Japanese counterparts.

What were Japanese councilors of the Mokpo City Council like? A review of their backgrounds as of somewhere around 1930 will be useful here. Manhei Uchitani, hailing from Hyogo prefecture, Japan, was a prominent grain exporter. Ujiro Matsui, born in Yamaguchi prefecture, was also a trader, who was the head of the Mokpo Electric Light Company and Showa Electric Company and served as a councilor of the Jeollanam-do province Council as well as a councilor of the Mokpo School Association. Sakai Mori, hailing from Ehime prefecture, was a grain exporter and a big landowner, who served as vice chairman of the Mokpo Grain Merchants' Association and general manager of the Mokpo Shrine. Naosuke Murakami, born in Yamaguchi prefecture, was a trader and landowner and served as a councilor of the Jeollanam-do Province Council and chairman of the

Table 3. Number of Councilors of the Mokpo City Advisory Committee and Mokpo City Council between 1927 and 1940

Year	No. of Japanese Councilors	No. of Korean Councilors	Remarks
Mokpo City Advisory Committee, March 1927	9	4	quorum 13
Mokpo City Advisory Committee, March 1928	8	4	quorum 12
Mokpo City Advisory Committee, March 1929	7	4	quorum 11
Mokpo City Advisory Committee, March 1930	8	5	quorum 13
Mokpo City Council, November 1931	19	8	quorum 27
Mokpo City Council, June 1935	21	8	quorum 30 (1 vacant)
Mokpo City Council, November 1936	18	10	quorum 30 (1 vacant)
Mokpo City Council, March 1940	13	15	quorum 30 (2 vacant)
Total	103 (64%)	58 (36%)	161 (100%)

Source: *Mokpobu gwangye seoryu* (Documents on Mokpo City) (kept at the National Archives).

Mokpo Chamber of Commerce.²⁷ Jiro Nara headed the Mokpo Mutual Aid Company and the Mokpo Trust Company and held the post of councilor at the Mokpo School Association. Rinpei Fujida was a mutual aid fund operator; Takeo Ishimori, a salt manufacturer; Kojiro Noguchi, a stationery dealer; Yujiro Okamura, a liquor dealer and a councilor on the Mokpo Chamber of Commerce. In sum, many Japanese members of the Mokpo City Council were traders, mer-

27. Kakutaro (1930, 427-428).

chants, industrialists, and landowners.

Who were the Korean councilors of the Mokpo City Council? Kim Sang-seop, born in Namgyo-dong, Mokpo, served as a member of the Mokpo City Council for the longest period of time from 1927 to 1935. As a prominent Korean capitalist in the port city, he served as CEO of Donga Rubber Company, Mokpo Warehouse Financial Company, Mokpo Brewing Company and Jeonnam Development Company. In addition, having had served as a member of the Privy Council of the Government-General of Korea and of the Mokpo City Advisory Committee, he was promoted to membership of the Jeollanam-do Province Council. Another longest-timer, Cha Nam-jin, hailed from Samyang-myeon, Muan-gun county, and graduated from Meiji University in Japan. He was a capitalist serving as director of Jeonnam Trust Company and Mokpo Brewing Company as well as as auditor of the Mokpo Warehouse Financial Company and Honam Bank.²⁸ Jeong Byeong-jo, a member of the Mokpo City Council from 1930 to 1936, was a notorious real estate broker from prior to Korea's colonization by Japan in 1910. He attempted to make a big fortune with one swoop by purchasing prospective Mokpo city pipe-water reservoirs, taking advantage of his membership of the Mokpo City Council in 1936, but because of this he was detained on charges of fraud, breach of trust, and embezzlement, and sentenced to a one-year-and-a-half prison term with a four-year suspended sentence by the Daegu Appellate Court.²⁹ Kim Myeong-jin, a member of the city council from 1930 to 1935, hailed from Haenam County and was a lawyer. Kwon Yeong-rye, hailed from Andong, Gyeongsangbuk-do province, served the city council from 1931 to 1940, and was engaged in seaweed and cotton ginning businesses.³⁰

Members of the Mokpo City Advisory Committee and Mokpo City Council, both Japanese and Koreans, were mostly merchants,

28. Kakutaro (1930, 428).

29. "Ex-Mokpo City Councilor Jeong Byeong-jo Case Referred to an Appellate Court." *Joseon jungang ilbo*, July 9, 1936.

30. Kakutaro (1930, 428-431).

industrialists, and landowners. They were elected largely thanks to the extremely limited number of eligible voters. With eligibility confined to those paying five won or more a year in city taxes, eligible voters in Mokpo in 1935 numbered only 883 Japanese and 551 Koreans.³¹ Those belonging to the middle class and above were generally elected men of wealth who were able to represent their interests. The candidates, too, were mostly pre-determined; elections were dull, with either no competition at all or little contest between only two or three candidates.

Also constituting the controlling elite of Mokpo were members of the Mokpo Chamber of Commerce. In 1930, the chamber had eight Japanese—Seiichi Mori, Hansuke Isei, Kizo Matsumae, Chieji Kinoshita, Yoshitaro Higuchi, Manhei Nakata, Heihachiro Hashimoto, and Kantaro Ito—and three Koreans—Song Mun-ok, Song Chang-man, and Kwon Yeong-rye. Seiichi Mori was a merchant handling cotton, marine products, and *soju*, as well as a director of the Mogyeong Transport and Warehouse Company. Hansuke Isei was a rice trader and grocery store owner and served as a director of the Asahi Fish Market and a councilor of the Mokpo Importers Exporters Association. Kizo Matsumae was also a trader and grocery store owner and chaired the Mokpo Financer Association and served as vice chairman of the Mokpo Importers Exporters Association. Chieji Kinoshita, also a trader, served as secretary of the Mokpo Importers Exporters Association and auditor of the Mokpo Financing Association. Manhei Nakata ran a cotton gin and drug stores while also managing the Mokpo branch office of the *Chosen Shimbun* (daily). Heihachi Hashimoto owned a store that sold rubber shoes. Kwantaro Ito managed his flat glass and drug stores and also served as the Korean agent of Asahi Glass Company.³² Korean councilor Song Mun-ok ran a rice store; Song Chang-mun ran sewing machine and electric appliances stores; Kwon Yeong-rye operated seaweed and cotton textile businesses.³³

31. "Eligible Voters in Mokpo City." *Dong-a Ilbo*, April 22, 1935.

32. Kakutaro (1930, 430-431).

33. Kakutaro (1930, 430-431).

Kwon, as mentioned above, was a member of the Mokpo City Council in the 1930s.

Members of the Mokpo Chamber of Commerce were mostly influential Mokpo merchants, dealing in trade, rice, cotton, groceries, and marine products. Based on their economic foundations, they served as directors or auditors of financial associations, companies, and markets as well as a newspaper branch chief or shrine managing general.

As reviewed above, the elites of Mokpo society consisted mainly of Japanese merchants, industrialists, and landowners, with several Korean merchants and industrialists also amongst them.

Mokpo, a Dual City: Spatial Division of South and North Village

Mokpo, as mentioned above, was a city dominated by the Japanese in terms of politics, society, and economy. As the Korean population gradually increased, it came to exceed their Japanese counterparts by five times in the 1930s and the Japanese continued to play a leading role. Remarkable gaps existed between Japanese and Korean neighborhoods.

The Japanese lived south of Mt. Yudal and along the southern and eastern shores of Mokpo, while Koreans mainly resided north and east of Mt. Yudal. Accordingly, the Japanese residential area was often called the “South Village” and the Korean residential area the “North Village.” South Village was a new town built by modern urban planning with streets arranged in a grid, whereas the North Village had only disorderly alleyways. Administrative designations differed, too; neighborhoods in South Village were called *jeong* (derived from the Japanese word *machi* meaning ward), and those of the North Village *dong*.

Located in the South Village were various public agencies, educational and medical institutes, shrines and temples. Among them were Mokpo City Hall, a police station, post office, customs branch,

branch court, Bank of Chosen branch, Mokpo branch of the Orient Development Company, a meteorological observatory, Songdo Shrine, chamber of commerce, community center, Mokpo City Hospital, railroad hospital, Mokpo Elementary School, Mokpo Girls’ Public High School, Higashi Honganji Temple, Shinkoji Temple, and the Tokiwaza Theater. The South Village also housed a variety of corporations, their branches, and factories. Among them were the headquarters and factory of Chosen Cotton Company, Nikkai Oil Manufacturing Factory, Nanboku Cotton Factory, Asahi Rice Mill, a branch of Chosen and Shipping Company, a merchant ship firm branch, and the Chosen Fisheries Company. The South Village also included facilities that were symbolic of modernity, such as factories, schools, hospitals, police stations, post offices, chamber of commerce, public halls and theaters. Although North Village also had some modern facilities, including schools, hospitals, churches, county offices, chambers of youth, and theaters—such as the Mokpo Primary School, Jeongmyeong Girls’ School, Yeonghung School, French Hospital, a public market, a Catholic church, Yangdong Protestant Church, a youth hall and Mokpo Theater—it had no public institutes other than the Muan County Office and a financial association.

In addition, there was a marked difference between the physical conditions of South and North Village. Bak Hwa-seong, the female novelist who resided in Mokpo, compared the two neighborhoods in her novel *Chuseok jeonya* (The Eve of Chuseok), published in 1925:

It’s really pitiful to look at Mokpo in the daylight. The tile-roofed houses of the Japanese sit in rows on the southern side. Straw-thatched houses mingle with the old tiled-roof houses of the rich in the center. And except for the Westerners’ houses, boys’ and girls’ schools, and churches that stand amid forests, low-lying thatched cottages occupy the eastern and northern side. Look at the foot of Mt. Yudal. Covering the entire hill is a slum consisting of pigpen-like straw-thatched huts on rocky ground. Nevertheless, the natural scenery of this city is beautiful despite the serious discrimination that exists here. . . . The northern side of Mt. Yudal is covered with straw-thatched huts on rocky ground, and the southern side con-

sists of green upland fields with a mountain village at its foot. From the center of the city lined with Korean and Japanese stores to the railroad station where passenger trains run four times a day, Mokpo is one of the best cities in Korea. The port on the southern side of the city harbors dignified steamships, beautiful sailboats, and frolicking motorboats that navigate the blue sea, surrounded by islands of all sizes.³⁴

Bak Hwa-seong depicted the South Village as filled with tile-roofed Japanese houses and the North Village as filled with pigpen-like straw-thatched huts. She seemed to believe that structures worth mentioning in the North Village were the Yangdong Protestant Church, Christian missionary schools, the houses of westerners, and the residences of landowners Kim Seong-gyu and Mun Jae-cheol.³⁵

The novelist focused on scenery in discussing the housing problem. But the housing issue was in fact a matter of survival for Koreans. Regarding the housing problem, the *Jungoe ilbo* reported this story in 1927:

Whereas Mokpo port, the gate of Jeollanam-do province, enjoys a gradual rise in prosperity thanks to the development of commerce and industry, the livelihood of Koreans has been steadily deteriorating; it's appalling to find locals living in cellar-hovels and dugouts between the rugged rocks of Mt. Yudal. To make matters worse, the housing situation has recently worsened, with draught-beleaguered laborers who migrated from rural areas swarming into the city. They roam the streets late into the night and early in the morning, begging for food at the gates, giving rise to issues in need of consideration.³⁶

Overpopulation in Mokpo caused by rural migration to the city aggravated the housing problem in the port city, forcing migrants to build shelters between boulders on the hill.

34. Bak (2004, 32-33).

35. On the account of Mokpo in Bak Hwa-seong's novel, refer to Byeon (2006).

36. "Koreans' Housing Difficulties in Mokpo Port." *Jungoe ilbo*, August 17, 1927.

The gaps between South and North Villages were not confined to housing. Not mere subtle differences but overt discrimination existed between the two neighborhoods, regarding piped water, drainage, and garbage disposal. The problems that arose as a result caused routine grievances and complaints from the Korean residents of North Village. In March 1925, local figures and reporters organized a committee to prepare a citizens' rally and decided to present an eight-point list of demands to the Mokpo city administration, threatening to hold a rally on March 15 if and when their demands were not met.³⁷ The demands called for road improvement, improvement of piped water supply, drainage dredging, removal of a crematory used by the Japanese, removal of a slaughterhouse, installation of more street lamps, improved garbage disposal, and the establishment of a public market.³⁸ The *Chosun Ilbo* published the following account at the time.

We have already twice reported that there exists far too much discrimination in all public facilities run by the Mokpo city administration in favor of the Japanese and against Koreans. To cite a few of the more severe cases, the streets in Korean neighborhoods are too narrow and inconvenient for pedestrian use, and hardly passable during the rainy season. Potable water faucets are so few that over fifty people have to wait in a queue for water in the morning and evening. A crematory used by the Japanese, located in front of a primary school reeks of burning bodies, and school children see the dead bodies that are transported there everyday. The residents have demanded improvement of the streets, plumbing facilities, and removal of the crematory many times but to no avail. Street lamps are installed in Japanese neighborhoods, but not in Korean villages. There is no end to the instances of such discrimination.³⁹

37. Ko (2004, 113-115).

38. "Mokpo Citizens Rise Up in Protest against the City Administration." *Dong-a Ilbo*, March 5, 1925.

39. "Discriminatory Facilities for Koreans and Japanese in Mokpo Prompt Local Figures and Reporters to Propose a Civic Rally for Mid-March." *Chosun Ilbo*, March 1, 1925.

It would seem that none of the demands were accepted and the citizens' rally went up in smoke. The most serious of the eight issues was piped water. With few water pipes laid for the Koreans, they had to pay one won for two buckets of water carried by a bearer. The poor who could not afford to buy tap water had no alternative but to rely on the wells or streams of Mt. Yudal. Hence, they were vulnerable to infectious diseases.⁴⁰ Councilor Yi Geun-chang demanded of the City Council in 1936, "Establish fundamental steps for piped water. Lay water pipes in Jukgyo-ri village. Two public wells cannot supply sufficient water for 1,500 laborer households. Their health is essential for the development of Mokpo, a city of commerce and industry. People shouldn't be left to drink impure water." But councilor Matsuzawa at the Mokpo City Hall replied that the village was too high in altitude to lay water pipes.⁴¹

Also serious were the problems of street construction and maintenance. In contrast to the well laid-out and paved streets in the South Village, the North Village was marked by disorderly alleys and unpaved roads. In 1936, city councilor Kim Yong-jin demanded that a road be built to the temple in Mt. Yudal at the expense of abandoning the pavement of a street between the public market and Namgyo-dong. Councilor Oh Tae-jin requested that a crosswalk be built in front of Juk-dong and near the Mokpo Theater. He also demanded repairs to the road running from the Mokpo union to behind the city hall, which was frequented by many factory workers and laborers. The councilors' demands were mostly involved with the development of the North Village. Councilor Kwon Yeong-rye bluntly asked the magistrate of Mokpo, "How much have you considered the problem of the North Village streets?" The magistrate replied, "No discrimination is practiced between South and North Villages. We seek ways of improvement, both spiritual and physical."⁴² But the reality was

40. "Expansion of Piped Water Facilities and the End to Their Commercialization in Mokpo Urgent." *Dong-a Ilbo*, July 20, 1932.

41. *Honam Review* 5.2 (May 1936): 49.

42. *Honam Review* 5.2 (May 1936): 53.

different. Differences between the two villages remained unchanged and the city authorities were indifferent to pending issues in North Village.

The issue of street lamps also continued to be discussed. Councilor Kim Yong-jin made the following remarks at a city council meeting in 1935:

Compare the number of street lamps installed in both Korean and Japanese neighborhoods. Land owned by Koreans totals 268,540 km² or 64,800 acres; while that owned by Japanese amounts to 1,322 km² or 324 acres. In terms of population, Mokpo has 50,000 Koreans and 8,000 Japanese. This means the Korean neighborhoods have one street lamp per 2,900 persons, whereas the Japanese neighborhoods have one street light per 580 persons. Isn't it necessary to install more street lamps in the Korean neighborhoods as part of an effort to ease this evident discrimination?⁴³

Matsuzawa, the home affairs division manager of city hall, said in response: "No discrimination exists between Japanese and Koreans. Street lamps are installed where they are needed for transportation. Complaints will be fully taken into consideration in the future." The street lamp issue was again raised in the city council in 1936. Councilor Yi Geun-chang demanded that street lights be installed along the Jukgyo-ri street frequented by Korean laborers early in the morning and late at night. But Matsuzawa responded they would be installed in the neighborhood of the Mokpo Railroad Station. When councilor Oh Tae-jun asked for the installation of street lamps along the road running from the Kungmu Farm to the Mokpo Prison, Matsuzawa replied it was difficult to do so because the road had no electric poles.⁴⁴

Still more discrimination was found among hospitals. Housed in Mokpo at the time were Mokpo City Public Hospital, the French Hos-

43. "Heated Discussion on Mokpo City Public Hospital Facilities, Chairman Adjourns Session, Fairness in Street Lamps Asserted." *Mainichi Shinpo*, March 27, 1935.

44. *Honam Review* 5.2 (May 1936): 47.

pital, Mokpo Railroad Hospital and nine clinics, five run by Japanese and four by Koreans. Located in the Japanese neighborhood of South Village, Mokpo City Public Hospital was staffed mostly by Japanese doctors. The head and vice head were Japanese, and so were most of the nurses. The employment of doctors and nurses fluent in Korean was demanded by Korean councilor Kwon Yeong-rye at the Mokpo City Council in 1935. In response, the head of the Mokpo City Public Hospital said, "The employment of Korean nurses is under consideration. But it's questionable if it can be realized." Kwon Yeong-rye countered by noting that Korean patients, both in and out of hospital, find it difficult to communicate with doctors and nurses because of the language barrier.⁴⁵ The councilor raised the issue again in 1936, reasoning that the public hospital suffered from a financial deficit because of the limited number of patients and particularly Korean patients the hospital attracts. "In proportion to the population of Koreans and Japanese, the Mokpo City Public Hospital should have more Korean in- and out-patients, but in reality Korean patients account for less than half of its patients," Kwon continued. "This is because Korean patients, due to the language barrier, are unable to explain their problems to Japanese doctors and nurses." City councilor Matsuzawa replied, "We have plans to resolve the public hospital's financial shortfall." This indicates that the Japanese authorities were interested not so much in Korean patients as in financial matters. Why were they consistently indifferent to the housing and medical problems of Koreans? By demonstrating the modernity of their residential areas, the Japanese authorities seem to have attempted to crush the natives' resistance against the Japanese, who had brought modernity with them. In this respect, the gaps between the South and North Villages in Mokpo can be interpreted not as a natural consequence but as the result of intentional discriminative policy.

Mokpo during the colonial period, as seen above, was a dual city in which the South Village housing Japanese and the North Village

45. "Heated Discussion on Mokpo City Public Hospital Facilities, Chairman Adjourns Session, Fairness in Street Lamps Asserted." *Mainichi Shinpo*, March 27, 1935.

accommodating native Koreans clearly differed from each other in many respects. Such features of a dual city could be found not only in Mokpo, but also in other open ports like Busan, Incheon, Masan, and Gunsan. Less evident as they were, those features could also be found in such traditional cities as Keijo (Japanese name for Seoul), Daegu and Pyeongyang as well. Why did the Japanese build such dual cities? Many Western academics have remarked upon the coexistence of traditional and modern aspects of a city, namely the features of a dual city, as the most outstanding spatial characteristic of colonial cities. Colonial cities represented a space where extraneous groups dominated indigenous ones, in which the cultural heterogeneity of the two groups caused social and spatial segregation. Generally, with differences in degree, the residential areas for the original population were traditional and premodern, and those of extraneous groups modern and Western.⁴⁶ Colonial powers built modern and Western residential areas for foreign forces, distinct from the natives' impoverished residential spaces, and attempted to demonstrate their overwhelming power and publicize the legitimacy of domination under the name of "civilization." Dual cities in colonized Korea were products of the Japanese colonialists' intentional political plan. In this regard, Mokpo was purposely developed as a dual city made up of South and North Villages. In this respect, Mokpo can be said to be typical of such cities in colonized Korea.

Conclusion

It can be said that the colonial modernity of Mokpo took the form of a "dual city." The city's dual nature first found expression in the segregation of residential areas. Korean and Japanese areas in Mokpo were segregated between South and North Villages with Mt. Yudal serving as the border. The two villages differed significantly in many ways, including roads, houses, water supply and drainage, street

46. Kim B. (2005, 58).

lamps, garbage disposal, and hospitals. Korean members of the Mokpo City Council frequently demanded improvements to the poor public facilities for the native residents, only to be rejected by the Japanese city authorities. The city authorities were generally indifferent to the poor conditions in Korean neighborhoods, and were deliberately so to some extent. Japanese colonizers in Korea attempted to underscore the modernity they brought with them by maintaining the wide gaps in living conditions between Japanese and Korean residential areas in cities such as Mokpo, where many Japanese lived. Imperial powers built dual cities in their colonies for such purposes; Mokpo was a model of them.

The division of residential areas, in fact, reflected the political, economic, and social aspects of the dual city of Mokpo. Japanese maintained economic hegemony in Mokpo. Symbolic of this was the composition of the membership of the Mokpo Chamber of Commerce. Most chamber members were Japanese merchants who accumulated wealth through trading in rice and cotton. Japanese also played a leading role in the Mokpo City Advisory Committee (later, the city council), accounting for two-thirds of the membership. Japanese councilors were mostly renowned merchants, industrialists, or landowners. They were also influential local figures such as shrine general managers, school association councilors, and heads of newspaper branches. This is how the Japanese effectively controlled Mokpo's politics, economy, and society. Of course, some Koreans participated in the chamber of commerce, city council, and school expenditure councils, but their influence was limited. In sum, it can be said that colonial modernity in colonized Mokpo took the form of a "dual city," divided in terms of politics, economy, society and the space of daily life.

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