

Irwolhoe and the Introduction of Marxism into Korea in the 1920s

PARK Jong-rin

Abstract

Irwolhoe, or the January Association, asserted the unification of the split socialist movement upon its formation in January 1925. Perceiving that the national liberation movement was an ideological struggle as well as an economic and political one, Irwolhoe published Sasang undong as a means of realizing its objective of prevailing in ideological warfare. Suppressed by the colonial authorities from Japan, Irwolhoe changed the editing policy of Sasang undong in January 1926.

Gwondoksa took over Sasang undong's mission of "introducing scientific theories." By the end of 1927, Gwondoksa had published a total of nine pamphlets. They were primarily translations of works analyzing capitalism through the prism of Marxism, in addition to translated versions of Marxist texts.

In 1926, Makseu-wa makseujuui and Gwahakjeok sahoejuui were published. The two books are noteworthy in the history of the introduction of socialism to Korea in that they attempted to analyze Marxism through the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Irwolhoe regarded Leninism as the Marxism of the imperial era and as "genuine Marxism" that enriched Marxism by solving theoretical and practical problems through Marx's theories and methodology.

Keywords: Marxism, Leninism, Irwolhoe, *Sasang undong*, Gwondoksa, Marxist texts, *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science*, Karl Marx

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PARK Jong-rin is Research Professor at Academy of East Asian Studies, Sungkyunkwan University. He received his Ph.D. in Korean history from Yonsei University in 2007. His publications include "1920 nyeondaehoe cho gongsanjuui geurup-ui makseujuui suyong-gwa yumul sagwan yoryeonggi" (Introduction of Marxism by Communist Groups and an Outline of Historical Materialism in the Early 1920s). E-mail: sorin98@korea.com.

Introduction

Irwolhoe, or the January Association, played an important role in Korea's socialist movement and the introduction of socialism to colonized Korea, despite its brief existence and small size. Irwolhoe was launched in Tokyo in January 1925 and was dissolved in November 1926. A leading organization of the Koreans' socialist movement in Japan, Irwolhoe led the socialist movement in Korea by forming the "Marxist-Leninist faction" along with the Hyeongmyeongsa (Revolution Club), Seoul Sinpa (New Seoul Faction), and Manchurian Communist Youth Faction in the process of unifying the socialist movement in Korea in the latter half of 1925, and organizing the Unified Korea Communist Party, a unified vanguard party. Following their return home in the latter half of 1926, the leading figures of Irwolhoe greatly influenced and helped to stir up major controversies in the socialist movement in Korea (Park 1998). In this manner, Irwolhoe had a major impact on the development of socialism in Korea in the 1930s, which was qualitatively different from that of the 1920s.

Despite the important role Irwolhoe played, research into Korea's socialist movements has tended to neglect the association until recently; in the wake of the pioneering work by Bak Gyeong-sik (1979), new research has been coming to light. Kim In-deok conducted a detailed study of Irwolhoe activities in Japan as part of his research into Korean activist movements in Japan (Kim 1996). I have also delved into how Irwolhoe took part in the socialist movement's unification drives in Korea and Japan in the latter half of 1925, how it became a key member of the ML (Marxist-Leninist) faction, and how it played a leading role in the Unified Korea Communist Party (Park 1998).

These studies have disclosed the general role Irwolhoe played. However, details about what the association did with respect to the introduction of socialism to Korea have yet to be researched. Interest in the association's perception of Marxism has for the most part been relatively scant.

This paper looks at Irwolhoe's efforts to unify the socialist movement as they were mired in a struggle for leadership between the

Korea Communist Party and the Korea Communist League, as well as the perception of Marxism as reflected in such publications as *Sasang undong* and pamphlets published by Gwondoksa.¹ In the process, Irwolhoe's perception of Leninism, defined as the Marxism of the imperial era, will be covered. Features of the association's activities for the unification of the socialist movement and those involving the translation and publication of Marxist texts will be looked into and the significance of Irwolhoe's translations of Marxist texts and the perception of Leninism in the history of Korea's introduction to socialism will also be discussed.

Organization and Activities of Irwolhoe

*Efforts to Unify the Socialist Movement*²

Socialists An Gwang-cheon, Yi Yeo-seong, and other members of Bukseonghoe (Northern Star Association) launched Irwolhoe, a socialist ideological movement body, in Tokyo on January 3, 1925.³ They had been criticizing Kim Yak-su and his followers for using Bukseonghoe for propaganda purposes, and soon after Kim Yak-su returned home to Korea in 1924, they dissolved Bukseonghoe and formed Irwolhoe (Japanese Home Affairs Ministry 1925; Bak 1975, 163).

Irwolhoe issued the following platforms upon its founding:

- We shall strive to realize a new society centered on the masses.
- We shall struggle in conjunction with the masses, regardless of class, gender and race, against all oppressions and exploitations

1. New research can be found in vol. 1, no. 2 (March 1925 issue), vol. 1, no. 4 (May 1925 issue) and vol. 3, no. 6 (May 1926 issue) of *Sasang undong* (Ideological Movement), the organ of Irwolhoe, and some pamphlets published by Gwondoksa.
 2. Irwolhoe activities for the unification of the socialism movement are revised and supplemented based on paragraph 4, chapter 2 of Park (1998).
 3. *Dong-A Ilbo*, January 6, 1925.

in an organized manner.

– We shall contribute to the mass movement by elucidating impartial theories (An 1925a, 3).⁴

The association decided to make concentrated efforts in two areas in order to achieve the stated goals of its platforms. One reads: “We shall absolutely stick to neutrality on the split of the socialist movement within Korea and positively push forward with the unification of the front based thereon” (Takatsu 1926, 36). The other reads: “We shall observe impartial criticism based on scientific theories.”

Irwolhoe was the leading socialist organization among Koreans residing in Japan, despite having only 37 members in 1925, because it consisted of leading figures of the General Korean Labor League in Japan (created in February 1925), Samwolhoe (March Association; formed in March 1925), and the Korean Proletarian Youth League in Tokyo (formed in November 1925), which led the movement (Japanese Home Affairs Ministry 1925; Bak 1975, 161).

Irwolhoe consistently remained neutral on in-country feuds between the Korea Communist Party, centered on the Hwayopa (Tuesday Faction), and the Korea Communist League (led by the Seoulpa) and held fast to the goal of unifying the socialist movement. In their November 1925 statement issued with the Korean Proletarian Youth League in Tokyo, Samwolhoe and the General Korean Labor League in Japan, Irwolhoe defined the problems of the socialist movement in Korea as factional strife stemming from partisan discords. It also proclaimed its desire to more assertively pursue the unification of the movement, sternly criticizing partisan conflicts in the movement at home and in Japan.

Countering a view that socialists must aggressively take part in the factional feuds of the socialist movement in Korea,⁵ Irwolhoe took a stand against communist group members going to Tokyo in a

4. *Dong-A Ilbo*, January 16, 1925.

5. Irwolhoe, Samwolhoe, Korea Proletarian Youth League in Tokyo, and General Korea Labor League in Japan, “Seongmyeongseo” (Statement), *Sasang undong* 3.1 (January 1926): 3.

bid to expand partisan feuds. A case in point is the association’s drive to dissolve the Sinseonghoe (New Star Association). It dismantled the Sinseonghoe, formed by the Bukpungpa (Northern Wind Faction) in Tokyo in October 1925, to expand its influence, denouncing it as an extension of unprincipled factional strife (An 1926b, 12-13). Another case in point is the association’s issuance of a statement to the liaison office in Japan of the Korea Communist Party warning against a split of the socialist movement (Yi 1948, 566-567).

Irwolhoe became even more active in 1926. Convening a new year research forum on January 2, 1926 under the theme of “unifying the movement in Korea and Japan,”⁶ the association put forth a three-point slogan: “Unconditionally burying all existing partisan sentiments, organizing a single powerful front across Korea, and reaching the masses with realistic programs.”⁷ Irwolhoe stressed the need to unify the split socialist movement by asserting the “formation of a united front of socialist organizations” (An 1926a, 1).

Irwolhoe’s An Gwang-cheon, Ha Pil-won, Bak Nak-jong, Nam Dae-gwan, Han Rim and Kim Jeong-gyu maintained a close relationship with the Hyeongmyongsa in Beijing. They organized the Tokyo branch of the Hyeongmyongsa headed by Heo Jang-hwan. When Heo Jang-hwan returned home sometime around July of 1926, An Gwang-cheon replaced him and took over the club (Gyeongju Police Station 1929a, 41; 1929b, 221-222 Daegu District Court 1929, 266). The relationship with the Hyeongmyong-sa paved the way for An Gwang-cheon and others to return home and strive for the unification of the socialist movement in collaboration with members of the Leninist League, including Yang Myeong.⁸

In February 1926, An Gwang-cheon, Kim Se-yeon, and a few others returned home alongside a number of Japanese socialists including Takatsu Seido to deliver relief funds to the victims of the 1925 flood. In Korea, they invited the leading members of the Hwayo

6. “Tongsillan” (Correspondence), *Sasang undong* 3.2 (February 1926): 44.

7. *Sasang undong* 3.1 (January 1926): 6.

8. On Hyeongmyeongsa, see Park (1998).

and Seoul factions, the two rival socialist movements, to discuss their issues, and emphasized the need to put an end to factionalism and unify the movement (Yi 1948, 536).⁹

On March 19, 1926, Irwolhoe published a leaflet titled, "Away from Division, toward Unification," under the name of the Movement Research Society in Korea.¹⁰ Again stressing the need for a unified movement, the pamphlet said, "The [socialist] movement in Korea is in imminent need of a major transformation, an epochal step forward, away from division and toward unification" (An 1927a). Irwolhoe also made *Sasang undong* available to the public in a bid to encourage communist groups to publicize their respective positions on the country's revolutionary movement in an attempt to bring an end to unprincipled factional strife and engage in a principled theoretical struggle.

Irwolhoe published *Daejung sinmun* (Masses Daily)¹¹ on June 5, 1926 (An 1927b), proclaiming its intent "to contribute toward pushing ahead with the unification of the Korean proletarian class vanguard movement."¹² Included in the inaugural issue were, "The Unification of the Korea Movement and Its Promotion" by Mubaek and "For the Sake of Accord" by Yamakawa Hitoshi, further delineating the nature of the newspaper. In a bid to stir up support for unification, the daily mobilized contributions by activists from Irwolhoe, Hwayopa, Seoulpa, Bukpungpa, Korea Labor Party, Hyeongmyeongsa, and Leninist League.

Facing the movement's stagnancy in the wake of the June 10 Independence Demonstration of 1926 and the second suppression of the Korea Communist Party, Irwolhoe had An Gwang-cheon, Ha Pil-

9. *Dong-A Ilbo*, February 19, 1926.

10. "Sago" (Notice), *Sasang undong* 3.4 (April 1926): 37.

11. *Sidae Ilbo*, May 15, 1926.

12. The *Daejung sinmun* was promoted in April 1926 by An Gwang-cheon, Ha Pil-won, Bak Nak-jong, Han Rim, Kim Jeong-gyu, Nam Dae-gwan, Kim Se-yeon, Yi Yeo-seong, Song Pil-eon, and Kim Gwang-su. *Chosun Ilbo*, April 20, 1926; Author unknown, "Brief History Course of the Korean Socialism Movement," *Sasang wolbo* 2.8 (1932): 37.

won, and others return home in August 1926 to help revive the socialist movement (Gyeonggi-do Province 1928, 8). Upon their arrival in Korea, they began working to unify the socialist movement along with activists from the Leninist League.

After observing the socialist movement in Korea, they joined the Jeonguhoe (Righteous Friends Association), along with Yang Myeong, in order to call for unification from within an established organization (Gyeonggi-do Province 1928, 8; Gyeongsangbuk-do Province 1934, 58). The joint efforts of Irwolhoe activists like An Gwang-cheon and Ha Pil-won alongside Leninist League leaders like Yang Myeong signified the union of domestic forces striving for the unification of the socialist movement both in Korea and abroad. The unification movement force succeeded in forming the "Unified" Korea Communist Party, a crystallization of efforts aimed at unifying the socialist movement initiated in 1925.¹³

Use of Publications for the Propagation of Marxism

Irwolhoe, as discussed above, proclaimed in its platform the policy of "contribute to the masses' movement by elucidating impartial theories." The policy was based on the association's perception that the national liberation movement is an ideological struggle as well as an economic and political one. To that end, Irwolhoe advocated the "maintenance of impartial criticism based on scientific theories" (An 1925a, 2-3).

In order to implement the policy, Irwolhoe established Dongseongsa, a printing firm specialized in the Korean language.¹⁴ The

13. On the formation process of the "Unified" Korea Communist Party, see Park (1998).

14. An advertisement printed in *Sasang undong* 1.1 reads, "This printing firm, with the world culture in the background and assuming a major mission of propagating our culture to Japan, shoulders the important task of conveying our situation widely to the outside world widely, and intends to fulfill this mission through strenuous efforts in the backyard of the struggle arena." Dongseongsa Printing Co. was headed by Ha Seok-hun. *Sasang undong* 1.1 (March 1925).

association also published *Sasang undong* (Ideological Movement), beginning in March 1925, by establishing Sasang Undongsa. In its inaugural issue, the organization defined itself as “a helping hand from a group that will provide theories criticizing the present and creating the future.”¹⁵

Irwolhoe then concentrated its efforts on research and propagation of scientific theories, focusing on translation of original Marxist texts. It was the best possible choice the Irwolhoe could make under the colonial regime, as the socialist propagation was legally banned but research into socialism was still permitted.¹⁶ From its inaugural issue in March 1925 until January of 1926 when it altered its editorial policy, *Sasang undong* published Korean translations of seven original Marxist texts:

- (1) Marx and Engels, “Socialist and Communist Literature,” translated by Song Eon-pil under the title of “Sahoejuuija-ui sahoejuuipeong,” *Sasang undong* 1.1 (March 1925).
- (2) Engels, “Karl Marx’s Funeral,” translated by Jeokseonpung under the title of “Kareu makseu-ui jangsik,” *Sasang undong* 1.2 (March 1925).
- (3) Engels, “Scientific Socialism,” translated by Sinchun under the title of “Gwahakjeok sahoejuui,” *Sasang undong* 1.4 (May 1925).
- (4) Engels, “Posthumous Writings of Engels,” translated by Ho under the title of “Engelseu yugo,” *Sasang undong* 1.4 (May 1925).
- (5) Lenin, “Karl Marx: A Brief Biographical Sketch with an Exposition of Marxism,” translated by C.F. under the title of “Makseu yakjeon,” *Sasang undong* 1.4 (May 1925).
- (6) Marx, “Critique of the Gotha Programme (1),” translated by Kim Gye-gol under the title of “Kkotta gangnyeong-e daehan makseu-ui bipan (1),” *Sasang undong* 2.1 (August 1925).

15. “Changgansa” (Inaugural Address), *Sasang undong* 1.1 (March 1925).

16. Editorial Office, “Bonji naeyong-eul gochimyeonseo” (Changing the Contents of this Journal), *Sasang undong* 3.1 (January 1926): 7.

- (7) Lenin, “Address at the Congress of the Russian Young Communist League,” translated by Eonpil under the title of “Roseoa cheongnyeong-ege,” *Sasang undong* 2.3 (October 1925).

The fact that *Sasang undong* translated and published as many as seven Marxist texts indicates how active it was in introducing translations of Marxist texts, especially given that Korea saw only three such texts published in translated versions before 1925.¹⁷ Those three were “An Outline of Historical Materialism,” the preface to *Criticism of Political Economics, Wage, Labor and Capital*, and *Value, Price and Profit*, published in pamphlet form by Minjungsa. Irwolhoe was extremely enthusiastic in setting out to achieve its objective of introducing scientific theories through *Sasang undong*.

Suppressed by the Japanese authorities, however, *Sasang undong* suspended publication twice, was fined twice, was banned four times, and all its issues including the inaugural one were confiscated in Korea. In the face of such legal sanctions by the colonial authorities and ensuing financial pinch, Irwolhoe decided to change the editorial policy in January 1926. In order to overcome the legal and financial difficulties, the association decided to lower the level of criticism and drastically reduce the journal’s number of pages (U 1925, 1).¹⁸

The journal created new columns for its readership with such titles as “Dialogue,” “Questions,” “Lecture on Socialism” and “Explanation of New Terms.”¹⁹ “Dialogue” discussed such issues as “Mental Reform or Material Reform?” and “Graduates and Living Costs” (Doou 1926; Yeoseong 1926); “Question,” “Proletarian Culture,” “The Bourgeois,” “Proletariat” and “Labor Power” (U 1925, 1);²⁰ and

17. For details of the translations of the original texts of Marxism in the 1920s, see Park (2007).

18. Editorial Office, “Bonji naeyong-eul gotchimyeonseo” (Changing the Contents of This Journal), *Sasang undong* 3.1 (January 1926): 7.

19. “Lecture on Socialism,” “Questions” and “Dialogue,” which characterized *Sasang undong*, were discontinued in May 1926. See “Pyeonjip yeoeon” (Editor’s Epilogue), *Sasang undong* 3.6 (May 1926).

20. “Jilmunnan,” *Sasang undong* 3.2 (February 1926); and PW Saeng (1926).

“Lecture on Socialism Corner,” more specialized subjects such as “new society and labor,”²¹ “utopian socialism and scientific socialism” (Borchardt, 1926) and “evolution of the bourgeois and evolution of socialism” (Pannekoek 1926). “Explanation of New Terms” introduced various concepts like International, Bolshevik, Menshevik, Syndicalism, C.G.T. (Confédération Générale du Travail; General Confederation of Workers), I.W.W. (Industrial Workers of the World), sabotage, syndicate, democracy, fascism, industrial revolution, the left wing, the right wing, and militarism.²²

“The introduction and propagation of scientific theories” assumed by *Sasang undong* was taken over by Gwondoksa, an affiliate of Irwolhoe. Gwondoksa was launched in or around March 1925 by turning Sasang Undongsa’s Gwondokbu (Reading Promotion Division) into an independent entity. The reorganization was rationalized as, “The bourgeois have theories protecting their class, so we have to have our own theories—the knowledge of social science—to confront them.”²³

Gwondokbu was originally tasked with handling general books on socialism, book series on social issues, and pamphlets. The division initially dealt in Japanese journals like *Marx shugi* (Marxism),²⁴ *Shakai shiso* (Social Ideology), *Shinnin* (New Men), *Shakai shugi kenkyu* (Socialism Study),²⁵ and *Gato* (We). In or around August 1925, the division published a translated version of “Cheongnyeong-ege goham” (Appeal to the Young) as its first pamphlet.²⁶ Gwondokbu became an independent entity in conjunction with *Sasang undong*’s editorial policy change, effected in January 1926.²⁷

21. “Sahoejuui gangjwa” (Lecture on Socialism), *Sasang undong* 3.1 (January 1926).

22. See Haesan (1926); Sanhae (1926); K (1926); and Ujeok (1926).

23. “Notice!!” printed on the back page of *Sasang undong* 1.2 (March 1925).

24. The Japan Communist Party’s journal was issued between May 1924 and April 1929.

25. Japan’s Fabian Association published the journal from May 1924 to June 1925. Kaiho (Liberation) Co. published 『解放思想』 (Liberation Ideology) in July 1925, 『解放文藝』 (Liberation Literature and Arts) in August 1925, and 『解放法律』 (Liberation Law) in September 1925. The journal was rechristened as “Liberation” in October 1925.

26. The publication of “Cheongnyeong-ege soham” (Appeal to the Young) can be confirmed by an advertisement printed on page 32 of *Sasang undong* 3.2 (September 1925).

27. “Pyeonjip yeoeon” (Editor’s Epilogue), *Sasang undong* 3.2 (February 1926).

Responsible for Gwondokbu were Song Eon-pil and Ha Pil-won.²⁸ Song Eon-pil served as the executive director, editor, and publisher since the inception of Gwondoksa.²⁹ According to materials published by Japanese colonial authorities, Song was also the editor of the seventh pamphlet, titled *Gwahakjeok sahoejuui* (Scientific Socialism) (Government-General of Korea 1941, 34), which Gwondoksa published in April 1926. This proves that Song had assumed responsibility for Gwondoksa by mid-1926.

Gwondoksa published six pamphlets in 1926, beginning with the publication of *Sahoe gaejo-ui je sajo* (Various Currents of Social Reform) in February. The pamphlet was published in earnest between February and April 1926, indicating that the club was most active during that period. Gwondoksa remained operative even after Irwolhoe issued a statement of dissolution on November 28, 1926. Gwondoksa published a total of nine pamphlets, the last two in 1927:³⁰

- (1) Petr A. Kropotkin, *An Appeal to the Young*, translated by the Gwondoksa Editorial Department under the title of “Cheongnyeong-ege soham” (1925).
- (2) Kitazawa Shinjiro, *Various Currents of Social Reform*, translated by Yi Seung-jun under the title of “Sahoe gaejo-ui je sajo” (February 1926).
- (3) Karl Marx, *Documents of the First International*, translated by the Gwondoksa Editorial Department under the title of “Je il

28. “Notice!” printed on the back page of *Sasang undong* 1.2 (March 1925).

29. See copyright of Kitazawa (1926).

30. Examination of such publications as *Nonong noguk jungyo inmul-ui myeonyeong-gwa yakjeon* (Features and Brief Biographies of Key Figures of the Laborers and Farmers of Russia) and *Gongsangjeok sahoejuui* (Utopian Socialism), in particular in terms of publication dates, affirms the following facts: “The list of books published by Gwondoksa,” advertised in vol. 1, no. 2 issue of *Iron tujaeng* (Theoretical Struggle) (April 1927), a journal published by Iron Tujaengsa, describes the two books as “published recently.” The two books are referred to as having been published recently in the September 17 issue of *Dong-A Ilbo*. “The list of books published by Gwondoksa” is also advertised in vol. 1, no. 2 issue (July 1928) of *Sinheung gwahak* (New Science), a journal published by Sinheung Gwahaksa that was.

inteonashyunal changnip seoneon geupgyuyak” (1926).

- (4) Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, *An Analysis of Capitalism*, translated and edited by the Gwondoksa Editorial Department under the title of “Jabonjuui-ui haebu” (March 1926).³¹
- (5) An Gwang-cheon, ed.,³² *Tongsok sahoejuui gyeongjehak* (Popular Socialist Economics) (March 1926).
- (6) Lenin, *Karl Marx*, translated by the Gwondoksa Editorial Department under the title of “Makseu-wa makseujuui” (April 1926).
- (7) Engels, *Scientific Socialism*, translated and edited by the Gwondoksa Editorial Department under the title of “Gwahakjeok sahoejuui” (April 1926).
- (8) Song Eon-pil, ed.,³³ *Nonong noguk jungyo inmul-ui myeonyeong-gwa yakjeo* (Features and Brief Biographies of Key Figures of Laborers and Farmers of Russia) (1927).
- (9) Engels, *Utopian Socialism*, translated by An Gwang-cheon³⁴ under the title of “Gongsangjeok sahoejuui” (1927).

Gwondoksa’s pamphlets, except for *Nonong noguk jungyo inmul-ui myeonyeong-gwa yakjeo*, edited by Song Eon-pil, were all translations. This reflects the social condition of Korea at the time in which foreign publications constituted the sole sources of learning, even regarding the outlines of scientific theories (MB Saeng 1926, 40). This can also be attributed to the notion on the part of Irwolhoe and Gwondoksa members that translation and publication of works by Marx, Lenin or Japanese socialists were more appropriate to achiev-

31. Gwondoksa pamphlets advertisement, carried in *Sasang undong* 3.4 (April 1926).

32. Gwondoksa pamphlets advertisement has it that the pamphlets are all edited by Gwondoksa, but a close examination of An (1925b) and An (1926c) reveals that the two articles are identical.

33. The latest publications introduced in the September 17, 1927 issue of *Dong-A Ilbo* has it that the book was edited by the Gwondoksa editorial department. It is inferred that the book was edited by Song Eon-pil from the fact that in “Sinheung roguk jungyo inmul-ui yakjeon (2)” (Brief Biographies of Key Figures of Newly Rising Russia II), printed in *Sasang undong* 3.4 (April 1926), he introduced seven persons—Kraassin, Lunacharsky, Stalin, Bukharin, Radek, Dzerzhinski, and Litvinov.

34. The latest publications were introduced in *Dong-A Ilbo*, September 17, 1927.

ing their goal of “introducing and propagating scientific theories” than their own writings. Hence, the fact that translations accounted for an overwhelming proportion of Gwondoksa’s total publications can be said to reflect their efforts to overcome this situation.

The Gwondoksa pamphlets can be divided into two categories. The first were analyses of capitalism through the analytical frameworks of Marxism: *Jabonjuui-ui haebu* (Analysis of Capitalism) and *Tongsok sahoejuui gyeongjehak* (Popular Socialist Economics). An Gwang-cheon based *Tongsok sahoejuui gyeongjehak* primarily on *Shihon shugi no karakuri* (The Mechanism of Capitalism) by Yamakawa Hitoshi, and *ABC of Communism* by Nikolai Bukhalin, as well as on works by Marx and Engels.³⁵ Written for the purpose of introducing some knowledge of economics (An 1926c, 1), the book consists of five chapters: “Three Characteristics of Capitalist Society,” “Exploitation,” “Capital,” “Panic and War” and “Transition in Economic Structure.” *Jabonjuui-ui haebu*, on the other hand, was a translation of a work by Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, which consisted of two parts, “Organization of Capitalist Society” and “Theories of Capitalist Economics.”

The second were translations of Marxist texts. *Je il inteonashyunal changnip seoneon geup gyuyak* (First International Inaugural Declaration and Rules),³⁶ *Makseu-wa makseujuui* (Marx and Marxism), *Gwahakjeok sahoejuui* (Scientific Socialism), and *Gongsangjeok sahoejuui* (Utopian Socialism). *Makseu-wa makseujuui*, a translation of Lenin’s *Karl Marx*, and *Gwahakjeok sahoejuui* and *Gongsangjeok sahoejuui*, translated versions of *The Development of Socialism from*

35. References used in the book include *A Handbook of Capital* by Kautsky, *Popular Capital* by Borchardt, *Marx Economics* by Untermann, *ABC of Communism* by Bukhalin, 『資本論大綱』 (An Outline of Capital) by Yamakawa Hitoshi, 『資本主義のからくり』 (The Workings of Capitalism) by Yamakawa Hitoshi, 『資本論略解』 (A Brief Explanation of Capital) by Kawakami Hajime, *Socialist Economics* by Hyndman, 『社會主義經濟學』 (Socialist Economics) edited by Sakai Toshihiko, and *An Outline of Marx Economics* by Borchardt (An 1926c, 1).

36. A translation of the first international inaugural declaration was issued in October 1864 alongside its provisional rules. Its Japanese translation version was published in *Sahoejuui yeongu* (Study of Socialism) 6.2 (September 1, 1922).

Utopia to Science by Engels, are especially noteworthy in the history of Korea's acceptance of socialism as they reviewed Marxism through the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. *Karl Marx* and *Scientific Socialism* were the first from among the many works by Lenin and Engels to be made available in Korea.

Also published was a translated version of *Currents of Social Reform*, a guidebook of sorts to socialism. A translation of *Shakai kaigo no sho shicho* (Currents of Social Reform) by Kitazawa Shinjiro, a professor at Waseda University, was published by Kagaku Shiso Fukyukai, in May 1923. Appendix, section 2 (I.W.W. organization) and section 4 (I.W.W.'s constructive efforts) of chapter 8, section 4 (guild socialism) and section 5 (relationship between guild socialism and states) of chapter 10 were omitted in the process of translation.³⁷

There was also a translation of Kropotkin's *Appeal to the Young* by Gwondoksa.³⁸ The book was so popular that its first printing sold out by February of 1926 and the third printing was published in 1928. Explaining its reason for publishing the book, Gwondoksa noted that Kropotkin, though of noble birth, shared his whole life with the masses, and the book was translated into more than 20 languages in the 40 years since it was first published, acclaimed by young people around the world.

Irwolhoe's Perception of Marxism

Translation of Original Texts

Irwolhoe's *Sasang undong* (Ideological Movement) and translated versions of original texts of Marxism published as pamphlets by

37. 『社會改造の諸思潮』(Currents of Social Reform) was translated and published in Korea in 1926 by Chunchugak Publishing Co. under the title *Hyeondae sahoe sajo gaegwan* (An Outline of Contemporary Social Currents), edited by Sin Jong-seok. For differences in structure and translation between this book and the identical publication, Gwondoksa published in a pamphlet format, see Park (2008b).

38. Latest publications advertisement printed in *Sasang undong* 3.2 (February 1926).

Gwondoksa provides a good illustration of how Irwolhoe perceived Marxism. Irwolhoe published part of *The Communist Manifesto* in the inaugural edition of *Sasang undong*, symbolically demonstrating the orientation of Irwolhoe and *Sasang undong* (Marx and Engels 1925). The article, "Sahoejuuija-ui sahoejuuipeong," was a full translation of "Socialist and Communist Literature," chapter 3 of *The Communist Manifesto*.³⁹ The article, though not a full translation of *The Communist Manifesto*, carries the significance of being the first publication in Korean to introduce *The Communist Manifesto* to the Korean masses.⁴⁰ The translator was Song Eon-pil, the man in charge of Gwondokbu, Sasang Undongsa, and Irwolhoe. Explaining why he translated *The Communist Manifesto*, he said that ideologies reflect the political and economic conditions of an era, that reactionary, capitalistic and visionary ideology are rampant, and that the translation was a way of coping with these problems (Marx and Engels 1925, 39).

Sasang undong, vol. 1, no. 4 carried a translation of Engels' work,

39. The article gave "a great deal of excitement to the readership that does not have the freedom to read *The Communist Manifesto*," read an editor's epilogue. "Pyeon-jip yeoeon" (Editor's Epilogue), *Sasang undong* 1.2 (March 1925).

40. In 1921, a translation of *The Communist Manifesto* was first published in colonial Korea. The Communist Manifesto translated by the Joseon Communist Party (Joseon Gongsandang) in September 1921, appears to have been rendered from a Japanese version done by Kotoku Shusui and Sakai Toshihiko, and carried in the *Heimin Shinbun* (Commoners Daily) in November 1904, in an issue commemorating its first anniversary. Korean translations of *The Communist Manifesto* were published in Shanghai and Irkutsk as well in the same year. The Shanghai version was translated by Yeo Un-hyeong, a member of the Korea Communist Party, from an English version, and the Irkutsk version by a member or members of the Korea Communist Party (Hanguk Gongsandang) of the Irkutsk faction from a Russian version. All the three were published clandestinely. It was through Irwolhoe's organ *Sasang undong*, vol. 1, no. 1, published in March 1925, that a Korean version of *The Communist Manifesto* was first published openly in Korea, and the first full Korean translation of *The Communist Manifesto* to be openly published appeared in August 1945 in *Nodong jeonseonsa* (Labor Front Co.), translated by the editorial department of Nodong Jeonseon (Labor Front). The text used for this translation was not the original German text, but a Japanese version based on an English rendition. The author intends to discuss the translation history of *The Communist Manifesto* in Asia and in Korea and Japan in a subsequent paper.

“Posthumous Writings of Engels.” A draft Engels prepared as the platform of the Communist League in 1847, the article dealt with principles of communism, an important step toward *The Communist Manifesto* in the history of Marxism. The translation printed in *Sasang undong* contained 12 of the 25 questions and answers in the original. “There are still ten questions and answers that remain unmentioned here, but we have too little freedom to introduce them as well,” the translator said, alluding to the Japanese imperialists’ thought control. The significance of “Posthumous Writings of Engels” lies in “pinpointing the contradictions and flaws contained in the current system and describing the outline of a future society,” he added (Engels 1925a, 52).

Sasang undong, vol. 1, no. 2 included an article titled “Kareu makseu-ui jangsik” (Karl Marx’s Funeral) (Engels 1925b). This is a translation by Jeokseonpung of Engels’ famous address delivered at Marx’s funeral in the London suburbs on March 17, 1883. In the address, Engels cited the discovery of the developmental rules of human history, namely historical materialism and surplus value, as one of the great achievements of Marx:

Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history. . . . Marx also discovered the special law of motion governing the present-day capitalist mode of production, and the bourgeois society that this mode of production has created. The discovery of surplus value suddenly threw light on the problem, in trying to solve which all previous investigations, of both bourgeois economists and social critics, had been groping in the dark (Engels 1925b, 3).

Along with those articles, Irwolhoe’s understanding of Marxism is evident in such pamphlets as *Gwahakjeok sahoejuui* and *Gongsang-jeok sahoejuui*, translations of Engels’ *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science*, and *Makseu-wa makseujuui*, a translation of Lenin’s *Karl Marx*.

The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science was compiled by Engels in 1880, extracted from three chapters in his *Anti-Dühring*.⁴¹ With the entire Marxist argument whittled down to three chapters, the work was highly rated by Marx as an introduction to scientific socialism. After Engels wrote a preface to the English version in 1892, the work became one of the most translated texts of the Marxist canon, appearing in more than ten languages.

The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science, rated as one of the three greatest works of Marxism alongside *The Communist Manifesto* and *Capital* (Engels 1906, 1; 1926, 2), was first introduced to East Asia in 1906 when it was translated into Japanese by Sakai Toshihiko and Kawakami Hajime. Sakai translated chapter 3 of *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science* and published it in *Shakai shugi kenkyu* (Studies on Socialism) in 1906 under the title “Kagakuteki shakai shugi” (Scientific Socialism) (Engels 1906). In 1921 he completed the translation of the entire book and published it under the title *Kusoteki oyobi kagakuteki shakai shugi* (Utopian and Scientific Socialism). All were retranslations based on the English version. The Japanese version translated by Sakai titled the first three chapters as “Utopian Socialism,” “Marx’s Two Major Discoveries,” and “Scientific Socialism.” He also divided each chapter of the text into different sections. For example, chapter 3, “Scientific Socialism,” was split into 12 sections on historical materialism, modern socialism, social production and capitalist ownership, proletariat and bourgeois, anarchic status of production, industrial reserves, panic, the consolidation of capital, capture of power by the laborer class, collapse of states, kingdom of freedom, and an outline of historic evolution. In contrast, Kawakami stuck to the original text when he published his extract translation of the book in *Shakai mondai kenkyu* (Study of Social Issues), no. 17 in 1920.

The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science was trans-

41. The three extracted chapters were “General Theory” in the “Seoseol” (Introduction), “Historical Outline,” and “Theoretical Outline” in “Sahoejuui (3)” (Socialism III).

lated completely into Korean as two Gwondoksa pamphlets, titled *Gwahakjeok sahoejuui* (Scientific Socialism) and *Gongsangjeok sahoejuui* (Utopian Socialism). *Gwahakjeok sahoejuui* was published as Gwondoksa pamphlet no. 7 in April 1926 and was revised from Sinchun's translation, published in *Sasang undong* vol. 1, no. 4 (Engels 1925c). Sinchun clarified in his translator's note that he had translated chapter 3 of *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science*.⁴² He also noted that his translation was based on an English version, and that he had also referred to Japanese versions of the book translated by Sakai Toshihiko and Kawakami Hajime.⁴³ While the Japanese version by Sakai entirely omitted "Proletarian Revolution" (the last part of section 12, "Outline of Historic Evolution") and was partially omitted by Kawakami, the Gwondoksa version of "Scientific Socialism" includes the whole text. The translator most likely worked by closely comparing the two Japanese versions and the English version. This approach to translation was an improvement from a simple retranslation from the Japanese version into Korean, as was the case with the translation of "An Outline of Historical Materialism," the preface to *Criticism of Political Economics*.⁴⁴ Similar progress was also seen in Bak Hyeong-byeong's 1923 translation of *Wage, Labor and Capital*, which was an attempt to improve accuracy in translation by referring to versions in other languages familiar to the translator (Park 2007). Despite such endeavors, however, *Gwahakjeok sahoejuui* (Scientific Socialism) closely followed the pattern of the Japanese version by Sakai Toshihiko, using the same chapters and sections, and selecting phrases almost identical to

42. This article was printed in *Sasang undong* 1.4 (May 1925), covering translation down to section 6, half of "Scientific Socialism." Translation of the remainder was published in *Sasang undong* 1.5 (May 1925), no copies of which are available.

43. This "Scientific Socialism" is a translation of Chapter 3, "Socialism, Utopian and Scientific," a renowned work by Engels. The text used was the English version published by Charles H. Kerr & Company in 1918 with Japanese versions by Sakai and Kawakami used as reference (Engels 1925c, 39). The remarks are repeated in the preface to Engels (1926, 2).

44. Refer to Park (2008a).

its Japanese version. Accordingly, Irwolhoe's translations of Marxist texts were primarily secondary or tertiary translations of largely Japanese sources.⁴⁵

Although there are no known surviving copies, it can be inferred that An Gwang-cheon's translation "Gongsangjeok sahoejuui,"⁴⁶ found in Gwondoksa pamphlet no. 9, was a translation of chapters 1 and 2 of *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science*, based on the explanation given in the preface: "an introduction of the criticism of three utopians—Saint-Simon, Fourier and Robert Owen—and two discoveries of Marx."

First, let us examine *Makseu-wa makseujuui*, a translation of Lenin's *Karl Marx*. Lenin wrote *Karl Marx* for the Granat Encyclopedia in 1914 (Lenin 1925, 2). The full text was published in 1925 by the Leninism Research Institute, affiliated with the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee, and titled *Marx, Engels, and Marxism*. Until April of 1926 when *Makseu-wa makseujuui* was published, the Japanese version of the book was confined to *Marx hyoden* (A Biography of Marx) as published by Shakai Sisosha. *Marx hyoden* only contained "A Brief Biography of Marx" and "Marx Theory," omitting

45. Sakai Toshihiko translated the original German text of *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science* and published it in 1927 under the title *Development of Socialism*. In the preface to the book, Sakai said he previously translated its English version because he was unable to comprehend the German. This problem was not confined to Sakai. Except for researchers like Kawakami Hajime, most socialist activists in Japan were unable to comprehend foreign texts in languages other than English. As a consequence, translations of not only Marxist texts but other major works on socialism were done mostly from English texts or English renditions until the early 1920s. As the importance of translating original texts emerged and they studied the French and German languages, the translation of original texts became more common from the mid-1920s. In comparison, little comprehension of original Marxist texts was achieved in Korea until the 1920s, excepting a few researchers like Baek Nam-un. This may be reflect differences between the two countries; Japan's socialist movement was initiated in academic circles, so the movement and theory developed in parallel, but Korea's started with the emphasis placed on activism. From the perspective of the introduction and development of socialism, translations of original texts and retranslations demonstrate significant differences.

46. "New Books," *Dong-A Ilbo*, September 17, 1927.

the remaining three chapters, “Socialism,” “Tactics of Proletarian Class Struggle,” and “Proletarian Dictatorship.” If the Gwondoksa pamphlet, *Makseu-wa makseujuui*, which is no longer available, had been translated from the Japanese version published by Shakai Sisosha, it probably would have also consisted of only two parts, “A Brief Biography of Marx” and “Marx Theory.”⁴⁷

Irwolhoe's Perception of Marxism and Leninism

Why did the Irwolhoe group translate Engels' *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science* and Lenin's *Karl Marx*? Despite the absence of explicit statements from the translators, we can interpret these translations as an attempt not only to meet the general aim of introducing scientific theories but also to systematically understand Marxism through the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, in other words, the original texts of Marxism. This would seem to be all the more so, as both *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science* and *Karl Marx* outline the tenets of Marxism.⁴⁸ Just as Minjungsa attempted to understand Marxism in 1923 through prominent socialist Sakai Toshihiko's *Shakai shugi gakusetsu daiyo* (An Outline of Socialism), Irwolhoe attempted to do the same through translations of original Marxist texts.⁴⁹ Such efforts were closely related to demand for scientific theories in step with the development of social movements of the era.

Then, why did they translate Lenin's *Karl Marx* along with Engels' *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science*? This question is closely related to how Leninism was perceived by the Irwolhoe group. Kim Han, who translated Jean Steen's *What Is Marxism?*, expressed in

47. A complete translation of “A Critical Biography of Marx” done by C.F. was published in *Sasang undong* 1.4 (May 1925).

48. 『空想より科学へ』(From Utopia to Science), a Japanese version of *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science* was translated by Sakai Toshihiko, and 『マルクス傳』(Biography of Marx), a Japanese rendition of Lenin's *Karl Marx*, were both introduced in the “study course” of *Sasang undong* (MB Saeng 1926, 40).

49. On the perception of Marxism on the part of Minjungsa, see Park (2007).

his translator's note the following view of Leninism:

Whenever we discuss Marxism today, when capitalism is collapsing and new wars of the imperial era are staged, we always talk about Leninism. What is Leninism about? Is it a new socialism containing something different from Marxism? Leninism is neither a subjective supplement to Marxism nor revisionist Marxism. It simply expresses the fact that human history has developed further and that Lenin has studied new experiences in world history in accordance with Marx's methodology and theory, solved real problems in the labor movement, and further enriched Marx's theory and methodology. By thoroughly applying the methodology of the dialectical materialism Marx discovered, Lenin has solved all major theoretical and practical problems encountered by the labor movement. He has analyzed all Russian problems through dialectical materialism and thoroughly exposed the inner workings of imperialism, the last stage of world capitalism. If we are to understand Leninism, we must understand Marxism, because Leninism has presented the world situation in a more developed way in accordance with Marxism (Steen 1926, 16).

Yeojae, who translated Bela Kun's *ABC of Leninism*,⁵⁰ said in his translator's note, “Leninism, to be sure, is nothing but Marxism. It is Marxism dealing with the development period of the socialist revolution during the collapse of the capitalism of the imperial era. Lenin explained a new era of world history from the perspective of Marxism and presented proletarian tactics confronting it” (Kun 1926, 39). In other words, the Irwolhoe group perceived Leninism as the Marxism of the imperial era and a “genuine Marxism” (Choe 1926, 5) that enriched Marxism by solving theoretical and practical problems

50. A guidebook to Leninism, it dealt with important elements of and documents on Leninism under nine themes. They are: capitalism, theory of imperialism, engines transforming capitalism into socialism, colonial liberation movement, international contradictions of capitalism, revolution theory, proletarian dictatorship, proletarian xxxxx, Communist International and organization of national communist parties (Kun 1926).

through Marx's theories and methodology. Based on the perception that positioned Leninism within the system of Marxism, rather than introducing Lenin biographically or mentioning him in a piecemeal fashion, Lenin's *Karl Marx* was translated along with Engels' *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science*.

Accordingly, it became a general trend in the discussion of Marxism to include this definition of Marxism by Lenin: "Marx was the genius who continued and consummated the three main ideological currents of the nineteenth century, as represented by the three most advanced countries of mankind: classical German philosophy, classical English political economy, and French socialism combined with French revolutionary doctrines in general" (Steen 1926, 16).

In addition, Han Rim⁵¹ of the Irwolhoe group produced a ten theme curriculum in an effort to meet aspirations for scientific knowledge. The ten themes were: general theory, historical materialism, economics, imperialism theory, rural problems, social history, economic history, guild and party history, Russian study, and women's issues (MB Saeng 1926, 40-42).

The Irwolhoe group's perception of Marxism, as discussed above, can be best characterized by the fact that they made the first attempt to systematically understand Marxism by translating the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and they included Leninism within the canon of Marxism. Needless to say, they were closely related to aspirations for scientific theories as a result of developments achieved in the socialist movement.

51. An editor's note in *Sasang undong* 3.1 (January 1926) reads: "An excellent piece 'study course,' the outcome of hard work by Han Rim, a pioneer member of this journal, is not published in this edition due to insufficient space. The piece will be published in the next edition without fail." The piece, contributed by MB Saeng, was printed in *Sasang undong* 3.2 (February 1926).

Conclusion

Irwolhoe was strongly concerned with unifying the socialist movement and maintaining neutrality in the splits between socialist movements in Korea from its inception in January of 1925. As the movement stagnated in 1926 under colonial suppression in the wake of the June 10 Independence Movement and the second suppression of the Korea Communist Party, Irwolhoe brought An Gwang-cheon and Ha Pil-won home from Japan in an effort to restore the movement. They, in collaboration with members of the Leninist League, endeavored to unify the socialist movement and led the "Unified" Korea Communist Party.

Based on its perception that the struggle of the national liberation movement was an ideological as well as economic and political one, Irwolhoe published *Sasang undong* (Ideological Movement) in a bid to realize its goals. Irwolhoe concentrated its efforts on the translation and propagation of Marxist texts. A total of seven Marxist texts were translated and published during the eleven-month period from March 1925, when *Sasang undong's* inaugural edition came out, to January 1926, when the journal was forced to change its editorial policy. Given that only three translations of Marxist texts were published in Korea before 1925, the sheer number demonstrates how active the Irwolhoe was in translating Marxist texts.

Compelled to change its editorial policy in January 1926 due to persistent suppression by the Japanese, Irwolhoe had Gwondoksa take charge of the "introduction and propagation of scientific theories" previously performed by *Sasang undong*. Through its publishing division, Gwondoksa published a total of nine pamphlets by 1927, mostly translations. They believed that publishing translations of the works of Marx, Lenin, and Japanese socialists would better serve their goal of "introducing scientific theories" than if Irwolhoe and Gwondoksa members were to write their own articles on Marxism.

The Gwondoksa pamphlets can be broadly divided into two categories. The first were books that analyze the workings of capitalism through the prism of Marxism, like *Jabonjuui-ui haebu* and *Tongsok*

sahoejuui gyeongjehak. The other were translations of Marxist texts, including *Je il inteonashyunal changnip seoneon geup gyuyak*, *Mak-seu-wa makseujuui*, *Gwahakjeok sahoejuui*, and *Gongsangjeok sahoejuui*.

Mak-seu-wa makseujuui and *Gwahakjeok sahoejuui*, published in 1926, are both noteworthy in that they delved into Marxist thought through the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. At a time when others attempted to study the Marxism through the works of Japanese socialists, Irwolhoe tried to understand it through the original texts of Marxism. This effort was closely related to stronger demand for scientific theories, keeping in pace with the development of the socialist movement. *Karl Marx* and *Scientific Socialism* were the first works by Lenin and Engels to be published in Korea.

The Irwolhoe group defined Leninism as the Marxism of the imperial era, perceiving Leninism as “genuine Marxism” that further enriched Marxism by solving theoretical and practical problems through Marx’s theories and methodology. Based on this perception of Leninism, Irwolhoe translated *Karl Marx*, in which Lenin outlined Marxism, along with Engels’ *The Development of Socialism from Utopia to Science*.

Irwolhoe’s perception of Marxism thus developed in close relationship with the demand for scientific theories that arose in response to developments in the socialist movement. Irwolhoe attempted to systematically delve into Marxism by translating the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin for the first time in Korean history, while including Leninism within the system of Marxism.

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GLOSSARY

<i>Bukpungpa</i>	北風派	<i>Samwolhoe</i>	三月會
<i>Bukseonghoe</i>	北星會	<i>Sasang undong</i>	思想運動
<i>Daejung sinmun</i>	大衆新聞	<i>Sasang Undongsa</i>	思想運動社
<i>Dongseongsa</i>	同聲社	<i>Seoul Sinpa</i>	新派
<i>Gato</i> (J.)	我等	<i>Shakai kaigo no</i>	社會改造の
<i>Gwondokbu</i>	勸讀部	<i>shoshicho</i> (J.)	諸思潮
<i>Gwondoksa</i>	勸讀社	<i>Shakai mondai kenkyu</i>	社會問題研究
<i>Hyeongmyeongsa</i>	革命社	(J.)	
<i>Hwayopa</i>	火曜派	<i>Shakai shiso</i> (J.)	社會思想
<i>Irwolhoe</i>	一月會	<i>Shakai shugi gakusetsu</i>	社會主義學說
<i>Jeonguhoe</i>	正友會	<i>daiyo</i> (J.)	大要
<i>Kagaku Shiso Fukyukai</i>	科學思想普及會	<i>Shakai shugi kenkyu</i>	社會主義研究
(J.)		(J.)	
<i>Kusoteki oyobi</i>	空想的及	<i>Shihon shugi no kaibo</i>	資本主義の解剖
<i>kagakuteki shakai</i>	科學的社會	(J.)	
<i>shugi</i> (J.)	主義	<i>Shihon shugi no</i>	資本主義の
<i>Marx hyoden</i> (J.)	マルクス評傳	<i>karakuri</i> (J.)	からくり
<i>Marx shugi</i> (J.)	マルクス主義	<i>Shinnin</i> (J.)	新人
<i>Minjungsa</i>	民衆社	<i>Sinseonghoe</i>	新星會

(J.: Japanese)