

# Formation of the Minganhak and Modern Magazines in Colonial Korea: Focused on the Case of Gaebyeok

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## Abstract

*This paper aims to examine the influence of the minganhak on the formation of knowledge culture in colonial Korea. The conflict between the gwanhak and the minganhak was pervasive across the Japanese empire. In Japan, the gwanhak meant official academism contributing to the nation's goal of economic wealth and military strength, whereas the minganhak meant to pursue universal values and academic diversity. In colonial Korea, however, the two types of academism had different characteristics from the Japanese counterparts. The gwanhak in the colony meant the learning concerned with colonial policies, namely, partial but intensified form of the gwanhak in the metropole, whereas the minganhak in the colony was the imagined form of the gwanhak as role and system to run modern state. The colonial minganhak was marked by the continued political endeavor to remind the readers of the lost sovereignty and its resurrection. In colonial Korea in the 1920s, the magazine Gaebyeok functioned the foremost agency in forming and developing the colonial minganhak.*

**Keywords:** *minganhak, gwanhak, Gaebyeok, magazine, censorship, knowledge, nation-state, colony, empire, modernity*

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It is paradoxically true that the decline of politics opened a door to culture in Korea. In other words, culture was chosen as an outlet for political enthusiasm, for political movements were suppressed. It is a matter of course, then that [Korean] culture has been marked by strong utility in nature all through its forms. This is critically important in understanding a new culture of Korea.

Im Hwa<sup>1</sup>

## Perspective

This paper examines the important role played by modern print media, especially modern magazines in the formation of national knowledge and culture in colonial Korea. In the middle of Meiji Japan, the relatively autonomous process of nation-state building paralleled the proliferation of general-interest magazines like *Kokumin no tomo* (The Nation's Friend), *Chūōkōron* (Central Review), and *Taiyō* (Sun), along with other specialty magazines, thus speeding up the dissemination of national forms of knowledge and culture. Although these magazines came as the products of private cultural institutions, they were deeply involved in the state-led restructuring of knowledge system, which in turn fostered a new generation of intellectuals. The engagement between modern private magazines and state-related academia is well illustrated by the career of Ukita Kazutami, a Waseda University faculty member in politics, who took the position of editor-in-chief of the influential magazine, *Taiyō*, and at the same time played a leading role in the *Taishō* democratic movement together with his sympathizer, Yoshino Sakuzō (Owada 2001).

Modern journalism in China also grew in close association with the academic world, though it was under quite a different historical context and circumstance from that of Japan. Major contributors of the magazine *Xin qingnian* (New Youth), like Chen Duxiu, Hu Shi,

Qian Xuantong, Liu Bannong, Shen Yinmo, and Lu Xun, while promoting what is known as the New Culture Movement (Xinwenhua Yundong), exerted profound impact on the formation of modern knowledge. Remarkably, all these writers and journalists served as either professor or lecturer at Peking University at one time or another (Kim Y. 1992, chap. 4). Associated with the academics of a modern university, the *New Youth* created a new wave of knowledge culture in China. In other words, the magazine was chosen as a vehicle to represent the progressive movement initiated by university academia. In this context, it might be worth recalling that the magazine *Xinchao* (New Stream), noted for its wide circulation extending even to the distant corners of southern China (Baik 1994, 222), was published by Peking University students such as Fu Sinian, and was dubbed as "Peking University version of *New Youth*." Thus, the university was the source of continued intellectual impact on Chinese society through the magazines *New Youth* and *New Stream*.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast, modern Korean-language magazines had no tie with such academic institutions as found in Meiji Japan and Republican China, nor did they with the state-led policies for modernizing knowledge systems due to Korea's colonial status. This particular status of Korea, however, created conditions that led Korean magazines to develop on their own and be able to define themselves as an agency for creating Korean-style modern knowledge. Consequently, the modern knowledge system in colonial Korea bifurcated between the officially institutionalized learning (*gwanhak*) responding to the Japanese colonial policies, and the civilian- or privately led learning (*minganhak*) produced and circulated by subjugated Koreans. By the 1920s, the struggle for hegemony hitherto latent between the two systems of knowledge visibly surfaced in society.<sup>3</sup>

This dual, antagonistic knowledge system in colonial Korea derived from complex conditions. The incongruence between the

1. This excerpt is from "Sin munhak sa" (New History of Literature) in *Chosun Ilbo*, November 3, 1939.

2. For intellectual characteristics of *New Youth*, see Nomura (1990).

3. The concept of *gwanhak* versus *minganhak* was first explicated by Kano Masanao (Kano 1983).

“ruling state,” actually run by imperial Japan, and the “imagined state” as reconstructed by the colonial Koreans conditioned their intellectual outlook. The overlap of the two states, neither accommodating nor co-existing, inevitably entailed social tension in colonial Korea. To the Japanese empire, the “imagined state” by the colonial people was unacceptable, however unreal it might be, because it might well develop into a rallying point for denying the legitimacy of the empire. The fundamental incompatibility between the two forms of state created a condition under which colonial intellectuals became committed to creating autonomous spheres of knowledge and learning by engaging in modern forms of media including magazines.

The Korean press media in the 1920s proclaimed itself as an alternative agency to “govern jointly” (*gongchi*) the colonial Korean society, as is well illustrated in its presumed role of “newspaper government” (*sinmun jeongbu*). This claim was a unique form of hegemonic aspiration by the Korean press media, which was subject to colonial rule (Bak H. 2005). The claim also came from the self-consciousness of the Korean media that it was the prime agency in producing the intellectual texts of the colony by employing Korean language. Implicit in the notion of “joint government” (*gongchi*) was the self-consciousness that the knowledge and information produced by the Korean press, especially the newspapers and magazines in the 1920s, constituted an alternative to the knowledge offered by the official institutionalized academia of the Japanese empire.

The best example of the close ties between the civil learning and the magazines in colonial Korea can be found in the publication of the magazine *Gaebyeok* (Genesis), which had an exceptionally large readership for all of its total seventy-two monthly issues, published from June 1920 to August 1926. While having in common with other general-interest magazines in producing and spreading national knowledge, *Gaebyeok*, with its implicit ant-colonialism and idea of an autonomous course of modernization, came into continual conflict with the colonial authorities. The magazine’s endeavors to reform the imperial subjects in the colony in a nationalist way resulted in its forced closing by the Government-General. Nevertheless, *Gaebyeok*’s

fate is a telling reminder that the Japanese colonial enterprises conditioned the separation of the knowledge culture from the colonized.<sup>4</sup>

### Rupture between Knowledge and the State

In Korea, the first modern magazines assumed the role of catalyzing the process of nationalization of knowledge. The *Chinmokhoe hoebo* (Bulletin for the Friendship Society), first published in February 1896 and considered the precursor of vernacular magazines in Korea, was an organ for an overseas community for the first Korean students in Japan (Cha 2000, 221). At the sending-off lecture to the students leaving for Japan, Education Minister Bak Jeong-yang called for them to become the competent elites capable of solving the national problems facing Korea (Park 1999, 130). In return, the students promised, “After graduation, we will work for the state to repay even one ten thousandth of the nation’s favor extended to us,”<sup>5</sup> demonstrating their firm commitment to initiating national reforms. Then, the *Chinmokhoe hoebo* responded to the modernization projects of the Kim Hong-jip cabinet by collecting a broad range of knowledge and information needed to modernize the state in the areas of politics, economy, military, and law (Cha 2000, chap. 6).

The idea of modernizing the state by knowledge championed by the *Chinmokhoe hoebo* became the premise governing ensuing magazines after 1905. With the advent of enlightenment activities outside the government, a number of political societies were organized under the name of “academic society” (*hakhoe*), a group that proved eager in publishing organs to publicize their positions and aims. Remarkably, they devoted more pages for offering modern knowledge and information needed for modern transformation of Korea than for propagating their political activities.

The development and dissemination of modern knowledge,

4. For the general characteristics of *Gaebyeok*, see Choe Su-il (2008).

5. *Chinmokhoe hoebo*, first issue (February 1896, 15-17).

rather than political strife, was the order of business for the magazines published by various enlightenment associations, reflecting the fundamentally reformist nature of their activities based on the doctrine of raising national power (*sillyeok yangseong ron*). Still, we have to give thought to the historical realities of the Great Han Empire (Daehan Jeguk, 1897-1910) that gave rise to the growth of cultural role of the early modern magazines in Korea. To the eyes of enlightenment reformers, the modern cultural projects conducted by the empire in areas of knowledge and education were modest. The educational institutions remained unreformed, and the publication projects initiated by the Ministry of Education were unsatisfactory (Kim B. 1999, 108-114). It was, therefore, the private newspapers, magazines, and publishing companies that filled such insufficiencies.

Because the understanding of the form and nature of the modern was one most pressing concern to early enlightenment reformers, their political discussions addressed not only political programs but also political knowledge and ideas that informed such programs.<sup>6</sup> One contributor to the journal *Giho heunghakhoe wolbo* (Monthly Bulletin of the Learning Society for Gyeonggi and Chungcheong Scholars), Yi Jong-ho succinctly summarized the social importance of the journal as, “to develop knowledge through new learning and to let the people comprehend the relationship between the state and the individual” (Yi J. 1908, 20-22).

The early Korean magazines, being initiated from outside the government, looked towards nationalistic goals. As a result, the knowledge culture in Korea took a bottom-up approach distinct from the more general trickle-down approach. While the knowledge culture of the empire concentrated on a top-down method of producing national citizens, its Korean counterpart in the colony was initiated by private hands positioned at the bottom. As long as the Japanese empire continued to dominate colonial Korea, the reversed flow of the knowledge culture persisted.

6. For the political ideas and programs of the early academic societies, see Kim D. (1994, chap. 2).

With the onset of colonization in Korea from 1905, the development of modern knowledge in Korea was subject to crippling pressure from the Japanese authorities, which suppressed patriotic discourses most severely. With the promulgation of the Newspaper Law (1907) and the Publication Law (1909) as censorship tools, publications advocating political independence or autonomous courses of modernization by Koreans came under extreme pressure. Hence, a criticism against the censorship policy that “to expose such evil desires that would lead to the downfall of state affairs as well as the general people does not constitute the disturbance of public peace and social mores,” had little appeal to the Japanese authorities (Jung 2003, 23).

The four categories of censorship put forth in 1909 were a transparent attempt to safeguard the establishment of colonial rule in Korea: instigation of violence, harming of relations [between Korea and Japan], breach of order, and resumption of [Korean] sovereignty. In May 1909, the number of confiscated books reached more than 3,800 volumes, including *Dongguk saryak* (Brief History of Korea), *Yunyeon pildok* (Required Reading for Youths), *Isip segi Jeoseon ron* (On Twentieth-century Korea), *Wollam mangguk sa* (History of the Fall of Vietnam), and *Gumsu hoe-uirok* (Minutes of Animals' Meeting) according to the Publication Law. Moreover, many textbooks were banned in schools.<sup>7</sup> In 1910 again, the banned books multiplied to include tomes like: *Miguk dongnip sa* (History of American Independence), *Itaeri dongnip sa* (History of Italian Independence), *Hwaseongdon jeon* (Biography of George Washington), *Seosa geonguk ji* (Account of the Founding of Switzerland), *Aeguk buin jeon* (Biography of Jeanne d'Arc), *Gukgahak gangnyeong* (Principles of State), *Gukmin jayu jinbo ron* (Theories on Freedom and Progress of Citizens), *Isip segi ji daechamgeuk jegukjuui* (Imperialism as Catastrophe of the Twentieth Century), *Gukga sasanghak* (National Thoughts), *Gukjeong sindam* (New Discourse on National Adminis-

7. *Hwangseong sinmun* (Imperial Daily News), May 7, 25, 29, 1909.

tration), *Minjok gyeongjaeng ron* (Theories on Nations' Competition), *Gungmin suji* (Required Knowledge for Citizens), and *Dongnip jeongsin jeongchi wollon* (Principles of Politics of Independent Spirit). Conspicuous in the banned books are treatises on modern nation-state (Ha 1986, 8-10).

The censorship report on textbooks announced by the Ministry of Education in 1909 includes the following proscriptions explicitly meant to forsake any link between the national knowledge produced by Koreans and the colonial state:

Those textbooks which employ radical words and speak of independence only to excite a sentiment of disrupting the state affairs, those which use subversive language by refereeing to the responsibilities and duties of the state, those which speak of narrow patriotism, those which infuse an antipathy toward foreign countries including Japan, and those which agitate anti-foreign sentiment.<sup>8</sup>

Since the annexation of Korea in 1910, Japan began to reorganize the education system in the colony. The "Korean Education Decree" promulgated right after the annexation dictated the renaming of "high school" into "high common school" at the same time reinforcing the curriculum for vocational education. Without any reference to college and university, the decree established the "high common school" for technical training practically as the final destination for the colonial students (Bak C. 2002, chap. 2). The new system meant an institutional denial of any possibility of academic advancement in colonial Korea, resulting in the functionally differentiated and built-in hierarchy in learning and education between colonial Korea and metropole Japan.

Even though the modern educational system of the Great Han Empire consisted entirely of specialized schools in such fields as foreign languages, teaching, law, medicine, and industrial techniques, the colonial system sealed any possibility of higher liberal education

8. *Daehan maeil sinbo* (Korea Daily News), March 14, 1909.

(Yu 1995, chap. 3; 104-112). In pre-colonial Korea under the Great Han Empire, the modern print media's excessively important role in producing and circulating modern knowledge was mainly due to the underdevelopment of higher educational institutions and a modern academic system. Once again, in colonial Korea wherein independent academism and education were denied to Koreans, the print media was hailed for its role as carrier of modern knowledge.

The representative magazine that underwent positioning changes in typical fashion was *Sonyeon* (Adolescence) published by Choe Nam-seon (1890-1957) from November 1908 through May 1911, with a total of twenty two issues. The magazine survived the annexation of Korea in 1910, when any publication with nationalist connotations was banned. Then, the question is how did *Sonyeon* position itself vis-à-vis the state to tide over the colonial publication policy that never recognize any nationalistic aspiration by Koreans. In anticipating the youth discourse in the 1920s,<sup>9</sup> *Sonyeon* suggested contemporary Korea was still in an immature stage of modern development. Thus, *Sonyeon* implicitly pointed to the circumstances of the state as being rightly positioned in the course of enlightenment, yet too incomplete and infantile to exercise sovereignty of its own.

Given that the discourse on Korea as a nation-state was prohibited by the colonial authorities, Choe instead tried to spread the politically innocuous notion of the Korean people as an ethnic unit. The "contemporaneous style" (*simun-che*) used in *Sonyeon* pioneered the use of the vernacular language of the Korean people (Han 2005). Furthermore, an array of Korean knowledge was disseminated by the magazine. This choice of strategy helped *Sonyeon* survive the destruction of the Korean nation-state discourse at the time of the annexation. In other words, *Sonyeon* managed to secure breathing space under the harsh military rule by choosing to spread the Korean knowledge that seemed devoid of the nation-state.

However, the Choe's discourse's lack of the Korean nation-state concept did not necessarily meant his voluntary submission to the

9. For the characteristics of the youth discourse in the 1920s, see Yi G. (2005).

imperial Japanese rule, because it was out of question to publish the nation-state discoursed devoid of imperial Japan. The foremost censorship categories set forth by the Government General included writings that disparaged the authority of the imperial house and challenged the constitution of nation.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, throughout the whole period of the Japanese rule, it was never legally permitted to discuss the nation-state other than in reference to the Japanese empire.

In *Sonyeon*, a national knowledge devoid of the nation-state took the following three forms. First, there was a scholarly movement to launch “Korean Studies” (*Joseonhak*), which constantly reminded the reader of an ideological reference to the Korea state which had been forced to suspend its independent development. For example, Choe Nam-seon’s “Haesang daehan sa” (Maritime History of Korea) and Sin Chae-ho’s “Guksa saron” (Private Discussion of National History) aimed to substitute Korea in the realm of historical knowledge for the forced absence of the Korean state. Similarly, the movement for reviving Korean classics led by the Society for Illuminating Korea’s Literary Tradition (Joseon Gwangmunhoe) intended to retrieve Korea’s cultural heritage which could be appropriated as source of cultural identity of a modern Korean state. In the final issue of *Sonyeon*, Choe called for “enthusiastic support to the Society from the readers,” suggesting that his next activities would focus on the revival movement of Korean classics.<sup>11</sup>

Second, *Sonyeon* endeavored to dismiss the ruling ideology of Joseon Korea, and to substitute modern ideas for it. In the final issue of *Sonyeon*, Bak Eun-sik’s “Wang Yangming seonsaeng silgi” (Veritable Records about Master Wang Yangming) marked the inauguration of an attack on Korean tradition by attempting to reinstate Wang Yangming, whose philosophy had been denounced as heterodoxy in Joseon Korea. The ideological struggle against traditional Korea was a predominant feature of the literary activities of Yi Gwang-su and

10. “Administrative Regulations for Publications in Korea” in *Survey of Publications in Korea* (Seoul: Publication Dept., Police Bureau, GKG, 1930).

11. For the activities of the Joseon Gwangmunhoe, see O Yeong-seup (2001).

Choe Nam-seon in the 1910s.

Third, *Sonyeon* experimented with the political possibilities of literature on the assumption that literature had social functions as a branch of modern knowledge. The work, “ABC gye,”<sup>12</sup> published just one month before the annexation conveyed the message that Korea was on the verge of catastrophic political change. The work was a partial translation of Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*, which also spoke of critical moments during the French Revolution. The *Sonyeon* designated Tolstoy “an idealistic anarchist defiant to the state and religion,” and called his novel *Resurrection* “a painful blow on the conscience of the nineteenth century.” These instances suggest the magazine’s desire to enhance writers and their works as a central agency to construct national knowledge (Han 2006, 389).

### **Emergence of Colonial *Minganhak* and the Magazines**

The colonization of Korea spelled denial of the possibility for Korean intellectuals independent of the institutions of the colony to develop their own modern academia. Consequently, academic activities not incorporated into the institutionalized academia of Japan remained separate as civilian- or private-led academism (*minganhak*). Here, *minganhak* is a generic term under which a broad range of scholarly activities by the colonial intellectuals are subsumed. In its conflicts with the official institutionalized academism (*gwanhak*), the *minganhak* had to carve out its own space for survival.

The *minganhak* in colonial Korea included a variety of fields that generally correspond to Korean studies today, albeit with different aims: knowledge about Korea as nation and people, social-scientific studies to analyze and assess colonial realities, and literature and art to provide a source of cultural identity. Because the *minganhak* could

12. The translation focuses on the revolutionary situation of France as depicted in Victor Hugo’s *Les Misérables*. “Gye” is 契 in Chinese character, meaning an association devoted for specific purposes.

not rely on the educational and academic institutions for its audience, it sought the audience directly among the general consumers of knowledge and culture. This condition placed a premium on the print media as a means of spreading products of the *minganhak* among the general population. In terms of audience, the *minganhak* had little to do with the stratified audience of the *gwanhak*, hence it had only to concern itself with the intellectual and ideological aspirations of prospective audience. In responding to the demand outside bureaucratic institutions, the *minganhak* stimulated the growth of alternative routes for distributing knowledge and culture.

Because intimacy characterized the *minganhak* in its circulation of knowledge, it could not but create distinct content and utilize a different format from those of the *gwanhak*. The direct link between the print media and the consumers of knowledge came into being in the 1910s, and was popularized in the 1920s when the knowledge produced by the *minganhak* was recognized as an alternative to that produced by the *gwanhak*.

The colonial *minganhak* was anchored in the aspirations for independent nation-state and modern sovereignty; hence it necessarily entertained ideas of anti-colonialism and acted as a counterweight to the *gwanhak*. When one renowned literary critic, Im Hwa, commented on the two most influential magazines, *Gaebyeok* (Genesis) and *Joseon ji gwang* (Light of Korea), that these remarkable magazines had significant impact on the intellectual and cultural world of Korea” (Im 1938, 115), he meant to underscore the political messages their language conveyed. The colonial *minganhak* got settled in its own space where negotiations between academism and politics, union between critical spirit and professional knowledge, and direct contact between intellectuals and mass took place. Overall, the colonial *minganhak* attempted to construct elements of nation within a colony devoid of nation.

The relationship between the colonial *minganhak* and the magazines underwent dramatic changes after the March First Independence Movement in 1919, when the limited freedom of publication in vernacular language fueled the reemergence of a number of Korean

magazines.<sup>13</sup> More importantly, under the revised provisions of the Newspaper Law, many magazines obtained the coveted *sisa* (current issue) permits that allowed them to discuss the political realities of the colony in guided way; *Gaebyeok*, *Sin saenghwal* (New Life), *Sin cheonji* (New World), *Joseon ji gwang* (Light of Korea), *Dongmyeong* (Brightness of the East), and *Hyeondae pyeongnon* (Modern Criticism) were some of the magazines to receive these permits. Needless to say, that freedom was subject to the political needs of the empire, yet also opened new avenues of expression for the *minganhak*.

The colonial *minganhak* as represented in the magazines of the 1920s was characterized by more explicit contents, greater professionalism, and more openness in imagining national communities than ever before. These changes in the *minganhak* meant an innovation in intellectual circles in colonial Korea. The *minganhak* of this era focused on ethnographical studies of Korea, socialist ideas, and modern literature.

One of pioneers of Korean ethnographical studies, An Hwak, published an article titled “Joseon munhak sa” (History of Korean Literature) in the inaugural March 1921 issue of the magazine *Aseong* (Our Voices), which helps shape our understanding of the colonial *minganhak* in the 1920s. An Hwak was the editor and publisher of the magazine, which in turn was the organ for a youth coalition of radical nationalists and socialists, the Youth Association of Korea. The fact that his article appeared along with those from such well-known socialists as Kim Eun-guk, Yun Ja-yeong, and Won U-gwan suggests a less clear-cut intellectual schism at that moment. This coexistence was possible because these intellectuals judged that their enthusiasm for an independent nation-state could transcend the ideological differences between nationalism and socialism (Han 2005).

An Hwak argued that “literature is the best vehicle for expressing mental activities in the most sensitive and sophisticated manner, so nothing is more relevant than literature when learning about the changes in a nation” (An 1921, 44). Considering his study at the

13. For the outburst of Korean publications after 1919, see Kim G. (1973).

Political Science Department in Nihon University in 1914, in the writing of the article *An Hwak* may well have been inspired by such nationalistic works as Ueda Kazutoshi's *Kokubungaku* (National Literature) published in 1890, Haga Yaichi and Tachibana Senzaburō's *Kokubungaku yomihon* (National Literature Reader), and Mikami Sanji and Takatsu Kuwasaburō's *Nihon bungaku shi* (History of Japanese Literature) (Ryu 2001). More importantly, however, *An Hwak*'s writings did not subscribe to the *gwanhak* ideologies projected in the Japanese works on Japan's national literature.

What *An Hwak* wanted to stress in his article was the individuality and particularity of Korean literature as an embodiment of Korean spirit. Defined as "the history of the mental activities of a nation," history of literature was endowed with potent centripetal force that should shape a modern worldview of on behalf a nation. *An Hwak* rewrote the premodern Korean literature to be filled with national spirit, and carried its mission over to the modern era to cope with problems such as absence of nation-state, alien invasions, and the immaturity of national consciousness.

What *An Hwak* did was to invent the national past and tradition of Korea, an activity common to the colonial *minganhak* in the 1920s (Kim H. 2005). *An Hwak*'s project, while common in the modern state in the process of nation-building, nonetheless assumed a colonial experiment in that the processes of divorcing the current state and remaking of it came about simultaneously. The former process aspires for ideological and institutional independence from the empire, whereas the latter process aspires for popularization of a nation among the Korean masses and autonomous construction of that nation.

Ryu Jun-pil, who traces the formation of Korean Studies in colonial Korea, argues that "it embraces the universal values of the world and humanities inherent in Korean Studies," while at the same time it provides an appraisal of the contributions of Korean Studies to such values (Ryu 2005).

### Strategy of *Gaebyeok* and the *Minganhak* in Colonial Korea

The *Gaebyeok* was the most prominent magazine in fostering the *minganhak* in colonial Korea. The remarkable feature of the magazine is first that it was published by a newly rising religion, the Religion of Heavenly Way, yet its interests were general, including contemporary political issues (Han 2007).

Although the leadership of the magazine came from a religious organization, its editorial policy focused on producing modern knowledge rather than religious tracts. *Gaebyeok* managed to establish itself as the most powerful agency of the colonial *minganhak* in the three main categories of national knowledge, socialism, and modern literature, greatly enhancing the reputation of its supporter, the Religion of Heavenly Way.

The second important feature of the magazine was that it endeavored to integrate the three categories within a single forum, thus turning them into the three major discourses of the time: nation, culture, and class, as Kim Jeong-in points out (Kim J. 2005). As a central Korean forum for the three major discourses of the colony, *Gaebyeok* carried a special luster among the colonial writers and readers. In the circulation of knowledge, *Gaebyeok* created popular forms of knowledge, distinguishing itself from professional academia and also from the *gwahak* run by the colonial state. Its commercial success and large readership can be attributed to its position as the central agency of the colonial *minganhak*.

Another feature of *Gaebyeok* is that it tried to make organic connections between the three categories of discourse on the basis of religious humanism, though the three were heterogeneous in their origins and evolution. The manifesto article in the inaugural issue of the magazine requested the reader "to know the world," declaring its devotion to promoting global knowledge. Here, the tenet of global knowledge championed by *Gaebyeok* was not the Social Darwinism of previous decades, but religious humanism based on ideals of mutual reconciliation and cooperation. Religious humanism would be the guiding principle in changing social perceptions of the readers.



The strength of social influence enjoyed by the magazine can be understood through its monthly sales of 8,000 copies despite circulating in a country with a literacy rate of just 10 percent, and more than 20 points of circulation involving 475 people. It should be noted that among these 475 people, 170 were identified as either local socialists or independent activists. The overlap of the magazine's circulation network and that of activists was crucial in generating cultural power in colonial Korea (Choe 2006, 267-360). Therefore, *Gaebyeok* was closely involved with the political move in colonial society to construct a Korean nation-state. When Im Hwa mentioned "utility of culture" in his "Sin munhak sa" (New History of Literature), it meant

Figure 1. Table of Content of *Gaebyeok* 64 (December 1925)<sup>14</sup>

The image shows a table of contents for the December 1925 issue of Gaebyeok. The table is organized into several columns with vertical text. At the top, there are two decorative illustrations of a landscape with a pagoda. The main text lists various articles and their authors. The columns from left to right contain:

- 新領向派文學之文壇的地位 (Newly leading faction literature's position in the literary world)
- 全羅北道縱橫觀 (A panoramic view of Jeollabuk-do)
- 嶺南地方巡迴片談 (A travelogue of the Gyeongsang region)
- 所讀知識階級之聯盟 (The alliance of the reading knowledge class)

Below the main text, there are smaller columns listing authors and other details.

14. The content includes an introduction to the Japanese socialist party, comments on the anniversary of the Russian Revolution, travel accounts and introduction to local culture intended to promote national consciousness of the colonized, literary critics and novels written in light of proletarian art movement.

the politicization of culture related to the autonomous activities to build a Korean nation-state.

The *minganhak* in *Gaebyeok* shows that its formative process was embedded in the tension created by centripetal and centrifugal forces of the empire and the colony. The interconnectedness of three categories of discourse—national knowledge, socialism, and modern literature—brought by the influence of the new national religion provided the possibility of an autonomous sphere for the colonial *minganhak*.

The distinctive fields of knowledge concerning nation, culture, and class coexisted within a web of meaning, suggesting that the print media like *Gaebyeok* functioned as the meta-knowledge in colonial Korea. While retaining the individuality of each type of knowledge, they were placed into a new context formulated by the inner links inherent in the print media.

Remaining questions are concerned with the meaning of the colonial *minganhak* in its interconnections of national knowledge, socialism, and modern literature brought about by the new national religion, and the impacts of the colonial *minganhak* on the knowledge culture of succeeding generations of Koreans. The keys to these questions will illuminate the uniqueness of knowledge culture in colonial Korea, which otherwise would be regarded as mimicking the empire or just a part of the endless chain of modernizing the colony.

## Conclusion

The paper points to the facts that it was in the *minganhak* sphere that efforts to reconstruct or preempt a nation was made in colonial Korea, and that the colonial magazines were the foremost ground for the *minganhak* activities. Ironically, the alienation from the official academia of the colonial state propelled the growth of the *minganhak* to meet demand from colonial Korean society.

These facts peculiar to the colony draw our attention to the problem of autonomy as exercised by the modern media. In general, mod-

ern media is integral to the system of representing nation-state wherein ideals of nation-state are propagated and its aims and policies are criticized as well. Still, the activities of modern media constitute a process of nation-building. If the media denies the legitimacy of nation-building, it will not be legally viable.

However, the colonial media in Korea was from the beginning excluded from process of nation-building. What was produced by the Korean vernacular media was considered just a local text, which had nothing to do with the great Japanese empire. In the view of the empire, Korean media was comparable to nothing more than the language of colonized natives, unable to be current in the empire.

Ironically, however, the artificial alienation of the Korean media from the colonial state provided a breeding ground for the media characteristic of the colony (i.e., colonial Korea). In the colony, the Korean media functioned as a pseudo-agency for nation-building. The uniqueness in national consciousness represented by the Korean media carved out a new autonomous sphere in reaction to the denial of autonomy. The impact of this process on Korean intellectuals helped build a special mentality of contradictory nature derived from their being outside the colonial state, but realizing the role of a nation-building.

Modern Korean literature was also conditioned by the colonial realities faced by Korean intellectuals. As pointed out before, the magazine *Gaebyeok* in the 1920s employed literature to fulfill its publication aims. The literature in *Gaebyeok* functioned as an oblique language to circumvent the denial of Korean nation-state. In *Gaebyeok*, literature is on par with other fields of knowledge such as politics and philosophy. By exploiting traits of literature such as ambiguity and complicity, *Gaebyeok* was effective in embedding and spreading anti-establishment resistant discourses like nationalist and socialist knowledge. The political language in *Gaebyeok* is dense, as seen in many works including Yi Sang-hwa's "Spring Comes in a Deprived Land" to express a sense of national crisis, as well as the socialist works of KAPF (Korean Artists Proletariat Federation) writers. The complicity found in the literature of *Gaebyeok* urged the individual

writer to seek a unity between the aesthetic individuality and the social collectivity.

The legacies of *Gaebyeok* were carried over to post-liberation magazines like *Sasanggye* (Thought World) and *Changjak-gwa bipyeong* (Creation and Criticism). In particular, the latter still sticks to the editorial format used in *Gaebyeok*, and literature has been perennially associated with its politics, thought, and nation since foundation in the 1960s. In other words, in *Changjak-gwa bipyeong*, the literature is in harness to supply social power for reforms to bring autonomy and democracy to Korean society. Meanwhile, the magazine can be understood as an example of the dynamic relations between intellectuals and the state that has existed from colonial times. Thus, the case of *Changjak-gwa bipyeong* illustrates that studying the characteristics of Korean media provides keys to the understanding of modern intellectual history of Korea.

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## GLOSSARY

<i>Aeguk buin jeon</i>	愛國夫人傳	<i>hakhoe</i>	學會
<i>Aseong</i>	我聲	<i>Hwaseongdon jeon</i>	華盛頓傳
<i>Changjak-gwa bipyeong</i>	創作 批評	<i>Hyeondae pyeongnon</i>	現代評論
<i>Chinmokhoe hoebo</i>	親睦會會報	<i>Isip segi Jeoseon ron</i>	二十世紀朝鮮論
<i>Chūōkōron (J.)</i>	中央公論	<i>Isip segi ji daechamgeuk</i>	二十世紀大慘劇
<i>Dongguk saryak</i>	東國史略	<i>jegukjuui</i>	帝國主義
<i>Dongmyeong</i>	東明	<i>Itaeri dongnip sa</i>	伊太利獨立史
<i>Dongnip jeongsin</i>	獨立精神	<i>Joseonhak</i>	朝鮮學
<i>jeongchi wollon</i>	政治原論	<i>Joseon Gwangmunhoe</i>	朝鮮光文會
<i>Gaebyeok</i>	開闢	<i>Joseon ji gwang</i>	朝鮮
<i>Giho heunghakhoe</i>	畿湖興學會	<i>Kokubungaku (J.)</i>	國文學
<i>wolbo</i>	月報	<i>Kokubungaku yomihon</i>	國文學讀本
<i>gongchi</i>	共治	(J.)	
<i>Gukga sasanghak</i>	國家思想學	<i>Kokumin no tomo (J.)</i>	國民之友
<i>Gukgahak gangnyeong</i>	國家學綱領	<i>Miguk dongnip sa</i>	美國獨立史
<i>Gukjeong sindam</i>	國政新談	<i>minganhak</i>	民間學
<i>Guksa saron</i>	國史史論	<i>Minjok gyeongjaeng ron</i>	民族競爭論
<i>Gumsu hoe-uirok</i>	禽獸會議錄	<i>Nihon bungaku shi (J.)</i>	日本文學史
<i>Gungmin jayu jinbo ron</i>	國民自由進步論	<i>Sasanggye</i>	思想界
<i>gwanhak</i>	官學	<i>Xin qingnian (Ch.)</i>	新青年
<i>Haesang daehan sa</i>	海上大韓史	<i>Xinchao (Ch.)</i>	新朝

(Ch.: Chinese; J.: Japanese)