

**The Memory War of Koreans between the Ghost of  
Premodern Chosŏn and the Modern Value System  
of Contemporary Korea**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The civilization of an era is a combination of contemporary elements and cultural memories. These two elements are sometimes in harmony together, but they often collide with each other in the process of new civilizations overcoming old ones. In that sense, memory war is possible at any stage of civilization since the past exists not in the material world, but in the social psyche in the form of memories. Based primarily on collective memory theory and narratology, this study aims to identify the interacting modes in which the pre-modern collective memory collides with the modern Korean value system, taking the pre-modern Chosŏn as an object of analysis. This study traces the history of contemporary Koreans' collective memory to find the roots of the current conflicts and divisions of Korean society. It attempts to find the shape of the conflicting mechanism by quantifying the elements of conflicting memories. Finally, this study aims to identify the battlefield map of memory war through tracing the history of currently colliding memories with each other. Importantly, this study reveals the driving force of social conflicts between the old and newly emerging collective memory by mapping the contours of collective memories and values conflicting among Koreans. The results of this study will contribute to understanding the dynamic mechanisms of social conflicts as well as to expanding into the interdisciplinary research of history, sociology, and cultural anthropology.

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## Author's Note

- In the text, Korean names are rendered in Korean order, surname first, unless the reference is to the work of a scholar who has published in English with conventional English name order. This study uses McCune-Reischauer romanization for Korean terms and names except where another spelling is expected (e.g., "Seoul") or where an author has a preferred spelling known to the public (e.g., "Yong-seop, Kim").
- The Korean term for 노비|(nobi) is written as nobi as it sounds. Nobis indicates the plural form.
- Unique Korean terms are written simultaneously with Korean and Chinese characters in parentheses.
- Chosŏn people are marked as 'Chosŏnese,' if necessary, in distinction from people of the Republic of Korea since no English term is suitable for the case. It is written and used as nominative and possessive according to the context of this study.

## **Chapter. 1**

### **Introduction**

*Let me start with a rather simple distinction between spirits and ghosts. Spirits are conjured up, they are called up; ghosts intrude, they come without bidding, they haunt us.*

— Aleida Assmann, *Ghost of the past*<sup>1</sup>

#### **1. The Background of this Study**

In November 2018, about 30 years after the '87 Regime<sup>2</sup> was established, an incident that shocked all Koreans occurred at Gwanghwamun in the heart of Seoul, the capital of Korea. A group of college students who were members of KUPU (Korea University Advancement Association) chanted, “Long live, Kim Jōng-eun!” and picketed with slogan urging Kim Jōng-un to visit Seoul. As is well known, Kim Jōng-un is a ruthless totalitarian dictator of North Korea who carried out numerous bloody purges, including of his uncle-in-law, Jang Sōng-taek. Almost one year later, on October 18, 2019, KUPU crossed over the wall of the US embassy in Seoul and held a surprise protest, demanding that then-US ambassador Harris leave Korea immediately, taking

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<sup>1</sup> Aleida Assmann, (2021). *Ghost of the past; paper for ‘Remembering and Forgetting’ Research Seminar*

<sup>2</sup> '87 Regime refers to the democratic regime and related discourses established by the changing political system and social order of Korean society caused by the June Struggle of 1987

responsibility for demanding an increase in the ROK's share of the USFK's stationing cost. Although the group was small, it was a symbolic event that was the culmination of a series of changes dating back to the start of the Korean regime in 1987.

During this roughly thirty-year period, many large political events such as tornadoes have engulfed the entire Korean society. For example, in the 2000s, a military training accident ignited the massive Anti-American movement in which two middle school girls were killed on the road by an American armored vehicle in 2002. Mass protests broke out against the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement so violently that swept over the country in 2006. Later, a candlelight vigil was ablaze to protest the importing U.S. beef that might possibly have been infected with mad cow disease in 2008, only to be followed by another candlelight vigil occurred for the impeachment and resignation of President Park Geun-hye in 2016, as well as rallies demanding the release of Park Geun-hye from prison, shouting “Impeach President Moon Jae-in (2018-9).” The events that shook entire Korean society in the 2000s burst out like a flood of waters as if a ghost were desperately waiting for the right time to do so. These events shocked the international community and threw Korean society into a vortex of chaos.

In the face of these once-in-a-lifetime events, Koreans increasingly question why Korean society is so divided, and why the nation is getting increasingly conflicted between regions, between classes, and between generations. Many scholars are perplexed about why the symptoms of regressing to the past frequently appear here and there in Korea. Naturally, there are growing voices of introspection about why the Korean intellectuals failed to present enough answers to the public’s satisfaction concerning what happens now deep inside Korean society, as well as not even

a proper explanation about the causes of such social division and conflict; nonetheless, the problem is so severe that more than 80% of Koreans express their opinion that Korean society is quite divided in response to the most surveys.<sup>3</sup>

Korean academic and government agencies have conducted much research on “analyzing the present status of social integration in Korea” to identify the causes and effects as well as to find measures of how to deal with such troublesome matters in Korean society. One representative study among them is the “Survey on Social Integration,” which the Korea Institute of Public Administration has conducted annually since 2011. The study’s results serve as a report for the publication of nationally approved statistics by the government. According to the results of the survey conducted at the end of 2021, 19.3% of total respondents responded that conflicts in Korean society are “not severe,” 41.1% said “severe,” and 37.8% said “very severe,” with an overall average of 3.1 out of a 4-point scale. The results show that the percentage of respondents who said it was “severe” was 78.9%.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, according to a survey by the Korean Social Conflict Resolution Center annually since 2013, most of the research results reveal more than 90% of the respondents believe that conflicts between groups in our society are severe.<sup>5</sup>

If social conflict is so severe, how much is being lost in Korean society as a result? According to a research result by Park Jun and Jöng Dong-jae, the economic cost of Korea’s social problems appears to correlate with an increase of about 16.1% of GDP per capita for each unit

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<sup>3</sup> Korea Institute of Public Administration. (2022). 2021 Korea social integration survey. p.72; this survey was conducted for the report for National Approval Statistics Publication.

<sup>4</sup> Korea Institute of Public Administration. (2022). *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> The Korean Social Conflict Resolution Center, (2021). Korean Public Conflict Awareness Survey Report 2021

decrease in the index of conflict. If Korea's 2015 conflict index (1.02) decreases to the level of Sweden's (0.21), it means that Korea's per capita GDP increases from \$34,178 (as of 2015) to \$38,635. In other words, just by lowering Korea's conflict level to that of Sweden, the GDP per capita of Korea will increase by \$4,457.

Im Hyug-baeg argues that Koreans have been experiencing a “simultaneity of asynchrony and synchrony” for the past hundred years since the era of Japanese colonial rule. Contemporary Koreans have experienced historical events synchronously in a jumbled state of pre-modern, modern, and postmodern affairs during the asynchronous historical time.<sup>6</sup> It means that contemporary Korean society is a mixture of generations and people who hold contradicting memories of different times and histories in different ways. It seems that the three eras of the premodern, modern, and post-modern exist simultaneously and coexist in the present Korean society. They still coexist all together, mixed up with senior generations who remember the experience of the colonial rule, those with the memories of authoritarian rule, and those that led to democratization in Korean society even in 2022.

It is not surprising, then, that the eyes of those generations in interpreting the world are entirely different from each other. In that context, conflicts between groups and generations in Korean society seem to be more multi-layered, complex, and simultaneous than in Western societies, where the process of modernization has consistently progressed in national stages over several centuries. In that sense, some researchers point out that essential conflict factors in Korean

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<sup>6</sup> Im Hyug-baeg, (2014). *The simultaneity of asynchrony and synchrony; multi-overlapped times in Korean modern politics*, Korea University Press

society are complex and multifaceted since contradictory cultural elements of different times are superimposed simultaneously in one place.

Accordingly, the structure of conflicts in Korean society is intertwined, on the one hand, with historical, political, and cultural elements and, on the other hand, with factors of class, region, and generation. Its complexity makes it difficult to single out any specific element as the main driving force of the conflict. For this reason, it is said that Korean society is always rife with conflicts, and that once they arise, they are not resolved in a short time but persist in the mid-to-long term.<sup>7</sup> In light of this, we need to find out what kind of dynamic mechanism of conflict is working between the ghosts of the past and the present modern civilizations, which is caused collectively by each person's different memory, which was given by different topological temporality and spatiality between the postmodernity, modernity, and post-modernity.

## **2. The Purpose and the significance of the study**

Most countries that experienced colonial rule, particularly in the case of those which have completed the transition from traditional premodern to modern society in a very short period like Korea, are appeared particularly prone to fragile social integration due to the conflicting disparate memories between the traditional customs and modern values of the current society. Specifically, Korea has transitioned from the premodern Chosŏn Dynasty to contemporary Korea in just 110

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<sup>7</sup> Park Gil-sung, (2008). At 10 years since the IMF, looking back at Korean society again.; Lee Byŏng-ryang & Kim Sŏ-yong & Jŏn Young-pyŏng, (2008). Diagnosis and Interpretation of Korean Social Conflict Structure. Korean Journal of Public Management, 22(4), 49-72.

years from 1910 to 2022. It means Koreans have experienced all those disparate civilizations of different generations, such as premodern, modern, and cutting-edge digital societies simultaneously in 110 years.

Thus far, it is clear that division and conflict in Korean society is a dire situation and that the fundamental cause of it is the clash between the ghosts of the past and the social norms of the present. This is not only a matter of a simple conflict of economic interest between competing groups or a power struggle between political factions, but also a clash between the different memories of past and present civilizations. It is not only the clash of different civilizations that exist in geographically separated places in the present world, but also the clash of civilizations of different time zones breaking out in the field of human memory. It is inevitably the memory war since the past exists not in the present material world, but in the social psyche in the form of memories.

For example, Japanese journalist Katsuhiro Kuroda raises the timely question, “Do Koreans still live in a traditional society?” as follows.

The stunning impression I have got from 20 years of experience in Korea is the feeling that “Koreans still live in a traditional society.” Korean society has already been modernized, but Koreans still seem to live warmly in the “Shield of the consanguineous family.” Japan's modernization through the Meiji Restoration was a thorough separation from the kinship group and regionalism. The Japanese carried out "killing parents" and "exodus from original hometown" and stood solely for themselves. Can the experimentation of Koreans' rejuvenation be feasible in the 21st century without eradicating regionalism and kinship nepotism?<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Cited from the column in Monthly Chosŏn (1987), contributed by Kuroda Katsuhiro (黒田勝弘) who published “The Korean is Korean (ko; 한국인은 한국인이다)” in Moŭm-sa.

It sounds awkward at first thought, but since nobody can deny that he witnessed many instances of blood ties and regional nepotism during his stay in Korea, one can see that he has raised a well-founded question. Many scholars of Korean studies, including Katsuhiro, all point in the same direction that attributes of traditional premodernity, such as factionalism, preferential paternalism, sympathetic familism, nepotism, and regionalism, are still prevalent in Korean society and that they have been inherited from the Chosŏn Dynasty. More strongly stated, they are value systems that oppose and hinder the development of modern rationalist values by firmly insisting on their position under the guise of tradition.

In that context, the first aim of this study is to open the black box that keeps the records of battlefield history of memory-war and to dig up what kinds of elements and roots of the conflict and division have been buried in it as a form of collective memory. The second aim is to clarify whether each of the excavated element belong to what sort of collective memories, that is to say, the ghosts of the past, or the present value system to create a separate list of opposing social norms and values. The third aim is to elucidate the dynamic interaction of how these elements of divisions and conflict react to each other through the survey of the perspective and value system that Koreans orient for now. Finally, this study aims to create a battlefield map of memory war by integrating all of the research findings thus far.

For this purpose, this study examines the hybrid characteristics of modern and pre-modern consciousness disclosed by Koreans today on three separate categories; that is to say, firstly, an ethical subconsciousness rooted in neo-Confucianism, which was the ruling ideology of the Chosŏn Dynasty; secondly, Chosŏnese value system stemmed from survival-oriented desire that

transcends moral reasoning, which was based on the servient life of the lowly and nobi; thirdly, Confucian shamanism, which formed the basis of Chosŏnese cosmology of both spiritual and material worlds. Based on the results, lastly, this study checks how actively such components of collective memories are still working in modern Korean society and then, through a quantitative interpretation about the survey results this study conducted, find how influential they remain here and now.

Today, looking around the globe, social divisions and conflicts around the world are becoming more convoluted and severe. Given this situation, analyzing the deep-rooted causes of social division and conflict in various countries worldwide from the perspective of the clash between memories of past and present civilizations is viewed as a new methodological framework. So, the significance of this study is to endeavor, based on such a novel methodological framework, to identify the driving force of social conflicts and dynamic interaction between divided social groups centered on the issues of today's Korean society. Given the idea that memories are formed through their perception pattern in different spatiotemporality between the pre-modern, modern, and post-modern, they inevitably develop into a memory war due to competing viewpoints between people that are produced by different experiences of temporally different civilizations.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, this study contributes to understanding the dynamic mechanisms of social conflicts caused by actively working memories between mutually different viewpoints and values inside today's Korean society where they are waging a memory war between the past and present

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<sup>9</sup> Igamberdiev, A.U., Shklovskiy-Kordi, N.E., (2017). The quantum basis of spatiotemporality in perception and consciousness, Progress in Biophysics and Molecular Biology

civilization.

### **3. Literature Review**

#### **3-1. Review of Current Discussion**

This study has focused on investigating the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of growing conflict between members of Korean society through a reflection of various social events and debates in Korean society, especially in terms of the historical context. For example, the protest against the Korea-US FTA (Free Trade Agreement) in 2006, the protest against imports of mad cow disease in 2008, the sinking of the patrol combat corvette in 2010 (PCC) Chōnan, the conspiracy theories over the maritime accident of the Sewol ferry sinking in 2014, and the candlelight vigil for the impeachment of President Park. These were large-scale events that caused a national sensation during the 2000s. These large-scale issues drove the entire nation into a vortex of social conflict. The real problem though is that they did not stop at temporary clashes on specific policies or issues but penetrated to the root of the problem within Korean society. In short, these conflicts were producing social chronicity below the surface.

Needless to say, it is critical to secure the legitimacy of one’s argument in order to gain an edge over the other party. In that sense, the sociopolitical partisans of Korean society have been struggling with each other over the initiative to collect, edit, and preserve historical memories. It is because they believe that if you want to dominate a person, there is no better way than to control their memory. According to the cultural anthropologist Aleida Assmann, there is little dispute that

autobiographical memories are what distinguish us from one another.

Experiential memories are embodied and thus cannot be transferred from one person to another. In stressing the experiential solipsism of individual memory, however, we disregard two important dimensions of memory: interaction with other individuals and interaction with external signs and symbols. Autobiographical memories cannot be embodied by another person, but they can be shared with others. Once they are verbalized in the form of a narrative or represented by a visual image, the individual's memories become part of an intersubjective symbolic system and thus no longer a purely exclusive and inalienable property.<sup>10</sup>

Korea's left- and right-wing political parties are fighting a bloody memory war for the power to collect, edit, and store the public's collective memory in their own way. There are many examples of such ongoing battles – for instance, the controversy over designating the Korean history textbook to get it published by the government,<sup>11</sup> Japanese colonial rule, the national division into the South and North, the Korean War, and the character of the authoritarian political systems. In short, the memory war, to preempt collective memory and secure editorial rights over it, is producing other conflicts within Korean society. It's not a cold war. It's a hot war! As an inevitable result, the entire history of the Republic of Korea has been tarnished to such an extent that it fell into lameness to suit the aims of each faction.

In the case of the Sewol ferry sinking, why do so many different interpretations, arguments, conflicts, and confrontations persist for so long over the memories and records of the single

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<sup>10</sup> Aleida Assmann, (2008). Transformations between History and Memory, Social Research, Vol. 75, No. 1, Collective Memory and Collective Identity (SPRING 2008), pp. 49-72

<sup>11</sup> It is a controversy that arose over the nationalization of Korean history textbooks under the Park Geun-hye administration in 2015.

incident? Nobody argues that it should not take time to get an accurate account of the incident. However, if the event could not have fixed its own authoritative narrative based on its full account even after several years, or in some cases decades, the reason for the laziness is often due to the fact that no group has secured the requisite authority to edit the memory and define the meaning of the event in their own way. In the case of Korean society, even if it is not perfect, it is very difficult to build a collective memory for a specific historical event based on even a rough consensus since Korean society has been polarized into divided categories of ideology, political thought, and collective memories over the past. There are many examples of divided social factions, such as the left and the right-wing, the progressive and the conservative, the pro-American and the pro-China, and pro-North Korea. Although they look like they are vying day by day for the sake of opposition, they are in fact struggling to secure power to address the historical memory of the public.

There was a time when it was argued that political ideology was the main cause of social conflict, but today's complex social environment cannot be explained by drawing simple ideological fronts and dividing camps. Current research argues that “Koreans have a certain unique temperament down deep in their heart that is rooted in their ancestry and regionality, and that such different value system cause conflicts between them because such things make Koreans not intelligible to one another” is gaining consensus overall.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Choi Jōngwoon, (2013). Korean, Who are we; where do we come from, and where we are going? Miji Books; He argued in this work that to find the modern identity of the Korean people, we should find answers to the questions of "What have we been going through?", "What have we felt?" Also, he added we should have been looking for "How have we interpreted them?", "What have we thought, and what have we hoped for?" In a word, it belongs to the issues of collective memory.

So, it is none other than an existential question about the nature and identity of Koreans. This question requires an ontological reflection on the historical process of becoming Korean and the formation of their collective memories in terms of how different value systems and temperaments have been embodied by each of the social factions in Korea today. While Korean society was caught in a vortex of historical events and repeated experiences, what sorts of memories were deposited in the psyche of each individual, and what differences in value systems gave birth to each type of individual? Knowing the sorts of collective memory that are working in the recesses of their mind and how they influence their daily life without knowing it, appropriate measures can be taken about how best to integrate them.

Assmann argues that in order to establish the complementary relationship between history and memory, scholarly attention should be paid to the so-called 'conservative forgetting domain.' In this realm of conservative oblivion, collective memories as traces and trash of the past remain until they are noticed by historians.<sup>13</sup> Historians should excavate these collective memories in the realm of conservative oblivion and study how the event was experienced and interpreted in the past and why it was remembered as such. The historian has no choice but to summon and reactivate the collective memory today and refer to the recorded history as the basis for reconstructing such events.<sup>14</sup>

Based on such an interpretive framework, this study has traced the memory of modern

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<sup>13</sup> Assmann, A. (1996). Texts, Traces, Trash: The Changing Media of Cultural Memory, Representations, Autumn, No. 56: The New Erudition (Autumn, 1996), pp. 123-134, University of California Press Stable

<sup>14</sup> Aleida Assmann, (2008). Transformations between History and Memory, Social Research, Vol. 75, No. 1, Collective Memory and Collective Identity (Spring, 2008), pp. 49-72

Koreans that have evolved from the Chosŏn Dynasty to the present day with the narratological method. In various narratives about them, this study retrieved and reactivated the memories that were the traces of the past which have been excluded from academic historical records in the actuality of today. These are memories that have already been discarded in the power struggle between sociopolitical factions and strewn like garbage into the trash, excluded from the original memory, but somewhere in the subconscious of Koreans where they exert a greater influence than any collective memories. These collective memories are the target elements that this study identify as the causal factors of social conflicts in Korean society.

If it were true that premodern values are prevalent in Korean society today in material terms, and they become more rigidified as time goes by, causing social conflict and seriously increasing social costs, then the task of the KVS survey will be to answer such questions by dissecting their collective memory and consciousness. In addition, the KVS survey considers it imperative to understand the mechanism of how such premodern heritage collides with the value system of modernity in the inner world of Koreans and to identify its identity and content.

### **3-2. Definition of terms; modernity and premodernity**

The term 'Premodernity' is actually a generic term that stands for a myriad of social norms, customs, and value systems that were the basic foundation of the old traditional society existed before the Industrial Revolution or modernization or secularization. The term 'Modernity' refers to social norms and various value systems suitable for the operating principles of a modern industrialized society after the Industrial Revolution. Since most of the colonized countries went through the process of modernization in very short term, transplanted by the colonial home country without experiencing any intrinsic industrial revolution,

the value system and consciousness of such societies arguably reveal hybridity to the extent that pre-modernity and modernity cannot be differentiated from each other.

Broadly speaking, modern and premodern civilizations are different from each other, operated by qualitatively different value systems and operating principles, so premodernity and modernity are at odds and collide with each other in their most cases, if not all. Even so, the boundary between modern and pre-modern civilization is not as sharp as clean-cut line with a sharp knife. Modern civilization is not being built on the clean site where pre-modern civilization has been completely demolished. If the pre-modern civilization is compared to an old building, the modern civilization is new complex building constructed in superimposed method on the very field where most of the old building called 'the pre-modern civilization' is not demolished but still remained.

These two opposing perspectives are believed to be a driving force that invokes social division and conflict in Korea today. To better understand the relationship between the pre-modernity of the Chosŏn Dynasty and the modernity of contemporary Korean society, it is necessary to identify the historicity and origin of premodernity in light of the Chosŏn Dynasty.

### **3-3. Theory of Collective Memory**

This study mobilizes narratology and collective memory theories for the qualitative study of premodern Chosŏnese collective memory in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. To achieve the purpose of this study successfully, it analyzes the social formation of the Chosŏn Dynasty from three different angles of gaze to get a deeper understanding of the existential mode of Chosŏnese, through which we can catch up with their collective memory.

Memory is undoubtedly an indispensable condition of human existence. However, it works differently for each person in each event. People often remember things differently depending on

their temperament and perspectives, even though they experienced the same thing in the past. Like a lyric of a pop song, "You are not me. Memories are written differently." The memories between two lovers can also be remembered differently. Fragments of the past that are remembered as pain for one can be beautifully recalled for others. Disputes or conflicts between the two are bound to arise when different arguments or interpretations are made about a particular event or object. In short, discordant memories and perspectives are likely to lead to division and conflict between the memory parties.

In what way, then, does a society, which is an organic aggregate of so many people, remember the past? The first is the memories of society that are inherited from one generation to the next by way of "Written history." The second is the collective memory that handed down from generation to generation as advocated by Emile Durkheim and developed by Maurice Halbwachs. Durkheim used the term "Collective effervescence" rather than "Collective memory" in his work, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912) extensively, but he used it in the same context as that of collective memory.<sup>15</sup> Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) took Durkheim's philosophy and developed it into today's conception of "collective memory."<sup>16</sup> Jan Assmann argues that memory is always in the process of reconstructing and reshaping itself through interaction with other individuals and with external signs and symbols. Memories are transformed to fit the contemporary context of the person and society at the time, or differently, sometimes by borrowing, sometimes by criticism and rejection, and sometimes by preservation or oblivion.

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<sup>15</sup> Emile Durkheim, (1912). *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. (tr. by Kare E. Fields, 1995. Free Press)

<sup>16</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, (1992). *On Collective Memory*, The University of Chicago Press, p.38

Cultural memory works by reconstructing, that is, it always relates its knowledge to an actual and contemporary situation. True, it is fixed in immovable figures of memory and stores of knowledge. Cultural memory exists in two modes: first in the mode of the potentiality of the archive whose accumulated texts, images, and rules of conduct act as a total horizon, and second in the mode of actuality, whereby each contemporary context puts the objectivized meaning into its own perspective, giving it its own relevance.<sup>17</sup> These culturally reconstructed memories are collectively internalized and stored as memories by all or some of the society members. This is called cultural memory, or collective memory. In this context, presumably, the origin of collective memories can be traced to each generation, class, and region, since all the recent memories have been transmitted from the past and are alive in the hearts of social members who share them.

Likewise, the memories of the past hidden in the world of the dead remain engraved in the fossils of narratives. The traces of the past left in the fossils are not fictional stories or fairy tales or one hundred percent facts, but the memories of hope and despair, expectations and disappointments of humans who lived in that era.<sup>18</sup> Metaphorically speaking, if a piece of pottery is excavated as broken fragments, the archaeologist can interpret the meaning of the pictures and sentences engraved on the broken pottery by reassembling the broken pieces like mosaics piece by piece to restore the original shape of the pottery.

Thus, the collective memory and narrative may be the pottery itself as a whole or as a piece of another larger picture. Aleida Assmann explains the process of embodying collective memory.

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<sup>17</sup> Assmann, J. & Czaplicka, J. (1995). *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity*, p.130, *New German Critique*, Spring - Summer, 1995, No. 65, Cultural History/Cultural Studies (Spring-Summer 1995), pp. 125-133 Duke University Press

<sup>18</sup> Halbwachs, M. (1992). *On Collective Memory*, The University of Chicago Press, p.189

There is little dispute that autobiographical memories are what existentially distinguishes us from each other. Experiential memories are embodied and thus they cannot be transferred from one person to another. In stressing the experiential solipsism of individual memory, however, we disregard two important dimensions of memory: interaction with other individuals and interaction with external signs and symbols. Autobiographical memories cannot be embodied by another person, but they can be shared with others. Once they are verbalized in the form of a narrative or represented by a visual image, the individual's memories become part of an intersubjective symbolic system and are, strictly speaking, no longer a purely exclusive and unalienable property. By encoding them in the common medium of language, they can be exchanged, shared, corroborated, confirmed, corrected, disputed, and even appropriated.<sup>19</sup>

As mentioned above, autobiographical, and experiential memories are no longer purely exclusive and unalienable property. Through various forms of social interaction, the memories mixed up with each other are gradually assimilated with one's own autobiographical and experiential memories, and the grouping phenomenon of memories occurs for all members living in the same socio-cultural and temporal space. Society as a whole shares similar memories as a group, but it is also polarized with almost opposite memories. It can also be divided into several types of slightly different collective memory to form multiple clusters.

Needless to say, humans cannot record what they cannot remember. Also, the historian cannot define the views of an individual as history. The historian records the most powerful collective memory of that time as written history. And human memory is transformed through the process of transmission from generation to generation. After all, the detail of history has been and can be transformed and manipulated even in the case of written history.<sup>20</sup> Those who know it well and want to transform the detail of written history to fit their own purposes try, at first, to

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<sup>19</sup> Assmann, A. (2008). Transformations between History and Memory, *Social Research*, SPRING 2008, Vol. 75, No. 1, Collective Memory and Collective Identity, pp. 49-72, The Johns Hopkins University Press

<sup>20</sup> Foucault, M., (1975). Film and Popular Memory, *Radical Philosophy*, Vol.5, No.11, pp.24~29.

manipulate the collective memory.

Since memory is actually a very important factor in struggle (really, in fact, struggles develop in a kind of conscious moving forward of history), if one controls people's memory, one controls their dynamism. And one also controls their experience, their knowledge of previous struggles. Just what the Resistance was, must no longer be known ...<sup>21</sup>

As Foucault argues, if one controls people's memory, one controls their dynamism. Those in power struggle who try to lay the groundwork for seizing power and to secure a political cause, manipulating popular collective memory is the most decisive factor in the power struggle.

Since human ability is finite and sparse, absolute memory manipulation is impossible, so an anti-memory inevitably springs out like a ghost and resists working memory. The anti-memory towards the truth will ooze the fabricated network of collective memory and burst out of it. Such a society is bound to plunge into a tornado of division and conflict, and the costs are prohibitive. This is why 'honesty' should be prioritized among society's values. The memory war in Korea in 2015 is a prime example. When the Park Geun-hye government announced a policy to make Korean history textbooks a national standard as part of public education, at the time, middle and high school teachers, university professors, and intellectual activists who belonged to the left wing all over the country resisted the effort. They desperately required the cancellation of the policy. The Park Geun-hye administration suggested that South Korea's history textbooks were so left-leaning that, for example, they praised the Kim Il-sung family in North Korea more often than past South Korean presidents in the textbook, but the left did not agree at all. Thus, there are often memory wars between political factions.

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<sup>21</sup> Foucault, M., (1975). Ibid. p.28

As Edward Said argues, "collective memory is not an inert and passive but a branch of activity in which past events are selected, reconstructed, maintained, modified, and given political significance".<sup>22</sup> No one can deny the fact that human memory is constantly transformable, but this study intends to extract the collective memory for analysis created by the voluntary selection of memories among the general public. Although they were politically powerless and did not have the power and ability to artificially manipulate collective memory, they confirmed themselves as the true bearers of the collective memory of the bygone era by forming a narrative among numerous individual memories and giving it a persistent vitality.

#### **3-4. Theory of Narratology**

The qualitative research of this study is to discover the narratives as much as possible that are dormant in eternal silence in the tombs of the past and to look for the hidden meaning of events by deconstructing and analyzing many narratives collected based on historical facts and records. The work aims to restore the collective memory of concerned era by uncovering the narratives already thrown away into the trash can of the written history. Those narratives are the tools of memory traces<sup>23</sup> which would contain stories of love and sacrifice as well as division, conflict, and dispute of those buried in the realm of eternal oblivion without remaining as written history.

All these countless factors, such as economic interests, political power, honor, status, and many others, may be the causes of divisions and conflicts as well as beautiful stories of love and

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<sup>22</sup> Said, E. (2000). Invention, Memory, Place, *Critical Inquiry* 26 (Winter 2000): 175-192.

<sup>23</sup> Sarah K. Robins. (2017). Memory traces; ch.6 of the *Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory* (Bernecker, S., & Michaelian, K. (Eds.). (2017). *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory* (1st ed.). Routledge.

sacrifice among members of the society. Why do we think we are willing to sacrifice even our lives for some people, even though in some cases, we don't want to give even a penny to other people? Perhaps it is because of the gap in the nature of the relationship. If you recognize the person standing in front of you as an enemy or the other, you will not forgive even a small mistake, and you cannot concede even a penny. But if he is a true friend or a beloved one to you, you can concede and sacrifice anything. In a nutshell, the difference in perspective and interpretation on whether you see a person as the other or as a self creates a huge difference in perception.

What is the cause of these differences in perspectives? It is determined by the memory one has of the other. If you have good memories of another person, there is no reason to have bad feelings toward that person. After all, division, conflict, and confrontation are struggles between people with memories and perspectives that are too different to accept each other's arguments. In that case, are human history, a nation's history, or a society's history merely human memories or a collection of facts that actually happened? Until very recently, it was believed that the so-called historians only, who have been professionally trained in historiography have the exclusive rights of primary access and voice to the data and interpretation of historical facts. But these days, no one believes that only professional historians' statements or descriptions concerning historical facts are entirely "true." What it means is that even if the historian objectively acknowledges the existence of a certain historical event, it may not be the 'truth' explaining the entirety of the fact.

For example, Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1977), *The History of Sexuality* (1976), *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), and many other theoretical works were produced by interpreting already well-known facts of the past, such as medical statements concerning a

madman, torture, execution, the old court records and files, the disciplinary power and punishment, prison, and the penal system in a very different way from the perspectives of then-existing historians at the time.<sup>24</sup> Other historical perspectives may be uncovered. Presumably, Foucault focused more on listening carefully to the stories, statements, and narratives that the ghosts of the past whispered to his ears, rather than on analyzing medical records and official written historical facts in ways of scientific and objective frameworks of analysis. It is believed that such a method could gradually form the academic results of genealogical methods and discourse analysis as critical factors.

However, such an argument does not insist that all interpretations concerning historical facts of the disciplinary power, the state apparatus, and the penal system produced before Foucault were erroneous, superficial, or insufficient. I give this example merely to suggest that specific interpretations of the same historical fact are compatible, even if they are different and contradictory. Before and after Foucault, both sides are mutually complementary, so neither can be defined as wrong. Thus, no one claims that the historian has fulfilled his vocation by objectively stating and recording past events, which is impracticable since Adam was a little boy.

Clearly, events cannot be stated without testifying memory and relevant narratives based on consistent context. Memories can be eyewitness testimony, videos, audio, ancient artifacts, historical documents, or fossils. And the transmission of that memory is fused with other memories in the process of creating relevant narratives. Narratives are thus distinct from pure fictional stories

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<sup>24</sup> Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish*, Tr.by A. Sheridan. Pantheon Books; *The History of Sexuality* (1978), Pantheon Books; *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (2002), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Routledge.

or fairy tales, as Barthes argues.<sup>25</sup> It has been overlooked that narrative is the critical method to create and express the possible world and its existence providing newly constructed human thought, knowledge, reality, consciousness, and identity to the audience. According to MacIntyre, narratives are not the exclusive properties of poets, playwrights, or novelists, since they have no narrative order. He argues narratives make us dream, daydream, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, and even love in the narrative. That is the narrative order.<sup>26</sup> Thus, it is the basic principle by which all human beings understand the meaning of their own life and constitute their egos and identities. People learn not only about situations, cultures, and thoughts but also about good and bad behavior, right and wrong judgment, ethical dilemmas, and so on through narratives. We associate ourselves with others through narratives, apprehend humans and nature, understand the world and history, and attach meanings to life. We already know that we are mostly consuming our time of life to exchange narratives with each other, but not just fictional stories.

#### **4. Research Method**

The study is conducted in three steps. The first step explores the symbolic phenomena and events that disclose the essential nature of Koreans well to excavate their collective memory and consciousness. Through that work, this study aims to identify the components of premodern collective memory, deposited in the bed of Koreans' consciousness that includes long-term

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<sup>25</sup> Barthes, R. 1967, *The discourse of History*, tr. By Howard. R. Hill and Wang N.Y, pp. 65-75

<sup>26</sup> MacIntyre, A. 2007, *After Virtue; a Study in Moral Theory*, the 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. University of Norte Dame Press, p.211

collective memory, such as traditional customs and thoughts, ideologies, behavioral patterns, and habits. Secondly, it attempts to examine the collective memories that originated from the three pillars of Chosŏn social formation, such as neo-Confucianism, Chosŏn nobi, and Confucian shamanism, still occupy the deepest psychological base of modern Koreans. In this respect, this study digs up each of these three domains to discover what components of pre-modern collective memory are buried in them.

Lastly, this study enlists the components of collective memory, classified into appropriate category according to the properties and functions of each value discovered. Based on these findings, the study can grasp the overall picture of the correlation of the constitutive factors interacting between modern rationality and premodern tradition, which seem active in the mindset of the Koreans at the moment. This two-track analysis identifies the unique emic variables of Korean culture, which can provide a more precise explanation of the general tendencies of behavioral patterns and characteristics of contemporary Koreans.

## **5. The Research Questions**

### **5-1. Three Main Topics**

The first research question of this study is, as mentioned before, to review the symbolic phenomena and events that disclose the essential nature of Koreans well to excavate their collective memory and consciousness. For example, this study examines what kind of people the Chosŏnese were and what kind of life they were leading viewed in the eyes of many foreigners who visited

pre-modern Chosŏn Dynasty in around late 19<sup>th</sup> century. When Chosŏn became a Japanese colony, what sort of life did the Chosŏnese live, and how they were reflected in the eyes of the Japanese from the colonial ruling country, is also reviewed. In addition, through some symbolic events, this study looks into the lives of Koreans and the process of becoming Koreans from the liberation from Japan's colonial rule in 1945 to today. Through that work, this study aims to identify the components of premodern collective memory, deposited in the bed of Koreans' consciousness that includes long-term collective memory, such as traditional customs and thoughts, ideologies, behavioral patterns, and habits.

Second research question is to investigate the nature of the founding process, unique culture, and collective memory of the Chosŏn Dynasty, which is regarded as the starting point of modern Koreans' collective memory and a treasure trove full of it. In that sense, this study digs up abundant narratives buried there concerning the emergence of neo-Confucianism as the absolute ruling ideology of Chosŏn as well as the narratives concerning the emergence and embodiment of Chosŏn nobi. Those narratives show us what happened there in the eyes of the Chosŏnese. In each field that searches for the remnants of premodernity, the objects that we encounter are collective memories that reveal themselves like ghosts even though they were not deliberately summoned.<sup>27</sup>

Next, the third is to explore another representative premodernity that is still actively working in the deep hearts of Korean society and people: the shamanistic tradition. Fortune-tellers, feng shui geomancy, and kut that is Korean style of shamanic rituals, have survived to the present

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<sup>27</sup> Aleida Assmann, (2021). Ghost of the past; paper for 'Remembering and Forgetting' Research Seminar

day.<sup>28</sup> Despite the criticisms of outdated traditional customs, obsolete values, and unscientific, irrational superstition, it is prevalent in Korean society. According to Kim Seong-rye, Korean shamanism is a modern religious phenomenon that is newly being embodied in the ‘here and now.’<sup>29</sup> She contends that it does not seem like an old premodern legacy, which will eventually fade away soon in accordance with the progress of the ultra-modernization of Korean society but conversely, it is becoming an entity embodied ‘now and here.’ In short, it should be considered as the premise of the ‘cultural anthropology of Korean shamanism.’<sup>30</sup>

According to the Korean Shaman and Fortune Teller Association, Korea's leading shaman and fortune teller organization, the number of shamans stood at 340,000 in 2006 and approximately 600,000 as of 2017. This shows that membership has increased by 1.5 to 2 times over the past decade. In addition, if we look at the overall atmosphere of society through media, TV, radio broadcasts, and street scenes, we can see that the demand for fortune-telling and shamanic gut has increased significantly. For example, Shinhan Life Insurance is said to be operating its own fortune-telling app called 'Lifetime Fortune-telling' for free on its Internet website and Asia Economic Daily's 'Fortune Counselor'.

Many leading Korean media serve diverse fortunetelling programs for fun. Despite the rapid progress of the ultra-modernization of Korean society, it clearly shows that such superstitious practices are not diminishing but spreading. It is truly bizarre how opposite cultural phenomena can flourish at the same time and space dominated by the value system of ultramodern civilization,

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<sup>28</sup> Kut; Korean shaman ritual in which a shaman makes sacrifices to the gods and spirits and prays for blessing and good luck, or healing.

<sup>29</sup> Kim Söng-rye, (2018). Cultural anthropology of Korean shamanism, p. 16, Sonamoo Publish.

<sup>30</sup> Kim Söng-rye, (2018). Ibid. p. 16

in which the most advanced norms and values flourish in the realms of modernization, secularization, and rationalization. Through an interview with a shaman, Kendall briefly mentions the past situation of shamans and fortune tellers in the 1940s before and after liberation from Japanese colonial rule.

... In the past, if you wanted to seek out a shaman, then you would have to walk twenty *ri*,<sup>31</sup> thirty *ri* but nowadays, here's one, and there's one, and there's another one. They're everywhere.<sup>32</sup>

Shaman's memories of her childhood would be her memoirs during the Japanese colonial period, but that does not mean that shamanism did not flourish in Chosŏn society or during the Japanese colonial period. At the time, shamanism was not as commercial as it is today, but consisted of a practitioner and mediator who led the shamanic rituals called "guts" of communal religious activities. Given the significance of these shamanic elements as the mediator for transporting and preserving relics of the pre-modern Chosŏn Dynasty into modern Korean society, this study intends to collect various collective memories through the study of shamanic folklore and related superstitious traditional customs.

However, it is not the key point of this study to decide which elements to take or which to abandon among the diverse features of traditional cultures. A more critical research task is to seriously consider what factors are supporting the growth of shamanism in Korean society these

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<sup>31</sup> 'ri' is a measure of length used in the Chosŏn Dynasty and equals approximately a third of an English mile.

<sup>32</sup> Kendall. L, (2009). Shamans, Nostalgias, and the IMF: South Korean Popular Religion in Motion, p.xviii, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu

days in the sense that it continues to preserve the anti-social premodernity inherent in shamanism. Suppose superstitious traditions do not disappear in the process of modernization but are located behind modernity and operate in modern Koreans' everyday lives. In that case, it is necessary to examine why such a phenomenon is possible in reality.<sup>33</sup> Among many possible reasons, firstly, such a superstitious tradition is functioning as a legitimate cultural creation, which contributes something beneficial to the current Korean community. Secondly, it might be because people feel comfortable and attracted to fortune telling and psychic reading before making judgments if it might be positive or negative. Thirdly, it is perhaps the desire to return to the premodern past instigated by nostalgia, which is reviving strongly in the deep consciousness of Korean people. Therefore, this study limits the scope of research to the reasons why shamanic folklore is increasingly prosperous in modern Korea's high-tech society and the factors and mechanisms that promote it today, especially those related to the preservation of premodernity in Korean society.

## **5-2. The Theoretical Framework for Quantitative Research**

As discussed above, this study traces the long historical process of becoming a Korean to identify ancestral components of the collective memory of Chosŏnese. By comparing and examining it with the components of the collective memory of contemporary Koreans, this study identifies the conflicting relationship between the two conflicting value systems derived from pre-modern syncretism and modern rationalism. The research work allows us to fully grasp that modern

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<sup>33</sup> Kim Sŏng-rye (2018) argues that if superstitious traditions do not disappear in the process of modernization but are located behind modernity and are operating in the everyday life of modern Koreans, it is because shamanism is functioning as a legitimate cultural creation, which contributes something good to the current Korean community.

rational and pre-modern traditional values are mixed up as a very complex hybridity of the existential mode of Koreans and their society.

It can be inferred that these two value systems stand at the point of opposing and rejecting each other rather than interacting harmoniously and receptively. In addition, when we argue that the value system consisting of freedom, legalism, the rule of law, and individualism for self-realization appear as opposing terms of pre-modern values, it can be said that survival values such as subservient attitude, habitual lies, communal collectivism, and others remain in the boundary of the pre-modern value system. Therefore, if we would concisely designate the survival value and self-realization value as the representative values among these value components, a society's affinity for the two opposing representative values would be a yardstick for measuring where the society stands between the journey of pre-modern and modern civilization.

Then, we can start the quantitative work to find the mechanism interacting with each other among the four value-realms created on the plot by setting the correlational variables of “pre-modernity vs. modernity” on one axis, and “survival vs. self-realization” on the other axis. Through it, the dynamic correlation of how the conflict and confrontation of different norms or perspectives, woven by various value systems that are opposed to each other, interact on these two axes. Moreover, it will give us graphic information to elucidate in detail how they act as a driving force to sustain the conflict situation between Koreans and Korean society today.

In short, the research question of the quantitative analysis is “What kind of collective consciousness structure and value chain do Koreans today have in their hearts?” To investigate this question, an analysis model known as World Value Survey (WVS) was referenced to establish

a schema of the survey fit for this study. This analysis model was designed by political scientists Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel to derive the cultural differences between 65 countries around the world, and it interprets the collected data by the following two dimensions and four variables.

1) Traditional values versus Secular-rational values

2) Survival values versus Self-expression values<sup>34</sup>

Since WVS is a model for statistical analysis through a global survey, there is a limit in that the standard of interpretation for questionnaire items and data is broad and universal. Therefore, this study borrowed the idea of the scheme of the analysis model but modified the standard of value interpretation to make it suitable for Korean-specific situations.

Accordingly, the axis of Traditional versus Secular-rational values was revised to Traditional versus Modern rational values. Traditional values emphasize the teachings and values of traditional culture, customs, and religions, in the case of Korea, such as shamanism and folk beliefs, filial piety to parents, and respect for the authority of elders and superiors. It also evaluates how much Koreans value traditional customs and family values. Those who embrace these values tend to reject divorce, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. Such a society has high self-esteem and tribalistic tendencies toward traditional society. On the other hand, modern rational values have the opposite preference to traditional values. A society made up of people who favor these values does not attach much importance to traditional folk religions or family values and authority.

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<sup>34</sup> Inglehart, R&C. Welzel, (2005). *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: A Staged Sequence of Human Development*. New York: Cambridge University Press

Divorce, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide are relatively tolerated but this does not necessarily mean that the suicide rate in these societies is higher<sup>35</sup> because of the importance of individual decision-making and scientific and logical modes of thought.

Survival values are the mundane materialism-oriented values that focus on economic stability and physical safety with no consideration of their religious spiritual life after death. Although it is based on relatively ethnocentric values, the level of trust among members of society is low. Also, since people are focused on survival, their tolerance toward others is relatively narrow. On the other hand, self-realization values are an attitude that places greater weight on one's quality of life rather than a materialistic attitude and considers the demand for self-realization more important than anything else. The environmental protection movement to preserve a cleaner environment is active, and high priority is given to increasing tolerance for others, such as foreigners, gays and lesbians, gender equality, and increasing demand for participation in decision-making in economic and political life.

By displaying two opposing values on the 'x' or 'y' axis using Cartesian coordinates (survival value vs. self-realization value on the x-axis, traditional value vs. modern value on the y-axis), the responses to the survey are categorized into values in four directions. The questionnaire items presented in KVS are structured to clearly extract the difference in the hybridity of each respondent. Each questionnaire item on the Likert decile scale is analyzed and a scatter plot is drawn up by SPSS Statistics 22.0. The setting of the scatter plot has been designed to represent the pre-modern traditional, modern, survival, and self-realization values on the coordinate plane. This

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<sup>35</sup> Inglehart, R&C. Welzel, (2005). *ibid.*

made it possible to visualize the distribution of hybridizations and easily identify them.

## **6. Chapter Outline**

This study endeavors to help contemporary Koreans turn their eyes to the true nature of their cultural character and existential conditions on the way of Journey from the premodern to the modern. By revealing all delusions and fantasies surrounding legacies that have been inherited from traditional Chosŏn society, this study aims to dispel them all from the dark side of contemporary Korean society. In pursuit of that, the study targets individual actors, that is, Koreans themselves, not society's economic or social phenomenon. In other words, Koreans were observed and analyzed not as static analysis objects but as dynamic and continuously changing objects according to the historical context. By doing so, it looks into what kinds of values, belief systems, worldviews, and religious views are operative in the consciousness-subconscious strata of their mind that are solid, and not easily changeable even in the long term.

In conclusion, this survey shows that while Koreans value modern rational attitudes, they still value traditional attributes. In addition, it shows that Koreans see their life from the perspective of realistic yet very materialistic, and place much more weight on the value of survival than on the that of self-realization. Also, it reveals that the longing for survival is still intense among Koreans as it once was under colonial rule. In sum, this study shows that the fundamental driving force of pushing today's Korean society into a swamp of division and conflict is the mutual confrontation between the groups opposing each other with different values and perspectives. In other words, it

is a memory war between the ghost of the past and the spirit of the present civilization.

This dissertation consists of six chapters classified based on the specific research topics. Chapter I is the introduction. Chapter II, “Weaving narratives about becoming Koreans,” excavates diverse narratives that contain abundant collective memories in the deeper bed of Koreans’ hearts through a narratological method. They were the collective memories deposited in those layers through the historical experiences and events over time from the premodern and the modern era according to the up and down shift of Koreans’ phase. This exploration synchronizes the historical aspects of the behavioral patterns with the consciousness of Koreans in terms of their collective memories. Based on the results, it organizes various values opposing each other and evaluates them in detail to get ready for further discussion. In short, the chapter aims to dig out relevant narratives as much as possible and share a common awareness of the topics and problems raised in discussing Koreans.

In Chapter III, “Chosŏn Nobi and their Servile Collective Memory,” the lifeforms of Chosŏn nobi are investigated to find who actually they were in the Chosŏn dynasty, in terms of their social status: “Were they slaves, serfs, or tenants?” This chapter is also devoted to exploring the origin of the Chosŏn nobi, how they emerged in the historical stage of the Chosŏn Dynasty, and why they made it into the large-scale slave society since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. This study argues that the collective memories of Chosŏn nobi are representative of current Koreans’ hybrid mentality, which has been transmitted from the social reality of the Chosŏn Dynasty, particularly from the psychological experience of the nobis.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the essential properties

and the existential condition of slaves by taking a look at a variety of discussions in the East and the West. In that sense, the thoughts and theories of Plato and Aristotle, including modern philosophers and theorists, and more recently, Palais and Patterson, are examined to define the existential condition of slaves in general. The second section focuses on verifying whether the status of nobi, the lowest class in Chosŏn, was consistent with the pre-examined ontological condition of slaves reviewed in the first section. More specifically, it investigates the actual life-form of the Chosŏn nobi, such as their family formation, nobi-trading, and their rights and duties in the communal village life. A typical model of the Chosŏnese village structure is represented to elaborate on their daily life as much as possible. An exploration of socioeconomic and political conditions of their material life is expected to show much more information concerning who the nobi were than the life of the ruling Yangban class about the collective memories of the Chosŏn society.

Chapter IV, “Resurgent Memory of Syncretic Confucian Shamanism” discusses deep-rooted shamanic customs in the daily life of Chosŏnese in conjunction with the dominant ideology of neo-Confucianism, including the historical process of forming the patrilineal tribal society in Chosŏn. In particular, it looks into how shamanic rituals as well as traditional folk beliefs, such as shamanic fortunetelling, Mudang-gut, and geomancy, had encrusted and merged the yangban’s neo-Confucianism with their afterworld view.

To this end, the chapter shows that the result of such an ideological Confucian revolution was first, a strict Confucian social status system based on a religious order that completely imprisoned the lives of Chosŏnese, and second, an artificially constructed large-scale slave society

unprecedented in world history. The Chosŏn slave system and shamanistic religious views were shackles that completely bound the soul and bodies of Chosŏnese, and it was the unexpected result of an ideological Confucian revolution of Chosŏn's founders, although not intentionally and purposely constructed.

In sum, the shamanistic traditions and customs still play a major role like a rhizome that preserves and nurtures pre-modernity, and also serves as a carrier for transmitting as well as spreading it in modern Korean society. Given that Chosŏn Nobi are slaves, how the servility and self-enslaving spirit extracted from the nobi's mindset, and their daily life is working on the sub/unconsciousness of today's Koreans and is influencing the becoming Koreanness is examined in this chapter.

Chapter V, "Interpreting the Survey of the Hybridity of the Korean Value system," presents the contours of the current Koreans' consciousness and collective memory, based on the results of the Korean Value System survey. The study conducted a value system survey on a total of 520 random Koreans through a survey agency. The results of the survey are presented in detail on the scatter plot as visualized graphically. Chapter VI presents implications and conclusions of this study.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Weaving Narratives about Becoming Korean in a Historical Context**

#### **1. Topic and purpose**

In this chapter, various narratives about the collective memory of Koreans are interwoven in historical contexts to explain their unreasonable premodern attitudes that have appeared in many events and social phenomena. In addition, this study classifies the concerned cases and reveals the kinds of collective memory that disrupt the mentality of Koreans and cause them to rationalize away their behavior. Those collective memories have been stored in their deep memory.

This study holds that the premodern features of the Koreans' consciousness display three layers of hybrid characteristics: firstly, an ethical subconsciousness rooted in traditional Confucianism; secondly, a survival-oriented desire that transcends moral reasoning, which was derived from the subservient life of Chosŏn nobis; and thirdly, a shamanistic worldview that provides with the base of Koreans' mundane materialism. These three domains of the collective memory make up the deepest psychological layers of the Korean. So, this chapter starts with examining how the Koreans feel about the concept of the nation in their peculiar ways. It then identifies the rhizomes that formed those collective memories and their underlying roots.

## 2. How do the Koreans conceive the nation and nationalism?

For thousands of years, people who lived on the Chosŏn peninsula saw themselves as the king's subjects and commoners. They believed that the king embraced the whole paeksŏng (百姓, 백성) in His arms and that they were all His sons and daughters without exception.<sup>36</sup> They did not consider themselves to be independent persons with legal rights. They were just a component of the clan family groups that had been a part of a patrimonial dynasty, who lived scattered in kinship villages and communities. Based on the principles of Confucian cosmology, all clan families, that is to say, paeksŏng (百姓, 백성), were believed as children of the king. They viewed themselves as a single tribal family community living in King's land, serving the royal family as the head family of the lineage. Although each family had a different surname, they believed that all families shared a common ancestor, especially primogenitor.<sup>37</sup>

This sort of belief was prevalent at the time, and it had been extended to the idea that China was big brother or a country of parents. By contrast, Japan was dismissed as barbaric, it being too

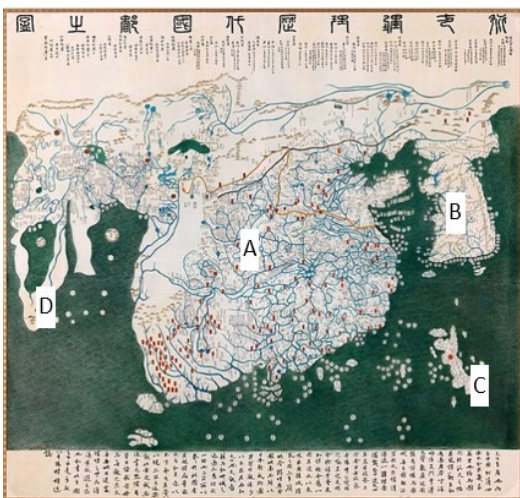
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<sup>36</sup> Duncan, J. (2000) translated paeksŏng into commoner or subjects in his work, "*The origin of the Chosŏn Dynasty.*"; Literally, Paeksŏng is a Sino-Korean, i.e., Paek (百, 백) means a hundred and Sŏng (姓, 성) means family name, that signifies hundreds of clan families; all the family members who rooted in the King's land.; Lee Jiseong, (2021). A Study of 'Kuk-min', 'In-min', and 'paeksŏng': their Historical Meaning in Modern Times, *The Journal of Korean language and literature*, (39), 2021.8, pp. 78-9.

<sup>37</sup> Park Hyun-mo, (2008). A Study of the King Young-jo's Notion on the Law and Paeksŏng: focusing on the Judicial Precedents, *The Academy of Korean Studies*; King Yeong-jo said, "King must fulfill his duty as a parent to the paeksŏng as entrusted with the protection of them from Heaven." pp. 25-8; "Paeksŏng is people from the same family with me, and they are all my fellow kinships." p.36

small to belong to one bloodline together with China and Chosŏn. This sense of tribal superiority is well expressed in The map of Honil Gangni Yŏkdae Gukdo (混一疆理歷代國都) produced in 1402. China was located in the center of the earth with the largest area. Next to it was Chosŏn. Japan was a small island to the south of Chosŏn, that is, in a position of lower rank than Chosŏn.<sup>38</sup> At the heart of Koreans' rage against so-called “Japan’s past wrongdoing” is that they cannot stand

[Fig. 1] The Honil Gangni Yeokdae Gukdo Ji Do



Kyujanggak Institute for Korean studies; "Map of Integrated Lands and Regions of Historical Countries"; <http://kyudb.snu.ac.kr/pf01/rendererImg.do>

A: China B: Chosŏn C: Japan D; Africa

the shame caused by being looked down on and ruled by such a lowly ethnic Japanese, violating the Confucian virtues.

In sum, the same double-edged way of viewing the world, like the dual attitudes for and against shamanism and fortune-telling, the duality of intense hostility to the externality and others in terms of self-confidence in the superiority of one's tribes, a sense of exclusion from others, and unconditional self-consciousness against other communities, which are intrinsic attributes of premodern communal living, are still deeply

entrenched in the hearts of contemporary Koreans.

Looking at recent historical records, Chosŏnese began to reflect on themselves as a nation and as a people from 1900 to 1910, close to the demise of the Chosŏn dynasty. When the Chosŏn

<sup>38</sup> Lee Young-Hoon, (2016). Korean Economic History I. Ilchogak, pp.314-5

Dynasty was in the midst of being colonized by imperial Japan at the beginning of the 1900s, facing the fate of their dynasty at stake, the prominent intellectuals and leaders at the time, such as Na Chŏl (1863-1916), Shin Chae-ho (1880-1936), and Choi Nam-sŏn (1890-1957), desperately felt the need to enlighten the people of Chosŏn. However, they tried to enlighten the people by summoning Dangun, an ancient mythical being, not by teaching them modern values, science, and philosophy, but by mobilizing the sensibility of the kinship lineage that all Koreans are the descendants of Dangun, belonging to the Baedal tribe.<sup>39</sup>

Dangun is a fictional and legendary god-king who founded the go-Chosŏn (고조선; ancient Chosŏn, 2333-108 BC), which was believed to be the proto-tribal-state established on the Chosŏn peninsular at the first time in its history and has been regarded as an object of folklore and folk belief since the late Koryŏ kingdom (918-1392).<sup>40</sup> These gatekeepers strove to instill in the Chosŏnese the idea that all of them were descendants of Dangun who belonged to a single lineage, especially in terms of the bloodline, and inherited the same historical legacy and their land. By doing so, they attempted to enlighten Chosŏnese<sup>41</sup>, who were losing their sense of identity under the colonial rule of Imperial Japan. They believed that such a tribal lineage is the core feature of

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<sup>39</sup> Park Sŏngsoo, (1996). Encyclopedia of Korean Culture; Academy of Korean Studies; The term “Baedal” is a word that has been used since modern times by combining several words related to the Korean people, such as Baedal-jok, Baedal-gyeoreh, Baedal. The term Baedal originates from the name of Dangun (檀君) as Bakdal or Baedal; -jok & -gyeoreh means tribe or offspring of the same forefather.

<sup>40</sup> Park Jae-min. (2016), The Period of Popularization of Dangun Myth, The Korean language, and culture, vol. 20(0), 67-95.

<sup>41</sup> The English word ‘Chosŏnese’ is not yet widely used, but it will be used frequently in this paper. Because, as in the use of Chinese or Japanese, the English word meaning indigenous Chosŏn people living on the Chosŏn peninsula based on their own culture and historicity is desperately needed. Please interpret Chosŏnese in that sense and recognize them as different beings from newly emerged Korean since 1945.

Chosŏnese identity and thus essential to encouraging resistance against imperial Japan to recover the Chosŏn Dynasty.

In that sense, the ideology they attempted to invoke was far from genuine nationalism. Nationalism, in its formal definition, entails national identity. It attempts to provoke national unity and patriotism to protect the sovereignty of the nation-state based on the nation's common interests. On the contrary, the enlightening ideology for the ordinary Chosŏnese could not contain such factors because they only pursued overcoming the colonial rule for the purpose of rebuilding their huge kinship community called the Chosŏn Dynasty. Later, they recognized the nation-state through the experience of Imperial Japan, but at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they could not establish a modern nation-state since they had never experienced it. So, the enlightenment thinkers of Chosŏn had to create an imaginary narrative to replace the nation and nation-state that could be visible to the common Chosŏn populace. The only way to meet such a goal was to replace the king with an imaginary primogenitor who created the Chosŏnese lineage as a single ethnic group sharing a single bloodline.<sup>42</sup> However, it failed to raise any deliberate and reflective questions: Who is the Chosŏn nation? What should be the desirable political system for the state? How should the nation's sovereignty be protected?

By comparison, the historical development of nation-state building in the West suffered numerous wars in the course of protecting their sovereignty from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. As a matter of fact, people who suffered such horrendous wars to defend their homeland and sovereignty

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<sup>42</sup> Colonial nationalism, which has been pouring out since Wilson advocated Willsonianism in 1918, mostly replaced the concept of the nation with that of ethnic or tribal groups.

tended to show deep love and attachment to the nation they had to protect even though they had to sacrifice much life in the process. As Tilly argues, it is inarguably the process of making nation-states, and it had to be the womb of their nationalism.<sup>43</sup> In addition, as they experienced crossing back and forth the harsh border between life and death, the entire nation's consciousness was bound to mature about the identity of their nation and move beyond the kinship of tribe or ethnicity.

As a result, it is natural that the nationalism of a country became more mature and refined by the level of national experiences and shared conceptions, transcending the bonds of bloodline and regionalism of the people who constituted members of the state. Through such transformative experiences, people who originally existed as clans, tribes, and subjects of certain lords and monarchs were increasingly embodied as a united entity of the nation-state. Thus, we can say that the ideological catalyst of nation-state building is nationalism in the original sense.

In the case of Korea, which was established after the liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945, Koreans experienced the Korean War from 1950 to 1953. The Korean War was a painful experience and memory. Nevertheless, it was a fortune among misfortunes that the most severe conflict factors of the social division, including the then-very powerful left-wing forces, were eliminated by the violence of war. Afterward, social integration was accelerated to overcome the polarized Korean society during the authoritarian regime.

However, much of the debate centered around who caused the war and whether it was a proxy war between the US and the Soviet Union. The debate did not end until the declassified

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<sup>43</sup> Tilly, C. *Coercion, (1990), Capital, and European States, A.D. 990-1990*, Basil Blackwell; his famous slogan, "war makes states and states make war," shows the role of nationalism.

documents of the former Soviet Union found recently stated that Kim Il-sung planned the war from beginning to end by Stalin's orders. Nevertheless, the unfounded pseudo-conspiracy theory, which leftist historians had long supported, did not disappear for a while. However, it was an obstacle to the maturation of the country's national consciousness.<sup>44</sup>

To most Koreans, the Korean War was the first experience that made them confront who they are as a modern nation and which political regime of the nation-state should be built on the Korean peninsula.<sup>45</sup> Korean nationalism has not been able to transform its basic frame into the nationalism in its true sense, and it remains in nationalistic tribalism to this day. Hankyoreh 21, a representative left-wing journalist in Korea, reported in 2010: "There have been controversies such as the theories of the North's invasion to South Korea, the South's invasion to North Korea, and America's induction of North's invasion, from the beginning of the war to the present, but the dominant theory in South Korean academia is the theory of America's induction of the North's invasion."<sup>46</sup> Also, in 2006, KBS broadcasted the TV soap opera "Seoul, 1945" referring to the theory of Induction of the North's invasion.

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<sup>44</sup> B. Cummings and J. Holliday argued the cause of the Korean War as North Korea's invasion of the South or the theory of inducement to invade the South. South Korea's left-wing activists and academics also sympathize with North Korea's claims, arguing that the Korean War was a war of "national liberation" and "a proxy war" by the United States. This theory at one time occupied a mainstream position in Korean society, but no one claims it publicly now. The Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) and other non-institutional left-wing organizations are still teaching young students the theory of invasion of the North and the theory of guiding the invasion of South Korea.

<sup>45</sup> For a long while in the past, the South-North Korean War was referred to as the Fratricidal War, which can be translated into Dongjok-sangjan (동족상잔). Dongjok (동족); the same tribe or nation. Sangjan (상잔); kill each other.

<sup>46</sup> Hankyoreh 21, (2010). The flag bearer of the Baedal nation, enthusiastic for anti-communist education; <https://h21.hani.co.kr/arti/PRINT/27489.html>

Despite evidence to the contrary, such as operational plans and war preparation reports to Stalin being publicized several times since 1990, the fundamental reason that many scholars believe in and support the official claims of North Korea's propaganda, which was once a war party and is now an enemy, rather than believing in their own country, government, allies, and counter-vailing evidence, is the collective memory that we are of single bloodline tribes. In the recent historical context, it must be one of the apparent causes that student activists who resisted the authoritarian regime in the past sought the North Korean regime's help for the democratization of South Korea. As a result, they showed many pro-North Korean tendencies.

In addition, the intellectuals who supported them were on the side of activists who believed that there was no way a nation sharing the same lineage could do such a thing. Therefore, they firmly believed that such evil events were bound to be caused by the conspiracy of US imperialism.<sup>47</sup> This claim was also the official position of North Korea that the North Korean Central News Agency repeats every year when the anniversary of the Korean War is near.

The implication of this narrative is that the majority of pro-North Koreans believe that the two Koreas are brothers of single blood and cannot blame them despite being a fratricidal war. Emotional bonds, which are stronger than the power of hard evidence, is more compelling than scientific rationales. The mind derives from the grand collective memory of one lineage and one race. In conclusion, Korean nationalism is not an ideology that promotes national unity or protection of territory and sovereignty but further protecting tribal lineage and solidifying the tribal

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<sup>47</sup> Refer to; Kim Chŏl-bŏm, (1990). A Perspective on the Korean War Eŭlyu Munhwasa.; Ha Youngsŏn, (1990). A New Approach to the Korean War, Nanam; The Korean politics research Team, Understanding the Korean War, (1990). History Criticism.; The study on the Korean War. Choi Jang-chip. Tae-am.; Kang Jung-gu, American and Korean War, History Criticism; Summer.

tradition. In the modern history of Korea, the terms ‘nation’ and ‘state’ have always been mixed up with the conceptions of tribes, ethnics, and compatriots. ‘Korean nationalism’ is one of the most familiar to Koreans, but it is really just nationalist tribalism or ethnicism.

### **3. Narratives on the Chosŏnese, 1870-1910**

This chapter focuses on the collective memory and consciousness of Koreans as well as the perceptions that foreigners held of Koreans. This section collects and analyzes the narratives of foreigners about Chosŏnese who lived from the 1870s to 1910. This was a time when ‘Chosŏnese’ last survived as a people of an independent dynasty – it being the last 40 years spanning from the Ganghwa-do Treaty with Japan (1876)<sup>48</sup> to the colonialization by Imperial Japan (1910). The Chosŏn Dynasty decided to give up the long-held seclusion policy and open the country’s gate to foreign powers by signing the Ganghwa-do Treaty with Japan. It was the first international treaty and became a turning point in the modernization of Chosŏn. From then on, Chosŏnese became known to the outside world. It was also the first time that Chosŏn and the Chosŏnese had direct contact with foreigners.

#### **3-1. The general impression of Chosŏnese to foreigners**

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<sup>48</sup> Chung Young-lob, (2006). *Korea Under Siege, 1876–1945: Capital Formation and Economic Transformation*, p. 42; The Ganghwa-do treaty of 1876, also known as the Chosŏn-Japan treaty, was the first international treaty signed between Chosŏn and Japan with a modern form in the history of Chosŏn. In this treaty, Chosŏn declared that it was a free country that enjoys equal sovereignty as many of the great powers, proclaiming internationally that it was no longer in the tribute relationship with China. Also, it agreed to abandon the seclusion policy and open several ports across the country, including Busan Port.

What did the Chosŏnese look like in the eyes of foreign consuls, traders, soldiers, and missionaries who had been to the late Chosŏn since the mid-19th century? The characteristics of Chosŏnese reflected in the eyes of alien visitors from Western powers were recorded in travel books, columns, and the inland exploration reports they published after their return home. Ernst J. Oppert (1832-1903), who visited Chosŏn in 1866 and attempted to rob Nam Yŏn-gun's tomb, the father of Regent Hŭngsŏn Daewon-gun but only failed, published his expedition in his book, *A forbidden Land: Voyages to the Corea* (1880) later after his return home. In December 1883, Percival Lowell (1855-1916) entered Jemul-po Port (Incheon today) via Busan port as a secretary of the United States consul. He later published *Chosŏn: The land of Morning Calm* (1888). The Chosŏn travel book, *Things Korean* (1908), was published by Horace N. Allen (1858-1932), who first came to Chosŏn through Jemul-po port in 1884 as a protestant missionary and later served King Kojong as a royal doctor. He also served as the Consul General, subsequently as the 2nd Minister of United States to Chosŏn, and later made significant contributions to improving health and medical care for Chosŏn people as a general practitioner. There were also Russian soldiers' and French diplomats' reports on a nationwide exploration of Chosŏn, among other popular travelogues not included here.

According to Oppert, Chosŏnese were considered good-hearted people, and their creativity and ability were superior to the Chinese and Japanese.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, in Russian soldiers' report of the reconnaissance survey to the Chosŏn Peninsula from 1885 to 1886, the nature of Chosŏnese

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<sup>49</sup> Oppert, E. (1880). *A Forbidden Land: Voyages to the Corea*. p. 144; S. Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington.

was recorded as gentle, good-tempered, and submissive. Sometimes, they reported that they stayed either in a village to be governed only by orders of local dignitaries without an army or in a very remote village with no government official. Nevertheless, they were shocked that they had never witnessed the village order being broken.<sup>50</sup> Charles Chaillé-Long (1842-1917) was Consul General of the United States in Chosŏn from 1887 to 1889. During his tenure, he led a scientific expedition up to Jeju-do and later published his travelogue, *Deux Voyages en Corée* (1894). In it, he writes that the essential virtue of Chosŏnese is kindness, and that the habit of doing good to neighbors is universal and generously applied.

The Chosŏnese have a tradition of helping each other by rolling up their arms whenever there is a need for each other. When farming, they lend farm tools and workers, provide financial assistance in case of fire or flood damage, and provide competitive support for any necessities for marriages, feasts, and funerals. These customs unite the entire Chosŏn people with great solidarity and make all members look like one family.<sup>51</sup>

The characteristics of Chosŏnese were commonly testified by Allen and many other Chosŏn travelogues. But this has little to do with the peace-loving disposition of the people who live there or the reputation of good people who like to help others. Since the foreigners had little knowledge of the history and social structure of Chosŏn, the idyllic scenery of Chosŏn would have seemed in their eyes a very peaceful and good place to live. However, it was just typical village community, which is very densely woven and operated based on the rigid social status system of yangban and nobi.

Approximately 70-80% of their testimonies to Chosŏnese were negative. In his travel book,

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<sup>50</sup> Carnev, V.P et al. (1958), *Po Korea; Puteshestviia*, p.166, (trans; Kim, Jeong-hwa, 2003, Kayanet pub).

<sup>51</sup> Chaillé-Long, C. (1894), *Deux voyages en Corée*, p.115, Paris: E. Leroux, Éditions Kailash, 1994,

Oppert who tried to rob the tomb of Chosŏn king's father, depicted Chosŏnese always indulging in drinking whenever they had a chance and boozed alcohol until they got drunk uncontrollably.<sup>52</sup> He also described Chosŏnese as half-barbarians or uncivilized persons who tended to show a deep hostility with a feeling of wariness toward strangers or aliens and were very reluctant to come into contact with them.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, he assumed that the Chosŏnese were not outward-oriented but used to hiding in their shells like snails since they had lived in a hermetically closed country under the policy of seclusion for a long time. Percival Lowell expressed the view that the Chosŏnese were afraid of going out to sail on the distant sea and seemed to have not even a drop of courage to overcome the obstruct of nature.<sup>54</sup>

However, Lowell seems to have had no idea of how Chosŏn was working, particularly in terms of its maritime policy at the time of his visit. Chosŏn's maritime ban policy was notorious for being strict with its rules. The Chosŏn Dynasty strictly enforced a maritime ban policy from the beginning of its founding by the Great Ming Code of the Ming Dynasty in China. It was very natural for the Chosŏn Dynasty, designated as a vassal of the Ming Dynasty, to follow the maritime ban code promulgated by the Ming Emperor.<sup>55</sup> According to the maritime ban policy of the Chosŏn dynasty, Chosŏnese fishers and sailors were strictly prohibited from going out offshore further than 20 kilometers from the coast at the farthest.<sup>56</sup> Those who violated the sea ban policy were

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<sup>52</sup> Oppert, E. (1880). *ibid.* p.121

<sup>53</sup> Oppert, E. (1880). *ibid.* p.163

<sup>54</sup> Lowell, P. (1888), *Chosŏn, the Land of the Morning Calm; a Sketch of Chosŏn*, p.45; World Digital Library. 1888. Retrieved June 11, 2013.

<sup>55</sup> The Great Ming Code (Daemyŏng-ryul, 대명률) is a Ming dynasty law enacted in 1367 by Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398), the founder of the Chinese Ming Dynasty.

<sup>56</sup> Ko Dong-hwan, 2014, pp.291-295; Koo, Do-young. 2015, pp. 75-117; Im Young-jeong. 1997 show that

punished severely as traitors. This policy was strictly enforced throughout the Chosŏn dynasty and was only loosely implemented from the late 18th century. As a result of such long-standing suppression, it was natural that Chosŏnese would fear going out on the distant sea. Still, it is not true to say that they had not a drop of courage to overcome nature's obstructions.

It may be true that Chosŏnese had no outward-oriented temperament, just as Lowell wrote in his book that Chosŏnese used to hide in their shell-like snails.<sup>57</sup> Allen wrote in his book that the willingness to work hard and desire to accumulate even a little more wealth was not found in the mindset of Chosŏnese at all. They did not have such a motivation to work harder to get more wealth. In other words, when lowly people hid their hard-earned property in a secret place and then, rumors spread that he hid something precious, it was bound to be an irreversible disaster for him. When unjust officials or local police heard of such a rumor, they flocked to him like a drooling hyena, accused him of a trumped-up crime, imprisoned him, and often harassed and tortured him until he gave up his fortune. Accumulating wealth through hard work was perilous, needless to say. Therefore, there was little motivation among the lower classes to work harder than secure life's necessities. Allen argues that having become accustomed to these conditions, they were compelled to be lazy and often lamented that they put off doing today what they could do

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the Chosŏn Dynasty followed the Ming Dynasty's Haejin policy (k:해금정책, 海禁政策 Haekum policy) from the early days of its founding, which strictly banned ordinary people to going to the distant seas by boat. The demarcation between the offshore and inshore was not set clearly by a specific distance but usually was decided that the far sea was farther away from the island visible from the coast for each region. Several names of the islands have been mentioned in the old documents. Among them, Naeheuksan Island (내흑산도) is the farthest from the coast than any other islands on the documents, and it is located in the sea roughly 20km away from the beach.

<sup>57</sup> Lowell, P. (1888), *ibid.* p.45

tomorrow.

### **3-2. Neo-Confucianism as the principle of Chosŏnese life**

According to neo-Confucian principles, which exercised absolute authority as the ruling ideology of Chosŏn, it is believed that human society should be governed by moral exemplarism rather than by coercive laws. For example, just as shepherds take care of their sheep, parents should raise and educate their children with great respect. Following Confucian discipline, rulers such as the emperor, king, and district magistrates should govern commoners by virtue and ritual. Therefore, it was believed that they should follow the teaching of old sages and acquire the benevolence and wisdom of Confucius and Mencius. Their virtues were seen as being equal to Heaven and Earth. Yangban were thoroughly educated from childhood that they must govern the people after studying Confucianism and understanding the nature of all things according to the principles of the universe.<sup>58</sup>

In neo-Confucianism, politics refers to the process of organizational realization of moral idealism. Thus, a state as an apparatus is regarded as a community that performs these activities. Government officials have to cultivate themselves at first and then govern people with benevolence and wisdom, just as a shepherd takes care of his sheep with loving care.<sup>59</sup> It was believed that if a sage with benevolence and wisdom governed the people with his insight, there would be no need for laws, just as a father should not rule his family with strict lawful codes. That was the ruling

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<sup>58</sup> Park Choong-sŏk, (1982). *The History of Political Thought in Korea*, pp. 204-205, Samyoungsa

<sup>59</sup> Yoon Hong-lim, (2002). *History and Task of Korean Political Ideology 7*, Vol. 11 of *Korea Political Research*, 2

ideology of the Chosŏn Dynasty, but the reality of Chosŏnese was quite the opposite.

As Allen explained, Chosŏn was ruled neither by law based on legal apparatus nor by the benevolence of rulers, ministers, local magistrates, and petty low-ranking officials. Rather, they ruled the people with unauthorized decisions and arbitrary judgments. As a result, no matter how unduly the extortion of property and the arbitrary exploitation of fortunes from the lowly without any reason and permission, or in the name of tax collection, the officials who committed such horrendous crimes were not punished unless they did not fill their own stomachs with the exploitation but sharing it with their superiors.

Another Chosŏn travel book, *En Corée* (1902), written by Claire Vautier, described how the indigenous Chosŏnese were obliged to obey the yangban's orders unconditionally and they had no right to argue or complaint against them by law. In particular, Chosŏn nobi had no freedom or ownership of personal property. Thus, they had no desire to save money and get rich. The only way of living they could choose was to be lazy. They never got angry or tried to resist even if their fundamental rights had been violated or damaged since they had been alienated from such rights by birth. They believed that they were inferior to the yangban and did not believe that death could make them free from all shackles even in the afterlife. This hopeless conviction was too deeply embedded in the minds of indigenous Chosŏnese.<sup>60</sup>

One final issue that needs to be addressed is the extreme ambivalence that Chosŏnese showed toward the external world. As referenced earlier, many foreign visitors to Chosŏn, including Allen and Oppert, had entirely different impressions of the Chosŏnese. One was that

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<sup>60</sup> Vautier, C. & Frandin, H. (1902), *En Corée*, p.113, Paris Librairie C H. Delagrave

they were very kind and treated visitors like their own family, while the other was that they were unkind, aggressive, and hostile to strangers and looked like stubborn half-barbarians or uncivilized people with no intention of looking outside of their shells. In some cases, the ambivalent attitudes the Chosŏnese showed to them were likely, in fact, double-sided standards rather than just ambivalence.<sup>61</sup>

In a sense, their evaluation was correct. Those mental characteristics were the most intrinsic disposition of Chosŏnese. Some may consider it strange that such divergent temperaments could coexist in a person who is not suffering from multiple-personality disorder or schizophrenia. Still, it seems natural to those who lived in the social structure of Chosŏn for hundreds of years. The mechanism in Chosŏn society seems powerful enough to domesticate its members' personalities and spirits into alignment with the double-sided ethical standards.

### **3-3. Shamanic beliefs as Chosŏnese cosmology**

Throughout their lives, Chosŏnese shared folk beliefs based on a shamanistic view of the afterlife. The afterworld, inherent in these folk beliefs, was not clearly separated by the boundaries of this world. In other words, the Chosŏnese perceived this life and the afterlife as intermingling and overlapping. For example, numerous narratives and folktales, such as *the stories of ghosts*

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<sup>61</sup> Ambivalent feeling and the double-sided standard are different. Ambivalence, such as kindness and aggression existing simultaneously in a heart, is a human nature that everyone holds in their hearts. However, if the same issue is judged with a double-sided standard only to one's own advantage, it may be a pathology that can be diagnosed as ethical schizophrenia. The duality here refers to a psychological state in which the double-sided standard is working valid; for example, my doing a certain thing is right but yours is wrong even if it is the same thing as what I did.

and goblins of Chosŏn (天倪錄, 천예록, Chŏnye-rok),<sup>62</sup> Traditional folktale of traveling into the afterworld (저승전, Jŏsungjŏn),<sup>63</sup> A tale of a girl, Sŏlhong (설흥전, Sŏlhongjŏn)<sup>64</sup> presented such perspectives in the plots of their narratives. Chosŏnese enjoyed talking about many small stories and fantasy tales concerning the skinders and unofficial history of their kings, queens, and generals. In addition to these four narratives, the more popular were folktales concerning the afterlife, described in many different ways. Kim Jŏng-sook argues in "Comparison of the afterworld experiences between China and Korea (2013)"<sup>65</sup> that the afterworld was not completely separated from this world. If humans in this world pray with the most desperate and earnest wish to make a journey to the netherworld, Chosŏnese believed that it was possible to visit the afterworld if they came across a tremendous, weird opportunity with the help of Heaven. It was the religious perspective and cosmological view of Chosŏnese.

These narratives of folktales and shamanic folklore reveal identical or similar descriptions of the netherworld. Chosŏnese shamanistic beliefs are an amalgamation of indigenous folk beliefs and more standard features of institutional religions such as Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. Buddhism recognizes a connection between this world and the afterlife through reincarnation,

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<sup>62</sup> Im, Bang. (1717-1724). *Chŏnye-rok* (天倪錄, 천예록): *Chŏnye* means the end of the afterworld. A book that contains all the grotesques, fantasies, and ghost tales of Chosŏn.

<sup>63</sup> *Traditional folktale of traveling into the afterworld* (저승전, Jŏsungjŏn). (author and date of writing unknown); a folktale-style novel written in Hangeul after the late 18th century.

<sup>64</sup> Author and date of writing unknown. Heroic novels dealing with the heroic life of the main character, Sŏlhong, set in the Ming Dynasty.

<sup>65</sup> Kim Jŏng-sook, (2013). Comparison of the after-death world experiences between China and Korea, pp.349-51, National Culture Research No. 59, Korea University National Culture Research Institute, pp.345~374

Taoism has a transcendent immortal hermit, so-called Sinsŏn (k. 신선, 神仙; c. shénxiān) who can travel between both worlds, and Confucianism argues that the soul of the deceased ancestors stay with their descendants for some years in this world after they died but ultimately return to the nothing into the nature.

In short, this world is jumbled with the afterlife from the perspective of folktales and shamanic beliefs. In modern parlance, the afterworld looks like an extension and a parallel universe of this world that is located neither in the Underworld nor in Heaven in terms of a vertical dimension against this world but in a horizontal dimension, which overlays this world. Therefore, they firmly believed that the social positions, statuses, and bloodline relationships someone has in this life are extended in their afterlife. In short, a person who once was a yangban in this life will be a yangban in his afterlife, and a slave in this world will live as a slave in his afterlife. A great general in this world will become one of the gods and spirits that protects a high mountain, sea, or in some cases, its homeland as he did in this world. In the case of accumulating good karma, such bridles are gradually removed throughout repeating this life and afterlife.

As Claire Vautier argues, the lowly and ordinary commoners and nobis had no reason to encourage themselves to work hard to improve their lot and be a better person. The only wish in their hearts was to share this life's bond with a more generous and virtuous master or village chief. In that sense, being lazy was a great way to fill the day. They believed all these accidents and events had to do with the naughty deeds of spirits; for example, if their health got any worse, infectious diseases turned around, or their families had any concerns.<sup>66</sup> This concludes the

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<sup>66</sup> Vautier, C. & Frandin, H. (1902), *ibid.* p. 139

background into the Chosŏnese during the late Chosŏn dynasty.

### 3-4. Communal life-form based on collectivism

The Chosŏn dynasty was a hierarchical society where one's social status was determined by birth. Nonetheless, the governing principle was based on the communal communities under the local governance of clans or tribes within the village as the basic unit. The Chosŏn dynasty organized the territory into regional administrative systems in the form of individuals-household-tong-dong-ri-myŏn-hyŏn-goon, aligned from the small to more significant areas according to bureaucratic principles.<sup>67</sup> Most were agricultural villages based on rainfed rice farming. The village was usually a clan consisting of the same surname households as a consanguine community or a tribal village comprising several yangban families with different surnames. Based on the residents' social status, they could be broadly divided into yangban villages. The villagers were mainly composed of yangban families, yangin(양인)<sup>68</sup> villages were mostly composed of free-born commoners, and chŏnmin(천민)<sup>69</sup> villages were where wretched humbles lived. According to the *Encyclopedia of Korean Culture*, the communal nature of Chosŏn society is explained in the following way.

In traditional societies, the basic social and economic activity units were usually self-sufficient village communities based on rice farming with weak productive capacity.

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<sup>67</sup> The village was the smallest division of the Chosŏnese administrative division system. Village here refers to a small town or community in the range of tong (5 households), dong (5 tongs), ri (5dongs), and myŏn (5 ris).

<sup>68</sup> yangin(양인); ordinary commoner

<sup>69</sup> chŏnmin(천민); lowly class

Such an economic environment helped materialize the Confucian community norms into village units in various ways. The essence of the community-oriented social norms of traditional societies is found in village folk beliefs, traditional rituals, folk games, and Dure, a farmer's coop for mutual exchange work of farming. This served as a kind of social norm that strongly evoked a sense of community among the villagers and formed a strong bond. Villagers rested their hands for the day of the wedding, funeral, village rite and helped each other prepare for the ceremonies.<sup>70</sup>

No one can deny that Chosŏnese culture, such as the community village festivals and the tradition of mutual aid in paddy field farming, were decisive factors in consolidating the communal character of Chosŏn society.

However, to understand the ambivalent cultural attitudes and double standards of Chosŏnese, it would be more accurate to look at the material foundation and historical context of what gave rise to such a culture rather than focus on the culture itself. According to this study, two dominant factors of the Chosŏn Dynasty resulted in these cultural phenomena. One was the neo-Confucian worldview and ethics oriented to a communal lifestyle that shackled the mindset of Chosŏnese. The other was the mode of labor imposed on the Chosŏn people by the management system of taxation and collecting tributes, which effectively forced towns and villages to work together through the exchange of labor power in collective and communal formations such as *Zhoobi* (주비) and *Duré* (두레).<sup>71</sup>

With respect to the first factor, the founders of the Chosŏn dynasty wanted to create a country managed by the virtues of Confucian scholars rather than a state governed by coercive

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<sup>70</sup> *The Encyclopedia of Korean Culture*, part of "Hyangdo," The Academy of Korean Studies.

<sup>71</sup> Lee Young-hoon, (1980). A Study on Jakbu (作夫) System of the late Yi Dynasty, *The Journal of Korean History*, (29), 1980.6, 75-137, The Association For Korean Historical Studies;

laws. Chosŏn Confucianists believed that if they understood the fundamental principles of Confucianism well, they would come to understand the truth of Heaven's mandate so that they could accomplish virtuous governance with greater benevolence and righteous judgment for the poor people than would be possible with coercive laws. In response to the central government's demand, each village enacted the self-governing codes of the community, such as the Act of mutual control by organizing five households into one unit (오가족통법, Oga-chakt'ong-bŏp), Hyang-yak (향약, village codes), and Dong-codes (동계, village cooperative) and then educated the villagers to follow them.

In addition, the local administrative authority granted quasi-judicial powers to privately punish locals who violated it. The penal power of subjects working at the center of a small village gave tremendous authority to the most influential yangban families in the village. The force exerted a gravitational pull like a black hole and no one dared to break it. Even if there was no law enforcement, the village's order and peace were maintained, and the villagers were domesticated to form a tight-knit collective order. When it was arbitrarily exercised, private power was far more relentless and terrifying than public power, which had to go through a trial process. Needless to say, the black hole was the village's most influential yangban family, and the villagers were woven like a web of fibers so tightly that no one could challenge its authority. Here we can see how the Chosŏnese retained such intense introversion towards the village community in terms of the ideological influence of the dynasty.

Regarding the mode of labor peculiar to the Chosŏnese village, the Chosŏn Dynasty divided the village residents into villagers' cooperative self-control units called Zhoobi that

enclosed eight gyŏl<sup>72</sup> of land area and mandated that they cooperate in farming and share responsibility for tax payment. If the sum of land owned by several households reached eight gyŏl, it was counted as one taxation unit called Zhoobi. The total amount of taxation and tribute levied to Zhoobi was determined through several tax allocation processes from the central government to the head of the village via the local authority of the administrative office. At the first stage, the central government estimated the total financial budget for the yearly expenditure and then divided it into districts and counties based on the previous year's financial performance. Then, the counties reallocated it to the head of the dong (동) or myŏn (면), and the local chief divided it into appropriate portions per village and notified the head of each town and the Zhoobi.

The representative of Zhoobi was called “the chief of Households (戶首, 호수, Hosoo).” The taxation of chargeable objects levied on Zhoobi included not only rice, which was the main product of agriculture at that time, but also various tributes and subordinate services or compulsory labor. For efficient tax collection, the central government of the Chosŏn dynasty forced the members of Zhoobi to cooperate and exchange work with each other in farming under Hosoo’s instruction and supervision and made them share responsibility for the shortage of levies. The communal principle of joint labor and cooperation regulated by “The Act of Oga-chakt'ong-bŏp”<sup>73</sup> was also applied to

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<sup>72</sup> gyŏl; the area unit of land. The area of land that can produce about 2.4 tons of rice was called one gyŏl. So, that was not an absolute unit of land. Accordingly, the poorer the soil, the wider the area of the gyŏl. The financial department of the Chosŏn dynasty classified the national land into 6 grades. On average, a gyŏl is equivalent to 1 ha.

<sup>73</sup> Oga chakt'ongbŏp (五家作統法, 오가작통법; The Act of Making Five households into a Tong (統); the “tong” was a primary division unit of the state administrative system. The Chosŏn Dynasty established the national administrative area system in the form of a bureaucratic organization, including “tong” as the basic unit, and enforced members of the Tong to abide by the Confucian ethical practice of 21 clauses. The

the operation of Zhoobi.

Naturally, the household members of a Zhoobi were penalized harshly if they failed to meet the annual quota of taxation levied on them. To avoid such dire results, the best policy in the case was for the villagers to become a member of the Zhoobi, in which the powerful Hosoo led from the village's most influential family. Because the first step to levy taxes and tributes to each Zhoobi was that the revenue officer swing by to estimate the expected rice and grains crops of the year by field investigation for himself, the powerful Hosoo had a chance to influence the revenue officer, who was usually of subordinate rank, to adjust the amount of taxation on the process of allocating the levies to each Zhoobi. The revenue officer could not ignore such requests since the assessment was usually conducted by a lower ranking officer of the local treasury office in the way of swinging by from site to site to assess the quality of the soil according to the criteria of the six-grade land quality and calculate the expected yield of the year. If the revenue officer determined the rating of the land as the sixth grade despite the land belonging to the first grade, the tax burden would be reduced by more than half per an equivalent area of land. To do so, powerful hosoo were needed.

The more severe issue concerned delivering taxes and tributes such as rice, linen, and cotton to the port or dock where the regular tax carriers to Hansŏng were waiting for them. It was inefficient for each taxpayer to deliver their tax and tribute directly to the tax collection authority, so it had been a long-standing custom for the Hosoo to collect them all at once on behalf of

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contents of them were to help each other in farming and to provide mutual relief from tribulation. However, in reality, it was to regulate the generation of refugees and encourage the payment of various taxes in an implicative method. This type of governance, which controlled all villages in a communal way, continued until the late Chosŏn Dynasty in different forms. *Encyclopedia of Korean National Culture*; [http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/Index?contents\\_id=E0038068](http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/Index?contents_id=E0038068)

individual household members and deliver them to the dock of a tax transport vessel. However, as time passed, the amount secretly pocketed out of the collected taxes and tributes by the Hosoo was often larger than the amount actually paid to the government tax office.<sup>74</sup> Powerful Hosoo usually took a relatively small burden of levies. Instead, a weak and powerless Hosoo had to take a significant portion of them. Moreover, if the powerful Hosoo pocketed more out of the total collected, the shortfall for taxation was bound to grow, and the only ones who should make up for it were the members of the weak and powerless Zhoobi.

When it came to the Zhoobi, the wretched lowly populace of Chosŏn was caught in the double fetters of both the dynastic oppression and the Hosoo's double-edged roles. The dynastic oppression based on the social status system operated in the form of a legal institution called Zhoobi. At the same time, the Hosoo was their protector on the one hand, while on the other, blood-sucking leeches stuck to the bodies of weaker farmers. The oppressive social status system and the communal principle of villages overlapped, defining the lives of Chosŏnese in the way of double imposition. Rejecting it and sneaking out of the village, there was no place to settle except in the middle of a deserted mountain.<sup>75</sup> It was impossible to even dream of escaping the double shackles imposed on their life, since the entire Chosŏn society was a village community tightly woven by yangbans who had the right to arbitrarily exercise private punishment, and each village had one

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<sup>74</sup> Lee Young-Hoon, *Korean Economic History* 1, p.401; Lee Mun-Gun (1494-1567)'s Muk-Jae diary & Yoo Heechun (1513-1577)'s Mi-am diary, the life-long diaries left by the above two bureaucrats describe how they managed and operated Zhoobi.

<sup>75</sup> One of the purposes of enacting “The Act of Making Five households into a Tong (Oga chakt’ongpŏp; 五家作統法, 오가작통법)” was to contain and prevent the occurrence of fugitive and fly-by-night households.

such powerful descent yangban family.

It shows the truth of Chosŏnese life that since there was no other way to survive without embodying such a life form into their own physical body, they had to melt it into their spiritual lives, too. These absurd conditions of life became worse as the late Chosŏn Dynasty progressed.

### **3-5. Perspective derived from double-edged ethics**

As mentioned earlier, most villages of Chosŏn were agricultural communities based on rainfed rice farming. Given that most of the rainfall was concentrated around from the end of June to the end of July and the dry season continued in the rest of the period, the issue of who secured the most agricultural water as well as who could use it prior to other village was one of the major causes of water disputes. The extreme introversion towards one's group was often a factor of conflicts against external others. For example, when there was a dispute between villages, rather than solving the problem by weighing each other's faults, village heads tried to subdue the other by showing off adeptly and explicitly that their village's authority was more powerful than that of the other villages. In case they had similar social status and influence, it was the most difficult to resolve troubles so that in the case, unnecessary debates were ignited over which village gave birth to more famous ancestors and literati as well as more powerful clans and tribal groups whose lineage scattered more widely spread across the country. Thus, the village with a greater political voice than their opposition, including paternal lineages and kinsmen, would eventually win the conflict. Rather than scientifically and rationally trying to determine what went wrong and who was to blame, it was often a matter of which camp had the loudest voice and political power when

a conflict occurred. Likewise, individual villages exerted a strong gravity of introversion, but in the village-to-village relationship, they were in a very isolated and confrontational state with each other.<sup>76</sup>

As shown above, the villages of Chosŏn were introversive, isolated, and basically closed communities to the outside world. In such a context, the double oppression structure given by the sense of positional incongruity and the possibility of exclusion devastated the lower wretches, particularly nobis, who suffered from traumatic disorders. Chosŏn society was governed by communal principles and operated by intertwining double oppressive structures in the form of a repetitive imposition from the micro-level village to the macro-level yangban and royal family. The psychological nature of Chosŏnese, who survived while enduring such a social and cultural environment, had been transformed into a double structure. It was a society that could survive only by judging the world by a double-edged ethics.

#### **4. Narratives on the colonial Chosŏnese, 1910-1945**

##### **4-1. Chosŏnese, surfing the wave of modernization**

How had Chosŏnese been represented under Japanese colonial rule from 1910 to 1945? What did the Chosŏnese look like in the modern novel written at that time? During this period, many

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<sup>76</sup> Koo Wan-hoe, (2007). The Dissension between Districts in the Late Chosŏn Dynasty and Local Magistrates' Role in the Dispute- Focusing on the Water Rights Dissension between Yesan and Deoksan District.; Kim Choon-taik, (2006). A Fundamental Study on the Socio-Economic Characteristic and Solidarity of the Consanguine Village in Rural Community - in Andong Gail, Journal of Koreanology (27)

Chosŏnese literary works were published. Among them, Yi Kwang-su (1892-1950)'s *Moojŏng* (무정: The Heartless, 1917) was the first modern novel written in the Korean alphabet, gaining sensational popularity then.<sup>77</sup> *Moojŏng* is a love story between three main characters; Yi Hyoung-sik, a young male teacher in Kyoungsŏng (today's Seoul), who has a strong aspiration to enlighten the ignorant Chosŏn people and pours his energies into teaching his students, a young woman, Park Young-chaeh, who is the daughter of Yi's teacher whom he respected as his mentor. Since she was a young girl, she cultivated a deep love for Hyoung-sik but after many twists and turns in her family life, became a *kisaeng* (Chosŏn geisha) in Pyongyang. His private English student, Kim Sun-hyoung, a fresh-faced eighteen-year-old who is the daughter of Elder Kim, is a Christian. The important point is not the love story itself but the glimpse of scenes concerning the Chosŏn society, which is revealed rather incidentally as the background of their love and conflict. If we have a historical experience and the requisite methods to interpret it properly, the landscape contains more truths than dry and deconstructed historical statements or statistical numbers.

In *Moojeong*, there is a scene where Sŏn-hyoung's father, Elder Kim, invites Hyoung-sik and asks how about getting engaged to his daughter before anything else, and then going to study in the United States together. At this moment, Hyoung-sik thinks to himself:

Elder Kim respects America. So, he tries to imitate the West in every aspect of his life and has truly imitated the West for more than past twenty years. He regards himself as one of the most civilized in Chosŏn.<sup>78</sup> .... (omitted).... Hyoung-sik also expects that hopefully, people will look up to Hyoung-sik himself and offer honors to him on the day he will return

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<sup>77</sup> Yi Kwang-su (K: 이광수; 1892 – 1950) was a Chosŏnese writer in the era of Japanese colonial rule who became South Korean when the Republic of Korea was established in 1948. Yi is most known for his novel, *The Heartless* (무정: the Moo-jŏng), which is described as the first modern novel written in Korean.

<sup>78</sup> Yi Kwang-su. (1918), *Moo-jŏng* (E: the Heartless) Section 79/ pp.138-139

with a doctoral degree from one of the most famous universities in the United States.<sup>79</sup>

Like a landscape that disappears far away in an instant out of the window of a speeding train, this scene gives a glimpse of the fact that the upper class and those who caught the first gleam of the times earlier than others already noticed in advance what kind of society was approaching and guided their children to successfully ride on the path toward modernization even under the rule of imperial Japan.

As shown in this scene, the parents recommended to their children to quickly absorb new culture and knowledge from the West and transform themselves into new intellectuals, who understood the Western civilization surging like a tide and equipped with the ability to work for them. They urged their children to study hard to get a master's degree rather than a bachelor's, a doctorate rather than a master's which they believed, could empower them to occupy better positions in the coming society. Likewise, they firmly believed that those who studied abroad in Japan rather than Chosŏn, and in the United States rather than Japan could acquire a higher position of social status in their future.

Judging from the empirical wisdom of Chosŏnese, who lived under the absolute authority of Confucian ideology for six hundred years, studying Confucianism diligently and passing the Chosŏn state exam was the only way to make a success in life as well as to achieve a rise of status even under the Japanese colonial rule. In that sense, the Key to success was believed to get more education to obtain the higher degree at the better school. Such a modern transfiguration of premodern collective memory was a universal phenomenon that witnessed countless cases in the

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<sup>79</sup> Yi Kwang-su. (1918), *ibid.* Section 95/ p.165

beginning stage of the transition period.

At the same time, another scene portrays the vast majority of the yangban class as losers who lost themselves and were pushed away from the mainstream of rapid social changes by the irresistible tide of modernization.

The two walked out through Chilsŏng Gate.<sup>80</sup> An old man in an almost well-worn tang-gun<sup>81</sup> was sitting on a roadside bench, wearing ragged and dirty cotton robes on such a sweltering summer day, as if there was no more thing to do in this world. He watched the couple passing by, swaying his body back and forth with aimless eyes. Hyoung-sik knew he was a high-ranking officer who enjoyed playing in Sŏnhwadang, the provincial governor's office, a decade ago when Chosŏn was still the old Chosŏn Dynasty. Hyoung-sik looked back at the old man and said to himself that once before, he had thought himself a stone man, but the old man looked like a ghost of the past who had become a fossil, lost his way, locked down in the ghost of the past.<sup>82</sup>

Big waves of modernization had tided in over the urban area since 1910. Roads connecting towns and villages were newly constructed, and buses and trucks traveled day and night from place to place on the new roads. Sewers were installed in town. Electricity was supplied to every urban household, and rice mills and breweries were opened alongside the streets. It was about the time that cultural facilities such as bureaus of newspapers and cafes were usually built.<sup>83</sup> Most of the yangban class living in urban areas, where the wave of modern civilization had surged wildly, had no choice but to be put out alongside the street. A few yangbans noticed approaching social changes quickly and survived by riding the wave of the times, but the majority of the yangbans were unable to adapt to the wave of modernization and were slowly falling into the lower classes.

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<sup>80</sup> Chilsŏng-mun; the north gate of the rampart surrounding Pyŏngyang, the capital city of North Korea.

<sup>81</sup> tang-gun; inner skull cap for yangban

<sup>82</sup> Yi, Kwang-su. (1918), *ibid.* p.63

<sup>83</sup> Lee Young-hoon. (2016), *ibid.* pp.218-219 and

Many savvy lower-class people started to build the upper part of colonial Chosŏn by surfing on the wave of commerce and industry. In this way, the upper classes of Chosŏn under colonial rule also began to differentiate into diverse paths of their own fate.

On the other hand, the farther away the village was from the Office of the Chosŏn Government General in Kyoungsŏng, the slower the touch of social change encroached upon villagers' conventional peace. According to Lee Young-hoon, going beyond the site of Myeon and entering the rural villages called Dong or Ri,<sup>84</sup> the lowest administrative unit of the colonial Chosŏn, it was difficult to see the hint of modernization there.

The old space and order co-existed there together with those of novel civilization. Rural villagers still showed respect and obedience to the Yangban. Paternal relatives formed and expanded their factions, compiled genealogies to keep the lineages and hierarchies, and tried to imitate the culture of the Yangban even in case they were not. In these remote villages, the principle of the traditional small-farming society had been strengthened to improve the family's social status through the practice of yangban culture until the end of the 1920s. In Eunyang-myeon, Gyeongsangnam-do, the number of kinship families over a specific size increased from 17 in 1912 to 34 in 1942, of which the population increased from 21% to 36% of all residents in these villages. In 1930, out of 60,000 villages nationwide, villages whose residents were using the same family name reached 48%. The transition to the modern era was not a single linear line in which the modern waves dismantled the tradition but a double and meandering line that also strengthened the tradition.<sup>85</sup>

It was not until the late 1920s that the hints of substantive change were detected in the daily life of remote rural residents in terms of social systems and cultures. None of the villagers knew the consequences of the social changes in the beginning, but it turned out to be the dissolution of the

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<sup>84</sup> Myeon, Dong & Ri; Units of the administration system of the colonial Chosŏn, which divided the land into 8 provinces and then into lower units in order such as cities, towns, myŏn, dong and ri. Therefore, Ri is the lowest administrative unit of colonial Chosŏn. Accordingly, Dongri meant the farthest away rural villages from cities.

<sup>85</sup> Lee Young-hoon. (2016), *The Economic History of Korea II*, p.219,

traditional order based on the status system. They gradually realized that the social change's outcome was the collapse of the old premodern community in which they had lived from generation to generation for almost five hundred years. Households in the remote villages packed up everything they could and left for the city to get a job. Young men loaded their tired bodies onto the train for the city, leaving their families behind and trying to reach out anywhere they could get a chance to earn money. By 1945, more than 2 million Chosŏnese left their rural homelands to seek jobs such as factory workers, engineers, people in business, bureaucrats, white-collar workers, soldiers, and specialists. 20-30% of Chosŏnese households had moved from traditional small-farming villages to a modern sector.<sup>86</sup> This meant that 70-80% of households in rural areas stayed in their hometown with the traditional collective memory that refused even a single change.

#### **4-2. Collective memory differentiated by colonial rule**

Under colonial rule, Chosŏnese society was made up of two main groups. One was a small number of yangban and landlords who succeeded in maintaining their wealth despite the collapse of the dynasty. With the power of such wealth, they sent their children to universities in Kyŏngsŏng or Tokyo, finally making them become members of a new intellectual group in the colonial Chosŏn society. According to Kwon Sook-in, Japanese settlers in Chosŏn did not ignore or despise them but wanted to socialize with them secretly.<sup>87</sup>

Mr. Seol's residence in Suwon was an old and spacious house. The house's exterior

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<sup>86</sup> Lee Young-hoon. (2016), *ibid.* p.260

<sup>87</sup> Kwŏn Sook-in. (2008), *Japanese Settlers in Colonial Korea; Encounters with Koreans and Formation of Colonial Consciousness*, *Society and History of Korean Social History Association* vol. 80(2008), pp. 109-139 (31 pages)

was traditional Chosŏn-style, but the reception room where I was guided was a great room with a thick carpet and expensive leather sofa like a prestigious hotel. Both father and his daughter were waiting for us in the traditional Chosŏn-style attire there. It was amazing to see how well they harmonized with the room.<sup>88</sup>

Here is another narrative in a similar vein.

On the train returning from a school trip to Manchuria and North Korea, I handed over a notebook to Chang to request a commemorative note. He smiled and nicely wrote ‘Ora et labora.’ It’s Latin! His maturity was distinctive from those of us who were only struggling without discretion. In addition to studying at school, I realized that he was accumulating the liberal arts. My eyes opened at that moment. The excellent family of Chosŏnese holds something dignified that the alien Japanese could not approach.<sup>89</sup>

Japanese settlers did not ignore the wealthy and well-educated yangban and newly emerging intellectuals. Such scenes were recorded in numerous memoirs, novels, and other media. A small but rapidly emerging group riding on the wave of modernization had absorbed Christianity along with Western values. Meanwhile, a large number of the group became stagnant in terms of self-transformation and practice. Here, we see that the collective memory of Chosŏnese began to bifurcate in terms of collective consciousness and world views.

As illustrated above, the majority of Chosŏnese were usually belittled as dirty, lazy, unlearned, thieves, and seen as useful only for manual labor in the colonial Chosŏn. In the modern novel, *Moojeong*, Lee Kwang-soo portrayed them in the following way.

Everyone in the train car fell asleep deeply. A worker-like boy lying across from him bent his back as if he were feeling cold. Hyoung-sik quickly closed the car window and covered the boy with a blanket he had been sitting on. The boy, who probably was heading for a gold mine somewhere, wore a dirt-stained cotton coat, muffled up his head

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<sup>88</sup> Kajiyama Hideyuki (梶山秀之). (2003), p.17 (as cited in Kwon Sook-in. 2008, *ibid.* p.120)

<sup>89</sup> Kyokikai (京喜會). (1982), p.361 (as cited in Kwon Sook-in. 2008, *ibid.* p.120)

in a dirty towel. His hair clumped here and there as dirty as no one could tell when he last brushed, and dirty dead skin was stuck thick under his neck and ears.<sup>90</sup>

Unlike the small minority of yangban who survived the fluctuation of the time and the small number of learned youths with a high level of education, the lowest and lower-middle-class Chosŏnese were condemned and treated as beings closer to beasts by Japanese settlers. Another modern novel, *On the eve of the uprising* (만세전: Manse-jŏn), written by Yom Sang-sŏp in 1924, accurately depicts the conditions of their lives.<sup>91</sup>

If you get your topknot hair cut short, those Japanese might treat you as less contemptible. How long do you think you will be able to put up with their scorn and the very disgusting name like yobo? <sup>92</sup>

Japanese settlers called Yobo not only when referring to the lower class of Chosŏnese but also the entire Chosŏn people. ‘Yobo’ came from the Chosŏnese word ‘yŏbo,’ which means ‘Hello’ or ‘Darling’ in English. The Chosŏnese used the word ‘yŏbo’ extensively when they wanted to get somebody’s attention to say something. In English, it means “Excuse me” or “Darling;” it is still one of the most frequently used utterances even today among Koreans. The Japanese settlers likely heard it as ‘yobo’ and used it as a language full of contempt and disgust when referring to Chosŏnese. In Yom Sang-sŏp’s novel, the word ‘yobo’ is mentioned ten times. From this fact, it is clear that the word ‘yobo’ was a common noun for Chosŏnese at that time. Kwŏn Sook-in says in

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<sup>90</sup> Yi Kwang-su (1917), *ibid.* Section 65/p.67

<sup>91</sup> Yom Sang- sŏp (K: 염상섭 1897–1963). A South Korean novelist published his first novel, *The Tree Frog in the Specimen Lab* in 1921. Based on naturalist realism, he pictured the facet of colonial Chosŏn and the people. *On the Eve of the Uprising* (K: 만세전, Mansejŏn) was published in Aug. 1924; *Encyclopedia of Korean Culture* (<http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/Item/E0017636>).

<sup>92</sup> Yom Sang- sŏp (K: 염상섭). (1924). *On the Eve of the Uprising* (K: 만세전, Mansejŏn) p.39

her article “Japanese Settlers in Colonial Chosŏn” that ‘yobo’ is the word in the viewpoint of Japanese that contains tremendous contempt” (佐藤俊男: Sato Toshio 1984; 52) like “yobo, the stinky jerk” (森崎和江: Morisaki Kazuyoshi 1984; 92). In other words, the colonial Chosŏnese were ‘yobo,’ because they were considered inferior and deserved to be treated recklessly (高崎宗司: Takasaki Soji, 2002: 128-129).<sup>93</sup>

In short, Chosŏnese were cursed for being filthy, foul-smelling, unsanitary, and lazy. Likewise, Matsuoka Yoko (松岡洋子, 1975, p.17) depicted in her book that she became unable to be clean no matter how hard she under the occupation of the U.S. forces following the defeat of Japan during World War II. In this situation, she testifies that we Japanese had become no different from Chosŏnese, who were believed to be filthy and immoral.<sup>94</sup> It goes without saying that people would be dirty, unsanitary, and foul-smelly when their life is mired in misfortune.

### **4-3. The spread of modern value oriented Chosŏnese**

In this period, there occurred a drastic change in the public estimation of the Chosŏnese, which was different from the days of the Chosŏn Dynasty. It was the laziness they had always cursed in their past life. On the surface, it did not look like a big deal, but it was quite a significant change, given the labor consciousness and desire to build wealth on the backs of the Chosŏnese. Whether in Korea, Japan, or Manchuria, the Chosŏnese, after the mid-1920s, they desperately searched for jobs and worked hard to earn money, like starving ghosts searching for food.

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<sup>93</sup> 佐藤俊男: Sato Toshio 1984; 52, & 森崎和江: Morisaki Kazuyoshi 1984; 92, & (高崎宗司: Takasaki Soji, 2002: 128-129; as cited in Kwon Sook-in. 2008, *ibid.* p.119

<sup>94</sup> 松岡洋子. (1975), p.17, as cited in Kwon Sook-in. 2008, *ibid.* p.130

The main reason for such a significant change was that Neo-Confucianism, the ruling ideology of the Chosŏn Dynasty, was replaced with the rule of law by the Japanese colonial government in 1910. Although their sovereignty was lost, the lowly and the nobis, who made up the vast majority of the Chosŏnese population, acquired legal rights, in the modern sense. Japanese judicial authorities strictly enforced the modern legal system, especially in civil and criminal law in cases involving both Koreans and Japanese. Accordingly, theft and robbery, which once prevailed in the previous Chosŏn society, disappeared entirely because greedy nobles, corrupt bureaucrats, and ferocious nobi owners could not devour even the smallest wealth of the lower classes. They were shocked to see that personal detention was possible only by the law and that private property was protected by the law as long as it was not illegal. They now realized that the property they had earned through hard work was legally protected. This, in effect, boosted their motivation to work harder.

Regarding Chosŏnese hard-working, Arima Manabu (有馬學, 2007)'s “Chosŏnese in Japanese cultural representations for the 1930s-1940s; video feed as a clue” accurately depicts the influence of Chosŏnese attitudes on their work ethic and desire to gather fortunes. Arima designated the group photo titled ‘On the banks of Tama River (玉川べり: Tamagawa Beri)’ as a photographic artwork representing the early 1930s using the technique of a photographic montage by Masao Horino.<sup>95</sup> The picture contains a Chosŏnese couple collecting gravel along the Tama River. The image was made so that anyone could recognize they were a Chosŏnese couple. Gravel

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<sup>95</sup> Masao Horino (堀野 正雄, 1907–1998): one of the most prominent Japanese photographers in the first half of the 20th century in Japan.

harvesting along the Tama River has been a source of gravel and sand for the construction of the Great Tokyo project since the early 1930s. The primary labor force for was the Chosŏnese. The process of harvesting gravel at this time was manual. There is a narrative below the photo describing that they went to the riverside before sunrise and worked tirelessly until the night darkened to the point that he could not even see their fingertips, just to earn a daily wage of 30 sens a day.<sup>96</sup> The piece depicts how the Chosŏnese, while poor, worked hard to save money little by little.

This was far from the image of laziness that other visitors to Chosŏn once held. It was a scene that Chosŏnese had never witnessed in the past. Eight years later, *Goryeoin* (고려인)<sup>97</sup> by Shimamura Toshimasa (島村利正)<sup>98</sup> depicted Chosŏnese as those who were far from lazy and indulgent. It was during the 1940s when the Japanese began to recognize Chosŏnese as those who worked hard from dawn to late at night in the arts, literature, and films they produced. Until then, they might have been filthy and smelly yet, but they were turning into a different Chosŏnese who were working doggedly day and night.

## **5. Narratives of Koreans, 1945-1999**

### **5-1. Workaholic Koreans transfigured from lazy Chosŏnese**

In 1999, the Korean financial crisis occurred. This period can be termed “the era of the

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<sup>96</sup> 1 Japanese Yen =100 Sen. The purchasing power of 1 JPY in the case of rice; In 1930, two kilograms of rice could be purchased for one yen.

<sup>97</sup> *Goryeoin* (고려인) is another name for Chosŏnese.

<sup>98</sup> Shimamura Toshimasa (島村利正, 1912-1981) is a noted Japanese author of fiction.

rapid growth of the Korean economy” since Korea's industrial and economic development accelerated to a period of high growth from 1963 and continued until 1997. According to the World Bank, the GDP growth rate, only 2.1% in 1962, increased to 9.2% in 1963. Over 34 years, the average annual growth rate of the Korean economy rose to 9.1%.<sup>99</sup>

How had the Koreans’ public estimation change during this period? When the Korean economy was accelerating (1963-1997), Koreans were seen as diligent, hard-working people. The most frequently used expressions in foreign media to describe Koreans in this period were terms such as diligence, sincerity, and honesty. Koreans at this time were so engrossed in the work that they were satirized as workaholics. *Arab News*, Saudi Arabia's largest English daily newspaper, focused on Korean workers who made a significant contribution at the forefront of the Middle East Construction in the 1970s-80s in its special reports titled, “South Korea is Coming to Town” on Nov. 17, 2014.

We have pleasant memories of the highly disciplined and hardworking South Korean workforce. People in Riyadh still remember the so-called temporary overpasses to ease Riyadh's congestion, built in a rush because of the dire need to regulate traffic. South Korea has emerged as one of the most advanced industrial countries globally with the most skilled workforce. Saudis still remember the South Koreans who came during the 1970s. – omitted – Because of their skills and work ethic, it is essential to bring the skilled South Korean workforce and expose the young Saudis to the work habits of the South Koreans.<sup>100</sup>

In the 1970s, the Korean construction boom reached its peak in the Middle East. Nevertheless, an article written in 2014 shows that Saudis still remember the South Koreans who came during the

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<sup>99</sup> The World Bank, 2021. World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files; <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=KR>

<sup>100</sup> view original text: <https://www.arabnews.com/columns/news/661146>

1970s. The prelude to Korea's Middle East construction boom was when Samhwan Corporation won the first contract to construct a highway in Saudi Arabia in 1973. Subsequently, many construction companies rushed to earn oil money from the Middle Eastern countries with full support from the Park Chung-hee government. Construction orders increased more than tenfold from \$750 million in 1975 to \$8.2 billion in 1980. During this period, 85.3% of foreign currency that flowed into Korea was oil revenue. The number of workers also surged from 6,000 in 1975 to 100,000 in 1978 and peaked at 200,000. On March 15, 1982, the *Kyunghyang Daily* published a "24 Hours Local Report of Middle East Workers' Bloody Sweat."

Mr. Han Dong-guk, whom I met in Kuwait, said, "I went to town only three times while working here for one year. I would rather take a rest and make up for my usual lack of sleep than go out on a day off that makes me spend money." The working environment was too harsh for humans. In July and August, the temperature rises to 40 to 60 degrees Celsius, so you have to cover your entire body with a piece of fabric. Drinking a lot of lime in tap water caused stomach upset and cholelithiasis. He told me, "From 6 a.m. to 5 p.m., I worked 10 hours a day except for lunchtime, 280 hours a month with only two days off." However, workers seemed to willingly enjoy overtime work to earn even a penny.<sup>101</sup>

Despite a general lack of industriousness among the Chosŏnese during the past Dynasty, Koreans appeared to be completely different in terms of their fierce commitment to earning even a penny more than others. The competitive rate for employment among Middle East workers soared sky-high. Since Korea was an underdeveloped country that ranked around the 100<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of GDP per capita with a dearth of job opportunities in the domestic market, the chance to find employment in the Middle East construction fields, where higher wages were guaranteed,

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<sup>101</sup> View original text:

[http://news.khan.co.kr/kh\\_news/khan\\_art\\_view.html?art\\_id=201504022109315#csidx859bd4d9342b01ca146cf7529d0ccd1](http://news.khan.co.kr/kh_news/khan_art_view.html?art_id=201504022109315#csidx859bd4d9342b01ca146cf7529d0ccd1)

excited people who were wandering around the domestic front of the job market in search of a job. This was a tremendously significant change for a newborn Korean who had lived as a Chosŏnese for almost six hundred years under the dynastic and autocratic political system based on neo-Confucian values. It was the first opportunity for descendants of Chosŏnese since the founding of the Chosŏn Dynasty to manage their own free commercial activities and to make money for themselves. Making money was criticized as a greedy and miserable mentality of a snobbish man by neo-Confucians since they taught the populace to follow the mantra for a man of virtue with the mindset of 安貧樂道 (anbin rakdo).<sup>102</sup> Moreover, the transformation was accelerated by the promise of the modern state that would protect their ownership of property by law. Furthermore, the timely boom of the global economy and the international division of industries, especially between the US and Japan, affected the Korean economy in the world economy. All three factors intertwined like a chain, leading the Korean economy to rapid economic growth.

## **5-2. Saemaül Movement as sources of Koreans' new collective memory**

Another critical event during this period was the Saemaül Movement. The Saemaül movement, which started in 1971, was one of the most significant motivations to change the mentality of the Koreans in terms of work ethic, the emergence of individualism, and self-reliance in their lives. As we saw earlier, the guiding principle of Chosŏn's social formation was communalism, collectivism, and the domination of the social status system based on neo-

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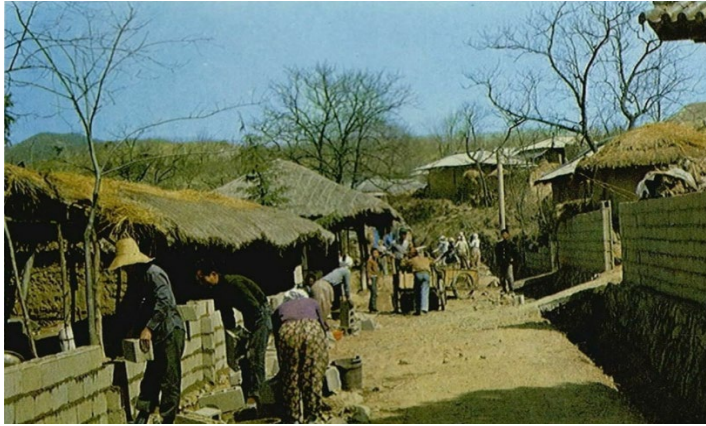
<sup>102</sup> 安貧樂道; sourced from the *Analects of Confucius*, part of Ong-ya (雍也篇), and the *Mencius*; 安 (an) means "to feel comfortable," 貧 (bin) means "poverty", 樂 (rak) means "to enjoy," 道 (do) means "Dao, truth." Saying that although you are in poverty, you should feel comfortable, and based on such a mind, you need to enjoy your life to find the truth (Dao).

Confucianism. Such a social structure not only made possible the unilateral exploitation by the yangban class and the dynastic family against the nobi and commoners but also provided a long-term stable foundation for fettering them. Therefore, it was a closed-off society rather than one open to others. As a result, it had become a society wielding double standards and fallacious logic stemming from factional egoism in a suitable combination depending on the time and place to survive competitions between clans and factions. No doubt, conflicts and frictions had often occurred to secure even small profits, which amplified profound distrust among members of society. In fact, all the materials were scarce at that time so that they were compelled to desperately pursue the survival-first principle.

Korea before 1970 was, to be sure, still a closed society rather than an open one. The daily lives of village residents were full of complaints and inertia and strewn with conflicts to secure even small profits. Compounding matters, many rural households moved to the city, drastically increasing the number of emptied villages. In light of these factors, the rural areas looked hopeless. Thus, the Saemaül (newly built village) Movement was designed to ameliorate these negative inheritances from the premodern dynasty by President Park Chung-hee. President Park surveyed villages nationwide and assigned grades based on their performance from outstanding as ‘self-reliant’ villages, average-performing as ‘self-help’ villages, and under-performing as ‘basic’ villages. The assessment criteria were based on the village's diligence, residential environment, road supply rate, cleanliness, and so on. The government's support for the Saemaül Movement focused on self-reliant villages and discriminated against under-performing villages through a “discriminative incentive policy.”

Consequently, residents of the self-help and the basic village began to stand up and join the project by improving the village environment or collecting funds for themselves, saying, "Let's

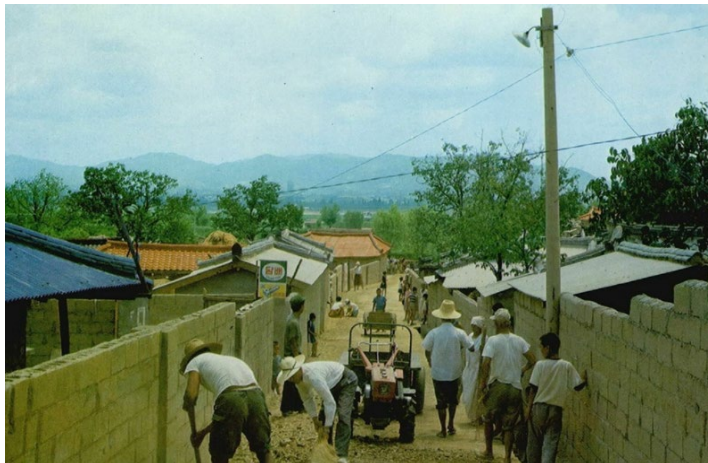
**[Fig. 2] Before the Saemaül activities of the Village Remodeling**



**[Fig. 3] After the Saemaül activities of the Village Remodeling**

A village before the Saemaül Movement in the early 1970s.

Ansim-ri, Kyöngsan; <http://archives.saemaul.or.kr/about/process>



make it happen, too!" According to Lee Young-hoon, in the last year of the Park Chung-hee administration in 1979, 97% of 34,800 villages nationwide became self-reliant villages from self-help or basic villages. The voluntary participation of under-performing villages was critical for such an incredible achievement to make most villages nationwide outstanding self-reliant villages in such a short period. To do so, village members worked hard and cooperated. Thanks to it, individuals became free from living by the inertia of struggling in debt. They turned old-fashioned villages into newly built locales where they could

generate profits and help new village businesses they initiated. The Saemaül Movement was a historical experiment of individual and social transformation. The government, villages, and

markets cooperated through mutual incentive chains based on fair competition.<sup>103</sup>

In summary, the Saemaül movement was not just an economic revitalization movement for villages. The top slogan of the Saemaül movement was "Let's live well off, too!" So economic growth was the first and natural goal. However, the Saemaül movement was also a movement to catch "two birds with one stone." This study argues that more essential than enlivening the village economy was the need to break down the premodern double-edged fetters that prevailed in traditional rural villages until the 1970s in Korea. It was a movement to encourage self-reliance, self-help, and self-diligence based on the villager's voluntary cooperation. It turned out to yield an unexpectedly good result. Lee Quan Yew, the former national leader of Singapore, who sparked the Asiatic value debate, had a similar political philosophy to Park Chung-hee. Lee Quan Yew argued that the people of the Asiatic community, which has been based on the Asiatic mode of production for thousands of years, would be able to successfully build a new modern civilization only after they had thoroughly removed the pre-modern consciousness of laziness and irresponsibility. He added that although Western culture and liberal democracy are still desirable and suitable for the people, it is unfamiliar to Singaporeans. They need at least 100 years of training to master such values. To that end, he argued, a little authoritarianism was an inevitable choice. Still, it should be strictly implemented by the laws and institutions, not the arbitrary will of the leader.<sup>104</sup> As a civilian-born national leader, he tried to achieve it with the law and the whip. Still, while Park Chung-hee was criticized as a military dictator, he reformed the nation's consciousness.

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<sup>103</sup> Lee Young-hoon. (2016), *ibid.* pp.478-482

<sup>104</sup> Lee Quan Yew, "Culture is Destiny," *Foreign Affairs*, March-April 1994

### **5-3. Koreans' encounter with the global community**

The following narratives focus on Korea's encounter with the global community from 1945 to 1997. As mentioned above, the newly formed Korean government restricted its citizens from traveling abroad. Those who needed to travel abroad had to apply for overseas departure from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and obtain its permission. Then, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Korea Central Intelligence Agency, and the relevant department of the National Police Agency examined the applicant for overseas travel to determine whether there were any suspicions related to North Korea and whether they were eligible for it. Such an overseas travel permit system was in effect until 1989. However, an "Anti-Ugly Koreans Movement" took place from time to time when numerous construction workers and managers were pouring into the Middle East and overseas due to the construction boom in the Middle East during the 1970s.

As we saw earlier, Chosŏnese had been confined to their hometown villages for hundreds of years, not being able to travel freely abroad. Since then, newborn Koreans had lived with restrictions on overseas travel. When such people poured overseas during the construction boom of the Middle East or export-oriented economic policies, they often failed to show the basic etiquette they should have as a member of a global society. In Korea, people of that kind were often called 'Ugly Korean,' being criticized as defects of Koreans that should be corrected right away. The government gathered those who applied to take overseas travel and required them to take 2 hours of security training and 2 hours of etiquette training in the government training center.

The Korea Anti-Communist Federation held these educational requirements for ordinary

oversea-travelers for men, such as public/commercial /culture/tourist visa holders, and Yeji-won (k: 예지원, Hall for etiquette and manner) for women.<sup>105</sup> The anti-ugly Korean initiative effectively improved Koreans' international etiquette. Many intellectuals who were good at a table-top theory criticized it as a practice of authoritarian government of underdeveloped countries since they believed they were already very good at practicing good manners. Yet, it was an important opportunity for ordinary citizens to serve not only as a guide for their first experience abroad but also to build preliminary knowledge of how to behave when they encounter global citizens.

## **6. Narratives of Koreans, 2000-Today**

### **6-1. Leap forward or return to premodernity?**

The main issue of this section is to clarify the details of the collective memory and subconscious of modern Koreans by examining to what extent the collective memory of premodern Chosŏn society has been inherited in contemporary Korean society. It also intends to investigate whether the remnants of the premodern era are on the path of decline or growth through a narrative analysis, which identifies the elements of Korean collective memory and shows how they appear as a whole. This section will reveal in detail how the double-edged ethics inherited from the premodern Chosŏn society are superimposed on those events in terms of a retrospective orientation

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<sup>105</sup> Ministry of Transportation 1988, Policy to Induce the People's Sound Travel by Liberalization of Overseas Travel, pp. 2-3, Po.46

toward the premodern communal life-form that many contemporary Koreans exhibit. Such an exploration will show the kind of relationship they have with the divisions and conflicts of Korean society today.

The following three narratives of the following events disclose the rough-sketched landscape around Korean society. First, the mad cow disease protest of 2008, which was called the ‘Anti-U.S. beef protest’ by American media.<sup>106</sup> Second, ‘the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye caused by Choi Soon-sil Scandal’ of 2016. Third, the historical controversy over the so-called past wrongdoing of Imperial Japan. The issues are being treated in two primary ways: one as a diplomatic conflict with Japan, the other as a dispute that splits Koreans into factions of domestic politics.

The first case is the mad cow disease protest in 2008 that shocked the Korean intellectual society and caused them to raise doubts about the regulatory standards of the Korean government. They had never been suspicious about it since the period of high growth economy in the 1970s. According to the news report of *Reuters*, May 31, 2008,<sup>107</sup> and the *New York Times*, June 30, 2008,<sup>108</sup> workers, students, and parents with toddlers in tow, totaling more than 18,000 people, took to the streets to protest against a government decision to resume imports of U.S. beef. The demonstrators insisted that U.S. beef was likely infected with mad cow disease because it was

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<sup>106</sup> “Mad Cow Disease Protest” is the name that Koreans refer widely to the case of Anti-American beef Protest. The binary name of it is BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy).

<sup>107</sup> Reuters. (May 31, 2008). Anti-U.S. beef protest draws 100,000 S. Koreans  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-korea-protest/anti-u-s-beef-protest-draws-100000-s-koreans-idUSSEO21734120080531>

<sup>108</sup> NYT. (Jun. 30, 2008). Beef Protest Turns Violent in South Korea  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/30/world/asia/30korea.html>

often malformed or raised with carnivorous feed. The government of Korea persuaded them that American beef had been recognized as one of the healthiest foods with quality assurance, which was the most enjoyed meat for all Americans and Koreans. The Food and Health Department officials also announced implementing more strict quarantine inspections of U.S. beef than ever. However, the protest grew more intense.

The government's official announcement and ironclad promises were thoroughly ignored, but groundless rumors from a few demagogues and politicians permeated the multitudes. The *Chosun Ilbo*, dated May 2, 2008,<sup>109</sup> one of Korea's leading daily newspapers, reported the collection of bizarre rumors swirling across Korean society related to the Anti-U.S. beef protest. According to it, a former Minister of Agriculture and Forestry dealt with beef issues during his tenure from Mar. 1998-Aug. 2000, argued that research reports from Yale and Pittsburgh University argued that 650,000 patients of the human mad-cow disease in the United States were already dead but concealed the fact that they died of dementia. While there was no truth to the matter, people naively accepted that those who ate American beef in the year 2008 would die of the mad cow disease ten years later after the incubation period ended. People were quite appalled and frightened by his shocking claim, and it spread widely around the Internet.

So many rumors circulated around Korean society that the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, which was the ministry responsible for importing beef at the time, posted the following banner on its website under the title "10 questions and ten answers about the ghost stories

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<sup>109</sup> Chosun Ilbo. (May 02, 2008). The government, sitting on its hands to the creepy fake news about mad cow disease; [https://www.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2008/05/02/2008050200011.html](https://www.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2008/05/02/2008050200011.html)

of mad cow disease." One of them was how those who used one of about 600 products, including cosmetics, sanitary pads, and diapers made of various parts and ingredients of contagious cows, could be infected with the mad cow disease with high probability. Even tap water was contaminated by knives and cutting boards that processed the beef of mad cow disease. Even a kiss could spread mad cow disease to each other.<sup>110</sup> Many ordinary people who attended the downtown rally said, "I came out here as a mother and at the same time as a member of the public to protect the health of my child and the people of this country."<sup>111</sup> But they never knew they were acting in the castle of lies and illusions.

The second case is the Choi Soon-sil Scandal. The event caused the impeachment of then-incumbent President Park Geun-hye in 2016. It continued from the start of October 2016 to March 11, 2017, when Park left the Blue House to return to her private home. It was unprecedented in terms of its level and scale. Later, the court discerned that most rumors were false or groundless. Even the tablet PC, which served as critical evidence for triggering the incident indicated that Choi Soon-sil, Park's huckleberry friend, was unfairly involved in revising the script of the president's speech or illegal influence on policymaking and execution.

However, all these rumors were later found to be manipulated by the media and her opponents.<sup>112</sup> Choi was suspected of being a shadowy adviser dominating Park's mind and spirit, which Park vehemently denied. But for many Koreans, vicious rumors spread like an airborne

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<sup>110</sup> The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry. 2008, [www.maf.go.kr](http://www.maf.go.kr)

<sup>111</sup> Reuters, (May 31, 2008). Anti-U.S. beef protest draws 100,000 S. Koreans  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-korea-protest/anti-u-s-beef-protest-draws-100000-s-koreans-dUSSEO217341200-80531>

<sup>112</sup> En Banc Adjudication, (Jun. 11, 12020). Supreme Court Case no. 2020do2883; Judgment on abuse of authority and obstruction of exercise of authority.

virus infects innocent victims in a fantasy drama. The worst part was that opposition lawmakers had accused Park at the time that she had held shamanistic rituals at the Blue House multiple times.<sup>113</sup> On November 3, 2016, the *Korea Times* reported that the rumors of the ferry accident were part of a cult ritual. The victims were "offerings," according to Moon Yong-sik's social media last week, a former member of the opposition Democratic Party of Korea. All the rumors turned out to be groundless upon further investigation, and none of them were included in the final prosecution. Nevertheless, they were a trigger to impeach a nation's president and sentence her to 22 years in prison.

The third event is the long-standing dispute between Japan and Korea over the so-called "past wrongdoings" under the Japanese colonial rule from 1910 to 1945. The issues of Chosŏnese comfort women, the forced labor during World War II, and the territorial dispute over the Dokdo (K: 독도, J: Takeshima) islets were severely snarled up by both parties that they were not easy to resolve. The Japanese government insisted that the comfort women who provided sexual services to Japanese soldiers at the front line in World War II were not sex slaves but sex laborers who followed the Japanese military of their own volition to make money. By contrast, the former comfort women asserted that they were forcibly taken by the Japanese police or military by violence and treated as sex slaves who had to provide sexual services to the Japanese soldiers all day long without adequate compensation. The Korean government supported the comfort women's claims. It demanded an open and heartfelt apology from the Japanese government and the emperor for violating human rights prohibited by international law. The other two disputes, issues of Dokdo

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<sup>113</sup> NYT, (Oct. 27, 2016). <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/28/world/asia/south-korea-choi-soon-sil.html>

and forced labor, were similar to the comfort women debate in terms of competing views on historical facts.<sup>114</sup>

Sixteen years since former president Roh's declaration of diplomatic war in 2005, which incited national sentiment and bad feelings toward Japan, the relations between the two countries reached their worst. Many reports, including the US Congressional Research Service IF10165 and IF10199, claimed that ROK-Japan relations were perennially fraught because of sensitive historical issues from Japan's colonization of the Korean Peninsula from 1910 to 1945.<sup>115</sup> Since 2018, both governments' actions and countermeasures involving trade, security, and history-related controversies caused South Korea-Japan relations to plummet, eroding U.S.-ROK-Japan policy coordination while harming national and regional security.

## **6-2. Summary**

Since all of the events discussed above were large-scale protests or political events that caused national resistance or reaction, it is natural that numerous social and political factors, as well as material and psychological factors, are intertwined in the development of the events. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify the core of the discussion by focusing on the essential characteristics of these events. Firstly, the protest against the import of mad cow disease-

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<sup>114</sup> JoongAng Ilbo. (Mar. 24, 2005). A message to the people related to Korea-Japan relations by President Noh Moo-hyun; [https://www-joongang-co-kr.translate.google.com/translate/a/8261?\\_x\\_tr\\_sl=ko&\\_x\\_tr\\_tl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_hl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_pto=sc](https://www-joongang-co-kr.translate.google.com/translate/a/8261?_x_tr_sl=ko&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=sc)

<sup>115</sup> the US Congressional Research Service IF10165. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/details?prodcode=IF10165>; the US CRS IF10199. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/details?prodcode=IF10199>

contaminated beef can be interpreted as a clash between scientific and unscientific perspectives.<sup>116</sup> Koreans applauded and enthusiastically supported unscientific conspiracy theories instead of scientific data and rational judgment. For example, large-scale street protesters refused to listen to scientific and objective data and explanations from government officials and experts. Even the media took the side of unscientific rumors and were passive in delivering accurate information to the public. This is because the media took a stance to deliver only the information that the public wants to hear rather than defending the truth.

In the case President Park Geun-hye's impeachment, the key feature was Koreans' shamanist tradition and superstitious tendency. The Supreme Court acquitted Park on charges of bribery and various power abuses. She was convicted of special activity expenses she received from the National Intelligence Service as bribes that the Director of the National Intelligence Service gave to Park Geun-hye. To be fair, it was reported that a larger amount of NIS special activity expenses had been afforded to all former Presidents of Korea. In short, the factor that angered the public was not the bribes but the rumors that shamanic rituals had been performed under the supervision of Choi Soon-sil<sup>117</sup> at the Blue House and that the young high school students on the Sewol ferry were sacrificed to revive Park Geun-hye and Choi Soon-sil's fathers. Here, it can also be seen that both superstitious and unscientific elements acted as major triggers of anger simultaneously. Despite such outrage, it should be noted that about half of the Korean

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<sup>116</sup> Yeonhap News, (2010. 09.27). A country, dancing with ghost stories;  
<https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20100830170600026>

<sup>117</sup> Is the 'shaman' a national nongdan? 'Choi Soon-sil's ghost story' that devoured Korea, November 02, 2016 [https://ilyo-co-r.translate.google/?ac=print&entry\\_id=211711&\\_x\\_tr\\_sl=ko&\\_x\\_tr\\_tl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_hl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_pto=sc](https://ilyo-co-r.translate.google/?ac=print&entry_id=211711&_x_tr_sl=ko&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=sc)

population enjoys fortune-telling. This double standard is a value that was forged in the communal life of Chosŏn.

As for the dispute over the Japanese past wrongdoing in modern history between Korea and Japan, domination and subordination are the most common occurrences in world history, so why are Koreans so outraged about it? It is not just a level of smoldering anger, but a full-fledged scale of anger, reflecting the very collective memory that persisted in the Chosŏnese worldview for several hundred years. Contemporary Koreans are outraged by the fact that not any other country, but Japan dared to rule them. As we have seen before, Chosŏnese believed that if China was yang, Chosŏn was yin, and if Chosŏn was yang, then Japan was yin. According to the teachings of Confucianism, yin cannot overcome yang and is inferior to yang, but Japan went against the principle of interaction between yin and yang, the source of all things in the universe. Thus, it was a very disgusting act that went against Heaven's Mandate and was a wrong doing that deserved to arouse anger.

In sum, the collective memory that runs through the narratives mentioned above is more about unconditionally sharing and supporting the values and views of the group who believe they belong, even if it is non-scientific, rather than trusting in the modern values of science and democracy. [Table 1] summarizes the traditional premodern and modern rational values discovered thus far, which confront each other, through a review of the various existing theories and literature. The attributes of pre-modern communal collectivism are deeply revealed. In the case of Park Geun-hye's impeachment, it was specialized from a shamanistic perspective, as well as the anti-Japanese sentiment. Schematizing this relationship, pre-modern tradition, irrationality,

tribalistic collectivism, and communal attributes intersect at a point with modern rationality, secularity, individualism, and the perspectives of self-realization.

Secondly, the pre-modern collective memory that relies on Korean shamanic traditions and superstitions still remains in the fabric of Korean society. In short, it was not the bribe that angered the public, but rumors that a shamanic ceremony was held at the Blue House under the direction

*[Tab. 1] Elements of the Value system for the premodernity and modernity>*

	<b>The premodern traditional value</b>	<b>The modern rational value</b>
1	Slave mentality & Habitual lies	Freedom & the virtue of honesty
2	Communal collectivism	Personal individualism
3	Public self-consciousness	Self-realization
4	Group-oriented mindset	Private-oriented mindset
5	Preferential paternalism	legalism
6	Hierarchical social status	Democratic social order
7	Result-oriented attitudes	Process-oriented attitude
8	Familistic sectarianism	Integrated citizenship
9	Nepotism	Rule of law
10	Agnatic lineage tribalism	Patriotic nationalism

of Choi Soon-sil, and that several hundreds of high school students on the Sewol Ferry were human sacrifices to resurrect Park's and Choi's fathers. Even in this case, it can be seen that both superstitious and unscientific factors were major causes of anger. Koreans still live with the spirituality that the afterlife and this world overlap. In other words, while they are usually convinced that this world is governed by scientific principles, they believe that in certain unusual circumstances the power of shamanic mysticism intersects with fate. This double standard is a value formed in the community life of Chosŏn.

With respect to the anti-Japanese dispute, Koreans are so outraged that Japan betrayed the Confucian principle of Iye. Despite Japan being dismissed as barbarians who lacked virtue and

noble qualities, Koreans feel how dare it colonize its 'older brother.' It is typically the attribute of tribal emotion not nationalism that one finds in this deeply rooted sentiment.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Chosŏn Nobi and their Servile Collective Memory**

#### **1. Research Background**

In the previous chapter, this study diachronically looked at what collective memories were engraved in Koreans' hearts, and what cultural memories have been handed down to the present by examining the historical process of becoming present Koreans. In the chapter three, as discussed above, the slave system, one of the three pillars of the composition of Chosŏn society, which is the source of today's traditional collective memory of Koreans, will be reviewed in the synchronic gaze at the Chosŏn Dynasty.

The most peculiar feature of Chosŏn society would be the existence of nobi. Nobis accounted for the largest proportion of the total population of Chosŏn society and were the working class responsible for material production. Although most scholars and historians agree thus far, there is a lot of debate concerning whether nobi's social status is slaves, serfs, or tenants. If the social status of a nobi was a slave, it means that Chosŏn was a slave society. If, by contrast, it was serf, it means that the social character of Chosŏn was a kind of medieval feudal system. And if it was tenant peasant, it means that Chosŏn was a society on the path of sprouting capitalist modernization. Since the collective memory formed at each stage of history is markedly different based on the essential characteristics of each stage, it is most crucial to understand the nature of

Chosŏn's social construction to dig into the premodernity of Chosŏn. In this regard, it is difficult to grasp the premodernity of Chosŏn as a whole without digging into the collective memories of the nobis.

Thus, this study aims to identify the social formation of the Chosŏn Dynasty whether it is feudal, slavery, or the early stage of modernization by way of examining the social status of nobi, whether it was a slave, serf, or peasant. Further, this study is to cross-verify their collective and cultural memories comparatively with memories of generally accepted genuine slaves to find if the attributes in their lifestyle conformed with them. For this purpose, this study examines the historical process of the emergence, becoming, and decline of Chosŏn slavery as well as explores the existential mode of Chosŏnese to find the collective memory they had in their servile life.

In conclusion, this study reveals that Chosŏn was in fact a large-scale slave society for 350~400 years and inherited the legacy of such a cultural memory of the large-scale slave society. Its significance is that it laid the groundwork for discerning what sorts of premodern values and perspectives are colliding with modern scientific rationality in current Korean society through comparison with the output list concerning collective memory transmitted from Chosŏn slaves. It is expected to contribute to analyzing the mechanism of social conflicts occurring from heterogeneous collective memories among members of society.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Ahn Byŏng-Jik, (2007). On Memory and History in the Korean context, vol., no.193, pp. 275-306, the Korean Historical Association; UCI: G704-000356. 2007..193.008; Halbwachs, M. (1980). The Collective Memory, Harper & Row (translated by Dieder, F.J., Jr and Ditter, V. Y.); Hirst, W. & Manier, D. (2008). Towards a psychology of collective memory, Memory 16: 183-200

## 2. Research Questions

The first goal of this chapter is to define the identity and social status of nobi. If the nobi were slaves who comprised a majority of the society, they must show the conditions of slavery, senses of slavery, and a corresponding mentality that is consistent with existing research. If so, Chosŏn should be defined as a slavery society. In that sense, this chapter begins with a literature review to explore the essential features of slaves and slavery. It reviews a broad range of literature from Plato and Aristotle to postmodern philosophies to capture the essential attribute of slavery or the existential condition of slaves. Broadly speaking, slaves are regarded as “enemies” by the community who threaten its maintenance and perpetuation. According to the generally accepted theory in academia, slaves were those sentenced to death for crimes that threatened the safety and well-being of the community, such as prisoners of war, traitors, and murderers, but were enslaved instead of being executed. Enslavement was conducted by depriving them of the rights granted to law-abiding members of the community. For this reason, they were the outsiders residing inside the community. Therefore, even if someone killed them, they were never charged with murder.<sup>119</sup>

Nevertheless, some scholars raise questions that hinder defining the status of ‘nobi’ of Chosŏn, in particular whether it is the lowest class or enslaved people. While the Chosŏn Dynasty never waged a large-scale war sufficient to supply prisoners of war, how could Chosŏn procure enough population to supply nobis of that size, which accounted for 30 percent of the total population? It took fifty to seventy years to be a large-scale slavery society, which was a pretty short period from the beginning stage of its foundation. Where did the nobi originally from? First,

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<sup>119</sup> Agamben, G. (1998). *Homo Sacer; Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Stanford University Press

the rapid increase in the number of nobis from the founding of the Chosŏn Dynasty in 1392 must be clarified. Without a large-scale war to acquire the prisoners of war at that time, the critical question is who in the population had been enslaved in such a short period. Further-more, it must be revealed how the Chosŏn Dynasty was able to supply enough nobis to create a large-scale nobi society for nearly 600 years.<sup>120</sup>

This chapter also examines the form of life and the existential conditions of the nobi. As Orlando Patterson argues, to ensure that nobis were slaves, they should share the existential condition of death, such as slave status symbols, slave trade, and vulgar names with no family names, which functioned as the basis for reproducing those who were inherently alienated.<sup>121</sup> By examining these questions, this chapter determines the kind of burden they bore and why they could not throw them off for the 600 years of the Chosŏn Dynasty. Lastly, this chapter identifies Chosŏn nobi's consciousness and mentality from the representation of their daily life and social environment. By doing so, it becomes possible to gain insight into the Chosŏnese psyche during the Chosŏn Dynasty.

### **3. Who is the slave?**

#### **3-1. Slaves in the Ancient to Medieval Times**

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<sup>120</sup> Patterson, O. (1982), *Slavery and Social death; A Comparative Study*, Harvard Univ. Press

<sup>121</sup> Patterson, O. (1982), *ibid.*

Plato defines slaves in his philosophical works. Although he never explicitly spoke about it as anything in a downright way, his scattered words about slaves in his dialogues are sufficient to deduce his thoughts on slavery. Plato states that freemen approach a phenomenon through rational interaction, reasoning, and analysis according to *logos*.<sup>122</sup> He believed that the Greeks were the closest to the freemen. On the other hand, the slave draws the whole world into the subjective world of his individual experience and judges everything only by the phenomena he faces, based on *doxa* (belief), the barbarian way of thinking. In this way, the spirit of the slave may recognize a phenomenon dogmatically and intuitively from its own experience but cannot explain and express its origin and essence to the extent that it has general persuasion. Thus, Plato defines the spirit that can just discern but cannot demonstrate using logic as a "spirit of slavery."<sup>123</sup> Plato argues that this inferior spirit is and should be subjugated to a freeman who possesses the superior spirit of reason that can reach true knowledge and to follow him as a ruler is the only way for them to achieve the good, saying, "some men are by nature fit to embrace the philosophy and lead the state, while others are unfit to embrace it and must follow the ruler."<sup>124</sup>

By contrast, Aristotle elaborates on the nature of slaves. Aristotle argues that "the use of the body" is a trait that slaves are born with that they can only do or perform better than anyone else. Aristotle argues that slaves are not for the use of the soul or mind but for the use of bodies. In other words, slaves are created for the sole purpose of manual labor. This means that despite being born with language skills, mother nature created them closer to an animal than to a free man

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<sup>122</sup> Plato. Law. 720

<sup>123</sup> Plato. Law; [Plat. Law. 966b]

<sup>124</sup> Plato. Republic; [474c; cf. Laws 690b]

and closer to a human being than to an animal. Thus, Aristotle might have felt difficult to find other words than “the use of the body” to express the purpose of the slave’s existence. Aristotle naturally comes to the conclusion that slavery is a good institution for both slaves and the public because it is midway between nature and culture.<sup>125</sup>

In this sense, Aristotle defines a slave as a part of his master's property in the sense that he is entirely attributed to and possessed by his master, even when it comes to whether he lives or dies. By this fact, the owner has the right to dispose of it at as he pleases. Insofar as it belongs to the owner, its location and condition do not matter.

According to Herodotus, the Spartans conquered both Laconia and Messenia. Instead of destroying them, they made the majority of the population into outside-resident slaves, supporting the Spartan economy by letting them reside on their own land. Once, there had been a debate about the helots, whether they were in fact slaves or serfs, since they lived without any masters and enjoyed some degree of autonomy in their hometown villages, despite being bound to the land and not having the freedom to move. Given that serfs originally referred to the labor force in the production relationship with feudal lords, they were merely slaves who were the outside-resident slaves living separated from their masters.<sup>126</sup>

Needless to say, slaves did everything according for which their talents were suited, from mining in deep underground tunnels to working on the finances and accountants of either the state or the plutocrat’s domicile. Some slaves belonged to the poor slave master in the rural and lived

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<sup>125</sup> Aristotle. *Politics*; Aristotle. *Pol.* 1.1254a

<sup>126</sup> Herodotus, *Histories* 9.10.

in starvation, but the emperor's slaves enjoyed luxury more than vassals and citizens. Of course, these luxuries were all in vain with just a word from the master.<sup>127</sup> In short, Aristotle argues that slaves are a part of their master's property and an extension of his body as tools and instruments for him to do with as he pleases.

This Greek and Roman conception of slavery was transferred to medieval Christian thinkers and writers without any distinct semantic changes. For the early Christian writers, such as Thomas Aquinas and Francisco Suarez, the ubiquity of slavery showed its utility beyond doubt, and an institution as useful as slavery could not be held to be contrary to the divine duty of self-preservation. They undoubtedly believed that slavery was not against God's will as He had established the same relationship with His creatures. They also firmly believed that true emancipation, equated with redemption, was only possible in a better world after death.<sup>128</sup> The utility basis for the justification of slavery was refined and carried into the modern natural law tradition by Grotius. He shared the view of his predecessors that institutions such as private property and slavery were good by virtue of their utility and thus permitted if not prescribed by natural law. Slavery, Grotius said, is contrary to nature, but "it is not in conflict with natural justice that slavery should have its origin in a human act, that is, should arise from a convention or a

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<sup>127</sup> "Slavery in Rome," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome* (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 323.

<sup>128</sup> Davis, B. (1966), *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, p. 43, Ithaca, NY. Cornell Univ. Press.

"Saint Thomas Aquinas could affirm that slavery was contrary to the first and highest intent of nature, and yet insist that it conformed to the second intent of nature, which was adjusted to man's limited capacities.... slavery was a necessary part of the governing pattern of the universe, speak of the slave as the physical instrument of his owner, and find scholastic justifications for the Roman rule that the child of a free man and bondwoman should be a slave."

crime.”<sup>129</sup> Legal slavery had its basis in self-sale and war. Grotius argued that “To every man, it is permitted to enslave himself to anyone he pleases for private ownership, as evident both from the Hebraic and the Roman law.”<sup>130</sup>

The slaves in the West can be defined as outsiders who had been forcefully removed from their homeland and remained kinless as lambs and cattle, by which their masters acquired absolute rights for slaves.<sup>131</sup> Insofar as slaves were human, they also kept familial relations. Nevertheless, such a relationship or kinship was not for the slaves but for the masters since the master could grant or withdraw it in various ways of castrating or trading them. This means that slave families could be broken up at any time by the master’s trade so that there were no other ways for slaves to avoid being deracinated and kinless. The slave family lived a life with no blood relatives to turn to when they were in desperate need. Thus, the slave was always a solitary, deracinated outsider — an outsider in the first sense that originated from being cast outside society as a slave, and an outsider in the second sense that he was denied the most basic social relation, kinship.<sup>132</sup> ‘Quem patrem, qui servos est? ‘What father, when he is a slave?’<sup>133</sup>

### **3-2. Slaves in Modern Times**

In modern times, Adam Smith provided a mild critique in his works against the justification of slavery on a utility basis. He focused his criticism on how this vile practice became so prevalent

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<sup>129</sup> Grotius, H. (1925), *The Law of War and Peace*, (II. VII. I. 1), tr. F. W. Kelsey, Oxford: Clarendon Press; 1

<sup>130</sup> Grotius, H. (1925), *ibid.* (I. III. VIII. 1)

<sup>131</sup> Finley, M. (1980), *Ancient slavery and modern ideology*, Cambridge, England; The Viking Press, NY.

<sup>132</sup> Patterson, O. (1982), *Slavery and Social death; A Comparative Study*, p.143, Harvard Univ. Press

<sup>133</sup> Plautus, *Captivi* 574 in Act 3, Scene 4 (Plautus), between lines 40-45

in the history of humanity and how it hurt the economy of the medieval ages. He also argued that the basis of the economics of slavery was not utility but tyranny. According to John Salter, Smith believed that slavery was detrimental to the interests of masters since production by slaves was always less than that by a free tenant who pays a fixed rent. The slave has no incentive to improve the land or expend the effort necessary to produce an amount over and above maintenance for himself since his master keeps any surplus. In the *Wealth of Nations*, Smith takes up this idea of the inefficiency of slavery in discussing the slow progress of agriculture in Europe since the Roman empire. Here, the emphasis is on the fact that slaves could not own property:

A person who can acquire no property can have no other interest but to eat as much and labor as little as possible. Whatever work he does beyond what is sufficient to purchase his own maintenance can be squeezed out of him by violence only, and not by any interest of his own.<sup>134</sup>

Smith's argument undermined the belief in the natural law that slavery was a rational institution since they entered voluntarily into it for economic reasons. In addition, he argued that in such a situation, the stronger the patriarchal authority of the household, the more they are likely to turn into a slave relationship. In this context, Smith argues that the absence of a just system is the origin of slavery.<sup>135</sup> Smith further argues that once slavery has been established those who own slaves will not abandon it on the basis of either efficiency or justice. In the *Lectures*, Smith elaborates

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<sup>134</sup> Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of Wealth of Nations* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1852), Book II; chapter ii, p. 9

<sup>135</sup> Salter, J. (1996). Adam Smith on Origin of Slavery, *History of Economic Ideas*, Vol. 4, No.1/2, pp. 225-251, Accademia Editoriale

that the real interests of masters to hold slavery are due to “the love of domination and authority and the pleasure men take in having everything done by their express orders.”<sup>136</sup>

However, what he saw in the colonies’ economic situation was somewhat different from his own argument. Sugar and tobacco colonies, beginning in the 1600s on both sides of the Atlantic, were run by slave labor, while free wageworkers ran corn production in the North American colonies. The reason for this difference, Smith explains, was the gap in the levels of profit between the different businesses: "The planting of sugar and tobacco can afford the expense of slave-cultivation. The raising of corn, it seems, in the present times, cannot."<sup>137</sup> Plantation owners of sugar and tobacco were able to continue to use slave labor because their products, sugar and tobacco, earned high profits in the market at that time. Even if slave labor was inefficient and costly to maintain the plantation more than wage workers as free men, plantation owners tried to avoid the troublesome matters of recruiting and condescending to the free workers. Instead, they preferred wielding despotic power over the slaves to indulge in patriarchal authority at the cost of low productivity and high maintenance.

Smith concluded that as long as human history exists, slavery cannot be eradicated. Witnessing the existence of slavery in the colonies, he drew the conclusion that the key to the survival of slavery lay in the structure or scale of profit-making. In other words, only a competitive economic system could expel slavery when the marginal profit became so low that it could not endure the maintenance cost of slavery. John Locke defines that a slave is under perfect slavery

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<sup>136</sup> R. L. Meek, D. at al. ed., (1978), Lectures on Jurisprudence. LJ(A), iii, p.116

<sup>137</sup> Smith, A. (1776), *ibid.* III. ii. p.10

conditions in case the slave master can kill his own enslaved man by wielding arbitrary power over him without taking any responsibility for the murder when he pleases.<sup>138</sup>

In the 18th century, Benjamin Franklin was one of the leading proponents of such abolitionist theories. Nevertheless, Benjamin thought that slavery in America would be in effect for a while because the land of America is vast and the working population sparse. Such a large piece of land could not be developed and managed otherwise. Thus, he speculated that slave labor would be needed in America for a while.<sup>139</sup> Looking back, it can be said that his claim has been empirically proven to be true. In that sense, emancipation was possible not in a better world after death but in this world of free trade and competitive markets. Perhaps this is why large-scale slavery in ancient Rome, the U.S. South, and Chosŏn eventually ended.

### **3-3. Slave theory of Finley and Patterson**

In the more recent years of the 1980s, Finley added the institutional characteristics of maintenance, expansion, and decline of slavery since some of the latter were the consequences of the slave society.<sup>140</sup> He argued that once brought in, slaves went through the institutional procedure to domesticate them into slave-fitting beings, regardless of whether they were initially barbarians, enemy generals, or the nobility of defeated nations. It was an apparatus for domestication for depriving them of their memory of human dignity and degrading them to the level of livestock.

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<sup>138</sup> John Locke. *Two Treatises of Government*, vol. II (1823)

<sup>139</sup> Benjamin Franklin, (1755), *Observations concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, &c.* pp.4-5, S. Kneeland Boston; on the magazine of *History with notes and queries*, #63 pp. 218-9.

<sup>140</sup> Finley, M. (1980), *ibid.* p.160

Finley asserts that corporal punishment, sexual exploitation, and torture were tools for bodily domestication.

This legal extension of corporal punishment and torture to the lower classes among the citizen population was not just another exception; it was a qualitative transformation in social values and behavior. (omitted). No such explanation is needed for the third, qualitatively different and ubiquitous, manifestation of the answerability of slaves with their bodies, their unrestricted availability in sexual relations.<sup>141</sup>

At first glance, “the answerability of slaves with their bodies” is akin to Aristotle’s “the use of the body.” He explains that these apparatuses distinguish them from freemen. Apart from the corporal degradation to the level of livestock, Finley added a mentally dehumanizing device such as the habit of addressing, or referring to, male slaves of any age as ‘boy,’ *païs* in Greek, the etymology of which is ‘to beat,’ *puer* in Latin, naming slaves *Marcipor* or *Lucipor*.<sup>142</sup> Such forms of address served to remind them that they were nothing and brainwashed them to regard their owners as perfect beings with a sense of superior excellence. In the same context, Patterson also argues concerning symbolic instruments as follows.

The master's authority was derived from his control over symbolic instruments, which effectively persuaded both slave and others that the master was the only mediator between the living community he belonged to and the living death that his slave experienced. ... (omitted)... Masters all over the world used special rituals of enslavement upon first acquiring slaves: the symbolism of naming, of clothing, of hairstyle, of language, and body (p.8). And they used, especially in the more advanced slave systems, the sacred symbols of religion.<sup>143</sup>

This institutional process was a device for domesticating them into slavery by giving them symbolic instruments indicating that they were not human but like livestock and engraving it into

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<sup>141</sup> Finley, M. (1980), *ibid.*, pp.163-4

<sup>142</sup> Finley, M. (1980), *ibid.*, p.164

<sup>143</sup> Patterson O. (1982). *ibid.* pp.8-9, p.37, p.52

their bones. In this sense, Patterson offers a preliminary definition of slavery on the level of personal relations: slavery is the permanent, violent domination of natively alienated and generally dishonored persons.<sup>144</sup> Through such domestication, the complete enslavement of body and soul resulted in a loss of the slave's complete control over his body and personality, including his memory. Once a person became a slave, the effect was extended to his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren until the master broke the bondage chain through manumission. However, manumission made only children born beneficiaries afterward, but not those who had already been born before it.

#### **3-4. The society with slaves and the genuine slave society**

Finley argues that even similar-looking slavery societies can be divided into a “society with slaves” and a “genuine slave society.” He concludes that “although slaves have been exploited in most societies as far back as historical records exist, there have been only five genuine slave societies, two of them in antiquity: classical Greece and classical Italy” and three later ones: Brazil, the Caribbean, and the American South in the New World.

In 1860 the slaves made up 33 % of the population in the southern states of the United States, a slightly lower percentage in Cuba and Brazil. On conservative estimates — 60,000 slaves in Athens at the end of the fifth century BC, 2,000,000 in Italy at the end of the Republic — the comparable percentages are in precisely the same range, about 30 and 35 %, respectively.<sup>145</sup>

Finley developed the theory of global slavery by creating a positive criterion and using it to classify slave societies into five civilizations of the genuine slave societies in world history. No one can

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<sup>144</sup> Patterson O. (1982). *ibid.* p.13

<sup>145</sup> Finley, M. (1980), *ibid.*, p148

deny his contribution to the advancement of slavery study. He suggested that a society can be identified as a genuine slave society if its slave population accounted for more than 30% of the total population of the society. By comparison to genuine slave societies, the figure apparently did not exceed more or less than ten percent in most slaveholding societies.<sup>146</sup>

Orlando Patterson, a leading scholar in slave theory, focuses on understanding slavery in terms of power relations between slave and master as well as symbolic tools for dominion and control for them in his work, “The Slavery and the Social Death,” while Finley tries to define slaves as property based on an essentialist understanding and by distinguishing societies with slaves from genuine slave societies by relying on the scale and the role of slaves in the economy of society. Patterson added the Chosŏn Dynasty to Finley’s five civilizations of genuine slave societies in world history. Patterson called the six civilizations "large-scale slave societies" instead of “genuine slave societies” or “large-scale slave labors” that Finley used in his writings, but it does not show much difference. Patterson argues as follows:

In fact, it is in the oriental state of Korea that we find one of the most extraordinary cases of economic dependence on slaves among all peoples and all periods. Large-scale slavery flourished there for over a thousand years up to the nineteenth century. For several centuries the servile population was proportionately higher than the one in the U.S. South at its peak of dependence on slavery in the nineteenth century.<sup>147</sup>

Patterson’s argument on the slavery of the Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties seems outdated because recent research revealed that the exact period of the large-scale slave society was not over a thousand years but over 300 - 350 years, from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>146</sup> Finley, M. (1980), *ibid.*, p. 9

<sup>147</sup> Patterson, O. (1982), *ibid.*, p.viii

Later, Patterson found that slavery was not only ubiquitous but also thrived most in those areas and periods of the world where all the great early centers of human civilization were established and increased significantly in their historical development.<sup>148</sup> After extensive investigation, Patterson added some other societies to Finley's five genuine slave societies. Newly added European societies by Patterson are Visigothic Spain, late Old English society, Merovingian France, and Viking Europe during its peak periods, even though slavery was not always dominant but nevertheless critical. He also characterizes late medieval Spain and Russia from the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth, Florence during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, late medieval and early Renaissance Venice and Genoa as being highly dependent on slave labor. He assumes that the same for Africa and certain areas of the Orient.<sup>149</sup>

It is clear that genuine slave societies were scattered worldwide regardless of the historical time.<sup>150</sup> In that sense, world history looks meandering and often pointless, not linear in development. Also, the development of history does not proceed in the way of the evolutionary stage theory of Marxist historical materialism. Looking back, it progressed forward, but sometimes regressed. In other cases, it kept walking sideways aimlessly, changing its direction hither and thither. Like world history, so was the history of slavery. For Finley, his concern was to avoid the "teleological fallacy," which often pervades the methodology in the history of ideas.<sup>151</sup> Patterson also argues that large-scale slave societies existed in ancient times, the Middle Ages, and even in the nineteenth century in oriental Korea and the US South. Sometimes it grew in size and

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<sup>148</sup> Patterson, O. (1982), *ibid.*, p.vii

<sup>149</sup> Patterson, O. (1982), *ibid.*, p.vii

<sup>150</sup> Patterson, O. (1982), *ibid.*, Appendix C, p.353

<sup>151</sup> Finley, M. *ibid.*, p 85

sometimes it shrank. In that sense, Finley and Patterson must be on the same page in terms of their historical views of slavery.

### **3-5. Slavery in Confucian culture**

The “Chinese cultural sphere” refers to the regions that Confucianism influenced in terms of the political system and socio-cultural behavior, such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, and Korea. Therefore, the term “Chinese cultural region” can be redefined as the “Confucian culture sphere.” In these cultures based on Confucian values, it seems that slavery also emerged and developed with similarities in some parts but distinct differences. In China, the term ‘nobi’ initially appeared in the remains of documents written on thin strips of bamboo that were unearthed from tombs built in the Han dynasty (202 B.C.-220). However, as shown in numerous research studies, slavery had already become common during the Spring and Autumn as well as the Warring States Period (770 BC - 221 BC) when Qin Shi Huang unified all of China in 220 BC. Countless prisoners of war were captured during the Warring States Period. It was impossible to provide for the slaves detained in the district offices. So, they had to sell them to the private sector. Hence, the slave trade was already very active, and the market price of slaves was formed at the time.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Compiled by Hunan Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, 2006 Liye Excavation Report, Yuelu Publishing House, p.184; Group of Bamboo Slips from the Qin Tomb in Sleeping Tiger Land (Yunmeng Qin Slips), 1978, Bamboo Slips from the Sleeping Tiger Di Qin Tomb, Cultural Relics Publishing House, p.259; 湖南省文物考古研究所 編著, 2006 里耶發掘報告, 岳麓書社, p.184; 睡虎地秦墓竹簡整理小組 (雲夢秦簡), 1978, 睡虎地秦墓竹簡, 文物出版社, p.259

The paths of enslavement were diverse in ancient China. The Chinese Etymology Manual (Kr. 說文解字, 설문해자) explains that the Chinese term ‘nobi’ refers to criminals, so the original etymology of it appeared in the criminal law to punish war prisoners, felons, and thieves.<sup>153</sup> Judging from the records on the bamboo documents, there was already a slavery law 187 B.C. in the Han dynasty stipulating that a criminal's wife and family were confiscated and made slaves by engraving slavery markings on their faces. Self-sales or selling children as slaves or collateral against debt were also legalized during the Han dynasty.<sup>154</sup> However, this system of slavery underwent many changes due to the emergence of various types of segmented lowly humbles during the Song dynasty (960 ~ 1279) when aristocrats expanded their land to large-scale farming due to the vigorous development of commercial markets. Even though slave labor supplied by government offices decreased, market demand increased. The shortage of labor had to be addressed by the landowners themselves. As a result, various lowly humble classes were created that were treated entirely differently from the existing nobis. In other words, the relevant ordinances gradually changed so that the owner could not kill slaves, beat them at will, or dispose of them as property. However, it meant that the labor force, which was insufficient by nobis alone, was supplied in various forms and methods between the supply and the demand side. The lower class had simply expanded rather than the slave system decline. Slavery was officially abolished in China in 1909, the first year of Shen Tong (宣統), the last emperor of the Qing Dynasty.

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<sup>153</sup> Lim Byeong-dŏg, (1990). The Slave and Prisoner of ancient China, p.77, Chungbuk History Vol.30

<sup>154</sup> The story of Mogae in the history of the Wei Dynasty of the Three Kingdoms; 汉律, 罪人妻子没为奴婢, 黥面

For a deeper understanding of the Chinese view of slavery, it would be good to explore the Confucianist worldview briefly, especially through the *Yijing* (kr. 易經, 역경), or *Classic of Changes*.<sup>155</sup> This work represents the cosmology of Confucianism. It is the soil in which this world is born with its own Heavenly Mandate (kr. 天命, 천명). depending on the fateful operation of *yin* and *yang*. It was believed that Heaven dominates the operation of the universe, the rise and fall of a dynasty, as well as human fortune and misfortune, depending on the operation of *qi*. People personified *qi*, which is in accordance with *yin* and *yang*, as the ‘Almighty Heaven’ and ‘Lord of Heaven’ (kr. 上帝, 상제: sang-je). Therefore, Confucianism believes that all kings, monarchs, especially Chinese emperors, were believed born with a special Heavenly Mandate to rule. It was also believed that the rise and fall of kingdoms, dynasties, families, and individuals were bound by their own fates according to Heaven's mandate.

In the Confucian political system, commoners and non-noble people, who were called *min* (kr. 民, 민) or Baeksŏng (kr. 百姓, 백성),<sup>156</sup> were born to be ruled, lacking the capability of governing themselves. They were essentially excluded from political participation. So, it was the heavenly mission for the Confucianist bureaucrats to rule and feed such wretched people. This obligation was called a commoner-fundamentalism (kr. 民本主義, 민본주의; minbon-juŭi) from

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<sup>155</sup> *Yijing* is called by another name, ‘*Zhouyi* (kr. 周易, 주역), meaning, ‘Changes of the Zhou.’

<sup>156</sup> Baeksŏng (百姓, 백성); A term referring to the general common people as a ruled class in a pre-modern society. -Sŏng means family name and Baek means a hundred. Basically, it points out those who have their own family name, while the nobi had no right to have a family name.

ancient times.<sup>157</sup> Therefore, the objective of the emperor's ruling was to comfort the lives of his subjects, Baeksŏng, with the cooperation of his Confucianist vassals and lieges.<sup>158</sup>

To this extent, Confucius considered the non-noble commoners as inferior humans unable to lead them to true knowledge. In the section of the Great White (kr. 泰伯, 태백; Taebaek) of the *Analects*, Confucius said, “You can make the non-noble commoners follow you, but you cannot make them know (子曰, 民可使由之, 不可使知之).”<sup>159</sup> Among the inferior beings, those who were commanded to occupy the lowest role by the Heavenly Mandate were the wretched people and nobis. They did not belong to the Min and Baeksŏng, who were deemed to inhabit the grace of the emperor. They were called jemin (kr. 濟民, 제민).<sup>160</sup> The term refers to those who were entitled to remain in the emperor's care and grace. In short, Confucianism believes that just as the universe is divided into *yin* and *yang* by the heavenly mandate, humans are also divided into the *yang* (良, superior, high) and *chŏn* (賤, inferior, lower). They were excluded from the Emperor's grace and His protection, and so had to endure their humble lives as commodities like livestock. Therefore,

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<sup>157</sup> The term “minbon (民本, 민본)” came from the word “minyu bangbon (民惟邦本)” in the records of Ha (夏書) of the Sŏkyŏng (B.C. 300, 書經, The Classic of Historical Documents) which means ‘min (민:subjects)’ is ‘bon (본, foundation)’ of the state.’. Encyclopedia of Korean National Culture (Minbon Thought)

<sup>158</sup> The term ‘people’ is not used as much as possible in relation to the king's rule or the monarchy. It is because the term ‘person’ or ‘people’ is the one that has its origins in the modern term, ‘individual.’

<sup>159</sup> The section of the Great White of the *Analects* (kr. 論語 泰伯篇, 태백; Taebaek); Taebaek (ch. Taibo) was the eldest brother of King Wen of the Zhou Dynasty who yielded the throne three times to his third brother, who was wiser than him.

<sup>160</sup> Jemin (kr. 濟民, 제민); Je (濟, 제) means those to whom the monarch allocates land and care for their living but in turn, they have to pay taxes and commit military duties. In short, it is a word that implicates the people into a relationship with the monarch.

they believed that it was more beneficiary for them to be the property of the nobles and other commoners.

### **3-6. Summary**

In a full-fledged slavery society, slaves were completely metamorphosed into chattel like livestock, treated as property and objects of trade. By means of this metamorphosis, they were excluded from the human species and relegated to the animal species. Slaves had to go through a process in which their original identity had to be stripped off and overlaid with layers of disgust and hatred to erase their dignity as humans. By beating, torturing, or trading them, slave owners and traders could do those hideous hostilities without any hesitation, remorse, and, in some cases, with pride. At the end of such processing, the slave completed their materiality as an object of trade, arbitrary violence, and even death. They were disgusted, hated, and shunned so that no one wanted to approach them.<sup>161</sup> This is the historical process in which slaves acquire materiality and property value. Even though they resided within the community, they were considered outsiders who were completely alienated from it like cows or swine. The regressive process towards dehumanization continued to the point where they came to believe that they were inferior to worms and livestock.

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<sup>161</sup> Patterson, O. (1982), *ibid*.pp.46-49; Slave should share the existential mode of social death, such as slave status symbols, slave trade, and vulgar names with no family names, which functioned as the machine of reproducing those who were inherently alienated.; pp.8-9, p.37, p.52, Masters all over the world used special rituals of enslavement upon first acquiring slaves: the symbolism of naming, of clothing, of hairstyle, of language, and of the body (p.8). And they used, especially in the more advanced slave systems, the sacred symbols of religion.

A typical slavery society can be defined as such only when the slave labor works as the primary force backing up the material production for the whole society in the production relation of the basic social composition. Typical evidence of a slave society is a well-developed slave market and slave trade. Since the symbols indicating the status of slaves were well developed, anyone could notice those who possessed them. From a social and institutional point of view, the existence of a slave market, an active slave trade, and a well-developed slave status symbol system are necessary and sufficient conditions to identify it as a genuine slave society.

Slaves were widely distributed in ancient Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, China, India, and other civilizations worldwide. In Rome during the days of Jesus Christ, about 25 to 40 percent of the population were slaves, and in England around 1086 AD, about 10 percent of the total population were slaves. In New York around 1703, 42% of all households owned slaves<sup>162</sup>, and in the mid-19th century, about 30% of the total population in the U.S. South were slaves on average. Today, about 46 million people worldwide are believed to be slaves.<sup>163</sup> In a word, slavery has a long history spread in almost all world regions regardless of the times. Regarding the modern concept of the slave, Act 1-1 of the Slavery Convention, signed in Geneva on Sep. 25, 1926, and amended by the Protocol done at the Headquarters of the United Nations on Dec. 7, 1953, presents its official definition as the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Oltman, Adele (November 7, 2005). "The Hidden History of Slavery in New York". The Nation. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/hidden-history-slavery-new-york>

<sup>163</sup> The Guardian, ed Jun. 1, 2016. "46 million people living as slaves, the latest global index reveals" <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/jun/01/46-million-people-living-as-slaves-latest-global-index-reveals-russell-crowe>

<sup>164</sup> League of Nations, Journal of the Sixth Assembly of the League of Nations, Geneva 1925, No. 3, 9

To summarize, a slave is defined as a person who is alive but has already embodied social death and is deprived of the right to possess any property. Ownership of one's own body and life is not recognized so that it is subject to sales at any time. Even the murderer of a slave is exempted also from the responsibility of the murder, because social convention regarded it as nothing more than killing an animal. Thus, slaves could not leave their owners, masters, supervisors, controllers, or employers without permission and were the ones who would be returned like lost articles if they left them or fled. Indeed, they were beings that could be owned or disposed of like goods in the past. Slaves were the property of their owners and could be bought and sold, traded, leased, or mortgaged like a form of livestock. Because they were under the total control of their masters, slaves were subject to labor and sexual exploitation and were controlled and ruled by cruel whips and punishment.

In most cultures, slaves were distinguished by the peculiar symbols mandated for them. For example, they were stigmatized, tattooed, or forced to wear uniquely colored clothes, hats, or hairstyles. Also, slaves were blamed for their lazy, childish, irresponsible, and dull behavior as their nature. They were believed to be incapable of enjoying freedom even if given to them.

#### **4. Tracking the Collective Memory of Chosŏn Nobi**

##### **4-1. Slavery in the Ancient States of the Silla Kingdom**

From ancient history to the end of the 19th century in Korea, the term ‘nobi’ appeared in various historical documents and literature. Perhaps the earliest record of the term ‘nobi’ appears on the eight legal provisions of the Gochosŏn (old Chosŏn)’s prohibitory law<sup>165</sup> that is written in the Tales of the Eastern Outlander among the compilation of the History of the Wei dynasty of Three Kingdoms: “A thief who has stolen another’s belongings should be enslaved by the owner of that things, and let the man make a ‘no (奴)’ and the woman a ‘bi (婢)’.”<sup>166</sup> In Buyŏ, one of the ancient states of Korea, they enslaved the family members of executed criminals. Goguryŏ and other states also enslaved criminals and debtors who could not pay off their debts.<sup>167</sup> In the Three Kingdoms era (c. 1 BC- c. 7 AD), when Silla and Goguryŏ and Baekje competed with each other for hegemony, many nobis were taken as prisoners of war. It is certain that countless nobis were held in the households of royal families and nobles living in the capital with the king, as well as in the influential families of the local community. However, due to a lack of records, it is difficult to find out in detail the proportion of the nobi population at the time, the size of nobi holdings, the relationship between nobis and their masters, their hereditary status, along with the family and kinship of nobis.

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<sup>165</sup> 三國志魏書東夷傳(the Tales of the Eastern Outlander in the History of the Wei dynasty among the compilation of the Three Kingdoms); A man named Giza (c; jīzi, 箕子), a member of the royal family of the Shang dynasty of China, came to the country of Dongyi and established the eight-point law and founded Gochosŏn.

<sup>166</sup> 『The Three Kingdoms』 is a history of the Three Kingdoms period between Wei (north of the Yangtze), Shu (in the southwest), and Wu (in the southeast) in China, compiled between 280 and 289 AD by Jin Jinsu (陳壽, 233~297), a man from the West Jin Dynasty.

<sup>167</sup> 三國志魏書東夷傳 (the Tales of the Eastern Outlander among the compilation of the History of the Three Kingdoms’ Wei dynasty);

As Cho Bŏp-jong argues, the term ‘no (奴, 노)’ referred initially to prisoners of war who would be sacrificed to the state altar for the worship ritual of Heaven in China.<sup>168</sup> If so, it is clear that people became reluctant to use it due to the feeling of disgust and taboo toward the word ‘no (奴, 노).’ According to Lee Young-hoon’s research, the term ‘奴’ turned out to be a commonly used character for personal names as well as place names in the era of the Three Kingdoms in the ancient history of Korea.<sup>169</sup> Even high-ranking nobles such as royal families, prime ministers, and generals were not reluctant to use the term in their name. From this, it is clear that the letter ‘奴’ was not a symbol of disgust, hatred, and wretchedness in the Three Kingdoms era. So, slavery had not yet been formed there despite the letter ‘no (奴) meaning “slave” at the time. Lee argues that such cases often appeared in several literature records showing that Goguryŏ people never used it to mean a slave when they used the letter ‘no (奴).’

On the monument to Gwang-gaeto, the Great King of Goguryŏ, his battle achievement is engraved as follows: the king of Baekje, who was defeated in battle, knelt in front of King Gwang-gaeto, the Great and swore, “I will be your faithful ‘no-gaek (奴客)’ for the rest of my life.” Here, no-gaek (奴客) should be interpreted as “loyal subject,” not as slave. In other words, until then, although ‘no (奴)’ was used in the nobi, it also had been used as a term of humility before superiors,

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<sup>168</sup> Cho Beop-jong, (1985). A study of slavery in ancient society: focusing on the occurrence and pattern of existence, see Korea University master's thesis, 1985)

<sup>169</sup> Lee Young-hoon, (1996). Trends and Characteristics of the nobi system in Korean History, pp. 316-319; book chapter from *Slave-serf-slave; Comparative study on the history of subjugated people. 1998, Ilchokak.*

in the king-subject relationship, or the life of a kinship community.<sup>170</sup> This is not to say that slavery did not exist at the time, as evidence indicates the prevalence of enslavement of prisoners of war, debt delinquents, traitors, and murderers. In other words, the concept of slavery was not yet mature enough and slavery was still not established as a general social system. Such nobis appeared to work as private servants or stewards of the ruling class' families, who took care of the household chores or provided other labor. This means that the scope of their labor was stuck in and around their master's household and slavery did not prevail as a basic production means throughout society.<sup>171</sup>

Documentary records demonstrating such historical facts are found here and there. For example, it is recorded that in 562, King Chinhŭng of Silla gave 200 prisoners of war to Sadahham, who had great achievements in pacifying the rebellion of Gaya, and it is said that Sadahham liberated them as Yangin (commoner). Why did Sadahham free all the slaves the king had granted him as civilians? Had he been able to sell the slaves at a high market price at that time? What is clear is that Sadahham did not do this to achieve such a noble purpose of slave emancipation because there was no such idea in the Silla era.<sup>172</sup> Why did he do that? It proves that the social

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<sup>170</sup> Lee Young-hoon, (1996). Ibid. pp. 318-9

<sup>171</sup> Aristotle. Politics; [Aristot. Pol. 1.1253b], to the ancient Greeks, slaves were believed as animated instruments and servants as assisting tools for good use of other tools.; Agamben, G. 2016. The use of bodies, pp. 36-38, tr. Kotsko, A. Stanford University Press.; the slave is a part of the master, like tools in the hands of the master or like an automaton attached to the master's body to the needs.

<sup>172</sup> the Historical Records of Three Kingdoms (Samguk-Sagi; kr. 三國史記, 삼국사기), Vol 4, Silla Mog-ki 4, King Chinhŭng 23rd year. Vol. 44, Yŏlchŏn 4, Sadahham; 三國史記, 卷4 新羅本紀4 眞興 23年. 同上 卷44 列傳4 斯多含

system of Silla was not in the condition of mobilizing nobis for large-scale labor and so they did not need to circulate nobis through trade and exchange on the market.

On the other hand, Tales of the Eastern Outlander shows a record that 1,500 Chinese invaded Jin-han (辰韓, 韓), the southern area of the present Korean peninsula, around AD 6-24 and became captive slaves, 500 of whom were treated so harshly that they died within three years after enslavement.<sup>173</sup> Although a considerable time gap exists between these records for about 600 years, two contrasting appearances of slaves coexisted in one society. One slave group was treated much more harshly than beasts of burden, the other immediately liberated. In a sense, it can be thought that one enslaved group was recognized as an invader from outside, and the other group, as being from within the tribes. This shows that the nobi personality was not totally confiscated yet and the trade and exchange values of nobis, like that of livestock, had not yet been marketized throughout the era of Silla.

The story of Ukmyōn clearly shows that the Silla people still believed that nobis possessed humanity, in part, if not fully, with the potential to possess Buddha-nature like free people and to be liberated as Buddhas.<sup>174</sup> The national religion of Silla is Buddhism, which holds that humans can be reborn as kings, beggars, or beasts in the next life based on karma. In that respect, it resulted in a very different socio-political system from Confucianism, which believed that the universe is

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<sup>173</sup> the Tales of the Eastern Outlander in the History of the Wei dynasty among the compilation of the Three Kingdoms (三國志魏書東夷傳), vol. 30, p.213

<sup>174</sup> The tale of Ukmyōn clearly shows that the Silla Kingdom regarded nobis as human beings who still possessed Buddha-nature and could reach Nirvana as a holy body of Buddha. The History of the Three Kingdoms, vol. 5, section 'Ukmyōn reached Nirvana'; 三國史記,卷5 感通郁面婢 念佛西昇.

divided into *yin* and *yang*. In China, since 200 BC, Confucianism had been the ruling ideology of the Han dynasty, which resulted in the strict status system based on the Yang-chŏn (the superior-the inferior) class system based on the laws and ordinances developed earlier than in any other part of Asia.

One record shows some clues about nobi's life and the population around AD 815, which were found in the 'village documents' near the Sŏwongyŏng (present-day Cheongju) of Silla. To give a little context, 28 were registered as slaves out of the total population of 460 in the four villages near Sŏwongyŏng. This number accounts for 6.1% of the total population of the village. Most of them were young adults aged between 16 and 57. There were no elderly people and very few children, so the family life of nobis would not have been maintained.<sup>175</sup> Given this data, we can conclude that they were not hereditary nobis, but punishment or debt nobis. They seem to have been engaged in manual labor, mainly belonging to government offices or private households. Even in this period, nobis still did not seem to have acquired materiality as perfect slaves, and it does not seem there was a slave trade system generalized over a whole society other than in the form of individual exchange or trade.

#### **4-2. Slavery in the Koryŏ Dynasty**

Koryŏ adopted Buddhism as a national religion and its ruling ideology, which left a glimmer of hope for the people that anyone could be reborn in the next life following his Karma

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<sup>175</sup> 武田幸男, (1976), 新羅の村落支配-正倉院所蔵文書の追記をめぐって, 朝鮮学報 81 (Murata Yukio, "Silla's Village Rule-Regarding the Addition of Documents owned by Jŏng Chang-won)

and Purajna regardless of their present status. Buddhism believed that “All Dharmas lack self-entity (諸法無我, 제법무아; Jeböpmua),” meaning that social status or wealth in this world, including a form of the human creature itself, could change at any time, such as changing a coat worn for a while, and that even death was a temporary event in human life.<sup>176</sup> Therefore, I, a human in this world, might be reborn as an earthworm in the next life. This view tends to instill egalitarian ideas in people's minds. In a society that shared this kind of spiritual belief, it was hard to completely separate human nature from humans and make them into beasts forever, so the ultimate conception of slavery was hard to take hold. Although the slave system developed gradually during the Koryŏ period with the introduction of Confucianism to its society, the Koryŏ people's view of slavery did not reach the level of believing that slaves were a race of beasts that had completely cast-off human nature. In that sense, as Finley and Patterson argued, Koryŏ was a society with slaves, but it was not a large-scale, genuine slave society.

This Buddhist egalitarianism seems to have prevented the development of the ultimate idea of slavery, such as prisoner of war and punishment slavery in the West until the middle of the Koryŏ Dynasty. A series of similar ideas revealed in the frequent slave revolts since 1170 clearly indicates that Koryŏ's nobis had not yet reached the complete acquirement of non-human materiality. In the Koryŏ dynasty, there were rebellions and uprisings by nobis and lowly born, taking advantage of the frequent coup d'états by high-ranking military officers that had occurred frequently after 1170. One clear example is the insurgency of Manjök (k. 萬積, 만적) in 1198 (the

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<sup>176</sup> Kim Sun-keun, (2009). The Concept of sunyata Presented in the Saddharma-pundarika-sutra. pp. 289-293, Hanguk Bulkyo Hak (The Journal of the Korean Association for Buddhist Studies), 54(0), 271-314.

first year of the reign of King Shinjong), who was the nobi of General Choi Chung-hŏn, the most powerful ruler of Koryŏ at the time. In his speeches instigating insurgency, he addressed many nobis, “Since the year of General’s insurgency in 1170 and after the year of defeating the Literati vassal Kim Bodang’s reactionary insurrection in 1173, many high-ranking officials had come from lowly nobis just like us. How can there be natural seeds that make slaves by birth in this world separately from the seeds that make generals and prime ministers?”<sup>177</sup> His insurgency failed, but in his speech, Manjŏk traces the fact that many high-ranking officials had come from the lowly born. In 1170-1200, there were many slave revolts, which can be said to be unique in Korean history, such as the uprisings of Lee Ui-min,<sup>178</sup> who was a former temple-nobi and later became the highest-ranking General, and Kim Joon,<sup>179</sup> who was a nobi of the Choi Chung-hŏn family and later became the highest power in the military ruling court of Koryŏ. In light of such facts and Manjŏk's claim that “all men are born with equal seeds,” slave consciousness at that time was far from non-human and the discrimination against slaves had not yet developed to the extent that they were regarded as beasts.

The common denominator of the various uprisings and revolts that had occurred since 1170 was that the military officers, who had been despised by the literati officials since the founding of the country, became the leading forces and, after the success of the coup, suppressed the literati officials. How can we explain those frequent rebellions of nobis and high-ranking military officers

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<sup>177</sup> The History of Koryŏ, Vol. 129, Yŏlchŏn (the biography) 42; Treason 3, Choi Choong-hŏn

<sup>178</sup> History of Koryŏ, vol 19, Distinguished Family (世家) vol.19, Uijong, the 24<sup>th</sup> Years; Encyclopedia of Korean National Culture, <http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/Item/E0045520>

<sup>179</sup> History of Koryŏ, Distinguished Family (世家) vol.24, Kojong, the 45<sup>th</sup> years; Encyclopedia of Korean National Culture; <http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/Item/E0010548>

in the middle Koryŏ period? Simply put, it was because military officers could not stand the humiliation suffered by the literati officials. The military officers, who valued physical strength and fighting power more than their background of birth, or academic career, revolted and allied with strong men regardless of nobis and those lowly born. This is so obvious that it sounds like “there is some space available for nobis and humbles at the time. At the same time, it revealed that the conflict between the binary status based on Confucianism that had been introduced into Koryŏ society reached the dangerous level of completely differentiating the society into the nobility and the nobis, the military and literati officer, just as *yin* and *yang* are separated with each other.”<sup>180</sup>

Confucianism, which had clandestinely maintained its tradition by only a few Confucianist literati, suddenly took a position as the dominant ideology of Koryŏ around 1270 when the Yuan dynasty had conquered Koryŏ and subjugated it to one of the provincial principalities of the Mongolian Yuan Empire. Deuchler called this event “a whole new chapter in the history of Korean knowledge.”<sup>181</sup> Despite this change of circumstances, the ideology of neo-Confucianism did not spread widely throughout the society except among the ruling class and the intellectual class who followed it. King Chungsŏn, the 26th king of Koryŏ (reigned: 1298, restored: 1308 ~ 1313), told his closest aide Lee Che-hyŏn, “In Koryŏ, well-versed in Chinese culture, all scholars in Koryŏ adhered to Buddhism and focused only on the triviality of writing style. What is the reason for this? Where are the learned people who have understood the classics of Confucianism and practiced

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<sup>180</sup> Deuchler, M. (1992). *The Confucian Transformation of Korea. A Study of Society and Ideology*. pp. 15-6, Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph, No. 36. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Publications, Harvard University.

<sup>181</sup> Deuchler, M. (1992). *Ibid.*,

their actions?” he lamented.<sup>182</sup> From these words, it seems that Buddhism had a strong influence even in the 1310s when the Koryŏ Dynasty was entering the late period.

The Confucian social status system failed to bloom in Koryŏ despite its subjugation to the Yuan Dynasty of the Mongols as a Principality in 1270 due to the strong ideological foundation of Buddhism working as its long folklore beliefs, which had been handed down to the ancient states of Korea for over a thousand years, the establishment of the military regime in 1170 and the delayed inflow of neo-Confucianism into Koryŏ as Deuchler argues, and the peculiarity of the Koryŏ state system. In the end, the Buddhist influence rapidly declined by the Yuan dynasty of Mongolia, which adopted Neo-Confucianism as the state ruling ideology. Accordingly, the Confucian conception that the social status system was determined by nature relying on the Heavenly Mandate came to dominate Koryŏ society around the collapse of Koryŏ, 1392. In short, it was clear that the soil of Koryŏ was politically, religiously, and culturally unsuitable for genuine slavery to flourish. Although slaves were used by government offices or powerful aristocratic families, they did not exceed 5% of the total population, and the slave trade market was not formed until the end of the Dynasty.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> The History of Koryŏ, Vol. 110, Yŏlchŏn (the biography) 42; All Vassals 3, Lee Che-hyŏn; “King Chungŏn summons Lee Che-hyŏn to Mankwon-dang”

<sup>183</sup> Ellen Salem, (1978). Slavery in Medieval Korea, Columbia University, p.140, 154.

“on the basis of the 80,000 monastic slaves converted to official slavery after the transition to the Chosŏn dynasty (in 1392), she estimated a total of two hundred thousand official and private slaves out of a possible total population of two million about the turn of the fourteenth century.”; Lee Young-hoon, (1998). The trend of the nobi institution in Korean history, Nobis, serfs, slaves: comparative history of subordinate people, p.357, Il-Chogak.

Before the rule of the Yuan Dynasty, Koryŏ was based on a compromised structure between the central power of kingship and local lords.<sup>184</sup> As Eisenstadt argues, the central monarchy of Koryŏ tried to establish a centralized government with a local district system like China.<sup>185</sup> However, they failed to suppress the local noble forces subject to the central government. Instead, powerful local clans enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy in their stronghold of the original ancestral hometown by training a private military force and building ramparts around the area. Naturally, vacant spaces were formed between the central capital and local provinces and between one rampart-town and others. According to Eisenstadt, this was arguably a free-floating resource for each political group to struggle with.

Furthermore, most Koryŏ people had faith in the rebirth of Maitreya Buddha, one of the Buddhist denominations. However, each rampart town worshipped different Maitreya in their own ways according to the traditional folklore of their towns and villages, showing strong solidarity just like a religious organization.<sup>186</sup> Such differences made them exhibit an exclusivity that did not tolerate an influx of even a slight heterogeneous element into their community. The characteristics of these two state systems made the rampart towns of each province jealous and quarrel with each other over free-floating resources. For example, in 1178, there broke out a cruel slaughter in which almost all of the Kyŏng-in<sup>187</sup> in Chŏngju were killed by the Cheongju locals. The Kyŏng-in

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<sup>184</sup> Duncan, J. (2000). *The origins of Chosŏn Dynasty*, p.8

<sup>185</sup> Eisenstadt, S. N. (1963). *The political system of Empires*, N.Y: Free Press of Glencoe;

<sup>186</sup> Lee Hae-yong, (1983). Faith to set up a stele on a juniper pedestal (Maehyang Stele) and the nature of celestial service for Maitreya—Analysis of Maehyang case in the 14 - 5<sup>th</sup> century, pp.381-388

<sup>187</sup> ‘Kyŏng-in’ referred to a person who lived or once had lived in the Kaekyŏng, the capital city of Koryŏ. On the contrary, those who lived in the rural counties outside of Kaekyŏng were called ‘Hyang-in.’ ‘Kuk-in’ referred to a core minority of the ruling class who lived around the king’s palace in the Koryŏ dynasty.

marshalled a military group and attacked Cheongju to revenge, but more than 100 people were killed in a losing effort.<sup>188</sup> Likewise, armed conflicts were common between local lords due to political disputes and conflicts of interest. The skirmish between Byölch'ö of Kyöng-ju and Fortress Yöng-ju in 1201,<sup>189</sup> the revolt of monk Myochöng and his followers in the Sögyöng in 1135, the Silla revival movement in Tongkyöng in 1204, the conflict between Andong and Sang-ju, all belonged to similar historical cases.<sup>190</sup>

From these records, it turns out that the 580 counties and districts (kr. 郡縣, 군현: Gun-hyön) of Koryö were integrated into a Koryö dynasty in the form of a military coalition of small or big warlords, but they were competing with each other based on relative independence and autonomy from the central power of the royal authority. As such, the county and district system of Koryö retained the character of a military confederation based on the mutual alliance between Sönguep, that is, rampart towns that were the base of local clan forces, and between warlords scattered in provinces because the weak central royal authority could not centralize them all. In that context, the state apparatus of Koryö appears to have been a dynasty based on a military coalition in which the central monarchy governed only the capital and some critical cities under its direct control and appointed powerful clans or warlords to rule other provinces. Accordingly, the rampart towns, which were the bases of the local lords, had their troops called Byölchogun for self-defense and to

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<sup>188</sup> History of Koryö Vol.100, Yölchön (the biographies) of Kyöng Dae-sung 13; 高麗史 卷 100 列傳 卷 13 慶大升.

<sup>189</sup> History of Koryö Vol.21, Sega (the powerful clans), Shinjong the 5<sup>th</sup> year; 高麗史 卷21 世家 神宗5年.

<sup>190</sup> Taedohobu (kr. 大都護府; 대도호부) means the grand guardian command office of the capital city that was a local administrative cum military organization that had been installed in military strategic locations since the early Koryö period. The city in which this government office was installed was recognized as one of the highest-ranking cities.

attack hostile forces, and the locals were well-trained soldiers to run to the battlefield at a moment's notice.

In warring states like Athens and Sparta, slaves were not welcome in their communities, despite being slave societies. The nature of slavery is basically hostile to the community where they belong. In case of an emergency like war, when the shackles of restraint are loosened even a little, they are changed into a group of rebellion that is highly likely to revolt within the community. Koryŏ confronted a similar situation where the power of the central authority was weak and the local warlords had to prepare for unexpected accidental skirmishes as well as continuous invasions of foreign enemies across the northern border. Bearing this in mind, it is doubtful that Koryŏ society might have been a large-scale slave society compatible with more than 30% of the total population being slaves. Nevertheless, small-scale slaves had always existed to satisfy the ruler's desire for domination and convenience anywhere at any time in history. At first glance, slaves of more than 30 percent of the total population residing inside the community who could revolt in an emergency were too much of a burden for rulers to wage war. It was neither necessary nor possible for a state at war to use the same tribes or ethnic groups as large-scale slave based on a military coalition. For this reason, Koryŏ society had an ill-fitted state system to allow large-scale slavery to take root in it. Also, the characteristics of the Koryŏ state system serve to explain the statistical figures in the various literature that have been presented here so far, like the fact that the slave population of the Koryŏ dynasty was below ten percent.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Ellen Salem, (1978). *Slavery in Medieval Korea*, Columbia University, p.140, 154

“on the basis of the 80,000 monastic slaves converted to official slavery after the transition to the Chosŏn dynasty (in 1392), she estimated a total of two hundred thousand official and private slaves out of a possible total population of two million about the turn of the fourteenth century.”; Lee Young-hoon,

In terms of the nobi population, Lee Young-hoon argues that slaves of Koryŏ were not the main component of the social constitution. Even in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, near the fall of Koryŏ in 1392, some documents showed that 4 to 6 percent of the nobi population existed among the total population.<sup>192</sup> Given the slight deviation caused by the lack of data, the average slave rate of the total population had been less than ten percent at most until the end of Koryŏ. For example, Lee Young-hoon presents an old confiscation list of a corrupted local magistrate's properties in 1319, including his lands, households under his power, and Nobis. It recorded the collections of 2,360 households, lands of 19,798 gyŏl(結, 결)<sup>193</sup> together with 137 slaves in ordinary farm households. Supposing that one household included ten members, it means that 23,600-population resided on the collected lands, and the proportion was less than 1%.<sup>194</sup>

In 1390, King Gong-yang ordered a detailed survey of the numbers of households and residents and the land size to admire the merits of Lee Sŏng-kye for the enthronement of Gong-yang himself. As a result, a registration ledger of households and land was created, showing that 25 households in that area were holding a total of seven slaves. The members per household were assumed as 13 to 15 persons, including young children and extended families. This case study shows that even in the 1390s, the final stage of Koryŏ, the slave proportion appeared as roughly 4-5 percent.<sup>195</sup> Even if the deviation due to lack of reference data and evidence is widely accepted,

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(1998). The trend of the nobi institution in Korean history, Nobis, serfs, slaves: comparative history of subordinate people, p.357, Il-Chogak.

<sup>192</sup> "Nobi" is used when referring to slaves of Chosŏn, while "nobi" is used in most other cases.

<sup>193</sup> Measurement unit of area of Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasty. on average, it is about 0.5-hectare area

<sup>194</sup> Lee Young-hoon, (2016). The Economic History of Korea, Ilchokak; (1998). Trends and Characteristics of Nobi Institution in Korean History pp.356-357, Ilchokak.

<sup>195</sup> Lee Young-hoon, (2016). *ibid.* pp.301-2

it assumes that the national average was less than 10 percent at maximum.<sup>196</sup> In sum, the nobi proportion of Koryŏ did not exceed ten percent of the total population.

### **4-3. Chosŏn, transformed into a large-scale slave country**

#### **4-3-1. The Radical Enslavement and its Ideological Background**

Researchers of Korean studies in the United States, particularly James Palais, John Duncan, Carter Eckert, and Michael Robinson, agree with the argument that Korea was a genuine slave society since the 11th century. Orlando Patterson argues that the typical large-scale slave society, which is rare either in the East or West, throughout world history, had been maintained for over a thousand years from ancient times to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Korea.<sup>197</sup> Since the succeeding Chosŏn Dynasty was a large-scale slave society, they claim that the Koryŏ period was arguably a large-scale slave society. However, although Silla and Koryŏ were undoubtedly a “society with slaves,” they were already proven not a “large-scale genuine slave society” through relevant research so far.

Then, the question follows as to how the Chosŏn Dynasty created such a large-scale slave society in such a short term, if the previous dynasty in the 14th century was a large-scale slave society. The issue of ideological background should therefore be examined to clarify why the

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<sup>196</sup> Lee Young-hoon, (2010). Critical Review on James Palais' Theory of Korean Slavery Society, Korean Culture vol.52, Dec. 2010, pp.339-351; In 1978, Ellen Salem estimated that the population of slaves in the late 13th and early 14th centuries was about 10% in his work; Slavery in Medieval Korea, Columbia University, p.140

<sup>197</sup> Patterson, O. (1982), Slavery and Social death; A Comparative Study, p. viii, Harvard Univ. Press: The name “Korea” is often used as a state name to refer to the Three Kingdoms period, Koryŏ, and Chosŏn by some scholars regardless of the historical period. Here, too, the original author's usage is followed.

founders of the Chosŏn Dynasty wanted to create such a large-scale slave society and what population group would be targeted for the enslavement in the absence of large-scale prisoners of war at the time.

Concerning the growth of the nobi population at the beginning stage of the Chosŏn dynasty from 1392 and later on, many historical facts and documents show that the slave population skyrocketed during the 15–17<sup>th</sup> centuries up to 30 - 40 percent. It is incredible, though, for example, Se-jo (世祖, reigned; 1455-1468), the 7<sup>th</sup> King of the early Chosŏn dynasty, ordered his closest aide Han Myung-hoi to count the total number of nobis on a national scale in 1467. Later, Han reported the survey result to King Sŏng-jong (成宗, reigned: 1469–1494), the 9<sup>th</sup> King of the early Chosŏn Dynasty that there existed a total of about 450,000 public nobis and about 100,000 of them were on fleeing at the time.<sup>198</sup> Assuming that the escape rate of the public nobi is the same as that of the private nobi, and considering the total population of the Chosŏn Dynasty around the late 15<sup>th</sup> century was nine million,<sup>199</sup> the total population of the private and public nobi had jumped up to at least 40% percent of the total population of Chosŏn for just about one hundred years.<sup>200</sup>

High-ranking public officials' comments in older documents in the reign of King Sŏng-jong showed that they were concerned about the abnormally high number of nobis. For example, in 1478, Shim Won (深源, 심원) wrote, "Now, among the whole national people, eight or nine

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<sup>198</sup> Annals of King Sŏng-jong, August, 15<sup>th</sup> year on the throne; Jŏng-sa September, Im-In, Gye-ch'ook; 成宗實錄, 15年 8月 丁巳 9月 壬寅, 癸丑; recited from. Trends and Characteristics of Nobi Institution in Korean History pp.365, Ilchokak.

<sup>199</sup> Kwon Tae-hwan, Shin Yong-ha, (1988). On Population Estimates of the Yi Dynasty, 1392-1910" "East Asian Culture: 14.177; Young-gu, Lee Ho-chŏl, 1988, The Estimation of Population in Chosŏn Dynasty (I, II). The Business History

<sup>200</sup> Trends and Characteristics of Nobi Institution in Korean History pp.365, Ilchokak.

persons seems Nobis, and only one or two are ordinary commoners out of ten.” However, these words are regarded as lamentations that are highly exaggerated due to concerns about the state of affairs, given that the contemporary Sōng Hyōn (成俔, 성현) said, “There are almost half of Nobis among ordinary people.”<sup>201</sup>

Based on recent studies, it is easy to find trends reflecting the rising number of nobis until the end of the 17th century. Han Young-guk corroborated that 47% of the population were nobis in the family register of the Ulsan-bu (蔚山府, 울산부) of 1609.<sup>202</sup> Noh Shin-young found it 41.7% in the Sanūm-hyōn (山陰縣, 산음현)<sup>203</sup> household-family register of 1606, 34.5% in the same family register of 1630, and Han Ki-bōm (韓基範, 한기범) confirmed a whopping 64.4% in the Dansōng-hyōn (丹城縣, 단성현) family register of in 1606.<sup>204</sup> Hiroshi Shikata (四方博) confirmed that the size of slaves was 44.3 percent through the Daegu-bu register of 1690.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Shim Won (深源, 심원); 成宗實錄 9年4月己亥, Sōng Hyōn (成俔, 성현); 『偷齋叢話』 上卷9; recited from Lee Young-hoon, (1998). *ibid.* p. 365

<sup>202</sup> Han Young-guk, *The Mode of Slaves' Marriage in the Middle Chosŏn Dynasty; Focusing on Cases Appearing in Ulsan Household Registration (Hojök) in 1609*, p.186, 『Historical Journal 75 • 76 bound volumes, 77, 1977, 1978; 181』; Kr. 韓榮國, 軌鮮 中葉의 奴婢結婚樣態 「1609년의 蔚山戶籍에 나타난 사례를 중심으로」 『歷史學報 75 • 76 輯, 77, 1977, 1978; 181』; Recited from Lee Young-hoon, (1998). *The trend of the nobi institution in Korean history*, p.365

<sup>203</sup> Hyōn was the basic unit of local administration that is equivalent to the District in America. It was the smallest unit of administrative divisions where official local administrators were dispatched from the central government of the Chosŏn dynasty.

<sup>204</sup> Han Ki-bōm, *The composition of the status of residents of Dansōng-hyōn in the early 17th century*, p.182 Master's thesis of Chungnam National University. 1982; 韓基範, 「17 世紀初 丹城縣民의 身分構成」, 182. 忠南大學校 史學科 碩士論文, 1982; Recited from Lee Young-hoon, (1998). *The trend of the nobi institution in Korean history*, p.365

<sup>205</sup> Hiroshi Shikata (四方博), *A Study on the Population of the Yi Dynasty by Social Status and Class*, Gyōngsōng Imperial University Law Society, *Chosun Economics* 8. 3, 1938; 四方博, 李朝人口に關する一研究(朝鮮社會法制史研究, 1937) 및 李朝人口に關する身分階級別的觀察(朝鮮經濟の研究, 1938). 京城帝國大學法學會, 『朝鮮經濟研究』 3, 1938; Recited from Lee Young-hoon, (1998). *The trend of the nobi institution in Korean history*, p.365

It is well known that the household-family register was produced for taxation but not for population census purposes. Some taxpayers tried to hide or not register some family members to save the personal tribute tax or avoid the compulsory labor service. Thus, the ledgers were incomplete, and Yang-in's young children (non-noble commoners) were severely omitted. In view of this, Han Young-guk set the actual population to be 1.4 times higher than the population on the family register while considering that there was almost no omission in the registration of the slave population. He estimated the actual proportion of nobi in Ulsan in 1609 to be 33.7%.<sup>206</sup> Whatever the reason, it is surprising that nobis, which made up less than 10% of the total population around at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, had grown to 30-40% of the total population in just 100-150 years since the 1390s.

One of the driving forces behind such changes was the neo-Confucianist ideology that the founders of the Chosŏn Dynasty dreamed of instituting was different from that of the Koryŏ Dynasty. They believed that Koryŏ was corrupted to the extent that it was beyond repair. So, they chose to overthrow the Koryŏ Dynasty. Around 1270, Koryŏ was integrated into the Mongolian Yuan dynasty as one of the provincial princely states and was under Beijing's control. In 1368, the ruling classes, including both the subjects of the Koryŏ court and local neo-Confucian literati, were split into two factions. The Koryŏ royal family and its subjects, who had been closely related through marriage to the Yuan royal family for over 100 years, insisted that they should support Yuan to fight off the Ming. Meanwhile, the central bureaucrats and the elite literati officials in the provinces, who had already adjusted to the neo-Confucian mindset and worldview but were always

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<sup>206</sup> Recited from Lee Young-hoon, (1998). The trend of the nobi institution in Korean history, p.365

alienated from the connection with the Yuan, insisted on rejecting the Yuan and following the original China of the ethnic Han, the Ming.

These reform-oriented bureaucrats had long believed that the Koryŏ system should be re-established based on Neo-Confucianism, by means of which they could recreate the ancient Chinese utopia of the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors in their generation. In the following passage, Deuchler describes the early neo-Confucianist vision of the late Koryŏ.

The desire to give new stability and order to Korean society was motivated by idealism as well as by pragmatic considerations. If the models and rules found in China's classical literature were instituted in Korea, it was believed, Korean society would eventually be transformed into an ideal Confucian society. The "ancient institutions" would replace native customs that had led to the disintegration of society.

The strongest demand for complete assimilation of the institutions of Chinese antiquity in Korea was made at the beginning of the dynasty by Chŏng To-jŏn, who insisted that the corrupt native customs and the vestiges of Mongol rule be discarded, and the new institutions be given permanency "for a full age."<sup>207</sup>

Since those who monopolized the interests of reality had always been followers of Buddhism and the Yuan dynasty, they were on the verge of dissatisfaction. As Donald Clark argues, they were economically deprived by the nongjang landlords, they were politically deprived because the top jobs were in the hands of an ideologically hostile court faction and because they had no way to put their reform ideas into practice, and they were farsighted enough to see that continued failure to break ties with the Mongols and adjust to the Chinese revolution would lead only to disaster.<sup>208</sup>

These reform-oriented bureaucrats, driven by hopeful hearsay of an outstanding military

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<sup>207</sup> Deuchler, M. (1992), *The Confucian Transformation of Korea; A Study of Society and Ideology*, p. 122, the Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University

<sup>208</sup> Clark, D. (1982), *Chosŏn's Founding Fathers: A Study of Merit Subjects in the Early Yi Dynasty*, p. 24, *Korean Studies*, Vol. 6 (1982), pp. 17-40, University of Hawai'i Press

general favorable to their ideas named Yi Sŏng-gye, began to gather around him and support him. Chŏng To-jŏn was one of them, who was a neo-Confucianist revolutionary rather than a reformer.<sup>209</sup> As a neo-Confucianist revolutionary, he argued that just as the sky is the origin of all nature and creatures, the king is the father of all people. All social systems and components, such as the relations between kings and servants, fathers and sons, masters and nobis, were rearranged and reinterpreted according to the five forces and *yin* and *yang*, which were believed to be the primary driving forces of the universe. Likewise, the eldest son, who should maintain the paternal line without any cessation, was regarded as the most virtuous man even within a family. Based on such a thorough neo-Confucian faith, the founding forces led by Chŏng Tojŏn tried to return all components of the Chosŏn society to their original places and roles. Therefore, they divided people into superior (kwi, 貴, 귀) and lowly (chŏn, 賤, 천) beings as if the universe were working based on the interaction of the divided *yin* and *yang* as written in the *I-Ching*.<sup>210</sup>

#### **4-3-2. The objects of mass enslavement in the early Chosŏn**

There are several clues that the driving force of the rapid increase of the nobi population in the early Chosŏn dynasty stemmed from the revolutionary policies pursued ruthlessly by the founding forces of Chosŏn. In 1392, the founding forces of Chosŏn who had replaced the dynasty through

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<sup>209</sup> Chŏng To-jŏn, Collection of Sambong, Vol 2, "Crossing the Ancient Dongzhou," "Engraving a poem on the Pine Trees in Hamju military camp"; 三峯集, 卷2, "過古東州," "題咸營松樹"

<sup>210</sup> The commentary on I Ching, the Book of Change, Book I, ch. 1, verse 1; 繫辭上傳 第一章 1節: The superior was the royal family and the noble yangbans, and the lowly were the commoners and the humbles. Nobis were regarded as beings completely excluded from the human category. In other words, if nobles and commoners were human, they were sub-humans who did not belong to them.

the Confucian Revolution began to reform mercilessly old political and economic systems and clear away practices of the former dynasty, Koryŏ.<sup>211</sup>

The first major reformation was the deprivation of the economic power of the major ruling powers of the Koryŏ dynasty. As part of this, large farms owned by powerful noble families were confiscated and redistributed to those who contributed to the founding of Chosŏn and their followers.<sup>212</sup> Secondly, the Confucian revolutionaries started to demolish most of the Buddhist temples without a trace which had been infamous as the most corrupt community of Koryŏ. The large-scale farmland, nobis, and temple villagers they owned were redistributed to the newly rising Confucianist yangban families.<sup>213</sup> Thirdly, they drastically reorganized the national administrative system into a centralized bureaucracy based on prefectures and counties, namely, the Gunhyŏn system. Concerning the radical nobi enslavement in the earlier stage of Chosŏn, these three major reformations had a great impact.

As mentioned before, the founding forces of Chosŏn created the Lee (Yi, 李) Dynasty by overthrowing the time-worn heretical ideology of the Wang dynasty of Koryŏ, taking advantage of the transition from Yuan to Ming Dynasty.<sup>214</sup> The founding forces of Chosŏn started to break

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<sup>211</sup> ‘The Annals of T’aejo’, *the 1<sup>st</sup> year, Vol. 1, the 3rd record on Jul. 30, 1392*; ‘His Majesty made a revolution in obedience to the Will of Heaven and ascended to the throne for the first time. (omitted). To make clear the reward and punishment, all Buddhist priests and nuns should be culled.

<sup>212</sup> Lee Min-woo. (2017). ‘Land system reform and social change in the late Koryŏ and early Chosŏn Dynasty’ *Yuksabipyoung, 75-104*; The land reform of Koryŏ was concluded with the enactment of the Gwajŏn Act in May 1391 (the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of King Kongyang), after burning all of the old land records of Koryŏ in the city in 1390 (King Kongyang 2).

<sup>213</sup> Hwang, In-kyu. ‘Study of the Buddhism and High Buddhist Priests of the Late Koryŏ-Early Chosŏn Dynasty’ *Hye-an*. 2003

<sup>214</sup> Kwon Keun, commentary to Chŏng To-jŏns Simgi-rip'yon in Chŏng To-jŏns, *Sambong-jip*, p. 286.

down the political and economic systems and practices they were most dissatisfied with in the old regime of Koryŏ. Large-scale farms owned by the powerful descent group of rampart towns in the provinces were confiscated and redistributed to the subjects. Most of the Buddhist temples, which were the largest farm-holders in Koryŏ, were also demolished, while their farms and nobis were redistributed to the newly emerging Sadaebu class.<sup>215</sup> Many of the powerful families and distinguished descent groups who boasted of their power by relying on the Koryŏ and Yuan royal families were also purged and executed. In addition to their wives and children, their property and nobis were confiscated and redistributed to the subjects and the new generation of high-ranking Sadaebu. These events provide some insight into where the sudden increase in the number of nobis, reaching 30 percent of the total population, came from in the early days of the Chosŏn Dynasty.

The population of Buddhist monks and temple nobis in the late Koryŏ period reached 30 percent of the total population. Although it is difficult to provide detailed numbers of the population at the time due to poor demographic statistics, in “Veritable Record of King T’aejo,” the 4th year, February 19, Inspector-General Park Kyung wrote a private petition, clearly pointing out that “the number of monks is three-tenths among the people.”<sup>216</sup> By the end of the 1390s, the population of Koryŏ was estimated to be around 5.5 million.<sup>217</sup> Therefore, there were about 1.8

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<sup>215</sup> Sadaebu (士大夫, 사대부): scholar-official; literati bureaucrat; scholar-bureaucrat. According to Lee ki-baik, “A new bureaucratic class appeared following the disintegration of aristocratic government during the period of military rule. ...In short, they were scholar-bureaucrats or literati, and after the collapse of military rule they came to perform an ever more important political role.”

<sup>216</sup> Veritable Record of King T’aejo,” Feb 9, the 4th year of the reign; Park Kyung wrote a private petition seeking the King's permission to use the labor force of monks, who were 3 out of 10 population, only eating and playing, in the place of peasants during the busy farming season

<sup>217</sup> Choi Bong-Hwan, Shin Yong-ha (1977), Tentative Theory on Demographic Estimation in the Chosŏn Dynasty, East Asian Culture 14, p.324

million monks, including temple workers and nobis in the late Koryŏ period. At the beginning of the Chosŏn Dynasty, most of these temples were demolished, and about two-thirds of the monks and temple nobis who lived there were forcibly laicized without any livelihood support. Most of the roughly 1.2 million people were thrown into the secular world with empty hands and naked fists. So, they had no choice but to become nobis. They were the Buddhist priests and temple nobis who were stigmatized as heretics by the Sadaebu, the founding force of Chosŏn, and were the exiles from the King's grace.

Another large pool of nobis was undocumented immigrants and fugitives from the ruined Sung Dynasty, Khitan, Jurchen, and descendants of rebels, including those of later Baekje who refused to conform to the Koryŏ dynasty to the end.<sup>218</sup> Many of them lived in the northern part of Koryŏ, for example, in P'yŏngan-do and Hamgyŏng-do bordering Manchuria. However, without registering in the family register or reporting to the government authorities, it was common for them to pursue their own lifestyle by hunting and gathering as they did in the place of their origin. They stayed inside the community from Koryŏ to the Chosŏn Dynasty, but their life form was like outsiders who were considered harmful to the safety and well-being of the whole community. According to the Annals of King Sŏngjong in 1473, when the administration was reorganized into a centralized bureaucracy based on the prefecture and county systems, in other words, Kunhyŏnje (郡縣制, 군현제) in the early Chosŏn Dynasty, all these vagrant tribes (楊水尺, 양수척; Yangsuchŏk,) were forced to register themselves in the family register, and their total population accounted for

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<sup>218</sup> The History of Koryŏ, Vol. 129, Yŏlchŏn (the biography) 42; Treason 3, Choi Chung-hŏn, the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the King Kojong

a quarter of the total population of each village.<sup>219</sup> The population was about 1.8 million. As the Chosŏn Dynasty reorganized its administrative system, the free zone between Sŏngeup and Sŏngeup (rampart military towns) disappeared and administrative districts changed into prefecture and county. They had no choice but to live as nobis as their only means of livelihood since they had no other living measures or properties in their hands.

In the midst of the terror caused by bloody power struggles that occurred for nearly 50 years after the founding of the Dynasty, large-scale farms in the late Koryŏ period were completely confiscated, while the land and property owned by the powerful families of Koryŏ were forfeited without any resistance. All who survived were enslaved. While renovating the temples and vagrant tribes, a sufficient pool of supplying nobis had been completed to create the large-scale nobi system based on large-scale land ownership. Considering these various circumstances, it comes as no surprise that about 30% of the population turned into nobis for about 100 years after the founding of the Chosŏn Dynasty.

#### **4-3-3. Establishment of Institutional Reproduction System of Nobi**

In the short period of about 70-80 years after the founding of the Chosŏn Dynasty, Chosŏn completed the transformation into a large-scale nobi society through the destruction of the large-scale farms of the Koryŏ aristocrats and the culling of Buddhist temple land and subordinate labors, which was promoted by the momentum of the radical Confucian revolution of the Chosŏn literati.

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<sup>219</sup> The Annals of King Sŏngjong (成宗實錄), the 4<sup>th</sup> year, December 18; the Minister of Defense (Byeongjo, 兵曹) reported to the King that even though the number of Jaein (the name of vagrant tribes in Chosŏn) living in the same town is one-third or a quarter compared to the common people, they do not work and play freely at their pleasure without any tribute role and compulsory labor service.

For example, among the crown princes of King Sejong, each of the princes Gwang-pyŏng (1425–1444) and Yŏng-ŭng (1434–1467) owned more than 10,000 nobis.<sup>220</sup> According to the record of the agreement on the distribution of inherited property between the brothers and sisters of the Lee Ae family (Lee Ae Nammae Hwahoemun-gi) in 1494 (the 24th year of King Sŏngjong), who were the siblings of Lee Maeng-hyŏn (李孟賢, 1436-1487), one of the most influential clans in Hansŏngbu at the time, Lee Maeng-hyŏn owned total 758 nobis, living in 72 myŏns in 8 provinces of Chosŏn.<sup>221</sup> In addition, T'oegye Yi Hwang, one of the most famous Confucian literati in Chosŏn, also left 367 nobis in the inheritance document.<sup>222</sup>

Despite the success of this radical enslavement, the nobi system would never be sustainable in the long run without the firm reproduction system of the nobi population. During the early years of the founding of the Chosŏn Dynasty, from 1397 to 1432, the child followed his father's status. If the father was a commoner, the child should be a commoner, and if the father was a nobi, the child should be also a nobi. This was called the law of following the father's blood (Jongbubŏp, 從父法).<sup>223</sup> Therefore, there was no rapid increase in the nobi population due to childbirth.

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<sup>220</sup> Yŏnsan-gun's Diary Vol 44, June 8; 13-501; The Annals of King Sŏngjong, Volume 251, March 3, 1491

<sup>221</sup> Ahn, Sŏng-jun. 'Property management of Seoul's noble family in the Late Chosun Dynasty—Analysis of Kim Su-jŭng's siblings Bunjaegi (分財記) in the Kyoto University's Kawai Library.' *National Culture Research* 84 (2019): 53-79

<sup>222</sup> Kim, Kŏn-t'ae. 'The Aspects of Family Fortune and Property Managed by Yi Hwang.' *The Journal of T'oegye Studies*, 130(0): 164

<sup>223</sup> Palais, James. *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty* (e-book. the University of Washington. 1996): 14, 278; Lim, Hak-sŏng. 'The Changes of the Nobis System and their Life form in the Chosŏn Dynasty.' *Historical and Folklore* No.41, 73-99 (2013): 78, 80

However, from 1432, when the matrilineal rule of succession (從母從賤法, 종모종천법; Jongmo-jongchǒnbǒp) was enforced in the event of a mixed marriage, if the mother was a nobi, the child would be a nobi.<sup>224</sup> Since all children are born to their mother, all children born to the nobi mother became nobis regardless of whether their father was an ordinary commoner (良人, 양인) or yangban. If either parent was a slave, the child *ipso facto* became a slave. This was called the “one-drop” rule (kr. 一賤則賤, 일천즉천; ilchǒn-jǔg-chǒn). With the enactment of this rule, all new-born children should be nobis without exception in case their mother was nobi.<sup>225</sup> Needless to say, all children born to nobi mothers became nobis, regardless of whether their father was a commoner or a yangban. And if one of the parents was a nobi, the children were also registered into nobi ledger, following the lowliness of the parents. This is the ultimate law, codified by ‘the Rule that one drop of nobi blood makes a person nobi (一賤則賤)’.

According to the one-drop rule, the total number of nobis in the Chosǒn Dynasty increased explosively to more than 40% by the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The natural reproductive system was established and worked very well, but later, another problem arose when they recognized serious difficulties in securing royal finances due to the excessive number of nobis. In 1731, the law codified that children born to the yangmin mother were recognized as yangmin status to solve the immediate financial difficulties of the royal family. The effect of this law was to allow a significant number of nobi children to be freed from nobi status and make them commoners.

With the enforcement of this law, children born to nobi mothers were no longer required

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<sup>224</sup> Lim Hak-sǒng, (2013). *ibid.*, p.78

<sup>225</sup> Lim, Hak-sǒng. *ibid.* 78

to inherit nobi status. However, when the permanent hereditary nature of the nobi status was cut off,<sup>226</sup> a fundamental flaw in the merchantability of nobis occurred. This incident was one of the reasons for the long-term downward trend in the trading price of nobi after the 18th century. Then, it resulted in the liberation of government-owned public nobis in 1801, and the nobi system was legally abolished in 1894 in the Chosŏn Dynasty.<sup>227</sup>

#### 4-3-4. Significance of nobi to the Confucian literati

From the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Chosŏn became more of a competitive society between clans based on kinship. Moreover, the power struggle and political oppression against hostile clans and tribes never ceased. Rather, they fiercely fought for the survival of the family group to stay within the inner circles of the yangban society.<sup>228</sup> One of the tools for such a power struggle was to show off the superior scale of economic wealth and predominant political power their family group held and show off their kinship relatives' prosperity. For the purpose of inflating the number of family members, they collected far more nobis than they actually needed. For example, among the princes of King Sejong, the prince Gwang-p'yŏng (廣平大君, 광평대군 1425~1444) and another prince Yŏngeung (永膺大君, 영응대군 1434 -1467) each owned more than 10,000 nobis.<sup>229</sup> Another significant case was in 1494 (the 24th year of King Sŏngjong), a record of reconciliation for

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<sup>226</sup> Lee, Young-hoon. *Economic history of Korea I* (Ilchokak. 2016): 301-2, 443

<sup>227</sup> Lim Hak-sŏng, *ibid.* (2013). 80

<sup>228</sup> The Confucian agnatic principle for the succession of ancestral rites and lineage within the a kinship group formed by descendants with the same great-grandfather and the union of tribes.

<sup>229</sup> *Annals of King Sejong*

distributing the inheritance of brother and sister Lee Ae (李瓊娣妹和會文記, 이애남매 화해문기; Lee Ae Nam-mae Hwahoemun-gi), shows the status of property possession of Lee Maeng-hyŏn (李孟賢, 1436-1487), one of the most prominent clans in Hansŏng-bu at the time.<sup>230</sup> The total number of nobis owned by Maeng-hyŏn's nine children was 758 heads, and they were residing in 72 towns and villages in the national eight provinces in Chosŏn.<sup>231</sup> His father served as prime minister, and Lee Maeng-hyŏn served as the vice minister of Personnel and the first counselor of the Office of Special Advisers (홍문관, 홍문관; Hongmun-gwan). Therefore, his family belonged to the genteel class among the aristocratic yangbans living in Hansŏng at the time. Additionally, Toe-gye Yi Hwang, one of the most prominent Confucianists, left 367 Nobis on his inheritance document.<sup>232</sup>

In this way, the minimum reservoir of humanness that nobis had held in terms of their social treatment and individual mentality until the very end of their life was deprived since they were born lowest, belonging to neither the superior nor even the lowly classes. Complete slavery was accomplished at the time so that nobis had fallen into slaves in the general sense and became nothing but beasts and livestock. On the other hand, neo-Confucianist yangban tried to make themselves up as the disciples of Confucianism who were morally awakened following the Heavenly Will and make themselves as distinguished races superior to any other kind in their

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<sup>230</sup> Ahn Sŏng-jun, (2019). Household management of a prestigious family in Seoul in the late Chosŏn Dynasty-- Analysis of the inheritance documents of the Andong Kim family in Kyoto University's Kawai Library, p.54; National Culture Research No. 84 (2019.08.31), Korea University National Culture Research Institute,

<sup>231</sup> Moon Sook-ja, (2004). Property composition of yangban household management. p.193, Kyŏngin munhwasa.

<sup>232</sup> Kim Gun-tae, (2011). Toe-gye Hakbo Vol. 130 p.164, Family Management and Household Management and Property Management by Lee Hwang.

abilities. It was believed that these faiths corresponded to the principle of neo-Confucianism and were ordained by Heaven.

With the advent of well-organized tribes of descent family groups, more revolutionary tendencies were added to this political discourse. Nonetheless, the reality was that the more rigorously they defined themselves as an elite group, the more they came to treat commoners and nobis as beasts and livestock.<sup>233</sup> In this process, the dehumanization of nobi class was accelerated. Those who violated such Confucian rules were regarded as breaking the Heavenly Mandate and thereby sinking to the level of beasts.

## **5. The life form of Nobi**

### **5-1. Nobi symbols**

In the Chosŏn dynasty, nobi symbols were created in various ways and imprinted on their bones. Such symbols were, for instance, a nobi-like attire, a nobi-like hairstyle, a nobi-like vulgar name, no family name, and always bowing the head and waist in front of a yangban. No matter how young the yangban children were, nobis had to respond politely by using honorific language. If they gave orders, they had to obey and follow them as if they were orders from their superiors. If one of them were violated, the nobi could face severe repercussions like corporeal punishment. Furthermore, nobis could not accuse their masters except for treason, so even if they were beaten to death, the way to appeal was legally blocked.

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<sup>233</sup> Deuchler, M. (1992), *ibid.* pp. 298-301

In terms of attire, male nobis were not allowed to wear a headband woven from horsehair for a topknot (망건: mang-gŏn). They could wear only a small bamboo knitted hat (패랭이: paelaeng-yi) instead of a wide-brimmed black hat made of horsehair (갓: gat). In contrast, yangbans often wore a wide-brimmed hat or long coat over their trousers and Chosŏn style jacket (저고리: jeogori) to be recognized as a member of the nobility. At first glance, the attire of nobis looked no different from those of the commoners, but the commoners were able to tie up their topknots in better shape and wore straw sandals. Female Nobis wore skirts called Duruchigi over their underpants shorter than those of women commoners, revealing their calves. In addition, a black hem was added to the skirt's hemline so that it could be recognized at a glance that they were nobis.<sup>234</sup>

There were significant differences in clothing and appearance between yangban and commoners and nobis. While there was no explicit decree to wear different attire, they quickly and easily recognized their identity as nobis in terms of their appearance. Usually, nobis' messy and untidy hairstyles and dirty bodies with tattered clothes were not stitched with their sides open, revealing their bare skin, signified their status. As for naming, novitiates had no last name and were called the most vulgar and common noun imaginable. For example, "short-bitch" or "small lad" (쪼깐이: jjokkan-i), "crooked" (꺾쇠: kkeogsoe), "working-cow" (돌쇠: dolsoe), and "working-cow-in-yard" (마당쇠: madangsoe) were names given based on nobi's appearance or

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<sup>234</sup> Kim Young-sook, (1998). Dictionary of Korean Costume Culture; Yang Suk-hyang & Kim Na-hyung, (2004). Costume Culture and Customs of Ordinary People Appearing in Genre Painting During the Late Chosun Dynasty- focusing on Danwon Kim Hong-do's Pungsok-hwachop. p.20, Korean Community Living Science 15(1): 17-26, 2004

position. In addition, some were called filthy nouns, such as “dogshit” (개똥: gaettong), “shit-gal” (분녀: bunnyeo), “fart” (방귀: bang-gwi), and “horse-shit” (말똥: malttong).<sup>235</sup>

Like most slave societies, Chosŏn had advanced nobi symbols that were mandated for them either customarily or legally. They were distinguished from surnameless vulgar naming, slave attire, and hairstyle. Chosŏn nobis were also blamed for their laziness, childishness, irresponsibility, and dullness like other slaves. They were believed to be inferior beings incapable of enjoying freedom even if given to them. Besides, they were literally bred and domesticated by their masters, similarly to many other animal livestock, increasing and decreasing the population of nobis as needed by the government’s legal mandates.

## 5-2. The nobi as the limbs of his master

Numerous remarks about nobis left by nobi owners and Chosŏn bureaucrats remain in the ancient texts of the Chosŏn Dynasty. For example, Ban-gye Ryu Hyung-won, whom James Palais praised as one of Chosŏn’s leading scholars of the new Practical Learning (Sirhak),<sup>236</sup> pointed out in his work “Ban-gye Collection of miscellaneous notes (Bangye-surok).”

They even say that the discrimination of status between the noble and the humble class is an unchanging principle and trend of Heaven. “Naturally, there are noble aristocrats and lowly Nobis in heaven and earth. Thus, the noble one gets a lowly person to work for him, and a humble one works for others. This principle is an unchanging law of Heaven, and it is also an everlasting trend.”<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Examples of nobi names listed here are those recorded in multiple Annals of the Chosŏn Dynasty. So many names of nobis are mentioned, so it is difficult to point to specific annals as the source.

<sup>236</sup> Palais, J. (1996). *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty*, p.14: e-book. The University of Washington.

<sup>237</sup> Ryu Hyung-won, (1670-1769). *Ban-gye Collection of miscellaneous notes (kr. Bang-ye-surok)* Vol. 26. Section: Slave (kr. 奴隸)

The following is a part of what the governor of Jeolla province submitted in a written appeal to King Sejo in 1456.

Nobis are like property. Anyone who steals property, even if it is insignificant, is considered a thief or robbery. Therefore, it is unacceptable to impose a light punishment on a person who threatens to extort another's nobi.<sup>238</sup>

The following is a written appeal of Yang Sŏng-ji, who served as Inspector-General at the time, to King Sejo in 1468.

Our dynasty's law on nobi has a long history, so the scholar-literati and high-ranking vassals depended on them for their daily lives. ...(omitted) ... In that sense, farmland is like the life of a person, and nobis are like the limbs of a scholarly literati. Their importance is the same, so it is impossible to abandon either one.<sup>239</sup>

Ample records of the nobi are left in the 'Records of a Refugee from Imjin Japan-Chosŏn War,' a diary written by Oh Hee-moon for nine years and three months from 1591 to 1601 on the way fleeing from the Imjin War.<sup>240</sup> His written narratives show that a yangban could do nothing without a nobi. This was because the slaves had to carry out and serve the yangban on the way to the refuge, including finding accommodation, cooking rice, and even fetching water. According to Confucian records, yangbans were of noble status, so it was considered shameful to do such a lowly thing in person. Sometimes Oh Hee-moon even slept in a frozen room through the night since he had no nobi to gather firewood. He sometimes went hungry because he had no nobis at the moment to send to others to buy grain. As such, nobis were the limbs of yangbans, and yangbans could not

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<sup>238</sup> Sep. 10, 1456, 2nd year of the Annals of King Sejo

<sup>239</sup> the Annals of King Sejo, the 14th year, The written Appeal by Yang Sŏng-ji (梁誠之), Jun. 18, 1468

<sup>240</sup> Swaemirok (瑣尾錄, 쇄미록); Oh Hee-moon (吳希文, 1539-1613)'s diary written for 9 years and 3 months during the evacuation period from Imjin War by the Japanese invasion.

do anything without nobis. Chosŏn nobis were the limbs of their master just as Aristotle described slaves as “the use of the body.”

### **5-3. The family form of nobis and their survival skills**

As Deuchler explained, it is necessary to research the family forms of the nobi,<sup>241</sup> such as the history of family development and the change in family ideology. The nobi family repeatedly divided or disbanded due to the yangban family's practice of equally distributing inheritance. What kind of family form and ideas did the nobis share in such vulnerable family relationships to manage their subservient life? Since nobis were the objects of inheritance, all are recorded in detail in this specification of dividing patrimonial properties. So, the most appropriate research method to study these related histories is to analyze the will and specification of dividing properties between heirs (분재기, boonjae-gi) of the yangban family, including the diaries written by the yangban family over their lifetime.

According to the research results of Moon Sook-ja, the meaning of lineage succession to nobis was not significant to them. The 1,741 nobis that Moon Sook-ja collected from various inheritance documents consist of 619 families. Among them, a single-person family accounts for 46% to 60% of the total, depending on the time of year. This means that there were more nobis who lived alone and passed away without any relatives than those who made up a family. In the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, 46% of single-person families, 30.2% of single families consisted only of parent

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<sup>241</sup> Deuchler, M. (1992). *The Confucian Transformation of Korea. A Study of Society and Ideology*. pp. 31-2, Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph, No. 36. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Council on East Asian Publications, Harvard University.

and unmarried children, 5.3% of immediate lineal families consisted of parents and their unmarried children, and 12.8% of disbanded families.<sup>242</sup> It was also found that only 38.2% of the slave families listed survived to the next generation. In addition, more than 60% of the slave families did not exceed one generation. All things considered, it was difficult for them to maintain even a simple blood lineage, regardless of the descent lineage that the Yangbans desperately wanted to preserve. Neither the nobi owners nor the nobis themselves had the will to protect their family lineage. When single-person families and disbanded families, excluding single families and immediate lineal families, are combined, more than half of the slaves fail to form a normal family and drift away bloodless, completely alienated from society.

Nobis could also accumulate their own fortunes behind the master's back. Although ownership of property was not recognized legally for them, it belonged to them before their wealth had been discovered and taken away by their master. In extremely rare cases, if they succeeded in collecting a fairly large fortune without being deprived of it by their masters, they could use that wealth to buy officials or to protect themselves by attaching themselves to a powerful family. Methods for a nobi to secure his property were: (1) a method of deceiving the nobi master and securing profits through intermediate embezzlement; (2) using or impersonating the nobi owner's authority; and (3) selling or commercializing the stolen or embezzled goods. Various methods had been used, including the practice of usury.<sup>243</sup> Since nobis were responsible for most of the

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<sup>242</sup> Moon Sook-ja, (2008). The Existential Mode of the Nobi Family of the Yangban Family in the 16th and 17th Century - Through Analysis of the Imchǒng-gak inheritance documents of the Gosǒng Lee Clan, p.161-165

<sup>243</sup> Lee Mun-gǒn (李文楨), (1535-1567). Mukjae's Diary; The diary left by Mukjae who recorded his daily life through about 33 years of his life before he died at the age of 74. Since too many records show

economic activities as well as the daily labor of workers, there was a high possibility that they could secure wealth through embezzlement in the intermediary transactions, and this opportunity was given to both no and bi. When they sensed that their property was discovered by the nobi master, they took various methods to protect their property, such as selling the land they owned, cheating on their master by using all means to hide it again, and in the end, there was no way out except to run away.

## **6. The nobi Trading and its chattel materiality**

The possession of nobis, as in the case of slaves, were carried out in similar and diverse ways both in the East and West. The possession of nobis was carried out in the same way as buying and selling goods, through sales and inheritance, gifts, subsidies, and entrustments to a more powerful family. However, the fundamentalist ethos of Neo-Confucianism, which was still strong in the founding era of the Chosŏn Dynasty, prevented the smooth development of the slave market. Because it is a very shameful thing for a Neo-Confucian scholar to do a for-profit business in the market, in the early days of the Chosŏn Dynasty nobis were regarded as gifts rather than objects of trade. The most common method of acquiring nobi ownership at the time was by inheritance. Slaves were subject to inheritance as part of the family property, and the inheritees were guaranteed the right to distribute them at their own will.<sup>244</sup>

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yangbans' lamenting slaves' various lies, cheating, and thief, only Mukjae's diary is exemplified here.

<sup>244</sup> Ji Sŭngjong, (1995). A Study on 'The Method of Acquiring Slavery Ownership' in the Early Chosŏn Dynasty; inheritance, gift, bounty, trading, entrustment, A study on the Nobi status in the early Chosŏn Dynasty, Ilchogak, 1995.

After the Imjin War, since the people's living conditions deteriorated and the situation changed significantly. Although it was illegal to enlist oneself as a nobi in the service of a powerful master or government office, it was widely practiced behind closed doors and had a great residual effect. As the situation matured and entered the middle of the Chosŏn Dynasty, more slaves were traded and the number of sister slaves began to increase. Moreover, any household that could afford them tried to raise the heads of nobis. In the end, they tried to make nobis for themselves in the ways of the Apryang-wichŏn (kr. 壓良爲賤, 압량위천), which involved enslaving the ordinary commoners either by means of criminal charges or financial reasons. Such an evil method of collecting nobis began to prevail in the Chosŏn Dynasty as a means of accumulating wealth. They also tried to recruit nobis by acquiring young children by picking up on the street and nurturing them into nobis in their own households. It is clear that the process of transforming ordinary poor commoners into nobis under patriarchal pressure after being incorporated into a family was the method of supplying nobis. The following is a written appeal to King Sejong that sought countermeasures against the wrong custom of turning children into nobis in 1418.

Seoul is complicated, and many lost children are wandering around the streets without finding their homes. Even good people who want to let them get back to their homes are often unable to find the exact spot of the child's house. Moreover, sometimes evil villains hide and feed these children and make them nobis. Therefore, I dare to suggest that from now on, if missing children are found, send them all to Jesaengwon (kr. 濟生院, 제생원)<sup>245</sup> so that Hojo (戶曹, 호조)<sup>246</sup> should provide foods and daily necessities to raise them temporarily, and have the parents who have lost a child go to Jesaengwon to find them.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Jesaengwon (kr. 濟生院, 제생원); A medical institution was built in 1397 in the early Chosŏn dynasty for the treatment of ordinary commoners' diseases.

<sup>246</sup> Hojo (kr. 戶曹, 호조); the ministry of finance of the Chosŏn dynasty

<sup>247</sup> The Annals of King Sejong dated August 19, 1418

Abducting children to enslave them was a crime at the time. Nevertheless, it was customarily tolerated until the late Chosŏn dynasty. The following is a case of acquiring a girl begging on the street from the diary of Oh Hee-moon. It shows that such behavior was not always malign.

(May 21, 1594) A girl about 11 or 12 years old was begging outside the gate, so I asked where her house and parents were. They lived in Juksan, and they said that their parents died at the enemy's hands at the beginning of the Imjin War. ... I thought she would die of starvation if I did not give her relief, so I had my family take her and raise her so that she could serve as a nobi on errands.<sup>248</sup>

As famine or disasters occurred in the late Chosŏn dynasty and more children were abandoned on the streets, public opinion condoned them becoming slaves rather than starving to death. As a result, the Chosŏn government allowed street children into favorable households and made them their nobis if they were raised well. As the number of nobis enslaved in this way increased, it was suggested that strong countermeasures against it should be enacted in the court of the Chosŏn government. However, such policies never worked properly in Chosŏn society.

The most common way to own and accumulate nobis was through the nobi trade. From the late 17th century to the 18th century, the nobi trade increased rapidly. By the second half of the 18th century, it gradually decreased, and by the late 19th century, the slave market deteriorated to the point that the nobi trade virtually vanished. The sharp decline in the nobi trade from the end of the 18th century appears to be closely related to the decline of the nobi's market price and actual value. Looking at the following [Tab.2 & 3], the nobi trade showed an increasing trend until the 18th century, followed by a decreasing trend after the end of the 18th century, and then dropped

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<sup>248</sup> Oh Hee-moon, May 21, 1594. *ibid.* Swaemirok

sharply after the mid-19th century. As shown in the analysis of family registers examined in [Tab.2] above, the proportion of nobis in the total population decreased rapidly from the mid-18th century onwards.

[Tab.2] Number of nobi trading and ratio by gender and period

Year	No (M)	Bi (F)	Total
1689-1710	35 (42%)	48 (58%)	83 (13%)
1710-1750	69 (43%)	90 (57%)	159 (25%)
1750-1790	73 (44%)	92 (56%)	165 (26%)
1790-1820	42 (41%)	59 (59%)	101 (16%)
1820-1860	28 (30%)	65 (70%)	93 (15%)
1860-1894	8 (24%)	25 (76%)	33 (5%)
Total	255 (40%)	379 (60%)	634(100%)

Ref. 1; Lee Jung-Soo & Kim Hee-Ho, (2008). *The Characteristics of Nobis and its Prices during the Late Chosŏn*

[Tab.3] the reality of nobi trades in the mid-late of Chosŏn Dynasty

	16 <sup>th</sup> c.	17 <sup>th</sup> century.			18 <sup>th</sup> century			19 <sup>th</sup> century			total	
	early	early	late	total	early	late	total	early	late	total		
Nbr of trades (percent)	39 (4.9)	46 (5.8)	105 (13.3)	151 (19.1)	178 (22.6)	143 (18.1)	321 (40.7)	156 (19.8)	122 (15.5)	278 (35.2)	789 (100)	
Trading nobis (percent)	78 (4.4)	109 (6.2)	296 (16.8)	405 (23)	404 (22.9)	356 (20.2)	760 (43.1)	324 (18.4)	196 (11.1)	520 (29.5)	1763 (100)	
Nbr of bi/trade (percent)	21 (53.2)	20 (43.6)	59 (56.1)	80 (52.7)	94 (52.7)	83 (57.9)	177 (55.1)	93 (59.3)	80 (65.3)	171 (61.5)	445 (56.4)	
Self- enslaved	Nobis/trade	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.2)	(9.8)	(4.7)	(27.8)	(44.9)	(34.2)	(12.1)
	Nbr of trade	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(0.6)	(14.0)	(6.5)	(28.2)	(45.9)	(36.0)	(15.3)

Ref.2; Lee Woo-Yon & Cha Myung-Soo, (2010). *Structure and level of slave prices in the late Chosŏn Dynasty, 1678-1889; this is the combined table concerning the tables in the paper mentioned above.*

Despite the increase in the number of nobi trades and the volume of the market, the volume of the entire market was on the decline. Meanwhile, the actual price of nobi fell sharply. However, the trends of trading 'bi (female slave) in Tables 2 and 3 show that from the 18th century to the 19th century, the demand for 'bi' rather than 'no,' which is a male slave, increased. It can be inferred that the usage of nobi labor gradually changed to such duties as housework and textile spinning rather than the agricultural labor force that required muscular strength. Of particular note is that self-enslaved nobis began to increase after 1760 at a rapid rate. The cause of the decline in the actual price of nobi can be explained by supply and demand in the nobi market. With respect to the supply-side, the number of nobis began to decrease rapidly due to the implementation of the nobi status law in 1731.<sup>249</sup> This decrease in the supply of nobis should serve to increase the market price. However, the real price of nobis steadily declined.<sup>250</sup> One of the main reasons for this decline in property portfolio for nobi was the continued price reduction of nobi since the early 18th century. According to Lee Woo-yŏn and Cha Myung-soo's research on the nobi trade and fluctuations in nobi prices from 1678 to 1889, the real price, expressed in rice, per male nobi in his 30s was equivalent to one sŏk of polished rice (1 sŏk; 석=144kg) in the 1700s. Later, the nobi price fell rapidly over the next century to less than half what they were in the 1700s by the late 18th century.

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<sup>249</sup> In 1731, the 7th year of King Yŏngjo, he formally enacted a law stating that the status of a nobi should follow that of its mother. According to this law, which is called "Nobi's status to follow its Mother Act (奴良妻從母從良法)," if the mother is from a commoner, the child becomes a commoner even if the father is a nobi. When a male nobi marries a female commoner, their children are freed from slavery, and the path to manumission had been opened by this law. This policy led to a decrease in the nobi population.

<sup>250</sup> Lee Young-hoon, (1998). The trend of the nobi institution in Korean history, nobis, serfs, slaves: a comparative history of subordinate people, Ilchogak.

In the 1880s, it declined to one-third of the 1700s level. Thus, it is no exaggeration to say that the actual value of nobi reached near zero levels.<sup>251</sup>

What does it mean for the real price in the market to fall even when supply decreases? It means that it was related to the aspect of the demand, rather than supply, of nobis. In a word, the cost of maintaining them became greater than the market value they could produce, leading no one to purchase them. Given the psychological value of the nobi owner's desire for honorable dominance, it became difficult to maintain nobis because the infrastructure of the Chosŏn society had cracked and the dynasty had begun to disintegrate. This phenomenon coincides with the historical record that the country of Chosŏn had been infested with vagrants and poor peasants since the mid to late 19th century. It also means that the property value of land began to take up more weight than nobis. In other words, Chosŏn people were moving gathering nobis for wealth to land.

As the socio-economic system of Chosŏn continued to flow in the direction of the dismantlement of the nobi institution, the Chosŏn royal government issued a decree to manumit the nobis held by the Chosŏn administrative agencies of the Chosŏn Dynasty in 1801. They were public official nobis of about 66,000 heads across the country. In 1894, by enacting a decree to manumit the private Nobis owned by individuals, the nobi institution that had been in existence for over a thousand years in the Korean peninsula was legally liquidated.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Lee Woo-yŏn & Cha Myung-soo, (2010). Structure and Level of Slave Price in Late Chosŏn, 1678-1889, pp.120-21, *The study of economics*, vol.58, no.4, pp. 99-132 (34 pages)

<sup>252</sup> Jeon Hyung-taek, (1979). Government slaves of the late Joseon Period, *Historical Research* 9, p.126; Im Hak-sŏng, (2015). *The Journal of Korean Historical-folklife*, (41), 2013.3, 73-99 (27 pages); Kim Gun-tae, (2015). Life of the descendants of 19th-century public slaves - Case of Daejeonghyeon, Jeju Island - *Research on Ethnic Culture* No. 69 (2015.11.30), Korea University Research Institute for Ethnic

## 7. The Decline and dismantlement of the Nobi system

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the nobi population began to decline sharply, and the nobi institution itself began to dismantle during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. With the increase of fugitive nobis and fallen yangbans following the Imjin War of 1592-98,<sup>253</sup> and the Chōngmyo-Horan (Manchu invasion) of 1627<sup>254</sup>, social phenomena such as the laxity of the yangban status system, reduction of nobi labor, and expansion of land operated directly by the landlord are often cited as the causes of its implosion. According to Shikata Hiroshi's analysis of the household-family registers of ten 'myōns'<sup>255</sup> in Daegu-bu<sup>256</sup> from 1690 to 1858, the demographic change of the social strata during the Chosŏn Dynasty in the 18<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> century is presented in the following table.

[Tab.4] The Population of 6 myōns in Daegu-bu Gyōngsang province  
by Social Status and Class (1690-1858) (unit: %)

Year	Household				Population			
	Yangban	Commoner	Nobi	Total	Yangban	Commoner	Nobi	Total
1690	290	1,694	1,172	3,156	1,027	6,894	5,992	13,913
	(9.2)	(53.7)	(37.1)	(100)	(7.4)	(49.5)	(43.1)	(100)
1732	579	1,689	824	3,092	2,260	8,066	4,940	15,266
	(18.7)	(54.6)	(26.6)	(100)	(14.8)	(52.8)	(32.4)	(100)
1789	1,055	1,616	140	2,810	3,928	6,415	1,957	12,300
	(37.5)	(57.5)	(5.0)	(100)	(31.9)	(52.2)	(15.9)	(100)
1858	2,099	842	44	2,985	6,410	2,659	4,126	13,195
	(70.3)	(28.2)	(1.5)	(100)	(48.6)	(20.2)	(31.3)	(100)

Ref. 2; Source; Shikata Hiroshi, (1938). *A Study on the Population of the Yi Dynasty by Social Status and Class*, pp.387-410, Gyōngsōng Imperial Univ. *Chosun Economics* 8. 3, 1938; recited from. Lee Young-hoon, (2016). *The Economic History of Korea I*, p.444, Ilchogak

Culture, pp.381-415

<sup>253</sup> The battle with Japan, which invaded Korea twice from 1592 to 1598.

<sup>254</sup> In 1627 (Injo 5, the 16th King), the war between Hügeum (Manchu) and Chosŏn lasted for about two months from mid-January to early March.

<sup>255</sup> 'Myōn' is equivalent to a 'district' in the classification of U.S. administrative divisions,

<sup>256</sup> 'Daegu-bu' means 'Daegu-city' today which locates in Northern Kyung-sang province in the southern part of Korea. In a word, 'bu' means 'city' regarding Chosŏn administrative divisions.

According to [Tab.4] of Shikata's study in 1938, the number of nobi households decreased from 37.1% in 1690 to 1.5% in 1858. However, the nobi population continued to decline from 43.1% to 15.9% from 1690 to 1789 but rose again from 15.9% to 31.3% in 1858.<sup>257</sup> Recent studies have revealed that it was caused by the fact that some noble yangban families inflated the reports of their own nobi numbers, including fugitive and lost nobis, and in some cases, added fictitious ones to exaggerate their family power. Such things were unimaginable before the two wars when the family register system was strictly controlled but began to occur due to the negligent management of the family register system from the mid-18th century.<sup>258</sup>

The decrease in the nobi population was also found in the Ulsan-bu household-family registers analyzed by Jōng Seok-jong. The number of nobi-households decreased from 13.9% to 0.6% between 1729 and 1867 and the nobi population from 21.8% to 14.4%.<sup>259</sup> On the family registers of Dansōng-hyōn analyzed by Lee Jun-gu, it appears that the number of nobi-households decreased from 46.8% to 8% between 1678 and 1786.<sup>260</sup> The places mentioned above are administratively located in Gyōngsang province, where the yangban institutions were developed. As shown above, the decline of the nobi population was a nationwide phenomenon.

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<sup>257</sup> Hiroshi Shikata (四方博), (1938). A Study on the Population of the Yi Dynasty by Status and Class, Kyōngsōng Imperial University Law Society, Economic History of Chosōn 8. 3, 1938.

<sup>258</sup> Lee Young-hoon, (1998). The trend of the nobi institution in Korean history, nobis, serfs, slaves: a comparative history of subordinate people, Ilchogak.

<sup>259</sup> Jōng Seok-jong, (1983). A Study on Social Changes in the Late Chosōn Dynasty, pp. 248-249, Ilchokak.

<sup>260</sup> Lee Jōngu, (1993). A Study on Changes in Social Status and Rolls in the Late Chosōn Dynasty, p.211, Ilchokak.

## 8. Summary

This chapter explored, firstly, the emergence and embodiment process of the Chosŏn nobi, and then, the social status and identity of nobi were also examined. As a result, it was found that the existential mode of Chosŏn nobi was perfectly consistent with the conditions of slavery that are discussed by Finley and Patterson, including Plato, Aristotle, Grotius, and Locke in terms of the family form of a slave, the actual conditions of the slave trade, and their status symbols.

In conclusion, nobis turned out to be slaves who had been completely deprived of their right to collect or possess property or even claim the rights to their own bodies or lives. In terms of lifestyle, the Chosŏn nobi were found to be an existence of socially dead and alienated by nature and were regarded as strangers in their hometowns, just like the slaves of other civilizations. Therefore, their bodies were completely reified and considered as chattels like products, and livestock. Thus, they were traded in the nobi market and inherited from generation to generation. This is evidence proving that the lowly people called nobis in Chosŏn were none other than slaves

Then, this study revealed that although a small-scale nobi society had existed for a thousand years since Silla, a large-scale nobi society in which more than 30% of the population was nobis continued for 300-350 years from the 1390s to the mid or late eighteenth century in the Chosŏn society. Specifically, Chosŏn was transformed into a large-scale slave society within 70-80 years after its foundation, and everybody knows that such a sudden change cannot be a natural phenomenon. Concerning the question of why such a radical transformation occurred at the time, this study shows that it was the result of the implementing the radical policy to construct a

Confucian utopia based on the hierarchical status system in the land of the Chosŏn Dynasty by the Confucian revolutionaries.

Finally, this study found out what kinds of human groups were designated as objects of enslavement in the early days of the founding of Chosŏn. The first target group was the monks, temple nobis, and labor group of the Koryŏ dynasty.<sup>261</sup> As temples and large-scale farms were demolished, they had no choice but to entrust themselves to the families of the newly rising ruling class, whether voluntarily or unwillingly, to become nobis (Min Soon-ŭi. 2016. 1-48). The second human resource that can be pointed out was, as pointed out above, those who refused family register registration and had wandering nomadic habits, such as Yang Su-chŏk, who wandered the administrative empty areas of Koryŏ society as invincible.

As the wave of radical enslavement subsided, the reproduction mechanism of the nobi population was institutionalized and settled by the law of nobi following the mother's blood. In this respect, large-scale slavery in the early days of founding Chosŏn was intentionally planned and made up as another side of the same coin of the yangban system. That is to say, Chosŏn slavery was created by the neo-Confucian Revolution to build an ideal Confucianist state governed by virtuous sages. The founding of the Chosŏn Dynasty was a revolution by the Confucian literati that transformed the Buddhist state regime into a Confucianist apparatus. However, it was not a revolution that entailed rapid changes in a short period.

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<sup>261</sup> Sŏng-hyŏn (1525). Yongjae-chonghwa, Volume 8: 'I, T'aejong, have reformed the 12 Buddhist denominations already, leaving only two sects, but I will renovate the land institution of the temples thoroughly.

Rather, like the modern Industrial Revolution, it was a slow but steady revolution that started from the founding of the Chosŏn Dynasty in the end of the 14th century and ended in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century.

The seventeenth century is often called "the century of ritual" because it witnessed an unprecedented preoccupation with "ritual learning" (yehak, 禮學) and consequently a proliferation of ritual handbooks.<sup>262</sup>

Humility, honesty, and respectful manners to others are feasible with one's sincerity, but strict adherence to the formalities and procedures set forth by Yehak was an unworkable request without sufficient wealth and authority, which was no need for the poor commoners and the lowly. Inevitably, it was a culture for a small number of aristocrats. However, it was the collective memory that all the commoner and the lowly of Chosŏn longed to join such a culture. As Deuchler argues, the newly featured Confucian society completed in the mid to late 17<sup>th</sup> century was a totally unexpected society that was far from the initial dream of the revolutionary founders of the Chosŏn Dynasty.<sup>263</sup> The result of that long and tedious revolution was a large-scale slave society.

Looking at the historical process of emergence and becoming of Chosŏn nobi, one can see what kind of collective memory they had accumulated in their lifetime. No one could deny that their lives corresponded to that of slaves. Chosŏn nobis, like other slaves, were already socially dead and alienated to the extent that they were regarded as exiles even in their hometowns. Their

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<sup>262</sup> Deuchler, M. (1992), *ibid.* p.173

<sup>263</sup> Deuchler, M. (1992), *ibid.* p.6; the second half of Chosŏn was a conspicuous different from the late Koryŏ. The driving force that initiated and directed this transformation was provided by Neo-Confucianism which must be the fundamental transformation that Chosŏn society underwent during the transition period from Koryŏ.; p.87 It was the thrust of this ideology that in time completed the patrilineal transformation of Korean society.

bodies were completely reified and considered chattel property such as livestock, and they were passed down from one generation to the next. It has been sufficiently proven that nobi was a slave who was completely deprived of his rights to the point of not being able to claim the right to collect and own a piece of property, nor to claim ownership of his own body and life.

In this form of life, the highest value of their lifeform was 'survival' itself. They were beings who could bear any insult and shame just to survive. As the highest value of life, 'survival' is engraved in collective memory and emotion. It is conveyed in the following proverb from Chosŏn society: "It is better to roll in a field of dog shit in this world than live well in the afterworld." The commitment of Chosŏnese to life is engraved in their collective memory, such as proverbs, extremely laziness, good at lying, deceit and fraudulence only to survive.

But slaves were like the limbs of their masters. Without slaves, Yangban slave masters could not do anything. According to the teachings of Neo-Confucianism, manual labor was for the lowly. Slaves who noticed such weakness in their masters, despite naturally being afraid of their masters, ignored them. The desire to serve a strong and powerful yangban master and to rebel against one's master always collide in their minds, engraving satire and sarcasm into the collective memory of Koreans.

Nobis could accumulate their own fortunes behind the master's back. In rare cases, if they succeeded in collecting a fairly large fortune without being deprived of it by their masters, they could use that wealth to buy officials or protect themselves by attaching themselves to a powerful yangban family. Methods for a nobi to secure his property and survival consisted of deceiving the nobi master and securing profits through intermediate embezzlement, fraud using or impersonating

the nobi owner's authority, and selling or commercializing the stolen or embezzled goods to erase the trace of illegality. The corrupted spirit of the community in this way was the heartbreaking result of the Confucian revolution in Chosŏn, which started with the dreams of building an ideal Confucianist state based on governance by virtue.

As a result, Chosŏn nobis became the existence who did not keep their own families, nor did they maintain their own households in their lifetime. It was almost impossible for nobis to maintain their family from generation to generation, so there was no need to use family surnames. At all times, they had to live as a single alienated unit and live as strangers. The symbol of nobi makes them give up their dignity and personality by engraving a sense of inferiority to their souls such as extreme laziness, good at lies, deceit, and fraud. In this type of life, the highest value of a nobi's life was 'survival' itself. In other words, the vast majority of their collective memory was filled with the insults and shame they endured to survive.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> Such a narrative can be witnessed countless times through the various types of epic songs handed down to this day, and the lamentation of slaves in shamanic folklore, chants, and narrative literature.

## Chapter. 4

### Resurgent Memory of Syncretic Confucian Shamanism

#### 1. The Purpose of this study

The traditional shamanic customs in Korea had been downtrodden under the pretext that they were sludges of premodern irrationality that should be cleaned up from the current industrial society. Such a situation of shamanic traditions and customs did not change regardless of the era and regime, not to mention the Chosŏn Dynasty or the Japanese colonial period, and almost until the 1980s. Despite those oppressions, their influences have not declined but expanded more than before, even in the cutting-edge digital society of Korea in the 2020s.<sup>265</sup>

How can the tenacious vitality of shamanism traditions originate? Rigorously speaking, at the very spot of raising this question, the need arises to verify the historicity of Chosŏn shamanism as its origin (Gheorghiuță Geană. 2005).<sup>266</sup> Kim Sŏng-rye interprets these attributes of Korean shamanism as follows.

Korean shamanism is a modern religious phenomenon created here and now. This is the premise of the ‘cultural anthropology of Korean shamanism’. In modern Korean society, Mugyo (Korean shamanism) is familiar but heterogeneous, and although it is a typical religious tradition

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<sup>265</sup> Concerning the market situation of the Korean fortune-telling industry, refer to the following sites; \* In South Korea, fortune-telling will soon be a \$3.7bn business. *Economist* (02/24/2018) accessed Nov. 19, 2021; <https://www.economist.com/asia/2018/02/24/in-south-korea-fortune-telling-will-soon-be-a-37bn-business>; \*About 9 out of 10 people... Youth looking for fortune tellers. *Dailian* (03/18/2021) accessed Jun. 08, 2021, <https://m.dailian.co.kr/news/view/973341>; \* [Why] A shaman and a fortune teller who said they had surpassed 1 million people. *Chosŏn Ilbo*. (2017).

[https://www.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2017/11/24/2017112402043.html](https://www.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2017/11/24/2017112402043.html)

<sup>266</sup> Gheorghiuță Geană. “Remembering Ancestors: Commemorative Rituals and the Foundation of Historicity”, (*History and Anthropology*, 16:3, 2005) 349-361,

in Korea, it has uncomfortable attributes to contemporary Koreans. Once before, although Korean shamans were condemned as pre-modern superstitious actors in society, they are being revived as objects of nostalgia for traditional culture and as monumental icons of rural life (Kim, Söng-rye. 2018).<sup>267</sup>

Although Kim mentioned that the thriving shamanism in contemporary Korean society is a religious phenomenon being created here and now, she also seems not sure whether it is a new creation as a religious phenomenon or if it is just a revival of the remnant of Chosön shamanism caused by nostalgia for traditional culture.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the historical process of the emergence and embodiment of Confucianist shamanism and its peculiarity as a religion of the Chosön Dynasty. In other words, this study is to find why such superstitious traditions and customs still have a strong affinity with contemporary Koreans. Specifically, it is expected to reveal why the remnants of the Chosön shamanism, the ghosts of the past, are still actively working in the minds of Koreans since their influences look very strong enough to serve as a carrier to transmit the remains of pre-modern customs of Chosön and an incubator to cultivate nostalgia for them even though they are obsolete already.

In that context, this study shows why Chosön shamanism, such as divination, fortune telling, mudang (Korean shaman) kut, and geomancy, was so widely distributed with popularity among the overall Chosöneses, regardless of the Yangban aristocrats, commoners, and lowly. In other words, Chosön Dynasty was a society dedicated to Confucian shamanism as its only religion.

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<sup>267</sup> Kim, Söng-rye. *Cultural Anthropology of Korean shamanism* (Sonamoo-Pine Tree. 2018):16  
Michael C. Kalton, et al. *Religion and Ritual in Korean Society*. Ed. Laurel Kendall and Griffin Dix (the Regents of the University of California. 1987)

This study also finds that Chosŏn shamanism was differentiated from the shamanic folk beliefs of Koryŏ, which maintained its existence by parasitizing Buddhism as its host. However, the shamanism of Chosŏn maintained its continuity through blind loyalty to the doctrine of Confucianism and propagating its doctrine, which was the absolute ruling ideology at that time. As a result, the Confucian revolution performed by Chosŏn literati transformed even the spirituality of Chosŏnese into the Confucian scheme of beliefs and ethics with the cooperation of shamanism.

Many Koreans believe that the shamanic customs of Chosŏn are a beautiful and precious tradition containing Confucian virtues that should be preserved. They had no feeling of resistance against the superstitious pre-modern heritage because they did not consider it superstitious. It is also because shamanism forms a hybrid religion, with which Koreans have a very close affinity since it has already been syncretized with Confucianism, Buddhism, and even Christianity recently. In sum, the reviving shamanic culture in modern Korean society is not essentially a new religious phenomenon, but a phenomenon in which the remnants of Chosŏn shamanism engraved in the spiritual heart of Koreans are currently reviving for various reasons. It is a reaction against the scientific rationalism of the modern era, and nostalgia for the ghosts of the past derived from the collective memory of Chosŏn folklore.

The significance of this study is that it provides far-reaching implications concerning the causes and effects of such a phenomenon which should be investigated related to its dynamic mechanisms to determine how it affects and what the result is in the overall politics, economy, and culture of Korean society. That is why this paper explores the spiritual and religious world of

Chosŏnese, including the perspective of their afterlife, the collective memory, and the value system they embraced in their hearts to survive their harsh reality, mainly in a way through the interpretive framework.

Lastly, this study would hopefully contribute to understanding why Koreans' mentality is still wandering around where the pre-modern and the modern are doubly overlapped, even though they enjoy the cutting-edge digital life of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It would also contribute to the development of the social discourse concerning social divisions and conflicts caused by the friction between the past traditional value system and the currently required social norms by revealing the driving forces for the tenacious vitality of Chosŏn shamanism until today.

However, this chapter has a limitation in that the quantitative analysis task of revealing how much pre-modern elements remain in the bottom layers of modern Korean society and how they affect divisions and conflicts between premodernity and modernity among Koreans are left as a study for the next opportunity.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2-1. Review of related research**

Studies on Chosŏn shamanism are abundant. However, many of them are confined to research and analysis of shamanism itself, limited to its form and structure. The scope of the research does not extend to the religious, philosophical, or psychological characteristics of Chosŏnese themselves.

For this reason, it is unclear what role the traditional shamanism of Chosŏn still plays in contemporary society in terms of its connection with its pre-modern elements. While traditional shamanism reflects a close relationship with Chosŏnese as well as with contemporary Koreans, it has not yet been expounded what form of dynamic mechanism is working to transmit its traditional premodern elements from premodern Chosŏn to today's Korean society.

Kim Sŏng-rye has summarized the research streams of Korean shamanism in her work "Cultural Anthropology of Korean Shamanism." The first research stream is Lee Nŭnghwa,<sup>268</sup> who coined the term "Musok (巫俗, shamanic folklore)" in Korea. In his work, "The study of Chosŏnese Shamanism (Lee Nŭnghwa, 1927)," he cites the common use of shaman's handbells in the practice of shamanic rituals in Chosŏn, Japan, and Manchuria, binding them together as a single culture and asserting that they have a cultural and religious affinity with each other. He argues that the cultures of this region have an affinity with the shamanism of antiquity. The second is the stream of Choi Nam-sŏn,<sup>269</sup> who analyzed the Dangun myth by comparing it with primitive religions and cultures in the Northeast Asian region and attempted to recreate shamanism as a long-standing tradition of the Chosŏn nation. Son Jintae<sup>270</sup> and Takashi Akiba broke away from the theory

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<sup>268</sup> Lee Nŭnghwa (1869-1943); He studied Chinese characters at a young age and entered and graduated from an English school in 1887, a Chinese language school in 1892, and Hansŏng French school in 1895. In 1918, he published "The comprehensive history of Buddhism in Chosŏn." He worked and wrote many books until his death in 1943; A comparison of various religions in Korea, Unjusa Temple, 1912; The History of Buddhism in Joseon, 1918; The Study of the Chosŏn Shamanism (Dongyang Sŏwon, 1927)

<sup>269</sup> Choi Nam-sŏn (1890-1957); In 1907, he dropped out of Waseda University, Japan. He published several nationalist magazines due to repeated discontinuance and later, he participated in the 3.1 Independence Movement as one of the 33 national representatives.

<sup>270</sup> Son Jintae (1900 -?); He was a historian and folklorist during the Japanese colonial period and is evaluated as a person who studied Korean history based on a new nationalist view. Graduated from the Faculty of Law and Literature at Waseda University in 1927. In 1932, he founded the Korean Folklore Society, and in 1933 he founded the journal Joseon Folklore. From 1946 he served as a professor of history

centered on national culture and introduced the concept of indigenous culture by arguing that shamanism is a social custom of the grass-root people.<sup>271</sup>

During the Japanese colonial era, Murayama Jijun (村山智順) investigated and analyzed Chosŏnese folk beliefs and religions to understand their thoughts, mindsets, and culture from the viewpoint of colonizers. In his work “Ghosts of Chosŏn,” he condensed the ideology and behavior of Chosŏnese into the following few characteristics. Firstly, he pointed out that Chosŏnese commonly show a passive attitude toward their life that pursues happiness through shaman-gut that chases ghosts away, based on a shamans’ exorcism. Secondly, the Chosŏnese relied on geomancy to find a propitious site for a grave or housebuilding, clinging to a community dominated by low-level familism, hoping only for fortune to occur in one's life. Lastly, they stuck to shamanic religious rituals and superstitious folklores that pursue happiness in this world. In sum, Murayama Jijun described the Chosŏnese overall attitude toward their life as a mentality habituated to thinking in terms of fate and the assistance of others.<sup>272</sup>

Kim Seong-rye defines shamanism not only as a superstitious tradition but also as a modern religious phenomenon.<sup>273</sup> However, these studies have a limit in that they define Chosŏn shamanism from the diachronic perspective of the Dangun myth of Gochosŏn, or that they have

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at Seoul National University's College of Liberal Arts, Assistant Minister of Education, and as Dean of Seoul National University's College of Liberal Arts in 1950. After the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, he was abducted to North Korea in September of that year, and nothing has been known about his life or death after that.

<sup>271</sup> Kim Sŏng-rye, (2018). Cultural Anthropology of the Korean Shamanism. p.92-4, Sonamoo

<sup>272</sup> Murayama Chijun(村山智順), (1990). Ghosts of Chosŏn: Korean edition by Kim Heekyoung, Dongmunsŏn

<sup>273</sup> Kim Sŏng-rye, (2018). Ibid., p.16-7, Sonamoo

been limited to empirical field studies of Chosŏn's ghosts and personal shamanic gut. The reality is that there are not enough academic achievements to explain why shamanism, including fortune-telling, divination, and shaman's gut, had become popular with the Chosŏnese people regardless of yangban or grassroots and why it is prosperous today.

## **2-2. Theoretical review;**

### **Compatibility of Confucianism with shamanism**

Although Chosŏnese shamanism appears to have taken various forms in its practice and method, such as fortunetelling, divination, shaman's gut, and geomancy, it was, at bottom, founded on the principle of *I-ching* (易經). As discussed earlier, traditional shamanism in the Korean Peninsula, based on the widespread folklore and beliefs from Silla and Koryŏ ages, was amalgamated with the Buddhist ideology. By the end of the 14th century, ideological repression by the neo-Confucian revolutionaries in Chosŏn led to the replacement of the mainframe of its narrative with Confucian ancestor worship. Chosŏn shamans replaced the theoretical frame of the shamanic narrative with the Confucian logic of *I-Ching*. It was regarded as the highest sutra among the Confucian classics by Chosŏnese literati, which were also the absolute ruling ideology of the Chosŏn Dynasty.

The *I-Ching* (易經, 역경) was initially called the *Zhouyi* (周易, 주역), a divination manual that appeared about 3,000 years ago in the early days of the Zhou Dynasty. 'Zhou (周, 주)' is the name of the dynasty in ancient China, and 'Yi (易, 역)' means a series of changes in all kinds of things and phenomena in the universe. In ancient China, the bones of turtles or animals were scorched

with fire and the cracks on them were believed to be signs from Heaven that contained an implication for auspicious or inauspicious changes that would happen in the future. So, it was used for divination purposes since it was believed to be a form of assistance that Heaven gives to poor humans to save themselves from unexpected disasters and adversities in the future. During the Zhou Dynasty, yarrow stalks were used for divination. It is said that Confucius later found out about the *Zhouyi*, and while studying it, he lamented, “If I had known this *Zhouyi* even two years earlier, I would have known the mandate of Heaven much better.”<sup>274</sup>

According to the records of the *Biography of Confucian Scholars of the History Book of the Han Dynasty* (漢書儒林傳, 한서 유림전), Confucius was engrossed in working on the *Zhouyi* in the latter days of his life so that he read the yarrow stalks of the *Zhouyi* as many times as to break the leash that tied the yarrow stalks together. To interpret it, he wrote a separate note for the *Zhouyi*. As a result, it has been recognized as one of the sutras (經, 경; kyǒng) of Confucianism, overcoming the previous status of ordinary ancient Chinese fortune books. Later, the *Zhouyi* came to be regarded as the highest level of Confucianism as it is said to be the study that enables the sagely to understand the organizing principles of the world and the mandate of heaven.

During the Chosŏn Dynasty, the *Zhouyi* was revered as the highest sutra for Confucian literati. King Sejong’s words in the *Annals of King Sejong* clearly show how important the *Zhouyi* was regarded.

**The Annals of King Sejong, vol. 11, April 26, 1421, 3rd year of the Reign.**

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<sup>274</sup> *The Analects of Confucius*, vol. Sul-yi (述而, the collection of Confucius words)

King ordered that “If you are going to follow the instruction of the Family Rites of Zhu Xi as the way to choose the date of the service to my mother's rites, you should get the auspicious date by divination, and If you would follow the legend of old Kings, you should follow a custom of receiving the blessed date by referring to them.”

When King Sejong set the date of his mother’s ancestral rites, he ordered his servants to practice divination and choose the auspicious date. It appears that even in the royal family of the Chosŏn Dynasty, fortune-telling and divination were an important part of daily life, and that it was not considered superstitious since it was regarded as the Confucian way.

**The Annals of King Sejong, vol. 48, April 5, 1430, 12th year of the Reign**

(A servant tells the king) To qualify for the examination to select national civil servants, I think it would be right to grant only those who have mastered the Book of Rites, the Great Learning, and the analects of Confucius one after another in order, and finally, who reached out to the highest stage of Zhouyi. I believe that is the right qualifications to take the national exam.

**The Annals of King Sejong, vol. 49, August 22, 1430, the 12th year of the Reign**  
***Hwang Hyeon et al. Appeals Revival Plan to Study Confucian Classics Harder***

In the future, I would like to propose that it would be desirable for those who passed all the exams from the Great Learning to the Zhouyi to be exempted from some national civil service exam procedures and to hire all of them even if they did not pass the exam.

**The Annals of King Sejong, vol. 58, October 25, 1432, 14th year of the Reign**

King Sejong said that these days when the Crown Prince greets me, I personally teach the main principle of Zhouyi to him.

King Sejong, the greatest king of Chosŏn Dynasty, relied on the *Zhouyi (I-Ching)* divination so deeply that the noble subjects and the common people who served in his court undoubtedly admired the *Zhouyi*.

This means that the cosmology of neo-Confucianism essentially included the buffering area, tolerant of Buddhism, shamanic folklore, and geomancy, which were criticized by Chosŏn

Confucian literati as heresy and superstition. Even in the royal family, kut and divination were considered necessary for important events. For that reason, if Chosŏnese divination and geomancy adopted the Confucian theoretical framework of Zhouyi, the shaman's Kut was syncretized with the teaching of Confucian ancestor worship. The core ideology of Neo-Confucianism and Family Rites of Zhu Xi emphasized that the true filial piety was to serve even dead ancestors as if they were living parents. The core teaching of Chosŏn Confucianism of filial piety created and embodied the extreme in ancestor worship.

From a neo-Confucian perspective in Chosŏn society, whether one's parents were alive or deceased, the descendants should serve them with the utmost respect as if they were all still living. If not, they would be stigmatized as disobedient, unfilial children and be condemned by everyone around them. Even if the unfilial died and entered the afterworld, they would be destined to be punished by their parents as well as other family ancestors and have to wander forever alone in the darkness of the ghostdom.<sup>275</sup> Therefore, if there is one most important event in the life of Chosŏnese, it was none other than the ancestral rites for the worship. According to the *Family Rites of Zhu Xi*, which stipulates the procedures for Confucian ceremonies at home, ordinary people had to perform ancestral rites up to their fourth ancestor.

If someone did not serve all ancestors, up to the fourth generations of their ancestors, such as parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents during their lifetime,

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<sup>275</sup> Deuchler, M. (1992). *The Confucian Transformation of Korea. A Study of Society and Ideology*. pp. 130-1, Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph, No. 36. Cambridge, Massachusetts

they would be accused of being disobedient descendants. According to Buswell, Jr., Confucian families had to observe different rituals for ancestors annually in the following way.

In his primer, Yi Ŏnjök introduces four kinds: seasonal rituals (sije); the memorial ritual exclusively dedicated to the deceased father (nyeje), memorial rituals dedicated to close ancestors on the anniversary of their deaths (kije); and the grave ritual performed at the gravesites of deceased ancestors (myoje).<sup>276</sup>

The rituals held annually by subordinate descent lines (小宗, 소종; Sojong) occurred about sixteen times a year. Combined with the ritual practiced on the early morning of New Year's day and the other seasonal rituals, it comes to about twenty times a year. In addition, there were separate rituals held by superordinate descent lines (大宗, 대종; Daejong).<sup>277</sup> The daily life of the Chosŏn yangban was a continuous series of ancestor rituals. Deuchler referred to this custom as Koreans living "Under the Ancestors' Eyes" throughout their whole life.<sup>278</sup> In a word, Chosŏnese lived in a world where the dead overwhelmed the living.

As will be discussed in more detail in the next section, Chosŏnese believed that the souls of the deceased ancestors had to live with their descendants for nearly a hundred years since there was no separate world for their souls to return to after death, whether in hell or heaven. Of course, great men in history had their souls not scattered into nature forever but transformed into divine

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<sup>276</sup> Robert E. Buswell, Jr., eds. 2007. *Religions of Korea in Practice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p.167.

<sup>277</sup> Daejong (大宗, 대종); In the lineage of a family group sharing the same surname and origin, Daejong refers to the eldest family line that is succeeded by the eldest to the next eldest son of each generation. Sojong (小宗, 소종) refers to a family lineage that diverged from the Daejong by the second or third son, not by the eldest in passing down the generations.

<sup>278</sup> Deuchler, (2015). *Under the Ancestors' Eyes: Kinship, Status, and Locality in Premodern Korea*, p.271-4, Harvard East Asian Monographs 378. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center.

beings, mountain gods, sea gods, and guardian spirits of their descendants. However, they believed that all the souls of ancestral gods and spirits should respond to the invitations by the competent shamans, which gave abundant resources to Chosŏn shamanism.

The belief that one's ancestors stayed around them even after death and the existence of Chosŏn shamans, mudang who could invite them to have a conversation, were an opportunity for both of Confucianism and shamanism. They were not like water and oil that cannot be mixed but to be syncretized together someday.

### **3. The historical process of embodying Confucian shamanism**

#### **3-1. Chosŏn shamanism, cut off from the Koryŏ tradition**

One of the essential differences between Koryŏ and early Chosŏn shamanism was the opposite view of the afterlife. Confucianism did not acknowledge the existence of the afterlife and the afterworld, contrary to the core Buddhist dogma of reincarnation and nirvana in Western Pure Land. Neo-Confucianists believed that all phenomena, various particulars, forms, and things of nature, are derived from cosmic qi (氣), the original energy of the universe and that all nature is destined to return to its original qi after death and destruction. In such cosmology and religious scheme, it is natural that conceptions of the afterlife and afterworld are not necessary for their Confucian epistemology (Michael C. Kalton et al. 1987).<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Michael C. Kalton, et al. *Religion and Ritual in Korean Society*. Ed. Laurel Kendall and Griffin Dix (the Regents of the University of California. 1987)

All of these happened when the Koryŏ was disrupted by the Chosŏn Dynasty, which condemned Koryŏ Buddhism and shamanism as heretical and anti-Confucianism (Cho, Hang-dŏk, 2007; Ahn, Jae-ho. 2009; Jŏng, Sŏng-sik, 2014).<sup>280</sup> Amid the vortex of the neo-Confucianist revolution seeking a radical transformation of the old Buddhist regime into the Confucian state, Buddhist priests who belonged to the highest rank in the Koryŏ dynasty were demoted to the lowest class, similar to the status of nobi of the Chosŏn Dynasty (Deuchler, M. 1992).<sup>281</sup> As a result, during the Chosŏn Dynasty, Buddhism fell into a miserable position opposite that of Koryŏ. However, it turned out that its spiritual influence did not decline at all until the end of the Chosŏn dynasty. Despite such repression by neo-Confucian literati, Buddhism clandestinely and extensively permeated the general substratum of the Chosŏnese life through the syncretization with shamanism (Kang, Sang-soon. 2007).<sup>282</sup>

Thanks to such hybridity, shamanic Buddhism, or in other words, Buddhist shamanism, was indigenized without any resistance deep in the hearts of Chosŏn folks. In Chosŏn society, Confucian literati seriously oppressed shamanism but maintained its influence by absorbing the Confucian dogma into their faith system. By doing so, Chosŏn shamanism succeeded in avoiding unnecessary conflicts with the ruling ideology of neo-Confucianism and making even the

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<sup>280</sup> Cho, Hang-dŏk. "The political ideology of Sambong Jŏng To-jŏn appeared in Kyŏngjae-mun gam(經濟文鑑)". *Korean Classics Study* 14 (2007): 7-39; Ahn, Jae-ho. "An Analysis of Jŏng To-jŏn 's Criticism against Buddhism Revealed in Light talks about Buddhism (佛氏雜辨), based on the understanding of Zhu xi's theory". *East-West Philosophy Study* 53 (2009): 309-29; Jŏng, Sŏng-sik. "Ideology and History of the theory of Sambong Jŏng To-jŏn". *Oriental Culture Study* 19 (2014): 9-37

<sup>281</sup> Deuchler, Martina. *The Confucian Transformation of Korea; A Study of Society and Ideology* (the Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992), 122.

<sup>282</sup> Kang, Sang-soon. "Confucian Transformation in Chosŏn Society and Its Behind: Ghosts and the Sacrificial Community". *The Journal of Korean Historical ethnology* (50),101-132. (2007).

Confucian ruling class of Chosŏn partly accept the religious views of Buddhist shamanism (Shamanism Idea Research Society. 2017).<sup>283</sup>

Specifically speaking, many researchers argue that there is almost no material related to shamanism during the first 100 years of Koryŏ (Howard, K. ed. 1998. 50; Kim, Gap-dong. 2016. 38).<sup>284</sup> It is since Myoch'ŏng, well-known as a wicked Buddhist monk, took the position of the national priest in the era of King Injong (1109-1146, the 17<sup>th</sup> king of the Koryŏ Dynasty), there appear records revealing that shamanism had become as popular and widespread as it could not be neglected anymore (History of Koryŏ Vol.16, Sega. King Injong, 1131). Nonetheless, this does not mean that there were no shamanic customs until the middle of the Koryŏ Dynasty. As discussed earlier, the Koryŏ folks shared the shamanic belief almost totally amalgamated with Buddhism, which was the ruling ideology of the dynasty. Even though Koryŏ folks enjoyed the shamanic customs, their form and content looked almost entirely Buddhist in terms of the religious views on life and death, rituals, and the faith system (Koo, Mee-Rae. 2013).<sup>285</sup>

For example, the ultimate goal of the Koryŏ people was to enter the Western Pure Land after their death, just as Buddhists, located 10 billion eons away from earth. They believed an afterworld was an isolated place away from this world as far as nobody could reach to recall

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<sup>283</sup> Shamanism Idea Research Society. *Convergence and conflict between shamanism and other religions* (Academic Proceedings 3, 2017).

<sup>284</sup> Howard, Keith. Ed. *Korean Shamanism; Revivals, survivals, and change* (The Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch. 1998), 50.; Kim, Gap-dong, "Development and Changes of Shamanic beliefs in the Koryŏ Dynasty". *History and Discourse (Journal of Historical Review)*, 2016), 78: 35-70.

<sup>285</sup> Koo, Mee-Rae. (2013). "The Modern Succession and Restoration of the P'algwanhoe Ceremony". *The study of Buddhism*, 35, 177-210; for example, the P'algwanhoe (팔관회; Festival of the Eight Vows) of early Koryŏ was a hybrid of Buddhism and shamanic folklore, which were completely mixed into a single entity to the extent that it was difficult to distinguish between Buddhism and shamanism clearly.

deceased ancestors to this world, even at the request of a competent shaman. These facts and viewpoints are well expressed in many documents and folktales of Koryŏ that have already been quoted many times (Park, Kyŏng-an. 2011).<sup>286</sup> In short, it can be seen that the shamanic beliefs of the Koryŏ people were thoroughly covered with Buddhist skin.

However, such Koryŏ shamanism was abolished by the founding revolutionaries of Chosŏn, and the Buddhist-based shamanism of Koryŏ was transformed into a completely different form of a shamanic belief system based on a Confucian cosmology in the Chosŏn dynasty. As mentioned before, the meritorious founding officials of the Chosŏn Dynasty were full of revolutionary aspirations to build a utopian state governed by Confucian virtues (Ahn, Jae-ho. 2009).<sup>287</sup> On the way to the end of the Koryŏ dynasty, a group of central and local bureaucrats emerged hither and thither who insisted that the Koryŏ dynasty should be abolished since it was irretrievably corrupted. They believed that establishing a new dynasty founded on Neo-Confucian revolutionary ideology was their duty according to the changing Mandate of Heaven. The founding forces of Chosŏn, led by Jŏng Do-jŏn, believed that Koryŏ Buddhism was the most corrupted force to be overthrown at first to establish a new utopian dynasty. Moreover, they criticized Buddhism, Taoism, and others as heresy and began to trample them thoroughly (Moon, Chŏl-young. 2008).<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Park Kyŏng-an, (2011). "Shamanism's view of nature and its trends in the Koryŏ era". *The Journal of Dongbang*

<sup>287</sup> Ahn, Jae-ho. "Analysis of Jŏng Do-jŏn's criticism against Buddhism revealed in his work, miscellaneous talks about Buddhists (Bulssi-jab-byŏn; 佛氏雜辨); in terms of Neo-Confucian perspectives". *Studies in Philosophy East-West*, 53, no.0 (2009): 309-329.

<sup>288</sup> Moon, Chŏl-young, "The Study on a Consciousness of Jŏng Do-jŏn; focusing on the Period of the Founding of the Chosŏn Dynasty after Depurge". *Oriental studies*, vol., no.44, pp. 201-229. (2008)

### 3-2. The creation of a ghostdom, without God and the eternal afterworld

The era of founding the Chosŏn Dynasty was not only a starting point of transforming the Chosŏnese cosmological view from Buddhism to Confucianism but also a period when Chosŏn shamanism took off the crust of Buddhism and stood alone as an independent religious form by absorbing Confucian dogma. Then, some questions arise; how could Chosŏnese accept the Confucian Classics, which preached no afterworld for souls but only returned to the nothingness of nature, despite thousands of years of immersion in the Buddhist Nirvana and Pure Land? Faced with such a lack of Buddhist Gods and the afterlife, how did they try to supplement it during their lifetime and prepare for their afterlife? The process of finding answers to these questions is no other than exploring the historical process of embodying the uniqueness of Chosŏn shamanism.

Neo-Confucian literati believed that just as everything in the universe is created and destroyed by the interaction of yin and yang, the original energy of the cosmos, human existence consists of soul (魂) and body (魄), which are another representation of yin and yang. When a person dies and is buried in the earth, the soul (魂, hon) leaves the body (魄, baek) and wanders in the air around their tombs until it finds a place to stay (Kim, Woo-hyung. 2006).<sup>289</sup> When it occurs, the descendants of the deceased should keep a thick wooden ancestral tablet, called Sinzhu (神主),

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<sup>289</sup> Kim, Woo-hyung. "Construction of the Theory of Soul and Its Relation to Epistemology in Neo-Confucianism". *Korean Studies Quarterly*, 29(4), 119-148. (2006)

next to the tomb for the comfort residence of the dead's soul (Yoo, Kwon-jong. 2004).<sup>290</sup> In addition, they had to give the deceased three sequent services over three days with all sincerity after burying the dead's body in the ground. If the funeral rites were carefully performed according to the Family Rites of Zhu Xi, the soul leaving out of the body could find its own name inscribed on the wooden cube of *sinzhu* (The Family Rites of Zhu Xi, 朱子家禮, *Zhuja-galye*).<sup>291</sup> Then, the wandering soul noticed that the home for him was prepared by his descendants and came to stay in the spiritual tablet, *sinzhu*.

After three sequent services over three days (the first, second, and third Ceremony of Repose in three days), the chief mourner announced that the soul took a seat in the *sinzhu* and then brought it to a private shrine in their own house (Yoo, Kwon-jong. 2004).<sup>292</sup> More precisely, these rituals aimed to appease the anxious soul of the dead and deliver it to the arms of the deceased ancestors already in ghostdom (명부, *Myōng-bu*; Sin, Mi-ok, and Gang, In-suk. 2021).<sup>293</sup> Since then, they have had to treat the *sinzhu* as cherished a living ancestor with meals and manners for three years while they were believed to have stayed in *Myōng-bu* (ghostdom of the dead). This is called the Three-year Mourning, and when this is over, the rituals are only held on the dates set in

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<sup>290</sup> Yoo, Kwon-jong. "Confucian funeral rites and the meaning of death". *The exploration of Philosophy*, 16 (2004)

<sup>291</sup> *The Family Rites of Zhu Xi* (朱子家禮, *Zhuja-galye*); A book in which Zhu Xi, the preeminent neo-Confucian master of the Southern Song (1126–1271), described the rites and proprieties of the Confucian family in detail. The section on funeral rites is a part of it.

<sup>292</sup> Yoo, Kwon-jong. *Ibid.* (2004). 11-15;

<sup>293</sup> Sin, Mi-ok, and Gang, In-suk. "The Functions and Meanings of Siwang in Jaehoe". *Studies of Southern Provinces* 43, no.0 (2021): 139-169; An immediate next world after death. The dead's soul must wait for the trials for the last judgment presiding by the Ten Kings over three years in this ghostdom.

the Family Rites of Zhu Xi, such as the birthday, deathday, and sacrificial dates of ancestors. It also teaches that ordinary yangmin people have to keep ancestral rites up to their fourth ancestor, or four generations of one's ancestor, such as parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents since the souls of ancestors do not return to nature until three or four generations pass for almost one hundred years. The Chosŏnese believed that they linger around the descendants in the world of the living (Ryu, Chae-hyŏng. 2016).<sup>294</sup>

In this way, Chosŏn Confucianism did not separate the world of the dead from the world of the living but insisted on the logic that they should live with the souls of deceased ancestors until they completely dispersed and returned to nature after about a hundred years of four generations. In other words, it was believed that the souls of the dead did not enter the afterworld separated from this world, but were temporarily transferred to the ghostdom (冥府, 명부), or sinzhu, to wait for the day they would return to nothingness into nature (Yoo, Kwon-jong. 2004).<sup>295</sup>

### **3-3. The landscape of the ghostdom in Chosŏn shamanism**

In this section, it is examined how deeply such a Confucian view of death had been mixed with shamanic ideas through exploring existing religious folklore included in shaman's oral dictation, spellings, and chants. In such a syncretic manner, Chosŏnese developed it into their folk religion peculiar to the Chosŏn culture that was distinctly different from other religious and neo-Confucian

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<sup>294</sup> Ryu, Chae-hyŏng. "A Study on the carrying out of a Memorial Service for Ancestors of Gong-in Ji Gyu-shik from the end of the 19th century to the early 20th century based on His Ha-jae Diary". *Yoksa-kyoyuk-ronjip (History Education Review)* 61, no.0 (2016): 230-35

<sup>295</sup> Yoo, Kwon-jong. Ibid. (2004). 13-4

ideologies (Park, Kyöng-an, 2011; Hong Jong-hyön, 2010).<sup>296</sup>

As mentioned before, the neo-Confucianists of Chosön did not recognize a permanent afterworld for the dead, in which punishment and rewards were applied according to each person's conduct during their lifetime, but rather, they condemned it as a frivolous heresy (Hélène Clastres, 1987).<sup>297</sup> Instead, Chosön Confucian scholars presented a supernatural ghostdom overlapping with the real world of the living as a place for the souls of the dead to dwell for a while. They depicted it as a replica of the real world. It was the world of the dead in which the Confucian status and bureaucratic system were realized, just like the real world.

In a word, it was the world where the discrimination between the noble yangban and the lowly nobi remained still strictly observed. Even after death, Chosönese accepted the Confucian theology as fate, saying that once a yangban was forever a yangban, and once a slave was forever a slave. (Lee Sang-soon, 2011; Yang Jong-sung, 2007; Yöng-güm Yi & Yöng-bae Yi, 2012).<sup>298</sup> As a result, the yangban nobles could keep nobi slaves even in the ghostdom after death. On the contrary, it means the lowly humbles of Chosön were utterly deprived of the possibility of hope that their harsh life in this world could be, in the end, either comforted by God or reversed to the noble even in the afterlife. The grassroots of Chosön suffered nihilism stemming from the idea of

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<sup>296</sup> Park, Kyöng-an. "A Study on the View of Nature and Its progress in Korean Shamanism during the Koryö Dynasty". *The Dong Bang Hak Chi*. no. 154; 75 - 109. (2011); also, Hong Jong-hyön, (2010). Convergence and conflict between shamanism and other religions, Minsok-won

<sup>297</sup> Hélène Clastres. "Religion without gods". *History and Anthropology*, 3:1, 61-82. (1987); such religious conception also can be seen in American Indian society until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>298</sup> Such ideas are found in many field research reports and works of Korean kuts; Lee Sang-soon. *The Collection of Chants and Spells in Seoul Saenam-kut; Song of Life, Song of Death* (Minsok-won. 2011); Yang Jong-sung. *Shamanic Ritual of Itaewon Village in Seoul* (Minsok-won. 2007); Yöng-güm Yi & Yöng-bae Yi. *The shamanic customs of the upper village of Jeolla Province* (2012).

the ultimate return to complete nothingness and the void of religious spirituality caused by the absence of the afterlife.

The landscape of the ghostdom in the early Chosŏn was well described in *Tale of Sŏl Gong-chan*, written in the early Chosŏn Dynasty around 1511. It shows the landscape of the ghostdom as the world managed by Confucian bureaucrats as a replica of the Confucian Chosŏn Dynasty.<sup>299</sup> The gates open and close at a set time and deal with the spirits of the dead in a highly bureaucratic process. Supreme deities such as the Buddha Sakyamuni, the Four Heavenly Kings (사천왕, sach'ŏn-wang), Heaven's military General (신장, shinjang), and the Taoist Jade Emperor, the Taoist demigod hermit (신선, sinsŏn), did not appear at all in the earlier version of shaman's tales and chants. Since remnants of Koryŏ Buddhism and shamanism were forcibly suppressed in the new Dynasty, the space of the dead was depicted as a place where Confucian bureaucrats ruled (Sŏk, Dae-gwŏn, and Song, Jae-yong. 2003).<sup>300</sup>

For example, Sŏl Gong-chan, who died untimely of the disease without ever getting married, recounted his despised and shameful life in the ghostdom by borrowing his cousin's mouth.

The ghostdom I reside in is far from here. It locates beside the seashore. The distance from here is forty Ri (10 miles), but the steps of the dead's soul are so fast that if you depart here at 9 pm, you can get there by midnight, and then when the gates open at 2 am, you can enter the dead's world (Choi Soo, 1511-?).<sup>301</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> Choi Soo, (1511?). *The Tale of Sŏl Gong-chan*; the original text written in the era of King Suk-jong (Korean National Culture Encyclopedia).

<sup>300</sup> Sŏk, Dae-gwŏn, Song, Jae-yong. "The Changes of Religious Thoughts in Sacrificial Rituals". *Asian Comparative Folklore*, 24, (2003). 151-172.

<sup>301</sup> Choi Soo, (1511?). *The Tale of Sŏl Gong-chan*; the original text written in the era of King Suk-jong

Besides, the ghostdom was a bureaucratic society based on status and authoritarianism because it shared the real world with the living. Söl Gong-chan recounted his experience in the ghostdom; he was interrogated by being lashed with an iron whip as soon as he sat on the lotus seat.

(Söl Gong-chan is talking) When I died, the officer of the afterworld immediately took me to a lotus seat. Then, they cross-checked my given life expectancy with the record in the Life Book and confirmed that my life had expired. Then, they interrogated me about my past life, lashing me with an iron whip, and I had to debrief every detail about my parents, brothers and sisters, and relatives and what I did. Often, I was taken in the dark and lashed again with the iron whip in the sitting position. I felt it was too painful to endure, so I told the officers of the ghostdom about my deceased mother and elder sister, but they were not helpful to me. So, I told him to contact Sölwi, my uncle, who was a high-ranking officer in his life and had a good position in the ghostdom. Surprisingly they set me free immediately after hearing me (Choi Soo, 1511-?).<sup>302</sup>

Söl recounted that the interrogators let him go immediately when they noticed that Söl Gong-chan had a kinship tie with Sölwi, a powerful, high-ranking officer in the afterworld. It shows that Chosŏnese believed that even in the ghostdom, lonely souls with no descendants to offer sacrificial rituals and no kinship relatives in power would be lashed by an iron whip and bullied. It is interesting to see that nepotism and cronyism prevailed in the world of the dead as in this world.

In another scene of Söl's Tale, bribes had a significant effect even in the afterworld. If the relationship between the ghostdom and this world, and between the living and the dead, is operated

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(Korean National Culture Encyclopedia).

<sup>302</sup> Choi Soo, (1511?). *ibid.*

on this mechanism, those who can influence the ghostdom life of the souls were only the shaman mudang. They could make them rich, comfortable, or oppositely unhappy and painful with bribes to gods and demonic spirits. This passage gives an idea of how deeply Chosŏn shamanism, believed to have the power to change the status and final judgments on the dead, influenced the lives of Chosŏnese.

### **3-4. Baridegi, completion as a shamanistic religion of Chosŏn**

As discussed earlier, the afterworld of Chosŏnese in the early and mid-Chosŏn period was not teeming with gods, spirits, and ghosts enough to construct a hierarchical system. According to Kang Sang-soon, the phenomenon of numerous gods and spiritual beings began to appear in shamanic rituals and folktales from the *Eowoo-yadam* (어우야담. annot. by Kim Dong-wook. 1960)<sup>303</sup> written in the first half of the 17th century. The folktales of the late Chosŏn Dynasty grew to contain abundant folktales of ghosts and ancestral demigods, essentially advocating Confucian virtues and values. These stories emphasize that ghosts exist as a substance, and ancestral rites are practical rituals that worship ancestors' spirits to avoid disease and disasters and get good luck and blessings (Kang Sang-soon, 2016).<sup>304</sup> In this way, the shamanic world of Chosŏn became a pantheon in which numerous gods and spirits of Buddhism, Taoism, and folktales were seated until

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<sup>303</sup> Yu Mon-in (1559-1623). *Eowoo Yadam* (어우야담). (annot. By Kim Dong-wook. Korean Literature 4th Vol. Tongmoon-Kwan, (1960); who served as Minister of Media and Censorship (대사간, Daesagan), contains rumors, tales, and fantasies wandering on the streets. These are satirical tales and wit, not common obscene rumors. It is the beginning of the book of folktales and folklores of the Chosŏn Dynasty.

<sup>304</sup> Kang Sang-soon, (2016). "Confucian Transformation in Chosŏn Society and its Behind: Ghosts and the Sacrificial Community". *History and Folklore*, vol.50

the late Chosŏn Dynasty.

Accordingly, the hierarchical order had been established among numerous ancestor deities. For example, General Choi Young (Lee, Sang-soon. 2011)<sup>305</sup> took the apex position among the ancestral gods or spirits who guards Mt. Dŏkmul in Kaesŏng, the capital city of Koryŏ. Below his seat, various ancestor deities who had served as heroic army generals or high-ranking officials in their lifetime settled in the master mountains of eight provinces to guard the mountains and the regions of the province. Likewise, many gods and spirits dwelled in villages, rivers, seas, and big rocks nationwide. At the bottom of the hierarchy are spirits hovering around descendants' houses and hobbling ghosts on the streets and forests. In this way, the rivers and mountains of Chosŏn were densely woven and managed by the ancestors' ghosts and spirits.

Among them, Baridegi was recognized as an apical ancestor of the shaman's genealogy by all shamans nationwide (Cho, Hyun-soul. 2018).<sup>306</sup> Baridegi, also known as Princess Bari, was abandoned immediately after her birth because she was born as a girl, but she was saved by someone else and grew up wonderfully. She later learned that her parents, who had abandoned her, had fallen ill and died soon, so she went to the ghostdom to find her cure, a place she could not

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<sup>305</sup> Lee, Sang-soon. *The shamanic ritual songs of Seoul Saenam kut, Song of Life, Song of Death*. (Minsok-won. 2011); Choi Young (崔瑩, 1316 - 1388) was a general and politician in the late Koryŏ period and was the most powerful vassal in central politics. Therefore, he confronted Yi Seong-gye, a symbol of local power, and was murdered by Gen. Yi after the retreat of Wihwa Island. Dŏkmul-san (mountain) in Gaesŏng, where he was buried after his death, became a sacred place for Chosŏn shamanism as he was revered as the highest loyalist of Koryŏ and a general who kept his fidelity to the end.

<sup>306</sup> Cho, Hyun-soul. "The abandoned princess Baridegi and Ethics of Shamanism". *Journal of Korean Literature* 37, no.0 (2018): 7-29; Baridegi (바리데기) is an abandoned thing. In this case, it means a princess abandoned shortly after her birth. Bari means 'abandoned,' and (Attached to the end of some nouns) '-degi' is a suffix that adds the meaning of talking to a 'lowly person who does things related to or has such talents'

enter as a living person. On the journey, she transferred numerous souls to paradise, and by such power, she was worshiped as the progenitor of the Chosŏn shamanic lineage. All shamans in Chosŏn needed approval from Baridegi through the Sinnaerim-kut, also known as Naerim-kut (Hyun-key Kim Hogarth. 1999),<sup>307</sup> which was offered to Baridegi, to act as an eligible shaman with qualification.

The emergence of Princess Bari means that the form and content of Choson shamanism had finally been completed in an integrated system around the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, which is passed down in today's Korean society. The key takeaway from the tale of Princess Bari is utmost filial piety. In a word, the Confucian virtue of filial piety cannot be denied in any possible case, even though parents are as heartless as willingly sacrificing their daughter to the king of sea dragons for birth to a son. In the tale of Baridegi, filial piety is described as a process of extreme asceticism in Buddhism and an opportunity to acquire the Taoistic ability to overcome even death. The Confucian view of death in the early and mid-Chosŏn Dynasty was naturally dismantled with the advent of Princess Bari since it transformed the Confucian ghostdom into a world where competent shamans could come and go. In other words, it was an intermediary right to travel beyond death between the worlds of the living and the dead (Byun, Ji-sŏn. 2011).<sup>308</sup>

By doing so, the Chosŏn shaman began to insist that the gods and spirits they worshiped as substantive beings, by which they could obtain the authority to mediate between the living and

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<sup>307</sup> Hyun-key Kim Hogarth. *Korean Shamanism and Cultural Nationalism*. (Korean studies series no.14. Ji-moon-dang Publishing Company. 1999). 102-9; the Sinnaerim-kut is the shamanic ritual that gives a shaman a specific spirit that will give him/her spiritual powers and makes him/her debut as a professional shaman.

<sup>308</sup> Byun, Ji-sŏn. "The role and significance of myth in a shaman ritual, focusing on Princess Barik in Seoul jin-okwui-kut". *Journal of Korean Culture (JKC)*16 (2011): 381-406.

the dead by borrowing Baridegi's authority. Shamans became the only channel through which they could interact with the gods and spirits to foresee the future and heal diseases. Considering the initial attempt of the Chosŏn Confucian Revolutionaries, which dreamt of building a Confucian utopia governed by virtuous and ethical literati, it must be a weird result (Martina Deuchler. 2015).<sup>309</sup>

Just to briefly recap the implication of the argument so far, ordinary Chosŏnese had no choice but to create an afterworld where they would be comforted for their hardships during their lifetime by the Absolute. Accordingly, they succeed in creating an afterworld by way of amalgamating multiple religions, such as Buddhism, Daoism, and Shamanic animism, as well as a way of avoiding any possible friction with the Confucian worldview and virtues (the Study Group of Shamanism. 2017; Keith Howard ed. 1998; 1-13).<sup>310</sup> In this way, the shamanic worldview had been formed and developed nationwide according to the specificity and needs of each region over a long time. Still, they shared common characteristics of the overall frames. (Lee Yong-bŏm, 2012).<sup>311</sup>

Firstly, Chosŏnese created afterworlds in the hybrid form of the Western Pure Land,

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<sup>309</sup> Martina Deuchler. *Under the Ancestors' Eyes: Kinship, Status, and Locality in Premodern Korea* (Harvard East Asian Monographs 378. Cambridge, Massachusetts. 2015); in her work, unlike other revolutions in general, the Confucianist transformation in Chosŏn was a revolution in fact, not a short and explosive one that took place within a month or a year, but a long and slow-going revolution that started at the end of the 14th century and had been completed in the middle of the 17th century. But as mentioned above, the results were unexpected and devastating.

<sup>310</sup> The Study Group of Shamanism. *Convergence and Conflict between Shamanism and other religions* (Folklore Center; Minsok-won. 2017); Keith Howard ed. *Korean shamanism today; revivals, survivals, and change*. (The Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch. Seoul Press. 1998). 1-13.

<sup>311</sup> Lee Yong-bŏm, (2012). "A Study on the Generality and Locality of Shamanic Mortuary Rites; focused on comparing the shamanic mortuary rites between Seoul and Jindo". *Research of the folklore of Southern provinces*, Vol.33

Paradise, and Hell governed by Shakyamuni, the Great Jade Emperor, and King of Hell. Not in the way of excluding one and introducing the other, they created an afterworld that was inclusive of all deities, which was located beyond the ghostdom where the souls of the deceased reside for a while. As a result, the souls of the dead had to wait in ghostdom until it was decided whether they would be reduced to nothingness or transmitted to Heaven or Hell by the higher gods. Chosŏnese believed that shamans (k: mudang, 무당) only could solicit the gods to lead the ancestor's soul of the client to paradise quickly and as well to feed them to their fullness. This was the niche where shamanism could syncretize with Confucian ideology.

Secondly, since the ghostdom, where the souls of the dead reside, overlapped and mixed up with this world of the living, it was thought possible for the spirits of the dead to come and go in and out of both worlds freely, and for the living also to come and go with gods' permission, albeit extremely rarely. Thirdly, as discussed earlier, one of the core driving forces under the Confucian transformation of Chosŏn was ancestor worship based on filial piety (Laurel Kendall and Griffin Dix ed. 1987).<sup>312</sup> Chosŏn shamanism used such ideology 100% as an opportunity to consolidate its religious status. They preached that the descendants who offered sacrifices with sincere filial piety for ancestor worship would receive great blessings. Moreover, they propagated that they could influence the process of the gods' last judgment for the ancestor souls in ghostdom. No matter how noble a person was in this life, he could become a starving street ghost if he did not get the sacrificial rituals. Then, these kinds of ancestors became vindictive demonic spirits and

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<sup>312</sup> Laurel Kendall and Griffin Dix, ed. *Religion and Ritual in Korean Society* (Center for Korean Studies, Institute of East Asian Studies, UCLA Berkeley. 1987). 2-6, 26-9

made their living descendants suffer from diseases and disasters.

Based on this kind of shamanic thought, Chosŏnese believed that ancestor souls who got the oblation of the Chŏndo-kut, S'itkim kut, or Saenam-kut, were able to be transferred to Paradise or Heaven, even if they were lowly or bad (Keith Howard, ed. 1998).<sup>313</sup> Through this historical process of embodying and creating the syncretic afterworld, which existed permanently for the souls of the dead, Chosŏnese completed the Confucian shamanic religion for their own needs in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **4. Affinity of Confucian Shamanism with Chosŏn culture**

##### **4-1. The Ancestor worship as the base of Chosŏn culture**

Chosŏn Confucianists believed that the souls of the dead who hung around the living descendants also should eat and drink like the living. Although the dead would never die again due to starving, they believed that the longer they starve, the more they suffer painfully. Regardless of whether the soul of the deceased ancestor stayed in the sinzhu or wandered around the descendants in the air without sinzhu, they would have suffered from hunger if they had not been served proper food through the rituals. It was believed they had to beg for food from other souls like beggars. For this reason, the ancestor's soul, which was not properly and sufficiently sacrificed by his descendants,

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<sup>313</sup> Keith Howard, ed. *Korean Shamanism; Revivals, survivals, and change* (The Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch, Seoul Press). 170-83.

would become a vindictive ghost, and avenge it by inflicting disease or tribulation and pain on the descendants and vice versa (Kim, Yu-ri. 2016).<sup>314</sup>

In a word, the disobedient descendants with a lack of filial piety would arouse the wrath of the ancestors and eventually destroy the entire family lines. If nobody wanted to starve after death, they had to set up a few devices to tie up their descendants to comply with ancestral rituals. For example, the first filial piety of Chosŏnese was to produce many children to keep the bloodline of the descendants uninterrupted, who would sacrifice the ancestral rites. The second one was to raise descendants full of filial love who faithfully keep ancestral rites by adequately educating their children. The third one was to manage the shrine and grave where the soul of ancestors was enshrined to prevent unexpected damages or being destroyed by accidents. If not, they would be punished by the wrath of their ancestors. In short, Chosŏn literati had to protect the *sinzhu* of their ancestors prior to saving their own lives in case of a disaster or accident (Martina Deuchler. 2015).<sup>315</sup>

For instance, many records appear related to ancestor worship in the *Mukjae* diary, written by Lee Mun-kŏn (1494-1567), a high-ranking official in the Chosŏn Dynasty. When his first nephew, Lee Hŭi (李輝), was sentenced to death for conspiring to high treason in 1545, he hurried to stop by Hŭi's house and brought the *sinzhu* of his parents and ancestors from his nephew's shrine

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<sup>314</sup> Kim, Yu-ri. "Performing the Yŏ-je (厲祭) and the concept of Musaguishin (無祀鬼神) in Chosŏn Dynasty". *The Journal of Korean Historical-fork life* (50), 73-99. 2016). 76-8; Musa-guishin means the soul who cannot receive sacrifices from the living for any reason; for example, lonely ghost and vindictive phantom.

<sup>315</sup> Martina Deuchler. *Under the Ancestors' Eyes: Kinship, Status, and Locality in Premodern Korea* (Harvard East Asian Monographs 378. Cambridge, Massachusetts. 2015).

to his house, immediately after getting told this news before anything else. To Munkön, protecting the *sinzhu* was much more important than trying to save his nephew's life, who would be executed soon (Lee Mun-kön. 1535-1567).<sup>316</sup> Since the *sinzhu* was the house where the souls of the deceased stayed until they dispersed into the cosmic Grand Qi (氣, energy) to nothingness, the destruction of the *sinzhu* was regarded as a ruin of family descent, the most unfilial thing.

In this context, Chosŏn Confucianists began to ponder how to secure the ancestral rituals that would take care of their life after death for about 100 years before returning to nothingness. As a result, the inheritance, which was equally enforced for all brothers and sisters even until the mid-Chosŏn, became gradually concentrated on male siblings. Then, step by step, most of the inheritance was concentrated on the family's first son (Deuchler, 2015).<sup>317</sup> Instead, the eldest son was responsible for serving all ancestral rites with good food and managing tombs and graves yards for the rest of his life, living close to the mountain of his ancestor's gravesite. Even when collateral relatives of the subordinate branches of the agnatic lineages passed on inheritance to their children, it became customary to leave part of their inheritance to the head of the family for their burden of expenses. The formation of agnatic tribal groups in Chosŏn based on the lineal principle of agnation had this background. Institutionalization culminated roughly around the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century during the Chosŏn Dynasty, together with the completion of the Confucian transformation of Chosŏn (Deuchler, 2015).<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Mukjae diary (1535-1567); Diary written by Lee Mun-kön (1494-1567), a high-ranking official in the Chosŏn Dynasty.

<sup>317</sup> Deuchler, (2015). Ibid., p.267; pp. 270-2

<sup>318</sup> Deuchler, (2015). Ibid., pp.189-191

It may sound far-fetched to argue that the principle of the agnatic lineage of the clan family in Chosŏn was formed out of a simple motive to ensure ancestral rites for their afterworld with certainty from their descendants. However, the religious obsession of Chosŏn Confucianists with ancestor worship and ancestral rites forced family members, who were scattered across the country, to gather regularly at the house of the head family, Daejong (the main line among the same clan with the same family name) and during the sacrificial gathering, all clan members were treated according to the order of the Confucian family hierarchy. It cannot be denied that such a mechanism had a significant impact on the Confucian transformation of the family system, inheritance practice, kinship relation, and the slavery of Chosŏn. Such emotions and memories were engraved in the deep subconsciousness of Chosŏnese. The final result of such a phenomenon was unexpectedly the factionalization of each clan family, which caused mutual conflicts between them for their political and economic interests and the pride and honor of the family.

#### **4-2. Shamans as a healer of disease and disaster**

The Chosŏn government implemented the disease treatment policy dually on the spiritual level and the physical level. In other words, They tried to cure the patients, on the one hand, by taking medicines or medical treatment, and on the other hand, by performing exorcism or rites of the shaman. These treatment methods were not only practiced in the private sector but were encouraged and managed administratively at the national level. For example, in the reign of King Sejong, shamans were placed in the East and West Agency of Saving the Destitute (Hhalin-sŏ, 活人署), a treatment center installed just outside the Wall Gate of the capital Hanyang, to take

care of the disease and poor (Lee, Nŭng-hwa. 2008. 182).<sup>319</sup>

Since ancient times when proper medical techniques were not yet developed, one of the shamans' essential functions was to wish the community well-being and heal the diseases of its members with the help of gods and spirits through shamanic rituals (Kwon, Soo-young. 2004).<sup>320</sup> As mentioned earlier, even in Chosŏn, it was believed that the cause of the disease was the curse of the ancestor spirits and was told that the disease could be cured by appeasing the anger of the vindictive spirits or by casting out them with the power of the god worshiped by the shaman and the surrounding helper spirits (Lee, Nŭng-hwa. 2008).<sup>321</sup> Thus, they believed that to prevent diseases and disasters, they had to perform ancestral rites with all sincerity and take good care of them. Moreover, Chosŏnese believed that the spirits would become angry and cause natural disasters and collective harm to the members of Royal families, government officials, or villagers if people did not perform the regular rituals or if people did unclean rituals due to a lack of devotion to the gods and spirits of the mountains and villages.

### **4-3. Shamanic customs as a tool and guide for their daily life**

Concerning the Chosŏn shamanism, common arguments of many research result are about Chosŏnese affinity for shamanic customs. In fact, Chosŏnese enjoyed practicing various divination and fortune-telling such as the Four Pillars of destiny, geomancy, and horoscope, including the

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<sup>319</sup> Lee, Nŭng-hwa. *ibid.* 182

<sup>320</sup> Kwon, Soo-young. "How do Korean rituals heal?; healing of Han as cognitive property". *The Journal of Pastoral Theology Vol.* 14, no. 1, 2004; Lee, Nŭng-hwa annot. by Sŏ Young-dae. *Study of Chosŏn Shamanism* (Chang-bee. 2008). 85

<sup>321</sup> Lee, Nŭng-hwa. *ibid.* 188-91

shaman's gut. To what extent was this true? Mukjae Diary depicts it concretely and realistically. Lee Munkön (1494-1567), the writer of the Mukjae diary, served as a high-ranking official in the early Chosŏn Dynasty. He was a fundamentalist neo-Confucian literatus who officially condemned Buddhism and shamanism as heresy.

Nonetheless, in his diary, there are many records of divination and fortune-telling, such as the Four Pillars of destiny based on the principle of the *I-Ching* (易經), astrology, or calling a shaman to practice divination and sometimes, Mudang gut. Even in everyday life, he tried fortune-telling with a light mind on ordinary daily events about once every two or three months. However, when his eldest nephew Lee Hŭi (李輝) was implicated in Ŭlsa-sahwa<sup>322</sup> in 1545 and was sentenced to death for conspiracy of High Treason, he was also stripped of all his government posts and then exiled to a provincial town called Sŏngju,<sup>323</sup> based on the guilt-by-association, even though he was found to be completely innocent of allegations related to the conspiracy at all. Faced with such an absolute crisis, Lee Munkön, Hŭi's uncle, appeared to practice divination much more frequently than before. For about four months from September to December 1545, really harsh time of tribulation for him on the way to Sŏngju for exile, he practiced divination almost every two or three days. He recorded the details of his divination in his diary, revealing the face of his agony and anxieties on September 6, 1545, when his eldest nephew, Lee Hŭi, was arrested and detained on suspicion of being one of the masterminds of high treason.

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<sup>322</sup> Ŭlsa-Sahwa (乙巳士禍); Myŏng-jong (1534 - 1567) was the 13th king of Chosŏn (reigned: 1545-1567). Ŭlsa (乙巳) is the 42nd year among the 60 zodiac-sign years, and Sahwa (士禍) means the large-scale bloody purge of literati. Lee Munkön's eldest nephew Hui was framed as one of the leaders of the treason conspiracy.

<sup>323</sup> A county seat located near Daegu in the southern region of Korea.

At the crossroads of life or death, he revealed agonies and concerns for the future of his family, clans, as well as himself in his diary.

○ **September 9, 1545, cloudy**

Lee Jung-yŏl (李中悅) came by again and said, “Hŭi and Dŏk-eung (德應) have been revealed as accomplices in treason.” That is too harsh. ○After it got dark, I brought back the spirit tablet of my father and mother from Hŭi's shrine to my home and placed it in my room temporarily.

○ **September 14, 1545, clear, cold, and ice froze**

I stayed in Chŏngpa, but it was too hard to wait anxiously for my final exile place to be decided all day long. My body is weak and difficult to sustain for that disaster. ○ Yun (尹) and Park (朴) came by to investigate the size of the land to confiscate. I asked them if I would arrive at my exile place alive, and he answered that there might be no order to kill me on the way there. I asked if my son, born in 1518, could give birth to a son, and they said that one or two are likely to get delivered. ○ I was told that nobis went to collect the discarded body parts and put them in a coffin. Kwon Ham (權城) and Yŏm (爛)<sup>324</sup> went together to do that work. It is said that the head and limbs will be divided and sent to each province to be circulated. ○ At dawn, Eung-min (應敏) and Eŭngbu (應符) came by and mourned loudly with keen hearts together.

In such an extreme situation, he relied on practicing divination and fortunetelling as to whether he could reach Sŏngju, the place of his exile, alive and whether his son Yŏm could give birth to a son to succeed the generation of descendants.

In other words, even at the scene of such a bloody slaughter, his only concern was how to avoid the death of his family line. It was the main reason why he devoted himself to divination more than any other time in his life. The instinct of preserving his family line and tribal network

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<sup>324</sup> Yŏm (爛) is the only son of Munkŏn.

was not limited to Munkŏn. For most Chosŏnese, the continuation of a family line, clan, or tribe was the value to be absolutely observed that was imprinted on their souls. It was valuable things that go beyond their personal lives. Hence, keeping their family line and tribal lineage was of the utmost importance.

That was why Confucian literati, who condemned Buddhism and shamanism as heresy and sorcery to be completely eliminated from their new dynasty, had no choice but to fall into shamanism and fortune-telling more than other dynasties existed before Chosŏn. The core value of the Chosŏn Confucianism was the idea of ancestor worship. Chosŏnese firmly believed that they had to well serve the deceased ancestors. If not, it was one of the worst of filial piety since the ancestral spirits were alive and lived among them. Therefore, they wanted to communicate with the spirits of their deceased ancestors and Mudang, the Korean shaman, was the only channel that could do that.

## **5. The completion of the Confucian shamanic religion without God**

What should be noted here is that shamanic chants and folk tales in the early Chosŏn emphasize obeying neo-Confucian rules and principles had changed to Buddhist and Taoist shamanism emphasizing morality later into the Chosŏn Dynasty. The *Tale of Sŏl Gong-chan* is estimated to have been written in early Chosŏn around 1511 and was found written on the inner side of an old book's folded page of Mukje diary (1535-1567). It was a time when the climate of the Confucian revolution had a strong influence over Chosŏn society. That is why the Tale of Sol

Gong-chan introduces the afterworld of the dead as the world managed by Confucian bureaucrats. The gates open and close at a set time and deal with the spirits of the dead in a highly bureaucratic process. Supreme deities such as the Buddha Sakyamuni, the Four Heavenly Kings (사천왕, sach'ŏn-wang), Heaven's military General (신장, shinjang), and the Taoist Jade Emperor, the Taoist demigod hermit (신선, sinsŏn), did not appear at all in the tales and chants in the early days of Chosŏn. The remnants of Koryŏ Buddhist and shamanic mythology had been almost removed from these folktales and were described as a place where ancestors' spirits stay for a respite.

From the 17th century to the late Chosŏn Dynasty, all the gods, spirits, and demigods began to appear in the folktales, shamanic chants, and spelling narratives of the shaman's gut, and later, began to complete the shamanic syncretism, including neo-Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and traditional folklores in the shamanic theology. For example, the hierarchy of ancestor deities that dominates Chosŏn had General Choi Young<sup>325</sup> at its apex, who guards Mt. Dŏkmul in Kaesŏng, the capital city of Koryŏ. Below his seat were various ancestor deities who had served as heroic army generals or high-ranking officials in their life settled in the master mountains of eight provinces to guard the mountains and the regions of the province. There was a multitude of gods and spirits dwelling in villages, rivers, seas, and big rocks, and at the bottom of the spiritual world, the spirits around descendants' homes and ghosts on the streets and forests.

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<sup>325</sup> Choi Young (崔瑩, 1316 - 1388) was a general and politician in the late Koryŏ period and was the most powerful vassal in central politics. Therefore, he confronted Yi Seong-gye, a symbol of local power, and was murdered by Gen. Yi after the retreat of Wihwa Island. Dŏkmul-san (mountain) in Gaesŏng, where he was buried after his death, became a sacred place for Chosŏn shamanism as he was revered as the highest loyalist of Koryŏ and a general who kept his fidelity to the end.

The afterworld view of Chosŏn people in the early and mid-Chosŏn period was not teeming with enough gods, spirits, and ghosts to construct a hierarchical system. According to Kang Sang-sun, the phenomenon of numerous spiritual beings appearing in shamanic rituals and folktales became popular from the “Eou-yadam (어우야담)” in the first half of the 17th century.<sup>326</sup> Later, the folktales of the late Chosŏn Dynasty began to contain many ghost stories based on a magical and substantive view of gods, spirits, and ghosts, but essentially advocating Confucian values. These stories emphasize that ghosts exist as a substance and that ancestral rites worship ancestors' spirits in the afterworld.<sup>327</sup>

The shamans served their own supreme shamanic god, Baridegi (바리데기)<sup>328</sup> or Princess Bari, among tens of thousands of gods and spirits. She was worshiped as the progenitor of the Chosŏnese shamanic lineage. All shamans in Chosŏn needed to acquire approval from Baridegi through the Sinnaerim-gut,<sup>329</sup> which was offered to Baridegi, to act as an eligible shaman with qualification. According to the shaman's long rhapsodic chant sung during the Baridegi gut, there was once a king named Ogu in the kingdom of the northeastern region who wanted to have a son

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<sup>326</sup> Eou-yadam (어우야담), written by Yu Mon-in (1559-1623) who served as Minister of Media and Censorship (대사간, Daesagan), contains rumors, tales, and fantasies wandering on the streets. These are satirical tales and wit, not common obscene rumors. It is known as the beginning of the book of folktales and folklores of the Chosŏn Dynasty.

<sup>327</sup> Kang Sang-soon, (2016). Confucian Transformation in Chosŏn Society and its Behind: Ghosts and the Sacrificial Community, History and Folklore, vol.50

<sup>328</sup> Baridegi (바리데기) is an abandoned thing. In this case, it means a princess who was abandoned shortly after she was born. Bari means ‘abandoned,’ and (Attached to the end of some nouns) ‘-degi’ is a suffix that adds the meaning of talking lower ‘a person who does things related to or has such talents’

<sup>329</sup> the Sinnaerim-kut is the shamanic ritual that gives a shaman a specific spirit that will give him/her spiritual powers and makes him/her debut as a professional shaman.

but only had six daughters. Eventually, the queen became pregnant, gave birth, and delivered her seventh daughter. The king became angry and had the baby princess thrown into the sea as a sacrifice to the dragon king of the sea. The Buddha Sakyamuni, who was watching the scene from high above the clouds, rescued Princess Bari and entrusted her to an elderly couple in the deep mountain to raise them. Fifteen years had passed when king Ogu and the queen, Princess Bari's parents, fell ill with the same mortal disease.

So, they did divination. The divination revealed that King Ogu and his queen fell ill and died, punished for abandoning Princess Bari, and that it could only be healed with the water of life from the afterworld. The six princesses, who grew up comfortably in the royal palace, refused to go to the afterlife. Baridegi was the only remaining kin, but nobody knew where she lived. Everybody believed that she would never accept the request to visit the afterworld for her parents, who had abandoned her. However, a faithful official left the palace saying that he would find Princess Bari and ask her to complete the mission, even if he had to scour the whole world. The official who found Princess Bari said that King Ogu was her parent and that he came after receiving an order to find her and bring her back.

The servant of King Ogu said to Princess Bari. "I came to visit Princess Bari on the order of King Ogu." Princess Bari asked the servant. "Do you have any memento to prove I am the princess you're looking for?" "I brought the baby Bari's swaddling cloth. He ordered me to pass his message on to you that King Ogu regrets that he had abandoned the king's descendant amid this mountain on account of his bad karma." When Princess Bari received the memento and looked closely, she recognized that the date of birth written on it was the same as the date of birth written

on the swaddling band that Baridegi had kept. “It's hard to believe what you're saying with this memento. Bring other evidence if you can.” The faithful subject put the freshly drawn water on a gold tray, cut the cotton wool of king Ogu and make it bleed, and then cut the baby's cotton paper to make it bleed, too. Then the two drops of blood mingled with each other as if dancing in the water on the golden plate. Only then did Princess Bari say, “They must be the same flesh and blood, so I will go with you,” and followed him.

This is the scene in which king Oku's envoy and Baridegi reunited after 15 years since the Baridegi was thrown away into the sea. The most interesting point is Baridegi's question of how do you know that “I am the daughter of King Ogu.” The king's envoy gave her date of birth, written on her old swaddling cloth. But Baridegi insisted that she find it hard to believe on its own. The king's envoy took out the king's underwear and cut it as if cutting the king's flesh and blood came out of it. Seeing this, Baridegi also cut the collar of her own underwear and blood came out from it too. She dropped it into the freshly drawn water she had placed on the golden tray, and two drops of blood went back and forth, mixed up as if dancing. Baridegi saw it and believed that King Ogu was her birth father. This shows how great the trust of Chosŏnese is in their bloodline. It is a scene clearly showing the belief that blood can never cheat and how they immediately recognize each other no matter how far or long they have been separated. The Chosŏnese believed it to be undeniably true for life. This firm belief in the blood of the lineage was formed when the principle of the agnatic lineage based on the formation of the patriarchal tribal group was completed in the 17-18<sup>th</sup> century in the late Chosŏn Dynasty.<sup>330</sup> From then on, a surprisingly strong obsession with

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<sup>330</sup> Kim Hyung-soo, (2019). Finding the ancestors of the yangban literati of Yŏngnam during the Chosŏn

ancestry has been passed down to today. No doubt, it is closely connected to ancestor worship as well as fortune in life.<sup>331</sup>

Baridegi, who returned to King Ogu with an envoy, was furious at the idea that she had to go to the afterworld instead of the six princesses who had lived comfortably in the palace, despite the fact that she was the one who had been abandoned to the sea in sacrifice to the dragon king of the sea. Nevertheless, she decided to go to the afterworld to get the elixir of life.

“Hear me, six sisters, your parents grew you all in a comfortable palace with nine overlapped security barriers, which can only be reached by releasing ninety-nine door bars, caring for you like precious pearls, and blessing you always with great love. Nonetheless, how can you refuse to make a journey to get the water of life to save your parents from death?” A sister next to princess Bari said, “Even if I go out to the backyard garden to see flowers, I can’t tell where each direction of the east, west, north, and south is, and I even used to lose the location of my living palace, how can I go to the Western land far away from this world?” It sounds like an evil cry of starving ghosts. Princess Bari finally decided to go for herself. “I had been in your womb for ten months and delivered me to grow like this. The grace must be bigger than the huge mountain.”

Princess Bari, who left to seek the elixir of life in the afterworld, overcame all the adversities that she fell into along the way and succeeded in finding a demigod to protect the elixir of life in the afterworld. In return for the elixir, Princess Bari provided housework to the demigod for nine years, and she married him and bore him seven sons. Through her efforts, Princess Bari grabbed the elixir and returned with the demigod to save the Ogu king and her mother.

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Dynasty and compilation of records related to ancestral rites; Kim Eon-soon, (2009). The formation of a lineage of agnation society in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the domestic reformation of the literati officials: focusing on the family precepts, *Society and History* vol.83

<sup>331</sup> Yi T’ae-jun, 1940, *Voiceless Youth*; In his novel, it is well described how much the patrilineal bloodline was critical in the modern Korean society as follows; “She wants to put the girls for whom she cares on her own family register, but she has no mother because she has already passed away, and no husband yet. If she tries forcibly to do it, they will all become illegitimate children without a father. Arguably, the title of an illegitimate child would be more disadvantageous than being a former convict for the girls who will later marry into someone else's family.”

What stands out in this scene is Princess Bari's filial piety. The Confucian principle that filial piety to parents cannot be denied is emphasized even though they are heartless parents who sacrificed their daughter to the sea dragon king to give birth to a son. The act of filial piety is the process of extreme Buddhist asceticism and it is the process by which Princess Bari acquires the Taoist ability to overcome death.<sup>332</sup> The view of the afterlife of Confucian scholars in the early and middle Chosŏn Dynasty, who believed that they could fulfill their duty of filial piety and service to their ancestors through formal rituals and sacrifices, was dismantled with the advent of Princess Bari. The ability that Princess Bari acquired is an intermediary right to transcend death and travel between the world of the living and the world of the dead. Simultaneously, the shamans of Chosŏn obtained the authority to mediate between the living and the dead by borrowing Baridegi's authority. The attempts of the Confucian revolutionaries in the founding era of Chosŏn to remove the afterlife from Chosŏnese and replace it with a Confucian cosmology of *qi* were completed in a totally unexpected form. Given this, it can be confirmed that in the late Chosŏn Dynasty, the afterlife of shamanism, a syncretic form of all gods and spirits of all religions and folktales, was firmly established in Chosŏnese thought and transmitted to contemporary Koreans. It was the result of the Chosŏn Confucian Revolution, which began as a dream to build up Confucian governance by virtuous literati.

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<sup>332</sup> Shin Jin-sik, (2018). The comparison of death conception between Jūngsanism, Confucianism and Taoism, *Journal of Korean Philosophy* Vol. 58 신선 (神仙, shinsŏn); Taoist hermit with miraculous powers. Taoism believes that if a human becomes a shinsŏn, that is, an immortal demigod transformed through severest asceticism, he will obtain the supernatural power of flying thousands of miles for a second by riding a cloud and will be immortal, living almost forever. In a word, transcending the extremes of Taoist practice means a step beyond death.

## 6. Summary; Confucian shamanism as the carrier incubator of premodernity

Why did Chosŏnese have such a close affinity with those superstitious customs, and why do contemporary Koreans show a similar propensity to them? The answer to this question can be a crucial clue to understanding the bizarre phenomenon of the flourishing shamanic culture in the cutting-edge digital society of Korea. For this purpose, this study has examined the historical process of the emergence and embodiment of Confucian shamanism unique to Chosŏn society. As a result, this study found that Chosŏn's Confucian shamanism did not end yet. However, it is a part of the obsolete pre-modern culture but is still alive as a vivid collective memory in the heart of modern Koreans. Also, this study reveals that the collective memory is believed to be a carrier that delivers Chosŏn's pre-modern traditions and customs to today's Korean society. It also serves as an incubator that further amplifies and nurtures them in this cutting-edge digital life.

This study sufficiently explored the history of how Chosŏn shamanism played an essential role in transforming Chosŏn into a Confucian state by disseminating Confucian ideology in an easy language that even lowly Chosŏnese could understand immediately. Since neo-Confucianism was an esoteric discipline that only well-educated literati could understand its principles, it was initially impossible to teach such an academic worldview and ideology to the illiterate majority of the Chosŏnese grassroots through a formal curriculum (the Great White of the Analects).<sup>333</sup> Instead, Chosŏn shamanism became the most crucial channel for disseminating Confucian ideology to the illiterate Chosŏn populace. It was because the shaman's

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<sup>333</sup> Confucius. *The Great White of the Analects* (kr. 論語 泰伯篇, 태백; *Taebaek*); Confucius said, You can make the inferior lowly commoners follow you, but you cannot make them know (子曰, 民可使由之, 不可使知之).

oral dictation and chants, full of Confucian virtues, recited through various forms of shaman kut rituals, were easily bound to capture the hearts and souls of the grassroots in Chosŏn, which Confucianism, the absolute ruling ideology of Chosŏn, coercively brainwashed.

Moreover, such a situation allowed Chosŏn shamans to show off their presence as mediators between ghostdom and the natural world by utilizing filial piety and ancestral worship. The theoretical framework of shamanic narratives shed its Buddhist-Taoist shell and replaced them with Confucian theology. As discussed before, Chosŏnese completed the Confucian shamanic religion in the mid-17th century through theological sophistication of a permanent afterworld for the souls of the dead beyond the ghostdom by borrowing Buddhist and Taoist dogma. Thus, orthodox neo-Confucianism had been twisted and distorted by the needs of the Chosŏn populace through this historical process of embodying the syncretic eternal afterworld (Lee, Kyung-soon and Koo, Se-woong. 2013, 2014).<sup>334</sup>

How did Chosŏn Confucian shamanism, completed after such twists and turns, capture the hearts of both noble yangban and lowly slaves in Chosŏn simultaneously? Firstly, Chosŏn shamanism thoroughly served the Confucian virtues of filial piety and ancestor worship. For that purpose, it developed many kinds of shaman kuts to pray for the prosperity of noble yangban families. At the same time, the shaman played the role of a consultant who listened to the complaints of the starving common populace who had nothing to protect themselves and the unfairness they had suffered. They listened to grassroots' tearful pleas and complaints with strained ears and provided brains to solve their troubles. In addition, they soothed the pain of the lowly through various kuts such as ss'itkim-kut to soothe the souls who died of unfair judgment with

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<sup>334</sup> Lee, Kyung-soon and Koo, Se-woong. "The Confucian Transformation of Mountain Space: Travels by Late-Chosŏn Confucian Scholars and the Attempted Confucianization of Mountains". *Journal of Korean Religions*, Vol. 5, No. 2, *Religion, Ritual, and the State in Chosŏn Korea* (2014), pp. 119-143

tearful resentment, Dangsan-kut, and Sŏngju-kut, to drive away diseases or disasters (Hong Tae-han. 2012).<sup>335</sup>

Secondly, Chosŏn shamanism was the only religion Chosŏnese had and exerted a decisive influence on shaping their views on life and death. However, it cannot be argued as a unilateral victory of shamanism against Confucianism. It was a victory based on a mutual treaty that shamanism would become a propagator of the ethics of neo-Confucianism. Instead, the shamanization of Confucianism was accepted by Chosŏn literati. In other words, orthodox neo-Confucianism was melted into Chosŏn shamanism as a part of the syncretic folk belief. Instead, the ideas of filial piety and ancestor worship, the core concepts of neo-Confucianism, were engraved in the souls of Chosŏnese as sacred values through practicing shamanic religious rituals repeatedly. The interactions formed a spiral relation of close cooperation, shackling the Chosŏnese consciousness.

As a result, Chosŏnese had to pay a steep price for popularizing Confucianism into shamanic superstitions. It sounds ironic, but such a historical phenomenon domesticated the Chosŏnese mentality accustomed to mundane materialism since it made them focus entirely on getting much money, wealth, and honor rather than on eternal spiritual life in Heaven or a life faithful to the will of God (Lee, Bok-kyu. 2018).<sup>336</sup> Accordingly, they became eager to mobilize their ancestral gods and spirits living in the ghostdom to secure their protection and blessing by serving ancestral rites passionately throughout their lives. Of course, they began to rely more and more on practicing fortune-telling, divination, and shaman's kut to make their dream come true through importuning psychic medium with the ancestral gods and spirits.

Deuchler realistically expressed the Chosŏnese custom for ancestor worship busy to sacrifice rites to one's ancestors throughout the year in the phrase, Chosŏnese lived their whole life under the ancestors'

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<sup>335</sup> Hong, Tae-han. *Korean Shaman chants in Ganghwa-do vol. 4* (Minsok-won. 2012)

<sup>336</sup> Lee, Bok-kyu. *Understanding Korean traditional culture* (Minsok-won. 2018)

eyes (Martina Deuchler. 2015).<sup>337</sup> In other words, Chosŏnese did not live in a world together with the dead but lived in a world where the dead overwhelmed the living. For example, the number of rituals serviced by subordinate descent lines (小宗, 소종; Sojong) counted about sixteen times a year. Adding the ritual practiced on the first day of the year and the other seasonal rituals, it comes to about twenty times a year. Because there were other rituals held by superordinate descent lines (大宗, 대종; Daejong), Deuchler's statement Chosŏnese living under the ancestors' eyes was certainly no exaggeration.

Despite initially pursuing an ascetic and atheistic view of life, Chosŏn Confucian literati compromised to create a supernatural pantheon full of gods and spirits with Chosŏn shamanism due to their mundane materialism based on the faith for blessing in this world. As a result, the ethics of the Chosŏnese resulted in a corrupt social atmosphere disorderly enjoying superstitious rituals and village festivity centered on exorcism rather than diligent labor.

Thirdly, Shamanism was a tool necessary for going through the daily lives of Chosŏnese and a friendly guide to preparing for the future. For example, the aforementioned Mukjae Diary provides abundant and realistic cases that Mukjae Lee Munkŏn (1494-1567) practiced divination and fortunetelling of the Four Pillars of destiny, based on the principle of I-Ching (易經), astrology, geomancy, and shaman kut. All these things he did habitually in his lifetime. Even visiting relatives in neighboring villages, he often liked to read the day's fortune to make his final decision. Also, when his son caught a cold, he called a shaman to his house and performed a rite to ward off the ghost of the cold. It is true that shamanism, including divination activities, was a part of daily life for almost all Chosŏnese, not just personal taste for Mukjae Lee Munkŏn.

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<sup>337</sup> Deuchler, Martina. *Under the ancestors' eyes* Martina Deuchler. *Under the Ancestors' Eyes: Kinship, Status, and Locality in Premodern Korea* (Harvard East Asian Monographs 378. Cambridge, Massachusetts. 2015).

Fourthly, Choson shamans were placed in government institutions to treat patients. In other words, the state formally acknowledged the ability of shamanism to cure diseases. Even when suffering from a mild illness such as a cold, Chosōnese sought a shaman rather than a doctor. In a word, Chosōn shamanism was not only a religion in charge of the spiritual world but also a life guide that cured patients' illnesses (Lee, Nūng-hwa. 2008. 182).<sup>338</sup>

Putting all these facts together, Chosōn shamanism inscribed Confucian doctrine centered on filial piety and ancestor worship into the souls and bones of Chosōnese and the materialistic idea of returning to absolute nothingness after death. Thus, the one resulted in the ghostdom, which teemed with thousands of ancestral souls, spirits, and gods. The other transformed Chosōnese into a people full of mundane materialism. Probably, other diverse political events and social phenomena linked in a chain of causation might produce those streams of transformation. However, these two elements of changes in religious and cosmological views of Chosōnese were the most decisive factors. In the end, they all together, regardless of the noble yangban or the lowly nobi, divided the entire territory of Chosōn into segregated zones governed by each of the influential ancestor spirits and gods, making it a shamanic religious state (Lee, Pil-young. 1994).<sup>339</sup>

This study reveals that in the pre-modern culture of Chosōn, Confucian shamanism was a critical element that had a tremendous influence in terms of either the spiritual or the material dimension. Such a doctrine of shamanic traditions and customs still remains intact in the hearts of Koreans today. For example, ancestral rites are still actively performed nationwide on every seasonal holiday and festival. Most seasonal holidays and festivals stemmed, in their origin, from the Confucian and shamanic doctrine, and the shamanic myths and tales intertwined with such seasonal customs are still being taught to the next

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<sup>338</sup> Lee, Nūng-hwa. *ibid.* 182

<sup>339</sup> Lee, Pil-young. *Social History of Village Faith* (Woong-jin Publishing. 1994)

generation under the name of preservation of traditional culture. For example, even today, when a man and a woman want to get married, they try to consult the fortune-teller to predict their partner's fortunes by the Four Pillars of date of birth and look at the compatibility to confirm sexual harmony (32.8% of respondents).<sup>340</sup> If you have trouble planning or promoting a new business, it is a custom to go to a fortune teller (41 % of respondents; at least once f2017-2021).<sup>341</sup> In a survey conducted on January 19, 2022, 10% of respondents said they had already seen their 2022 New Year's horoscope, and 23% said they would (Korean Research. 2022).<sup>342</sup>

After all, Koreans still feel a powerful affinity for pre-modern shamanic customs, and it plays the role of a carrier incubator that preserves and cultivates old traditional values that collide head-on with modern values based on modern and scientific rationality and pass them on to the next generation. The limitation of this study is that it has not been able to quantitatively analyze how many remnants of pre-modern Confucian shamanism remain in today's Korean society and how strongly they exert their influence.

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<sup>340</sup> Survey report by Hellounse.com; <https://news.mt.co.kr/mtview.php?no=2012112814371837717>. Source from Moneytoday.

<sup>341</sup> Korean Research. 2022. <https://hrcopinion.co.kr/archives/20672>

<sup>342</sup> Korean Research. 2022. <https://hrcopinion.co.kr/archives/20672>

## **Chapter 5.**

### **Interpreting the Survey of the Hybridity of the Korean Value System**

#### **1. Research background**

This study has focused on investigating the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of growing conflict between members of Korean society through a reflection of various social events and debates in Korean society, especially in terms of the historical context. For example, the protest against the Korea-US FTA (Free Trade Agreement) in 2006, the protest against imports of mad cow disease in 2008, the sinking of the patrol combat corvette in 2010 (PCC) Chōnan, the conspiracy theories over the maritime accident of the Sewol ferry sinking in 2014, and the candlelight vigil for the impeachment of President Park. These were large-scale events that caused a national sensation during the 2000s. These large-scale issues drove the entire nation into a vortex of social conflict. The real problem though is that they did not stop at temporary clashes on specific policies or issues but penetrated to the root of the problem within Korean society. In short, these conflicts were producing social chronicity below the surface.

Needless to say, it is critical to secure the legitimacy of one’s argument in order to gain an

edge over the other party. In that sense, the sociopolitical partisans of Korean society have been struggling with each other over the initiative to collect, edit, and preserve historical memories. It is because they believe that if you want to dominate a person, there is no better way than to control their memory. According to the cultural anthropologist Aleida Assmann, there is little dispute that autobiographical memories are what distinguish us from one another.

Experiential memories are embodied and thus cannot be transferred from one person to another. In stressing the experiential solipsism of individual memory, however, we disregard two important dimensions of memory: interaction with other individuals and interaction with external signs and symbols. Autobiographical memories cannot be embodied by another person, but they can be shared with others. Once they are verbalized in the form of a narrative or represented by a visual image, the individual's memories become part of an intersubjective symbolic system and thus no longer a purely exclusive and inalienable property.<sup>343</sup>

Korea's left- and right-wing political parties are fighting a bloody memory war for the power to collect, edit, and store the public's collective memory in their own way. There are many examples of such ongoing battles – for instance, the controversy over designating the Korean history textbook to get it published by the government,<sup>344</sup> Japanese colonial rule, the national division into the South and North, the Korean War, and the character of the authoritarian political systems. In short, the memory war, to preempt collective memory and secure editorial rights over it, is producing other conflicts within Korean society. It's not a cold war. It's a hot war! As an

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<sup>343</sup> Aleida Assmann, (2008). Transformations between History and Memory, *Social Research*, Vol. 75, No. 1, Collective Memory and Collective Identity (SPRING 2008), pp. 49-72

<sup>344</sup> It is a controversy that arose over the nationalization of Korean history textbooks under the Park Geun-hye administration in 2015.

inevitable result, the entire history of the Republic of Korea has been tarnished to such an extent that it fell into lameness to suit the aims of each faction.

In the case of the Sewol ferry sinking, why do so many different interpretations, arguments, conflicts, and confrontations persist for so long over the memories and records of the single incident? Nobody argues that it should not take time to get an accurate account of the incident. However, if the event could not have fixed its own authoritative narrative based on its full account even after several years, or in some cases decades, the reason for the laziness is often due to the fact that no group has secured the requisite authority to edit the memory and define the meaning of the event in their own way. In the case of Korean society, even if it is not perfect, it is very difficult to build a collective memory for a specific historical event based on even a rough consensus since Korean society has been polarized into divided categories of ideology, political thought, and collective memories over the past. There are many examples of the divided social factions, such as the left and the right-wing, the progressive and the conservative, the pro-American and the pro-China, and pro-North Korea. Although they look like they are vying day by day for the sake of opposition, they are in fact struggling to secure power to address the historical memory of the public.

There was a time when it was argued that political ideology was the main cause of social conflict, but today's complex social environment cannot be explained by drawing simple ideological fronts and dividing camps. Current research argues that "Koreans have a certain unique temperament down deep in their heart that is rooted in their ancestrality and regionality, and that such different value system cause conflicts between them because such things make Koreans not

intelligible to one another” is gaining consensus overall.<sup>345</sup>

So, it is none other than an existential question about the nature and identity of Koreans. This question requires an ontological reflection on the historical process of becoming Korean and the formation of their collective memories in terms of how different value systems and temperaments have been embodied by each of the social factions in Korea today. While Korean society was caught in a vortex of historical events and repeated experiences, what sorts of memories were deposited in the psyche of each individual, and what differences in value systems gave birth to each type of individual? Knowing the sorts of collective memory that are working in the recesses of their mind and how they influence their daily life without knowing it, appropriate measures can be taken about how best to integrate them.

Assmann argues that in order to establish the complementary relationship between history and memory, scholarly attention should be paid to the so-called 'conservative forgetting domain.' In this realm of conservative oblivion, collective memories as traces and trash of the past remain until they are noticed by historians.<sup>346</sup> Historians should excavate these collective memories in the realm of conservative oblivion and study how the event was experienced and interpreted in the past and why it was remembered as such. The historian has no choice but to summon and reactivate the collective memory today and refer to the recorded history as the basis for reconstructing such

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<sup>345</sup> Choi Jōngwoon, (2013). *Korean, Who are we; where do we come from, and where we are going?* Miji Books; He argued in this work that to find the modern identity of the Korean people, we should find answers to the questions of "What have we been going through?", "What have we felt?" Also, he added we should have been looking for "How have we interpreted them?", "What have we thought, and what have we hoped for?" In a word, it belongs to the issues of collective memory.

<sup>346</sup> Assmann, A. (1996). *Texts, Traces, Trash: The Changing Media of Cultural Memory, Representations*, Autumn, No. 56: *The New Erudition* (Autumn, 1996), pp. 123-134, University of California Press Stable

events.<sup>347</sup>

Based on such an interpretive framework, this study has traced the memory of modern Koreans that have evolved from the Chosŏn Dynasty to the present day with the narratological method. In various narratives about them, this study retrieved and reactivated the memories that were the traces of the past which have been excluded from academic historical records in the actuality of today. These are memories that have already been discarded in the power struggle between sociopolitical factions and strewn like garbage into the trash, excluded from the original memory, but somewhere in the subconscious of Koreans where they exert a greater influence than any collective memories. These collective memories are the target elements that this study identify as the causal factors of social conflicts in Korean society.

If it were true that premodern values are prevalent in Korean society today in material terms, and they become more rigidified as time goes by, causing social conflict and seriously increasing social costs, then the task of the KVS survey will be to answer such questions by dissecting their collective memory and consciousness. In addition, the KVS survey considers it imperative to understand the mechanism of how such premodern heritage collides with the value system of modernity in the inner world of Koreans and to identify its identity and content.

## **2. Research questions and purpose**

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<sup>347</sup> Aleida Assmann, (2008). Transformations between History and Memory, *Social Research*, Vol. 75, No. 1, Collective Memory and Collective Identity (Spring, 2008), pp. 49-72

Through qualitative research spanning the previous chapters, this study has revealed that the traditional value system inherited from the Chosŏn Dynasty is still active in the minds of modern Koreans. Such a collective memory of premodernity works as the driving force to make people feel nostalgia for the past traditional world and causes social conflict since the premodern value system collides with modern values. In light of this fact, many questions arise. Firstly, what are the elements of these two value systems? Secondly, how does the clash between them divide today's Koreans? Thirdly, is it possible to measure and express the Korean value system (KVS) with statistical values regarding the type of hybridity these contradictory elements constitute in the consciousness of modern Koreans?

This chapter analyzes the inner world of Koreans quantitatively in terms of premodern and modern values. In addition, it quantitatively analyzes the social consciousness of modern Korea in terms of collective memory and collective consciousness. Based on the results of this quantitative research, it subdivides them into more detailed categories in an effort to identify the political and social factions that arise in every major conflict in Korean society.

### **3. Significance of the Study**

For the purpose of measuring the KVS (Korean Value System), this study set opposing value standards of survival vs. self-realization on the x-axis and premodernity vs. modernity on the y-axis and analyzed 100 questionnaires that met each value standard. The values of the x and y coordinates for each individual were calculated and displayed as a scatter plot on one coordinate

plane. The survey subject does not have to say, "I am a conservative or liberal, left or right-wing, traditional or modern person", but it is visually marked on the scatter plot after their responses are analyzed.

The significance of this study is that it can visually depict the collective consciousness of modern Koreans by specified groups. For example, suppose there are 520 samples, each of the 520 points on the coordinate plane represent the distribution of their own consciousness. Similarly, a whole mass of the marked points shows the collective consciousness of the society. Therefore, it is possible to directly observe what kind of people are in conflict with what group and grasp the kinds of collective memory and consciousness that are influencing the tendencies and behavior patterns of certain social groups. The strength of this study is that it makes it possible to establish concrete ideas about what policies and education should be implemented and how investment should be best utilized for minimizing conflict.

## **4. Theoretical Perspectives**

### **4-1. Theoretical background for the analysis frame**

In the 2010s, many scholars in Korea began to argue that “Korean society is regressing to the premodern Chosŏn era.” Kang Kyu-hyŏng raised the following question in his 2021 column, “Is Korea regressing to the post-Chosŏn?” Hwang Sŭng-yŏn published his paper, “Slave mentality inside Koreans (2019),” and “Habitual lies and Slave mentality deep-rooted in Koreans (2021).”

In addition, as a full-fledged academic study, Choi Jōng-woon’s work, “The Birth of a Korean (2013)” and Ham Jae-bong’s book, *Becoming Koreans* (2020) are relevant to such claims. On top of that, a number of foreign journalists and scholars such as Kuroda Katsuhiko (黒田勝弘) raise similar issues. This study has revealed the results of the qualitative analysis method by showing that the premodern collective memory still has a strong influence on the consciousness and attitudes of Koreans in their daily life.

Those who hold premodern values recall the Chosŏn Dynasty as a nostalgic hometown. The premodern values that evoke such a traditional sensibility feel dissatisfied with the reality that Korean society is changing into a digital social structure. Those who are still immersed in a premodern consciousness act as a conflicting factor that clashes with modernity in every case.

This study contends that in order to understand the underlying patterns of conflict in Korean society and the characteristics of the subjects of conflict, the most important task is to analyze the proportion and distribution status of the collective memory they hold in their minds. Based on this idea, the Korean value system (KVS) divides them into four value groups: premodern/tradition-oriented, modern/rationality-oriented, survival-oriented, and self-realization-oriented, and analyzed in the manner and proportion that they are combined in the mind of Koreans.<sup>348</sup> When the consciousness of those individuals is synthesized as a whole, the social density and distribution of Koreans’ collective memory/consciousness can be displayed on a single coordinate plane for the visualization.

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<sup>348</sup> For the criteria for classifying the value system into these four axes, the Inglehart–Welzel Cultural Map of WVS (World Value Survey) was referred to. However, the value standard of “Secular” of WVS was modified to “modern rational.”

Is it true that the value system of individuals and society can be found in the collective memory and collective consciousness? The Korean Value System Survey, the interpretive framework of this study, is made up of collective memory rather than a set of objective facts. For example, if a particular history is a record of perfectly objective facts, then that history must exist as a single fact, regardless of who recorded it. Because it is a perfectly objective fact, its history has no room for interpretation other than what is recorded. However, there is no one in this world who can see world affairs in an absolutely objective sense. Over time, putatively objective historical facts will disappear and only the historical facts colored with various interpretations will remain.

As Charles Maier argues, memory motivates historical activity, and historical research uses memory.<sup>349</sup> In other words, there is a constant interaction and transformation between history and memory. In the end, history becomes a collection of memories, not a collection of facts. History as a science judges not only oral testimony and experience, but also the extent to which the evidence is closely related to the event and the exact meaning of the evidence, based on various memories. Since memories fade over time, we have no choice but to rely on history to verify, prove, and disprove historical records of memory groups that are grouped into nuclei. In this way, records or testimonies by direct experience or eyewitnesses of the original event are left as early historical records and are transformed into collective memory in the process of being passed down, recited and cross-verified. Since collective memory is a history that transcends individuals and has

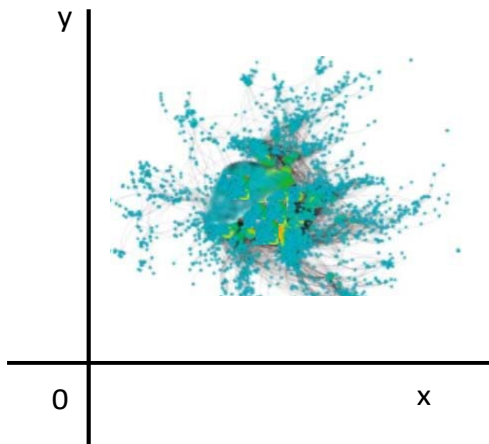
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<sup>349</sup> Maier, C. (1993). A Surfeit of Memory? Reflections on History, Melancholy and Denial; *History and Memory* vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 136-152, Indiana University Press p.143

obtained authority through social verification, it is engraved with historical truth in the minds of society members.<sup>350</sup>

One of the tasks of the historian is to focus on the loopholes in the memory of society through the performance of an intellectual and ethical function in a place where history and memory are polarized and at odds with each other. By focusing on the forgotten, the historian creates anti-memory.<sup>351</sup> In addition, anti-memory of the forgotten is the most certain and clear way to analyze and track human memory, especially the memory shared in society. Therefore, understanding the collective memory and collective consciousness of a society is the first step to understanding the inner world of that society and is the basis for all social scientific analysis.

The KVS survey established the following analysis frame. First, it needs to design a sufficient number of question items for each social consciousness so that each individual's memories and



**[Fig. 4] Unipolar type  
of collective consciousness>**

consciousness can be collected as much as possible and fragments of each individual's memories and consciousness can be synthesized as much as possible. However, too many questions may cause reluctance to respond to the survey subject, so it should be adjusted to reach an optimal point. Second, data collected through such questionnaires should tend to converge to shared memories and

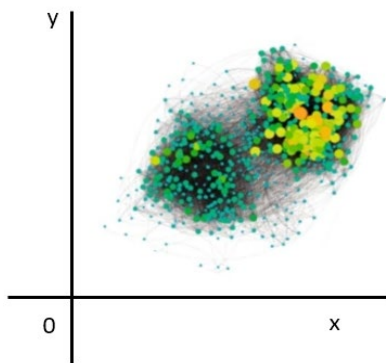
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<sup>350</sup> Assmann, A. (2008). Transformations between History and Memory, *Social Research*, Vol. 75, No. 1, Collective Memory and Collective Identity, pp. 49-72, The Johns Hopkins University Press

<sup>351</sup> -ditto, p.63

consciousness. The questionnaires can be designed to collect Likert scale data based on the decile point to achieve this end. Interview surveys are avoided that involve a subjective interpretation or a “yes or no” question. Third, the social consciousness of Korean society is divided into twelve categories: general values, political consciousness, consciousness about equality and free competition, and group vs. individual consciousness.

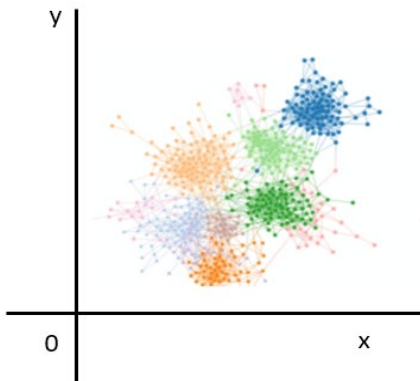
**[Fig. 5] Bipolar type of collective consciousness>**



Fourth, by averaging the Likert scale values of these question items, the KVS survey obtains the coordinate values of what kind of value system each individual’s consciousness constitutes that are calculated and expressed as a cluster sharing the same or similar collective memory. The types of social consciousness are derived, as shown in Figures 4, 5, and 6.

[Figure 4] is a case in which the clusters of social members’ memories appear as a single large mass. It is a phenomenon of social homogenization of collective consciousness. It can be shown in the case of a well-organized and integrated society.

**<Figure 6; Multipolar type of collective consciousness>**



It means that all members of society share a homogeneous historical consciousness and collective memory through optimal social institutions and communication. By contrast, it can indicate that the society is under a one-man/one-party dictatorship such as in Nazi Germany or North Korea. [Figure 5] shows a bipolar collective consciousness society in which

two distinct groups exist, as in the case of newly independent countries after World War II as well as in a society with severe political conflict. It belongs to a society where confrontation and conflict are intense such as where conservative-liberal, left-right, and regional-other regional clusters are marked in a polarized shape. [Figure 6] shows a multipolar society in which several different stakeholder groups or clusters of collective memory are held in balance with one another. Alternatively, a multipolar type may be a broken society with no socially cohesive values and minimal ideological cohesion. It can be divided into these three types of society. However, various types of societies may exist with different collective memory clusters between the gaps.

#### **4-2. Theoretical background for questionnaire composition**

This study classified the traditional values of premodernity still active in Koreans into three categories. The first is a slave mentality that stemmed from slavery, the basis of the social system during the Chosŏn Dynasty. The second is a propensity stemmed from the Chosŏnese reliance on the collectivistic village and nostalgic attitude toward Chosŏn Dynasty as an ethnic, ideally imagined community. The third is the mentality of “only between us (uri-k’iri)” and partisanship stemmed from a kinship-centered, nepotistic society built on the lineal principle of agnation. The fourth is the mentality of valuing wealth and honors in this life rather than dreaming of spiritual deliverance in the next. This sort of materialistic attitude has been formed by the Chosŏnese shamanistic religious view, which is evident in the contemporary Koreans’ view of life and death.

While the habitual lies, deceit, and faulting of Koreans pointed out above are rooted in a slavery consciousness, Yoo Min-bong (2021) and Shim Hyung-in (2013) describe five enduring

characteristics of Koreans: familial sectarianism, nepotism, paternalism, and tribalism based on the agnatic patrilineal family group. By and large, Koreans today are accustomed to a hierarchical and results-oriented way of thinking. Through the research thus far, it has been clarified that the characteristics mentioned above are simultaneously the social norms and value systems of Chosŏn society that were essential for maintaining and living their communal, kinship-oriented way of life.

Lastly, it has been shown that the strong affinity of modern Koreans for shamanism is indeed a cultural factor transmitted from the Confucian practice of ancestor worship in Chosŏn. The historical process that recognizes nature and culture as they are and deconstructs them from the sphere of the Almighty God is called “secularization.” In that case, secularization is the essential content of modern attributes. Nevertheless, if the shamanic customs have not faded at all and are getting stronger even in modern times in Korean society, it means that the affinity of shamanism has a greater influence than that of modernity on contemporary lifestyles.

By the middle of the 17th century, shamanism in Chosŏn developed into a syncretic religion that mixed Buddhism and Daoism in a shamanistic way with folklores transmitted from the Koryŏ Dynasty. Chosŏn shamanism is a time capsule that preserves premodern elements as they were regardless of secularization. Such shamanic elements take the form of traditional cultural factors and are gaining increasing popularity in modern Korean society. In other words, shamanic custom functions as a medium that transmits and preserves the memories of premodernity into modern Korean society. The memories exert a lasting impact on their value systems, worldviews, decisions, and daily life.

Lutz Niethammer argued that history has the opportunity to re-examine and revise the

dominant public memory by uncovering and bringing to the surface “other hidden memories” that have been repressed in the subconscious.<sup>352</sup> As Assmann observes, Niethammer pays attention to the fact that critical memories that are naturally selected can be discovered within the reservoir of discarded collective memories since those of the poor or humble slave class were meant to be censored from the point of view of the ruling powers or excluded from the historical record. Excavating discarded collective memories will cause cracks in the current historical memory. Thus, there is bound to be a rift and tension between the historical memory and the discarded memory.

For this reason, the KVS Survey has designed the questions to investigate individual thoughts, consciousness, and psychological characteristics of each issue from various perspectives to determine how many premodern elements remain in Koreans’ consciousness and how strongly they focus on survival-oriented values. It is also designed to measure the scale of modern-rational and self-realization values, respectively, in relation to premodern traditions and survival-oriented values. Each person has different thoughts, opinions, and psychological characteristics, but through social interaction, they converge into a collective consciousness and lead to a better social life. Even within a single society, different collective consciousnesses can exist.

Methodologically, this study has employed the WVS (World Value Survey).<sup>353</sup> According to the WVS, collective memory and consciousness are categorized into values in four directions

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<sup>352</sup> L.Niethammer, "Die postmoderne Herausforderung. Geschichte als Gedächtnis im zeitalter der Wissenschaft", W. Küttler, Jörn Rüsen, E. Schulz (Hg.), *Geschichtsdiskurs*, Bd.1: Grundlagen und Methoden der Historiographiegeschichte (Frankfurt a. M. 1993). 31-49.

<sup>353</sup> WVS’s Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map interprets the cultural differences of 65 countries as two variables: Traditional values versus Rational values and Survival values versus Self-expression values; for more information, refer to the WVS site of “<https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>”

on the two axes of x and y and displayed on the coordinate plane of a scattered plot. Survival-priority values vs. Self-realization-priority values are plotted on the x-axis. Traditional vs. Secular values are plotted on the y-axis. Secular values refer to a way of thinking that has been modernized and rationalized away from traditional culture. The survey relates to the act of separating thinking from a religious point of view and redirecting it to a scientific, rational, and humanistic direction.

Thus, traditional, religious values and modern, secular values are mutually exclusive. However, it is not an entirely exclusive confrontation, as each person has different proportions of hybridity based on their individual characteristics. For example, no one who lives in a cutting-edge modern society will live entirely with modern, secular, and rational values and perspectives. Everyone lives with a view to rationality in an appropriate traditional value system. Although survival and self-realization values are opposed to one another, they live by appropriately hybridized values.

## **5. Research Method**

### **5-1. Setting and population**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the values system of Koreans by referencing the World Values Survey Association's questionnaires and analyzing them. For this purpose, an online survey was conducted. The sample size was 520 people. The gender of the respondents consisted of 263 males (50.6%) and 257 females (49.4%). To investigate the value systems of Koreans, the

responses of groups ranging in age from 20 to 60 or older were collected in an even distribution. The age range of the survey respondents was fairly evenly distributed: 92 people in their 18-29 years old (17.7%), 93 people in their 30s (17.9%), 114 people in their 40s (22%), 123 people in their 50s (23.7%), 98 people in their 60s and over (18.8) %. The final educational background consisted of the following figures: 95 people (18.3%) with or without high school graduation, 38 people (7.3%) who are enrolled or dropped out of college, 334 people (64.2%) who have graduated from university, and 53 people (10.2%) with graduate degrees or higher.

## **5-2. Operational Definition**

The World Value Survey (WVS) has shown that, over the past few years, the values and beliefs of each society member not only play a role in its economic development and establishing a robust democratic government system but also have a strong influence on the development of gender equality. WVS has statistically proven that it plays a crucial role in forming values related to daily life and human relationships, such as social tolerance and forming associations of mutual trust and consent. The Inglehart-Welzel Cultural Map of WVS interprets the cultural differences of 65 countries as two variables: Traditional values vs. Rational values and Survival values vs. Self-realization values.

This study examines participants' responses to a total of 104 questions in 11 categories: ① general values of life, ② trust among members of society (social capital), ③ attitudes toward individualism and communalism, ④ attitudes to corruption, ⑤ foreign labor and immigrants, ⑥ perspectives on freedom, equality, and security, ⑦ awareness of science and technology, and

religion, ⑧ conception of ancestor gods and shamanism, ⑨ ethical values and norms, ⑩ political consciousness, ⑪ nationalism and history. They were designed to respond in a Q&A format and a decile of the Likert scale. To examine the proportions of Korean values mixed up with traditional values, modern secular values, survival values, and self-realization values, the average individual values for each question was calculated to be marked on a scatter plot using Cartesian coordinates to display the averaged values. Finally, the scatter plot was prepared to visualize the hybridity of what type of value system Koreans had by displaying survival values vs. self-realization values on the x-axis and traditional values vs. modern rational values on the y-axis.

By displaying two opposing values on the ‘x’ or ‘y’ axis using Cartesian coordinates (survival value vs. self-realization value on the x-axis, traditional value vs. modern value on the y-axis), the responses to the survey are categorized into values in four directions. This made it possible to visualize the distribution of hybridizations and easily identify them. The question items presented in the KVS were structured to clearly extract the difference in the hybridity of each respondent based on the following principles.

① Each question is composed based on the everyday experiences that can easily identify the values of traditional-secular and survival-self-realization in four categories.

② To calculate the degree to which the hybridity between the four values is internalized in the mindset of individuals, respondents are requested to express their opinions on deciles of the Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 10= fully agree). In this way, the basis for numerically judging the combination of hybridity for individual question items is designed.

③ Each question is prepared based on works that have specializations related to the

characteristics of or secularization of a traditional community, the historical development of collective memory and consciousness, including the research results thus far of this study.

④ The keywords are:

- **For traditional-modern values:**

Affinity, Collectivism, Factionalism, Communal, Communitarianism, Community, Family Group, Tribal clan, Imagined community.

- **For Survival-self-realization values:**

Income, Labor, Competition, Individualism, Freedom, Equality, Refugee, Immigrant, Ethics, Nanny state, Positive discrimination.

⑤ The independent questions were added to get respondents' affirmative or negative answers together with numerical frequencies. However, these items were excluded from calculations for the hybridity analysis.

### **5-3. A Questionnaire of Traditional and Modern Values**

Traditional values emphasize the teachings and values of traditional religion, the importance of communal life, the bond between parents and children, respect for authority, authoritarian ethics, and traditional family values. This sort of people tends to understand the process of modernization and the development of science and technology as moving away from a human-centered environment. Those who embrace these values tend to reject the value of divorce, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide. Moreover, these societies have high levels of national pride and nationalistic tendencies.

Secular values have preferences in opposition to traditional values. A society made up of people who favor these values place little importance on religion, communality, traditional family values, and authority. Divorce, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide are relatively tolerated because of the emphasis on individualism.

The measuring of traditional value and modern value consisted of 43 items, and all of the question items were used to extract only the hybridity between tradition and secularism. [Table 5] shows the question items of traditional values and modern secular values.

*[Tab. 5] A Questionnaire of traditional vs. modern values  
(Trad.; Traditional/Mod.; Modern)*

Variable	nbr	Measurement/ Questionnaire items	Scale	
			1=Yes, 10=No	Trad Mod
Traditional vs. Modern secular value	1	One of the goals in my life is to make my parents feel proud.	1	10
	2	When the mother goes out to earn money, the children suffer.	1	10
	3	In general, men are better political leaders than women.	1	10
	4	A college education is more necessary for boys than girls.	1	10
	5	In general, men are better business managers than women.	1	10
	6	Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as having a job.	1	10
	7	Luck and networking are more critical factors for success than hard work	1	10
	8	I think some corruption is inevitable in social life.	1	10
	9	I don't think that corruption in Korean society is extreme.	1	10
	10	The more immigrants, the more crime.	1	10
	11	Immigrants increase the risk of terrorism.	1	10
	12	Tech & Science cannot make our lives healthier, easier, and more comfortable.	1	10
	13	We should trust in religious teaching more than in science	1	10
	14	The existence of God is very important in my life.	1	10
	15	I believe in the existence of God.	1	10
	16	I believe in the existence of the afterworld and afterlife.	1	10
	17	I believe in Heaven & Hell.	1	10
	18	I believe in the protection of my ancestors.	1	10
	19	Religion is always right when science and religion collide.	1	10
	20	The only religion I can accept is the one I believe in at the moment.	1	10
	21	Do you believe in divination or fortunetelling?	1	10
	22	Do you believe in the customs of Geomancy, such as moving parents' graves?	1	10

23	Government should support the poor by collecting taxes from the rich.	1	10
24	State leaders should be elected only through a free electoral system	10	1
25	The state is responsible for the unemployed and should provide them with relief.	1	10
26	People have the right to resist political oppression.	10	1
27	The state should equalize the income of its citizens.	1	10
28	Citizens must obey their rulers.	1	10
29	Women have equal rights with men.	10	1
30	I want to live in a democratic society in any case.	10	1
31	I am very upset about the history that Koryŏ and Chosŏn were ruled by China.	1	10
32	I am very upset that Chosŏn was a colony of Japan once before.	1	10
33	We must endure their political and economic rudeness due to the Sino-centrism	1	10
34	We must be patient because we have to serve China for our security.	1	10
35	The United States is the ally that saved us from communization.	10	1
36	The United States is our ally above China.	10	1
37	The Korean War was a proxy war between the US and the Soviet Union, so we have no reason to thank the US.	10	1
38	Since China is expected to become a superpower over the United States, we should make China our ally.	10	1
39	Japan will continue to be an essential partner for our economic growth and prosperity in the future.	10	1
40	Japan is our ally to stand together with China in case of emergency.	10	1
41	As an aggressor country, we must sever ties with Japan in the future.	1	10
42	Japan is an island country that has served us from generation to generation.	1	10

#### 5-4. Survival value vs. self-actualization value

“Survival value” is a principle of judgment and behavior that puts emphasis on the pursuit of economic stability and physical safety for one’s own survival more than any other value. This is a relatively ethnocentric value, and the level of trust between members of society is on the lower side. By contrast, “self-realization” entails the pursuit of “fulfillment by oneself of the possibilities of one’s character or personality.”<sup>354</sup> It also places great importance on the quality of life and

<sup>354</sup> Merriam-Webster shows the meaning of “Self-realization” as “the fulfillment by oneself of the possibilities of one’s character or personality.”

actively encourages gender equality and environmental protection campaigns. In addition, high priority is given to fostering tolerance for others, such as foreigners, gays, and lesbians. Those who fall into this category tend to participate in economic and political decision-making through social activities.<sup>355</sup> [Table 6] shows the measurement items for survival value vs. self-realization value.

*[Tab. 6] A Questionnaire of survival vs. self-realization values  
(Sur; Survival, Self; Self-realization)*

Variable		Measurement/ Questionnaire items	Scale	
			1=Yes, 10=No	
			Sur	Self
<b>Survival vs. Self-realization value</b>	1	Personal income must vary according to the individual's efforts and abilities.	10	1
	2	State-owned enterprises and public enterprises are preferable.	1	10
	3	Citizens must take responsibility for their own lives.	10	1
	4	Free competition is not desirable.	1	10
	5	Immigrants have a very good influence on the development of our country	10	1
	6	Foreign workers are a substitute for the workforce in the 3D industry.	1	10
	7	The greater the number of immigrants, the greater the cultural diversity.	10	1
	8	We should provide refugees with political shelters.	10	1
	9	We need to increase immigration to provide opportunities for people in poor countries.	10	1
	10	Immigrants increase the unemployment rate among Koreans	1	10
	11	The heterogeneous culture of immigrants causes social conflict in Korea.	1	10
	12	Equality is more important than freedom.	1	10
	13	Safety is more important than freedom.	1	10
	14	If war broke out, I would be willing to volunteer to join the battle.	10	1

<sup>355</sup> The term, “self-realization” has a similar meaning to Maslow’s theory of the hierarchy of needs. Maslow's motivational theory states that as human needs mature, they form a series of stages, which asserts that when one need is satisfied, other needs at the next level in the hierarchy emerge. In general, it is a theory that attempts to satisfy the needs of the next level are stronger than the needs of the lowest level in the hierarchy only when those needs are satisfied. The theory asserts that physiological needs are at the most primitive level, followed by safety needs, affection and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization.

15	I can easily make a judgment about whether my actions are ethical and moral.	10	1
16	I can tell lies that can harm others to protect my interests.	1	10
17	I can frame or sue you to eliminate a competitor who threatens my interests.	1	10
18	If my relative has committed delinquency, I will cut off his kinship ties if he does not follow my advice to apologize and beg for forgiveness.	10	1
19	I think the more honest people are in our society, the more they lose.	10	1
20	I believe that the rich in our society gained wealth by exploiting the socially disadvantaged and weak workers.	1	10
21	We have to endure China's rudeness because China is our biggest importer.	1	10
22	We have to endure China's rudeness because we cannot win China for now.	1	10

### 5-5. How to Draw up the KVS scatter plot

The KVS survey results obtained by measuring each question item on the Likert decile scale are analyzed and a scatter plot is drawn up by SPSS Statistics 22.0. The setting of the scatter plot has been designed to represent the traditional, modern, survival, and self-realization values on the coordinate plane. The survival and self-realization values are marked on the x-axis, while the traditional and modern values are on the y-axis. Since human history has developed, the mass of scattered marks have moved from the position of (-5, -5) toward that of (5, 5). The first quadrant, including points (5, 5), shows the modern, secular society correlated with self-realization values. The second quadrant, including points (0, 5) as a vertex, is a society that respects the modern and survival values more than premodern traditional and self-realization values since the quadrant belongs to the area of  $x \leq 0$  and  $y \geq 0$ . In other words, it belongs to a society less modernized and simultaneously hampered by a fast-paced way of life. Accordingly, the fourth quadrant places more importance on self-realization than survival, but the basic consciousness still places more

importance on traditional values.

The method for calculating the response values for making the KVS scatter plot is conducted in the following way. Firstly, the values of the questionnaire items measured on a 10-point decile scale are converted to (-5) ~ (+5). Secondly, 42 items measuring traditional values vs. secular values and 22 items measuring survival value vs. self-actualization value are individually averaged to the total sample of 520 people to get the averaged values of each item. Thirdly, SPSS statistics 22.0 derives the scatterplot graph. The disadvantage of the 10-point Likert scale is that respondents frequently choose the median value arbitrarily and give meaningless responses. To minimize the possibility of distortion of the overall survey results, if the median value of 5 and 6 in individual responses exceeds 30% of the total 66 questions in the questionnaire, it was regarded as data noise and removed from the list.

## **6. Research Results**

### **6-1. General values of Koreans**

To find out which way of life Koreans prioritize, respondents were instructed: “Please rank from 1 to 7 what you believe to be the most important among the following items.” 80.6 percent of the respondents answered that family is the most important value in their life. However, 8.3 percent of respondents said that money is more important than family. Among the respondents who chose family as the most essential value, 153 responded that money was the second most crucial value. 115 people similarly answered that job and work, which are essential to earning money and maintaining a livelihood, are the second most crucial after family. In the end, Koreans

value family most and providing for them. It was found that self-realization values such as leisure time, friends, politics, and religion are still subordinated, and they have a mind that prioritizes survival values. Three respondents chose politics as their first and second priority, the lowest at 0.6% of the total respondents.

In response to Q2 about what people thought was the most important value in children’s education, 119 people (22.9%) chose tolerance and respect for others, 86 people (16.5%) chose good manners, and 70 people (13.5%) answered that their children achieve their goals.

*[Tab. 7] Q1. Please rank from 1st to 7th in the order that you think is most important among the following items. (1st place)*

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Family	419	80.6
Friends	9	1.7
Leisure	18	3.5
Politics	3	.6
Work/job	12	2.3
Religion	16	3.1
Money	43	8.3
Total	520	100.0

*[Tab.8] Q1. Please rank from 1st to 7th in the order that you think is most important among the following items. (2nd place)*

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Family	52	10.0
Friends	99	19.0
Leisure	79	15.2
Politics	3	0.6
Work/job	115	22.1
Religion	19	3.7
Money	153	29.4
Total	520	100.0

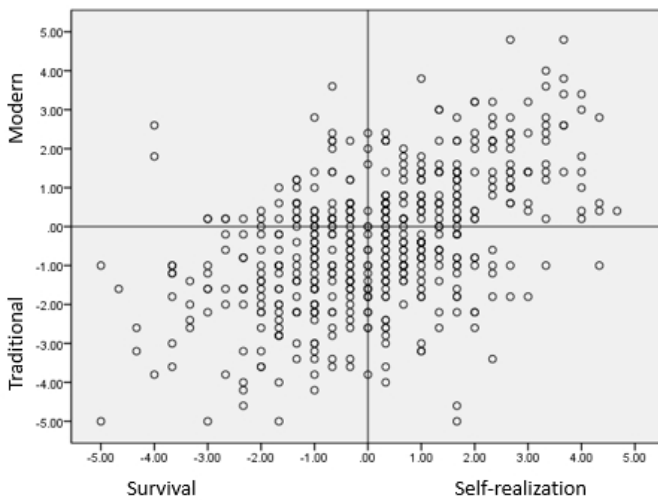
They responded that they wanted to raise them so that they could make continuous efforts. When it came to children’s education, it was found that Koreans want their children to cultivate modern values necessary for social life. On the other hand, it was found that premodern values such as giving importance to the group rather than the individual (3.1%) or obeying superiors (1.2%) were no longer preferred.

In a survey measuring the degree of openness to others, 89.8% of the respondents to the

question Q3, “Choose three people you do not want to have as your neighbors the most,” answered that 89.8% of the respondents picked social misfits such as drug addicts, AIDS patients, and alcoholics. Only 4.3% of the respondents answered that they don’t want to get people from other races, foreign immigrants, believers of other religions, and those who speak a foreign language. As a result, it was found that Korean society’s openness to the outside world is relatively high and that there is a strong sense of rejection of maladjusted people.

In measuring Koreans' general values, Q4~Q6 questions were added to measure the spread of traditional vs. modern secularism, survival vs. self-realization values. The result appeared in the following scatter plot.

[Plot 1] General Values



The values systems or social norms that ordinary people pursue without specifying certain areas such as political, economic, cultural, or other religious fields are well expressed in the wishes of parents raising children. Therefore, the KVS survey investigated the kind of virtues and life goals Korean parents want their children to pursue and

cherish. According to the survey’s results, as shown in the scatter plot presented above, Koreans have a value distribution that is right-upward sloping. However, it was revealed that they were not concentrated around any specific values, but varied and widely dispersed around the right-upward

standard line. However, the third quadrant, traditional-survival, and the first quadrant, modernity-self-realization, appeared to have more scattered marks than the other two quadrants. In conclusion, Koreans can be broadly divided into two categories in terms of their value systems. One category consists of those who feel tired of modernization and industrialization, adhere to traditional values, and are passionate about fulfilling material means to lead their lives while remaining faithful to their families and familiar social or kinship groups. The other is a series of Korean groups who actively realize the value system that supports them in their lives since consciousness and material life have already been considerably modernized. The overall scatterplot mass is tilted to the right-upward toward coordinates (5, 5) so it can be seen that the direction of Korean consciousness is shifting toward modernization-self-actualization constantly.

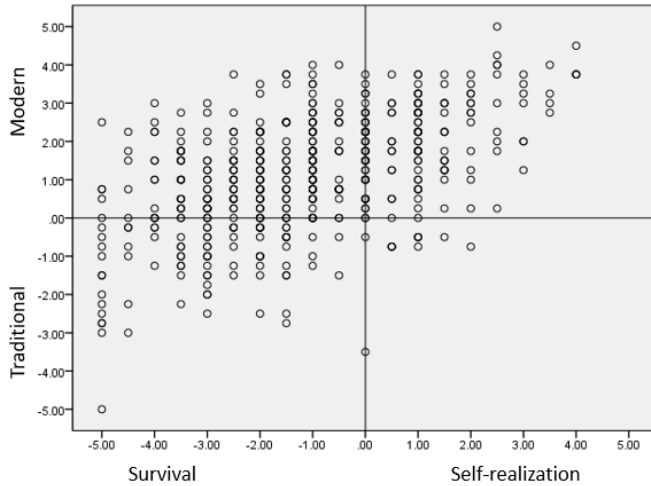
## **6-2. Reliability among members of society**

*Q7; Do you fully trust the people around you or think you should be cautious in your relationships with them? Please mark the checkbox that agrees with your opinion (1; be very careful----10; fully trust).* For the above question, 51.2% of the respondents chose the middle range of scale 4-7, and only 15.2% of the respondents showed that they trusted the people around them by marking the 8-10 scale. In general, 66.4% of the population appears to trust neighboring people. 33.6% of the respondents marked the Likert scale 1-3, revealing a general distrust among members of society. As a result of the survey about family in Q8, 56% of respondents showed almost 100 percent trust (scale 9-10) for them, and 38.3% of respondents showed pretty strong trust in their family (scale 6-8). However, they showed a strong distrust toward people they met for the first

time so 74.4% of the respondents marked 5 or lower on the scale. The spread of Korean traditional-secular, survival-self-reality was measured. The result appears in [plot 2].

The attitude of Koreans regarding social trust is considered to be fairly modernized as it is

[Plot 2] Reliability among members of society



located in the 1st and 2nd quadrants. The phenomenon of enjoying non-face-to-face online or p2p transactions without any doubt and the popularity of mobile financial transactions seems to be based on such social consciousness. Nevertheless, many scattered marks still remain in the area of survival value which is located in  $x \leq 0$ , indicating that

the field of Koreans' life may be quite fierce.

### 6-3. Attitudes toward free competition, individualism, and collectivism

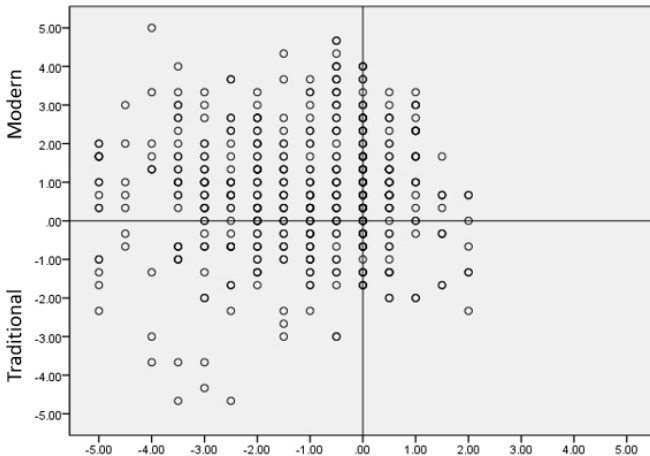
Q9-1 asked respondents whether they thought that “personal income should be unconditionally equal regardless of individual effort or ability.” 40.1% of the respondents marked a check on the 4-7 scale, indicating some uncertainty concerning this question. 50.8% of the respondents, on the 8-10 scale, held a strong view that “income should vary according to individual effort and ability”. Meanwhile, 9.1% of respondents (scale of 1-3) had a strong collectivist tendency that income should be unconditionally equal.

Q9-2 asked whether state-owned and public enterprises were preferable or whether private enterprises were more desirable as the basis of the national economy. The respondents who marked the 4-7 scale, which is the median  $\pm 2$  interval, accounted for 63.5% of the total. Only 13.9% of respondents, on the 1-3 scale, strongly supported a private enterprise system while 22.7% of respondents strongly supported state-owned and public enterprises. In response to Q9-3, “The state should take responsibility for the basic life and welfare of the people” and “People should take responsibility for their own lives,” 51% of respondents marked the 4-7 scale, and 26.1% who marked the 1-3 scale support a welfare state. 22.9% of the respondents marked that individuals should be responsible for their own life.

According to the results, more than half of Koreans still want the state government to share the responsibility for the general welfare of its citizens. When asked if they think free competition is desirable, 51.9% of the respondents chose an intermediate position while 35.8% of the respondents argued that free competition was more desirable. The response rate on the 8-10 scale, which strongly supported free competition, reached 12.3%. As to whether personal effort leads to a successful life or that it is ultimately a matter of social capital, 47.2% of the respondents marked the 4-7 scale, 20.6% of the respondents marked the 1-3 scale, believing that personal effort is the critical factor to success. 23.3% of respondents marked the 8-10 scale, believing that social capital is more important to success.

When asked about economics, Koreans revealed a mixed attitude between individualism

[Plot 3] Attitudes towards free competition, individualism, and collectivism



and collectivism. 68.7% of respondents marked the 1-5 scale concerning free market competition. Although the collectivist and communitarian propensity in Korean society is transitioning to the modern social formation based on free competition and individualism, it is still strong in today's Korean society that there is a wide range of classes with a generally

mixed attitude.

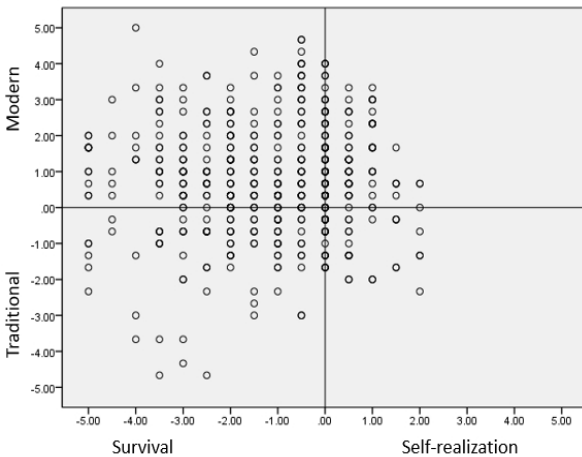
#### 6-4. Foreign Labor and Immigrants

This question is designed to measure the level of Koreans' openness toward the outside world. Modernity has the character of expanding individual rights and responsibilities as well as broadening their activities overseas. Therefore, openness to foreigners is also a measure of modernity. In Q14, the survey investigated the impressions Koreans hold about foreign workers and immigrants. 14.2% of the respondents marked the 1-3 scale, indicating that they had a bad influence of Korean society and its development. The 8-10 scale, indicating that they are instrumental for the development of Korean society, accounted for 9.4%. 46.9% of those on a 5-

point scale or higher and 53.1% on a 6-point scale showed a normal distribution among respondents. In addition, 14.8% of the respondents marked points 1-3, indicating that they are opposed to the idea that Korea should provide refuge for political refugees while 16% of the respondents marked the 8-10 scale, indicating that they strongly support a more progressive immigrant policy. Based on the results, the survey shows that moderate opinion is dominant.

The results shown in [Plot 4] provide a visualization of Koreans' openness to the issues related to foreigners, immigrants, and foreign workers. Almost all marks are clustered in the second quadrant, so it shows that Koreans are pretty open to foreigners based on relatively modern

*[Plot 4] Openness measured by tolerance toward Foreigner, Immigrant, and alien labor*



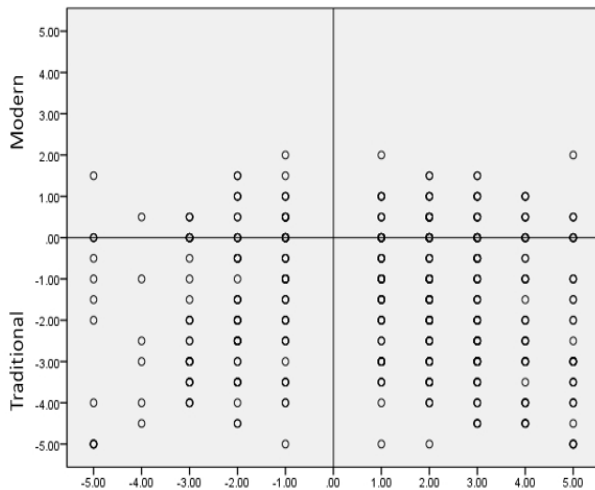
values ( $y \geq 0$ ). However, it also shows that most Koreans have survival values, such as a tendency to focus only on the economic gains and losses resulting from immigration ( $x \leq 0$ ). Yet, they are far away from the realm of traditional values, so they do not seem to indicate that foreigners undermine the cultural heritage of Koreans or show tribalistic exclusivity against them.

Nevertheless, it is true that there is still a long way to go to develop into the ideal of self-realization.

### 6-5. Attitudes toward freedom, equality, safety, and national security

Q16-Q19 measured participants' attitudes toward modern values. Preference was compared concerning the values of freedom, equality, safety, and national security. National security was measured in terms of whether respondents would enlist in the military in the event of war. In comparing the values of freedom and safety, 17.5% of the respondents preferred freedom while 35.4% chose safety. A normal distribution curve was shown when comparing freedom and equality. 56.2% of the respondents expressed their preference for freedom by selecting a 5-point scale or less, while 43.8% answered that they preferred equality by selecting a six-point scale or higher. When asked whether they would enlist in the military for their country in the event of war,

[Plot 5] Attitudes toward freedom, equality, and security



19.8% of respondents said they would do so, while 30.6% would not enlist. From this, it can be seen that there are quite a few respondents who wish to receive benefits from the state but do not want to sacrifice for the country. When asked to choose two policies that the Korean government ought to pursue over the next ten years, 39.2% of the respondents

indicated economic growth whereas 26.2% of respondents indicated the welfare of citizens and expansion of the citizen's voice as their top priority.

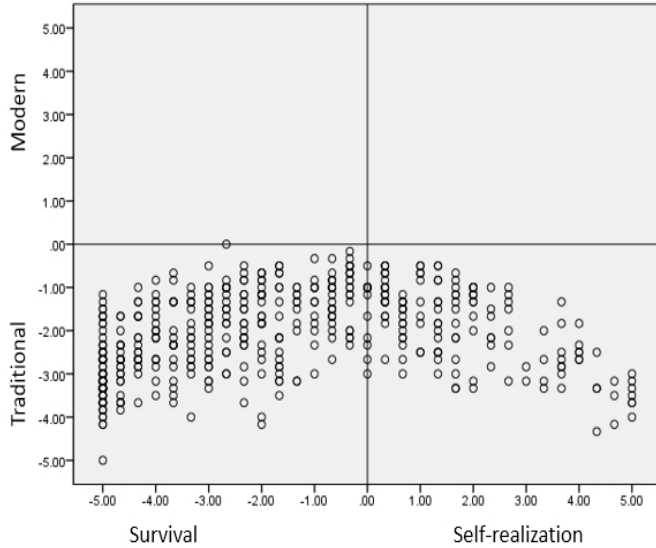
The core values of modernity are ‘freedom’ and ‘individualism.’ Historically, the "free individual person" has become the protagonist of modern history. When comparing freedom with equality and freedom with security, we can see how much weight Koreans give to other values relative to freedom. When the results are plotted on a scatterplot, it is shown that the modern sensibility of Koreans is still within the arms of the traditional value system. In short, Koreans attach importance to the value of freedom, but less than or similar to equality or security. By and large, more Koreans are oriented toward modern rather than premodern values.

#### **6-6. Value attitudes toward science, technology, and religion**

Q20~Q23 measured the degree of secularization among modern Koreans by measuring familiarity and trust in science and technology, the fundamental values of modernization, and comparing it with faith in religion. Q20 measured whether the public ought to trust science and technology to improve our quality of life. 3.1% of the respondents answered that they strongly disagree by marking the 1-3 scale, and 60% of the respondents marking the 8-10 scale indicating that they strongly agreed. 13.1% of the respondents who chose the range of point 5 or less and 86.9% of the respondents who chose the range of point 6 or more showed a strong sense of trust in science and technology. When asked whether the public ought to follow religious teachings rather than science when the two conflicted, similar responses showed that Koreans trust science rather than religion. 37.5% of the respondents marked the 1-3 answer: “I do not believe at all” in response to the question: “Do you believe in the afterlife after death?” and 57.7% of the respondents marked the 1-5 scale. 15.6% indicated a strong belief in the existence of the afterlife

by choosing the 8-10 scale. According to the results,

[Plot 6] Attitudes toward science, technology & religion



7 out of 10 Koreans answered that they do not believe in the afterlife. When asked whether they believe in heaven and hell, 38.4% showed strong negativity and 19.4% showed strong positivity. When asked about ancestor worship, 35.8% of the respondents marked the 1-3 scale, indicating strong negativity, while 12.1% of the respondents marked the 8-10 scale,

indicating strong positivity. On matters concerning science, technology, religion, and ancestor worship, Koreans' consciousness is generally secularized in a 3:7 ratio.

### 6-7. Ancestors and Shamanic customs

Q24-Q30 measured the degree of traditional folk beliefs and Confucian rituals from the Chosŏn Dynasty. It was found that 63.7% of Koreans still observe ancestral worship practices and that 49.8% of them follow them 2 to 4 times a year. In addition, 26.2% of married people divined their compatibility as a couple before marriage, and 37.1% of the unmarried responded that they would divine their marriage compatibility to decide whether to marry. 30.8% of the respondents answered “yes” to whether they believed in divination based on the Four Pillars of destiny. 25.8% of respondents said that they divined at least once a year, and 21.9% of respondents reported

visiting fortunetellers to divine the secret of the new year's fortune.

In addition, 44.0% of respondents answered, 'Yes' to the question: "Do you believe there is a propitious site for a grave, based on the theory of geomancy?" Yet, when asked about the presidential election candidates moving their parents' graves just before the election, 45.6% of respondents answered that they "do not support it at all" by marking a 1-3 scale, while 8.6% responded "very dissatisfied" by marking the 8-10 scale. The results show that Koreans' ancestral practices are still not diluted. It can be seen that about 40% of Koreans still hold traditional beliefs about marriage compatibility, divination based on the four pillars of destiny, and feng shui geomancy.

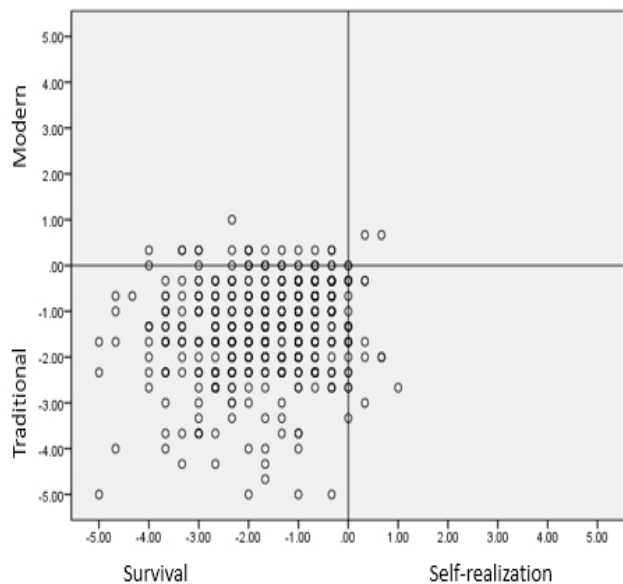
#### **6-8. Ethical values and social norms**

Q31~Q36 measured the moral values and social norms of Koreans. In Q31, respondents were asked how difficult it is to judge whether a specific behavior is in line with their moral values. 14.4% of the respondents marked the 1-3 scale, indicating that it is very difficult. On the other hand, 25.4% of the respondents marked the 8-10 scale indicating that they did not experience any difficulties in making moral judgments. 58.9% of the respondents marked a scale of 6 or more, indicating that they had clearly defined moral standards. In Q32 and Q33, participants were asked if they thought they could lie or accuse others falsely to protect their own interests. 43.1% of respondents said that lying was unjustifiable, while 8.8% of the respondents marked the 8-10 scale, indicating that lying was justifiable. They showed a stricter attitude towards falsely accusing others of wrongdoing. While 57.9% of the respondents said that a false accusation was not permissible

in any case, 6.0% of respondents said that in some cases, false accusations could be justified.

Q34 measured how far the ethnic traditions of Chosŏn were transmitted down to today's modern society. The question asked whether you agree with the following statement: "If one of my relatives was guilty of a wrongdoing, I would cut off his kinship ties if he did not follow my advice to apologize and beg for forgiveness." 44.7% of the respondents expressed their support for the argument by marking the 8-10 scale. Q34 measures how far the ethnic traditions of Chosŏn were transmitted down to today's modern society. In Q35, when asked if they ever thought that the more honest people there are in our society, the more they lose. 4.8% of respondents answered that they never thought of such a thing at all by marking the 1-3 scale, and 49.8% answered they often felt so by marking

[plot 7] Ethics and Social norms

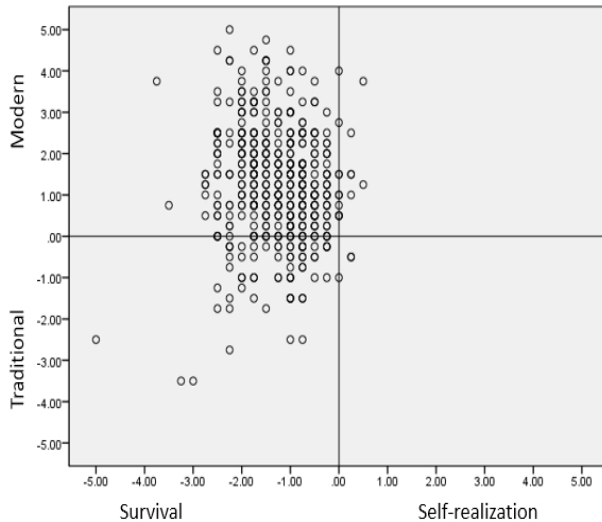


the 1-3 scale. In Q36, participants were asked whether they believe the rich and powerful gain wealth by exploiting the disadvantaged workers in Korean society. 12.7% of the respondents answered negatively by marking the 1-3 scale, while 36.0% responded that they had thought so by marking the 8-10 scale.

[Plot 7] shows the results of this survey item by marking each individual on a scatterplot. Based on the results, Koreans still live in a very traditional and survival-oriented society in terms of their moral values and social norms.

## 6-9. Political Consciousness

[Plot 8] Political consciousness



Q37 asks respondents to what extent they think that Korean society is politically left or right-leaning. Only 3.7% of the respondents marked the 1-3 scale, whereas 56.9% of respondents marked the 8-10 scale, indicating that they were very ideologically oriented. On a 5-point scale or less, only 24.4% of the respondents denied that Korean society is politically

divided, while 75.6% on a 6-point scale or higher felt that Korean society is divided. 83.9% of respondents expressed a strong desire to live in a democratic society, while 69.8% of the respondents answered that they considered Korean society to be a democratic society by marking the a 6-point scale or higher.

The scatterplot distribution is shown as [Plot 8]. Overall, the political landscape of Korean society is oriented toward modern values, but it is still firmly situated in the domain of survival values.

## **6-10. Nationalism**

Q41 measured Koreans' perception of nationalism by presenting them with two options. One is the trend to approach historical matters as factual events, The other is the trend toward creating revisionist accounts emphasizing the excellence of Korean culture regardless of whether or not the events are true. This perception of history stems from a reaction against the sense of victimization that Japanese imperialists attempted to instill in Koreans by reinforcing 'Chosŏn's long-term stagnation theory' in the minds of Chosŏnese to solidify the domination of Chosŏn. When asked whether it is true that "Koryŏ and Chosŏn were occupied as vassals of China from the time Koryŏ was conquered by the Mongol Yuan Dynasty in 1270 to the declaration of the Korean Empire in 1897," 72.7% of respondents answered "Yes," whereas 27.3% of respondents answered, "There is no such fact." To a survey of respondents who acknowledged Chinese rule in connection with Q41, "How do you feel about Koryŏ and Chosŏn being ruled by China?" 17% of respondents answered, "I am angry enough to want to change history." In the end, it was found that 44.3% of respondents felt strong enough to deny or change the facts to reflect their values.

In Q42, when asked whether they acknowledged that Chosŏn was a colony of Japanese imperialism, and if so, what they thought about it, 97.7% of respondents answered that they knew Chosŏn was once a colony of Japan, while 39.9% of respondents answered that they were angry enough to want to change the historical record. In Q43, when asked why Koreans, who are very sensitive to Japan's remarks concerning the Korean political situations, remain silent about China's provocative words and actions, responses were shown in the table 9 below.

*[Tab. 9] Q43; Koreans’ Differing Attitudes toward China and Japan*

		Absolutely Not (1-3)	Moderate 4-7	Definitely Yes (8-10)
1	Because China is a historically toadying country for a long time	36.2%	48.9%	14.9%
2	China is the largest importer of Korean products	26.0%	52.7%	21.3%
3	Because we are unlikely to beat China	36.2%	48.9%	14.9%
4	Because we must serve China for our national security	59.1%	35.3%	5.6%

Q44 asked respondents to indicate their thoughts on the U.S. role in helping to defeat communist forces during the Korean War: “With the help of the United States in 1950-53, we defeated the communists in the Korean War with North Korea and the Soviet Union. What do you think?” The survey results are shown below in the [table 10].

*[Tab.10] Q44; the perspective of international relations surrounding the Korean peninsula*

		Absolutely Not (1-3)	Neutral 4-7	Definitely Yes (8-10)
1	The United States is the ally that saved us from communism.	9.5%	52.3%	38.2%
2	The United States is our ally above China.	5.2%	46.2%	48.6%
3	The Korean War was a proxy war between the US and the Soviet Union, so we have no reason to thank the US.	22.3%	59.5%	18.2%
4	There is no need to prioritize the United States because China is expected to become a superpower over the United States in the future.	39.9%	54.1%	6%

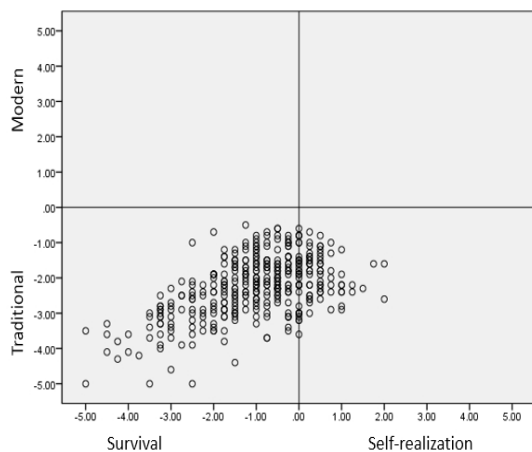
Q45 stated that Chosŏn was once under Japanese colonial rule, but Japan contributed to Korea’s economic growth after World War II and is now a member of the Korea-US-Japan military alliance, responsible for mutual national security. Respondents were asked what they thought about this development in international relations. The results are shown below in [Table 11].

[Tab.11] Q45; Korean perspectives toward international relations with Japan

		Absolutely Not (1-3)	Neutral 4-7	Definitely Yes (8-10)
1	Japan will continue to be an essential partner for our economic growth and prosperity in the future.	22.3%	63.3%	14.4%
2	Japan is our ally to face China in case of emergency	29.8%	58.7%	11.5%
3	As an aggressor country, Korea must sever international relations with Japan in the future.	26.3%	59.1%	14.6%
4	Japan is an insular country that has served us from generation to generation.	32.5%	50.2%	17.3%

All of the survey responses on Korean nationalism were synthesized and represented as a scatter plot. The results can be seen in the scatterplot in [plot 9]. The results show that Korean nationalism is different from nationalism in the Western sense. Historically, nationalism was an ideological element necessary for nation-building. In feudalism, where people believed that the social class they belonged to was destined, the term ‘nation’ was a concept that no one had ever experienced until the nation-state emerged in the modern era. The formation of the modern state marked the development of nationalism based on the concept of nation. However, Korean

[plot 9] Koreans’ perception of nationalism in terms of confronting historical facts



nationalism did not go through the same developmental process.

The international experience that Koreans went through was not a war between sovereign states but the experience of serving and dominating neighboring countries in one way or another. In the end, these marked differences resulted in the formation of Korean nationalism from tribalism. The

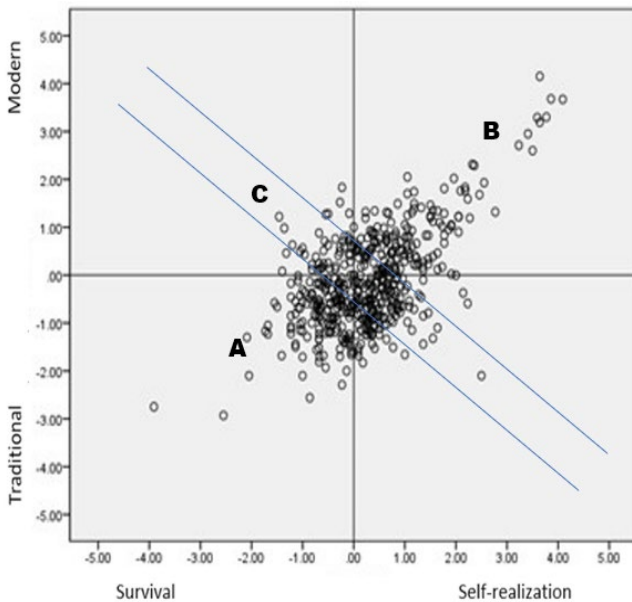
scatter plot of Korean nationalism presented in [plot 9] clearly shows this development. It shows

the survival value orientation based on a strong traditional value system. However, it also develops in a right-upward direction and is expected to enter the modern value quadrant soon.

### 6-11. Comprehensive KVS Scatter Plot of all Koreans

As described in the previous section, the premodern band is located in the quadrant close to the point (-5, -5). As modernization progresses, the speed and slope of change differs, but eventually it moves toward the first quadrant where point (5, 5) is located. Looking at [plot 10], the structure of consciousness and its hybrid value system among Koreans are streamlined right-

[Plot 10] Comprehensive KVS Scatter Plot of all samples (N=520)



upward toward the direction of modern and self-realization. It looks like a flying comet and appears to have a dense pattern surrounding the coordinates (0, 0) as its center.

The moving track of modernization, which started at coordinates (-5, -5), gradually shifts the locus of Korean consciousness to the right-upward to the first quadrant, and the consciousness structure of contemporary Koreans stays in the middle between premodern fideism and modern secularism.

By drawing an imaginary straight line that roughly divides the entire scatter marks into the

mass of three parts, named sections A, B, and C, the number of samples in each section is calculated by the following method. [Table 12] shows the results.

Looking at [Table 12] and [Plot 10], it can be seen that the collective consciousness of Koreans is largely divided into three groups. Section A represents a group that wants to preserve premodern values and that prioritizes economic security above all else. The KVS survey designated it, T-S (traditional-survival value-oriented) group.

*[Tab.12] Distribution of Korean value system by type and section*

Section	A (T-S)	B (M-S)	C (M)	Total
scale	$(1 \sim 3) + \alpha$	$(4 \sim 7) - 2 \alpha$	$(8 \sim 10) + \alpha$	10
n/ section	9,108	13,864	16,774	39,746
%	22.9	34.9	42.2	100

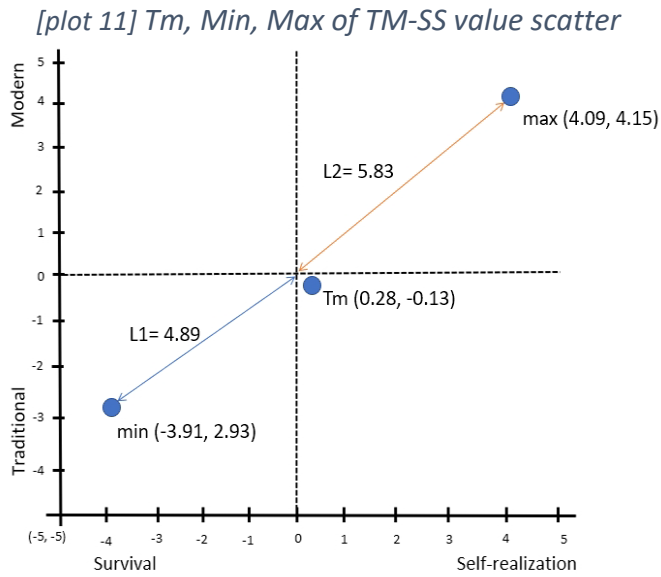
*Ref. T-M; Traditional- Survival value. S-S; Survival-Self-realization value. M; moderate value system  $\alpha$ ; to classify ten scales into three sections of 3.333, one-third of sections 4 and 7 is added to sections 3 and 8, respectively.*

In [Table 12], it can be seen that section ‘A’ occupies 22.9% of the target samples. On the other hand, section ‘B,’ which pursues modern secularism and simultaneously believes that self-actualization is the most critical value in their life, occupies 34.9% of the total samples. In addition, it was found that 42.2% of section ‘C’ has a moderate consciousness composed of almost the same ratio between modernity and premodernity. The results of calculating the sum of the x and y values is displayed in [Table 13].

*[Tab.13] Minimum and a maximum overall average of Korean values*

	N	Min. value	Max. value	Mean	Standard deviation
S -S x-axis	520	-3.91	4.09	0.28	0.94
T-M y-axis	520	-2.93	4.15	-0.13	0.97

The most traditional and survival-oriented person is marked at the coordinates of min (-



3.91, -2.93), and the most modern and self-realization-oriented person are marked on the coordinates of max (4.09, 4.15). The total mean value of the entire sample is tm (0.28, -0.13). As we saw earlier, the shape of Korean's national character is a streamlined shape with a very long spread to the right-upward. It is characterized by a long distance between

the minimum and maximum points. In [plot 11], the distance between the minimum point and the coordinates (0.0) is L1=4.89, and the distance between the maximum point to the coordinates (0.0) is L2=5.83. The longer distance between the two value systems, the greater the gap in the collective memory and consciousness among individuals in Korean society.

## 7. Implications

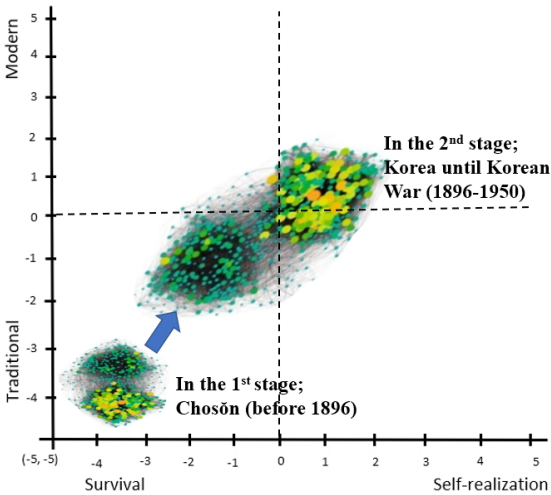
### 7-1. Perspectives in a Historical Context

[Plot 10] presents the shape of national consciousness and the hybridity of the Korean value system that is streamlined right-upward toward the direction of modern and self-realization. This

type of collective memory and consciousness distribution belongs to a bipolar pattern among the unipolar, bipolar, and multipolar types of collective memory and consciousness. If the waist of a long, meteor-like mass with a long tail were torn off, it would be a typical bipolar pattern of society in terms of its collective memory and consciousness. However, the distribution of collective consciousness in Korean society shows 22.4% of the traditional-survival types (Type A) and 34.9% of the modern-self-realization types (Type B), while the moderate type C accounted for 42.2%. The fact that the moderate type C appears as the largest group among the three value systems means that the risk of the broken waist of the scatter plot and transforming it into a bipolar type is quite small.

If you closely observe the “[Plot 10] TM – SS Scatter Plot,” you can see at first glance

*[plot 12] Estimated plot for the 1st & 2nd development stage of Korean collective consciousness*



what kind of historical process today’s Koreans went through to reach that shape and position.

Such a process can be conceptualized as a scatter plot in [plot 12]. In the previous chapters, this study showed that the collective memory of modern Koreans has little relevance to that of the Koryŏ Dynasty and its predecessors. The collective memory of their predecessors is the result of the Confucian Revolution in the Chosŏn Dynasty. Based on the results of various studies,

the collective memory and consciousness of the Chosŏn Dynasty must be almost an extreme

unipolar shape. Chosŏn was the center of gravity of neo-Confucianism, emitting a powerful attraction like a black hole.

The shamanic folklore and culture spread throughout the spiritual world of individual Chosŏnese, and a social status system divided between the noble yangban and the lowly classes, based on the clan and tribal descent groups, tightened the slavery system to the point that it was impossible to do anything about it. It was a communal, tribal society. Externally, it was a society in which the flow of information from the outside was blocked by a strong lockdown policy, such as the enforcement of the maritime ban. As a result, Chosŏn was a society that did not allow a different value system to exist even though there was a difference in the level of consciousness among individuals. Although the consciousness of the common people and the noble yangban was sharply divided, they were not at all heterogeneous in terms of sharing all those folklores, customs, and cultures. This can be expressed as two disks located almost close to the vertices (-5, -5) of [plot 12], forming a circle that is placed face down. Modern Koreans' national memory and consciousness formed at this place.

Chosŏn remained virtually unchanged for years, maintaining its unipolar shape near the vertices point of the T-S quadrant in terms of the historical development of its collective memory and consciousness. It was not until after Kabo Kyŏngjang in 1896<sup>356</sup> that it began to open its doors to the outside world. Chosŏn gradually began to advance towards modernization in the right-upward direction as shown [plot12] under the influence of foreign imperialism. The Japanese

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<sup>356</sup> A national reform movement that was promoted from July 1894 to February 1896; National History Compilation Committee of Korea

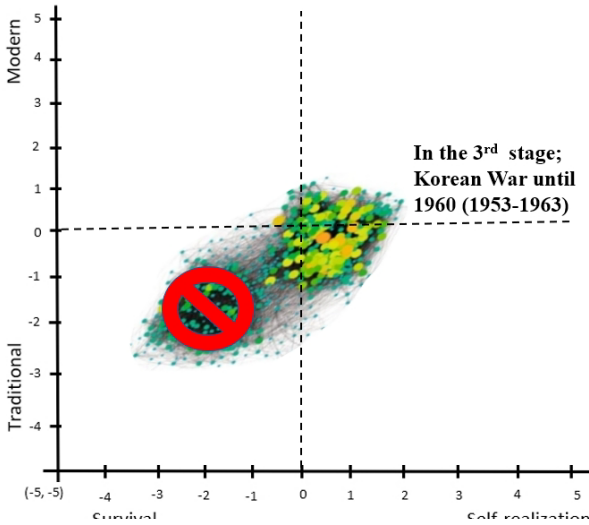
colonial rule and the U.S. military trusteeship, which was initiated in 1945, catalyzed this process. Modernization caused the Korean people, who had no mother country to unite them, to be scattered and divided. It was a rift in the long-standing unipolar collective memory and consciousness of Chosŏnese. One rift was in the direction of the Russian Revolution. The other was in the direction of American-style capitalist system. Until the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the collective memory/consciousness of Koreans was sharply divided. This can be understood in terms of such political categories as left vs. right, communism vs. liberalism, and nationalism vs. internationalism. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the days were spent in a power struggle. If we represented this historical period, it would have been the shape of the collective memory displayed in the 2nd stage of [plot 12].

The third stage extends from the Korean War of 1950-1953 to the outbreak of the 5.16 Military Revolution of President Park Chung-hee in 1963. During this period, the historical collective memory and consciousness of Koreans underwent the most rapid change in Korean history. The most significant event was the Korean War. North Korea and its sympathizers, who opposed the establishment of a liberal market economy in South Korea and tried to establish a communist system modeled on the Russian Revolution, were utterly devastated by the violence of the Korean War.

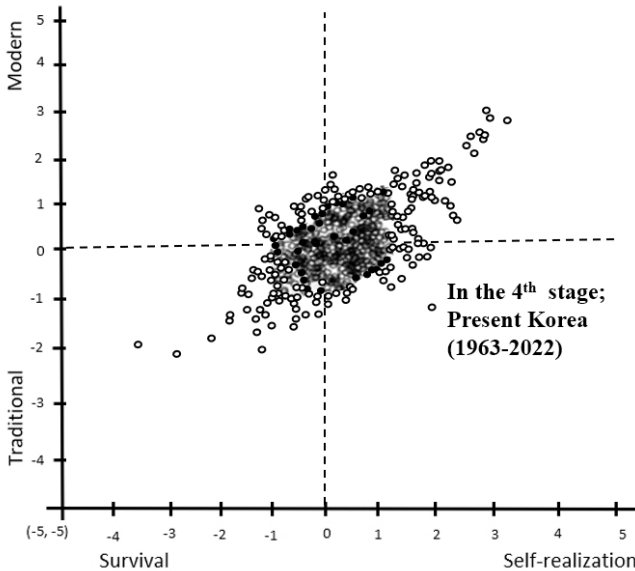
As shown in [plot 13], part of the collective memory and consciousness of Koreans, which had been divided into long, elongated, peanut-shaped, remaining deep inside the traditional-survival area, was radically removed by the violence of the Korean War. It caused a rapid shift in the entire collective memory and consciousness of Koreans in the right-upward direction of self-

realization. After the Korean War, an authoritarian regime emerged while successive anti-communist movements aggregated the collective memory and consciousness of Koreans into a unipolar form centered around an ethos of modernization.

[plot 13] Estimated plot for the 3rd development stage of Korean collective consciousness; Korean War (1950-1987)



[plot 14] the 4th stage; present Korea (1963-2022)



This enhancement of social potential became the basis for an era of rapid growth up until the 1990s. From the democratization of Korea in 1987, the memory and consciousness of Koreans has been divided right-upward but both ends are elongated from side to side as shown in [plot 14] below.

If we look at the cause of the division of memory and consciousness in Korean society after the 1987 democratization movement, we see that there are many theories to account for it. The heterogeneity of theories and practices following democratization and liberalization can be cited as the main causes. The driving force for the division was the confrontation between those who

wanted to move toward the values of modernization and self-actualization and those who felt nostalgia for the past Chosŏn communal society. After democratization in 1987, there was an upsurging trend in Korean society to recall the past Chosŏn era as a beautiful and nostalgic hometown. As a result, the traditional-survival memory was revived.

These movements were promoted by strong tribalist forces.<sup>357</sup> Their main catalyst was the student movement that formed the main axis of the 1987 democratization movement. After democratization in 1987, they formed the mainstream of the Korean left-wing. Collective memory and consciousness stood in opposition, to some extent, the values of freedom, a market economy, and economic growth, and instead advocated for the equal distribution of wealth and control of the market economy, and communalism rather than economic growth and wealth. The more active members felt nostalgia for the traditional culture and values of the Chosŏn dynasty. For this reason, they saw Japan as an unforgivable enemy who destroyed the beautiful and longing hometown of their heart.

On the other hand, the collective memory and consciousness of the Korean right-wing values rationality and advocates free competition, the market economy, and economic growth. They value individualism more than communalism and advocate a system of distribution based on individual effort rather than one of equal distribution. Thus, it can be said that the leftists in Korea possess a traditional-survival value system and the rightists a rational-self-realization value system. Because the Korea Institute of Public Administration exhibit similar results, it can be clearly seen

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<sup>357</sup> In this study, the term ‘tribalism’ is used instead of the term ‘Korean nationalism’ to emphasize a strictly academic connotation.

that the terms ‘left’ and ‘right’ are considered interchangeable with the terms ‘T-S type’ and ‘M-S type’ of this study. The Korean public administration studies show that Korean society consists of 22.8% leftists, 30.4% rightists, and 46.8% moderates. The results of this survey are nearly consistent with the findings of this study, for example, concerning the distribution of Traditional-Survival (A-type), Modern rational-Self-realization (B-type), and moderate (C-type). This fact demonstrates that the bed of deep collective memory and consciousness of the Korean left is filled with a nostalgic ethos stemming from the traditional survival values; (A) type, and that of the right-wing is the rational-self-realization values; (B) type.<sup>358</sup>

Looking at [plot 12] above, the mass of collective memory and consciousness of Koreans streamlined right-upward from min (-3.91, -2.93) to max (4.09, 4.15) as revealed in the previous survey results. Their centroid, the total mean of the entire sample, is  $tm$  (0.28, -0.13). It is very close to the point (0, 0) indicating that the whole consciousness is almost half-half mixed. The distance from min (-3.91, -2.93) to (0, 0) is  $L=4.89$ , and the distance from max (4.09, 4.15) to (0, 0) is  $L=5.83$ . In contemporary Korean society, the majority of Koreans are approaching  $tm$  (0.28, -0.13) on average, while the left-wing group with the most extreme traditional-survival type of collective memory/consciousness moves from the premodernity of the Chosŏn Dynasty to the

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<sup>358</sup> In the ‘2021 Social Integration Survey’ conducted by the Korea Institute of Public Administration and Security, 22.8% of Koreans were progressive, 30.4% conservative, and 46.8% moderate. The survey method of the social integration survey was conducted together with an interview and a questionnaire survey. In the questionnaire on ideological orientation, respondents were asked to record their ideological orientation as progressive, conservative, or neutral on the answer sheet. Considering that progressives are used the same as leftists and conservatives are used in the same way as rightists in Korean society, these findings are similar to those of the KVS survey in this study. refer to “Korea Institute of Public Administration, (2022. 01), Korean Social Integration Survey”

modern era. After the fold, it moved up to min (-3.91, -2.93). Those who claim to be ideological moderates have a collective memory/consciousness that is mixed.

In the first quadrant of modern, self-actualization, people with the most modernized value system and consciousness are gathered and their distribution is very low-dense and extends up to max (4.09, 4.15). Given this distribution, it is not difficult to surmise that the majority of the right-wing groups in Korea are made up of the same types of people as international students, children of foreign business owners, diplomats, and their children who have had easy access to foreign culture. They also tend to be individualistic and quiet against social issues.

Because the collective consciousness/memory of Koreans show such distribution, the values of type A and type B groups are very different. Although it is said that the group consciousness of the leftist group, the traditional-survival type, is gradually decreasing and the number of members is smaller than that of the right, the distribution of these groups is very dense and the distance is very narrow, so the mutual sympathy is very high. However, the right-wing group consciousness of the rational-self-actualization type is gradually increasing and developing in a rational direction, but the density is very low, and the distribution distance is far, so the basis for mutual sympathy or common voice seems to be rather weak.

The KVS survey indicates that different structures of collective memory and consciousness cause different worldviews between political factions and are operating as forces behind the various types of conflicts in Korean society. This survey has pointed out that visible phenomena are not all things, but that the invisible collective memories operating in the deeper layers of Koreans' hearts and minds are the essence of the conflict. It seems that Koreans are in a memory

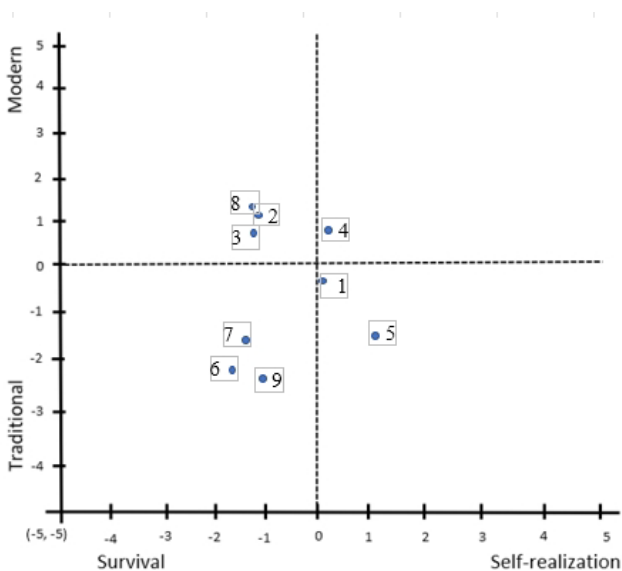
war with past civilizations. It is not a war between different religious civilizations such as Islam or Greek Orthodox, nor a war with different regional civilizations, nor a war between economic civilizations of hegemons. Rather, it is a war between premodern and modern civilizations. It is, in essence, a war between past and present value systems.

## **7-2. The dynamics of the collective memory battlefield in Korean society**

Even if a person has an ‘A-type’ character, which belongs to the group of Tradition-Survival value system, it does not mean that all of the person’s memories and consciousness consist of tradition-survival values and perspectives. The person might, in fact, have a radically modernized perspective and support self-realization values in certain aspects. Rather, it means that a single individual can have a variety of values for different domains of the value system in their mindset. The KVS survey classified the value system of individuals (n=520) into 10 categories, and the survey data was coordinated and displayed on a scatter plot per value category. The study results show the kind of mentality Koreans have for each value domain.

It is necessary to analyze the type of value system with which Koreans manage their lives. This is because confrontations are conflicts of heterogeneous values stemming from their different collective memory and consciousness. Through this analysis, the KVS survey represents what kinds of value domains conflict with each other in each different area. By doing so, the survey can clarify the dynamics of value systems that collide, conflict, and reconcile with each in contemporary Korean society.

[plot 15] Value scatterplot by subcategory



- Ref.; 1; General value (0.17, -0.36)
- 2; Social capital (-1.17, 1.13)
- 3; Individualism vs. Collectivism (-1.19, 0.73)
- 4; Openness to the outside (0.81, 0.06)
- 5; freedom, Equality (1.14, -1.41)
- 6; Religion, Sci & Tech (-1.74, -2.10)
- 7; Ethics, Norm (-1.61, -1.40)
- 8; Political Consciousness (-1.26, 1.24)
- 9; Nationalism (-1.03, -2.24)

[Plot 15] is a scatter plot representing the value domains of Koreans subdivided into the nine subcategories presented in the previous section. The previous scatter plots for each value domain were graphs that represented how much of the population was distributed in each value domain. In those cases, the total number of marking points in each plot of 1 to 10 represents 520 respondents, respectively.

This study verified the facts by averaging the numeric values of all responses per value domain and displaying them as a single coordinate point on the scatter plot. By doing so, it

is easier to verify what position each value domain occupies on the TM-SS scatter plots. Second, it is possible to clarify value groups that oppose each other by examining which quadrant each value domain is located in and what the cluster type is. Third, understanding the ways of confronting and reconciling between value domain groups makes it possible to understand the dynamics of how various conflict elements in Korean society interact. Based on such knowledge, more efficient policies can be developed to minimize conflict in Korean society.

Looking at [plot 15], it can be seen that the value system of Koreans is divided into three groups. Three value domains 6, 7, and 9, are located in the Tradition-Survival area, the third quadrant. The value domains 2, 3, 4, and 8 are located in the modern-self-realization and modern-survival areas. There is no problem in classifying them as one group because all of them are concentrated close to coordinates (0, 0). The last group is the value domain of 1 and 5, which is located in the fourth quadrant of tradition-self-realization. Although they belong to the traditional value group, they have self-realization-oriented values that are amenable to the values of modernization. It is safe to say that these groups are moderate. This result is consistent with the case of dividing all Koreans into groups A, B, and C, as previously analyzed. The group adheres to tradition is called A'; the group that aims for modernization and modern values, B', and the moderate group, C'. Therefore, the fundamental conflict structure in Korean society is the confrontation between the modern value-oriented group and the traditional value-adherent group. Its distribution by value area is represented below.

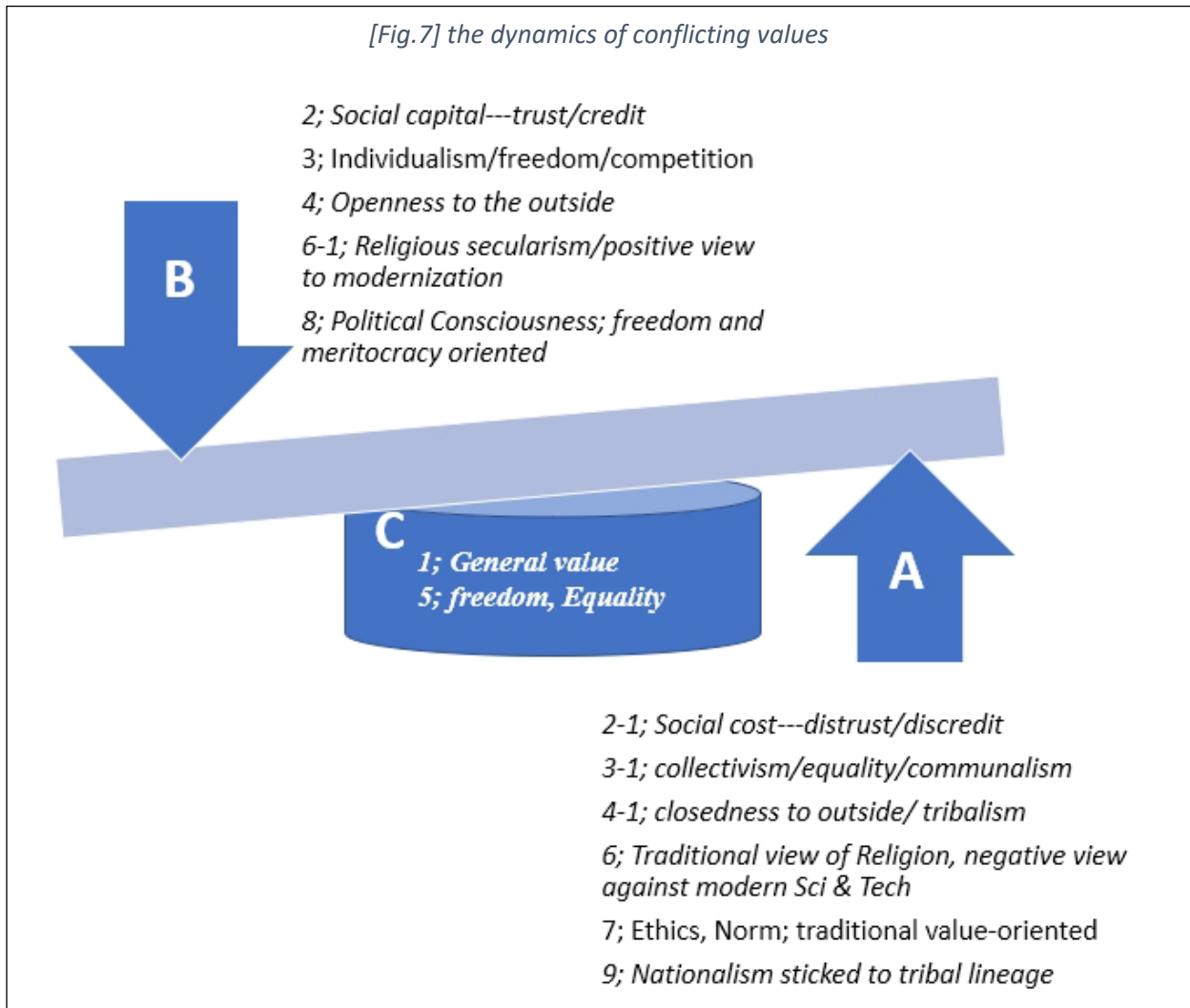
[Tab. 14] Distribution by value area

Section	A' (T-S)	B' (M-Sv/Sr)	C' (Mo)	Total
Quadrant	3 Qd.	1 or 2 Qd.	4 Qd.	
%	22.9+ $\alpha$	34.9+ $\alpha$	42.2-2 $\alpha$	100%
Value domain	6, 7, 9	2, 3, 4, 8	1, 5	9 domains

*Ref. 1; A', B', & C'=similar to Group A, B, & C that are classified by value type before. T-S; Tradition-Survival value-oriented. M-Sv; Modern rational-Survival value-oriented M-Sr; Modern rational -Self-realization value-oriented. Mo; Moderate*

Based on the results, the dynamics representing the confrontational structure and conflicting elements in Korean society are briefly below. <Figure 2> shows the conflict structure of Korean society. Since the collective memory/consciousness of the left and right extremes has

been revealed, it can be represented more clearly by referring to <figure 2> above. Figure 2 provides insight into the structure of division and confrontation in Korean society. As revealed in the previous research results, many people consider that Korean society is seriously divided with conflict. As seen in Q37, 75.6% of respondents answered that Korean society is divided by left-right opposition, and 56.9% of them responded that it is severely divided. Only 3.7% of



However, the position of this group is concentrated in the position of self-actualization value orientation at the coordinate point (0,0). Therefore, the tendency of this group can be defined as

future-oriented based on a politically moderate swing vote. As presented in <Table 10>, they are the largest group in Korea and account for about 42.2% of the total population that KVS surveyed. The characteristic feature of Type 'C' groups is that they want their children as well as themselves to pursue modern values while preserving the traditional values to some extent. Moreover, they seek maximum freedom but also equality and security in their lives. As shown in <figure 2>, the reason why the waist of Korean society, which is distributed long enough to look like a shooting star, amid extreme left-right confrontation and various types of conflict, does not break into two chunks is due, in large part, to the balancing impact of these social forces.

## **Chapter 6. Implication and Conclusion**

### **1. The findings of the qualitative study**

Since democratization was launched in 1987, conflicts in Korean society have become increasingly complicated, so much so, that it is difficult to identify the groups in conflict. Today, Korean society is in a contentious phase of factionalism – for example, left versus right, progressive versus conservative, nationalism versus nationalist tribalism, pro-US versus pro-China, as well as the advocator of the free-market system versus those of equal distribution, liberal democracy versus social democracy, etc. When a tornado-like event takes the entire country by storm, each faction forms a larger group to defeat its opposition. By the look of it, it would appear that we are back in the pre-modern era prior to the rule of law, when witch hunts were rampant. The factions eventually converge into two large factions, Left and Right-wing. At the heart of such conflict, there must be a key driving force.

Naturally, social conflict and collective action can be rooted in a variety of complex causes and reasons, such as simply in political thought or ideology or competing for political power or economic interests. Conflicts and divisions arising from different ways of thinking are different are caused by competition over political and economic interests. This study holds that the basic behavioral pattern of individual determination of which faction one aligns oneself can be shared. However, since such homogeneity or heterogeneity is determined by emotion rather than logic,

and emotion is dependent on memory, the determining factor in such judgments is the memory concerning the pending issues. After all, man is a being of memory, and consciousness arises from memory.

What type of collective memory is engraved in the mentality and behavior of Koreans? This is the main research question of this study. The first task of it was to analyze the pattern of the collective consciousness of Koreans rooted in it. The second was to identify the type of memory working deep in the bed of the Korean psyche prompting social conflict. This study mobilized both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to systematize the memories at work between conflicting social groups.

The findings of the study can be summarized as follows. First, the traditional value system transmitted from the Chosŏn Dynasty is still at work in the psyche of modern Koreans. Second, modern Koreans have pre-modern traditions and modern rationalist values in their consciousness, hybridizing by almost half. As such, the collective consciousness of Koreans is still in the realm of tradition. Third, Koreans still show relatively strong hybridity toward traditional values. The hybrid collective consciousness of Koreans formed a shape like a very elongated, streamlined meteor as a whole. It showed a right-upward movement with an inclination of about 1. Korean society today reflects a vast gap between the two systems of values. This inevitably leads to social division and conflict.

Methodologically, this study took the following steps in conducting its research. First, it collected and analyzed symbolic and representative narratives included in the historical mega-events that Koreans have experienced on the way to becoming Koreans today. The narratives of

particular political events and cultures allow us to better understand the nature of the event than to observe superficial appearance. Naturally, it has the power to access the core of the case with a narratological methodology that theoretical analysis cannot do with records or eyewitness dictation. This study started with collecting various narratives hidden in representative mega-events in Korean history based on the narratological method.

Based on this theoretical foundation, this study first reviewed the narratives related to Korean nationalism. The reason is that Korean nationalism is a political ideology and, at the same time, collective memory in which Koreans are totally integrated. In this context, the question arises as to how Koreans accepted and understood the concept of 'nation' even though they had never experienced the founding of a nation before the early 20th century when Western powers flooded China and Korea. In particular, it is essential to find out what contents of nationalism were woven in relation to the Japanese colonization of the Chosŏn Dynasty.

In the early 1900s, when the colonization of Chosŏn by Imperial Japan occurred, the pioneers of Chosŏn denounced the Japanese occupation of Korea and launched a nationalist campaign to awaken the people of Chosŏn. As in the West, nationalism was an ideology that promoted nation-state building and united the people as members of the nation that is a community of destiny. From the early 16th century to the last few centuries, they suffered numerous wars to build and defend the nation-state, sacrificing much blood in the process. As such, they value their attachment to their homeland and the protection of their sovereignty as their highest priority. That was the path of their development of nationalism.

As Tilly (1990) argues, war must have been the process of nation-state building and the

womb of nationalism. As such, nation-state building is an inevitable prerequisite for the emergence of nationalism. In return, nationalism that had matured in this way has contributed to consolidating the nation-state system while playing the role of an ideological catalyst in building the nation-state. This can be called nationalism in its original meaning.

However, most colonies did not have much experience in nation-state building. Because Western powers colonized them before establishing a nation-state, the concept of ‘nation’ or ‘nation-state’ was absent or abstract. The same was true with the situation of the intellectuals and pioneers representing Chosŏn at the time. Because of these limitations, they unwittingly turned their eyes to the Confucian ideology that had firmly dominated the culture and rituals of Chosŏn society for over 500 years. Accordingly, the early Enlightenment thinkers of Chosŏn set out to construct the myth of Dangun, the progenitor of the Chosŏn ethnic and the great leader of the whole Chosŏnese, as the core of their nationalism and the epicenter of attracting the entire Chosŏn Baeksŏng.<sup>359</sup> To those who were too accustomed to the strict Confucian social status system of yangban and nobi, based on agnatic blood lineage tribes, it felt like very natural to serve Dangun as the progenitor of the descent family group (taejongga, 大宗家), to which the ancestral shrine was attached, and inherited the land and slaves that had been set aside to sustain the ancestral services. In Chosŏn society, which had been woven by the eldest and younger brother's descent family groups founded on the agnatic lineage tribalism, it was inevitable and the most efficient tool to enlighten Chosŏnese by creating Dangun as the core of their nationalism when they had no nation in the late Chosŏn and colonial period.

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<sup>359</sup> Refer to foot note 45 in chapter 3.

Originally, nationalism was a political ideology that melded all clans, tribes, and larger-scale ethnic groups into one imagined community sharing a destiny called the “modern nation.” Nonetheless, Chosŏn nationalism championed tribalism to prevent Chosŏnese from being melded into a nation. China and Japan also experienced similar cases of emerging nationalism. In any case, Chosŏnese enlightening nationalism, which began to be formed in the late Chosŏn Dynasty, was a tribal device in which a shamanistic object of worship called Dangun was installed in the frame of the Confucian ruling ideology. In that sense, nationalist ethnicism encourages the blood lineage of Chosŏnese by summoning Dangun, the progenitor of the Chosŏn nation. Through a narrative analysis of so-called Korean nationalism, this study revealed that these devices are engraved and transmitted in the memory of modern Koreans today with little change in their basic frames and symbols of the Chosŏn era.

Next, this study collected and analyzed narratives about the lives of Chosŏnese described from the third-party perspective and performed the task of identifying the collective memory on which their lives were based in that era. First, the collective memory of Chosŏnese was examined through the descriptions of missionaries, diplomats, and foreign merchants who visited Chosŏn in the late Chosŏn Dynasty. In addition, this study looked at the type of life Chosŏnese lived during the Japanese colonial period and the significance it had in terms of becoming modern Korean. For this purpose, it collected novels written in the colony and analyzed the mentality and behaviors of the characters in the novels. It also referred to several travelogues and reports. Regarding the historical process of becoming a Korean after liberation in 1945, we reviewed what changes occurred in the collective memory of Koreans through mega-events and representative policies

that could symbolize the spirit of the times.

This study also traced the images of Chosŏnese presented as were reflected in the eyes of foreigners who visited Chosŏn between 1870 and 1910 to find the collective memory and consciousness of Chosŏnese in the late Chosŏn Dynasty. Travelogues were selected and reviewed as well as reports of missionaries, diplomats, soldiers, explorers, and merchants from the United States, Germany, France, and Russia.<sup>360</sup> Above all, most visitors described that the landscape of Chosŏn, catching their eyes, seemed strangely calm and peaceful. Like many other travelogues, the Russian military reconnaissance unit, such as Carnev and his men, once visited the deep mountain village and left very specific and detailed reports as their purpose of the visit was to map and reconnaissance in Chosŏn. After they conducted reconnaissance on the Korean peninsula from 1885 to 1886, a report was submitted to the upper management saying that the Koreans were docile, good-natured, and submissive. They reported that they had stayed in villages ruled only by the orders of local dignitaries, without an army or bayonet, and in very remote villages with no government officials. Nevertheless, the report states that he was shocked that he had witnessed a breakdown in village order.<sup>361</sup>

Russian scouts and other foreign travelers did not have sufficient knowledge of the history and social structure of Chosŏn, so the landscape looked like a village where good people lived peacefully together without authority figures. But the peaceful scene they witnessed was nothing

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<sup>360</sup> Once, there was a tendency to downplay the observations of Western foreigners at the time as a product of Orientalism, but the extent to which their portrayals of Chosŏnese were empirical and whether they were contaminated by the perspectives of Orientalism was distinguished by cross-analyzing other relevant data.

<sup>361</sup> V.P Carnev, et al. (1958), *Po Koree; Puteshestbiia*, p.166, (trans; Kim, Jŏng-hwa, 2003, Kayanet pub)

more than a typical Chosŏn village, operated by a strictly crafted social status system of yangban and slavery and the communal principle based on it.

While there were positive reviews, 70-80% of their testimonies about Chosŏn were negative. Percival Lowell expressed the view that Koreans were afraid of sailing into far seas and did not seem to have the courage to overcome the obstacles of nature. Most Chosŏnese probably lived their entire lives without even having traveled far away from the village they lived in. As Oppert recollected in his travelogue, Chosŏnese were very wary and hostile against foreigners and strangers and reluctant to come into contact with them.

Allen's memories of Chosŏnese were that they had no will to work hard and accumulate even a little more wealth. Claire Vautier said that the lowly commoners and slaves had no reason to work hard to become richer and better. Their only hope was to meet a more virtuous slave master or village chief during this life, live happily ever after, and then go to the other world. In that sense, being lazy was a good policy to pass the time of the day without any particular work or event. If rumors spread that lowly slave hid their hard-earned fortune, probably something valuable, in a secret place, it was bound to be an irreversible disaster for him since it indeed invited hyenas from all directions, which would flock to the prey.

As Allen explained, the Chosŏn Dynasty was well equipped with laws and legal codes, but it was governed by the arbitrary judgments of rulers, local governors, and their subordinate officials according to the Confucian principle of virtuous governance. Therefore, it was very easy for yangban rulers to take away the wealth of the lower classes if they wanted to. Even the lower class, whose basic rights were violated or damaged, did not become angry or resist such injustice.

It was because they were all well aware that such an act would result in the loss of their property and, at times, even their lives.

After living in such an environment for hundreds of years, the slaves and lowly came to believe they were inferior to the yangban and did not believe that they could break free from all these shackles even in the afterworld after their death. This hopeless conviction was so deeply ingrained in the hearts of Chosŏnese. This is because their religion, shamanism, absorbed Confucian principles and indoctrinated them. Throughout their lives, Chosŏnese shared folk beliefs based on shamanistic views of the afterworld. The afterlife in these folk beliefs was not clearly demarcated from the world of the living.

Since individual villages in Chosŏn were basically closed communal societies with little contact with the outside world, they had very strong clannish tendencies. Therefore, the relationship between the villages was very isolated and opposed to each other. And the basic labor force supporting the village community was the lowly and the slaves suffering the double burdens presented in Chapter 2. Naturally, the oppressive structure of such a social environment, a sense of positional discomfort, and the possibility of exclusion from the community were strongly present as traumatic obstacles in their minds.

Nevertheless, Chosŏnese had always been obsessed with their hometown villages to which they were born and belonged. To be excluded from a village operated based on the Confucian imperative of respecting family, superiors, and elders was tantamount to death. It was a society that had to judge the world with double-edged ethics to survive in such a communal environment. In a society based on communal principles, an individual's judgment was unacceptable if it was

against the will of the community leaders, even if it was rational and rational. Therefore, when an incident occurred, objectively determining what went wrong and who was to blame was a matter of later. The most urgent thing to do was to figure out which camp had the loudest voice and could exert the more significant political power and what direction the whole village's will was going.

Around the middle of the 17th century, the social order based on the agnatic lineage principles of descent family group, the slave system, and the shamanic worldview culminated in the Chosŏn society as triple pillars supporting Chosŏn Dynasty. The founding of the Chosŏn Dynasty was, at bottom, a Confucian revolution propelled by scholars and sympathizers who were alienated from the core power of Koryŏ, who tried to build an idealist regime based on neo-Confucianism that began to sprout from the middle of the Koryŏ period. It was a revolution that slowly and steadily reformed human consciousness. The results were the establishment of an agnatic order that solidified the tribal society, the settlement of large-scale slavery, and the universalization of a shamanic worldview.

Next, we looked at the narratives of the Japanese colonial period from 1910 to 1945. In his novel 'Mujŏng,' Lee Kwang-soo described the end of one historical time and the coming of another era, which was not simply meant in the sense that a dynasty had demised, and Imperial Japan colonized Chosŏn. Premodern society gave way to modernity as it flooded into the Chosŏn peninsula.

Lee Kwang-soo put an American Christian missionary on the stage of Mujŏng to show how he introduces the Chosŏnese to the modernized world and visualizes the eras that intersect each other through a scene of a former Chosŏn official smoking with a long tobacco pipe in his

mouth, squatting on the roadside to kill time while basking in the sun. The free love stories, which were unacceptable when Confucian principles were tying up the entire society, unfold on the stage of the novel throughout the storytelling. At the end of the book, it is declared that the Chosŏn Dynasty was entirely over by visualizing the newly emerging reality in which the Chosŏnese tradition insisting that only Confucianism was the orthodox classic and the others were heresy, had been withdrawn.

Based on the memoirs and notebooks of several Japanese settlers, it is confirmed that Chosŏn was rapidly evolving in the face of the wave of modernization. Lee Kwang-soo contrasts young boys on a train on the way to the city aimlessly to get a job in a factory with the scene of a mountain village where Confucian traditions and communal principles remained unchanged, despite the strong wave of modernization out there. Not only the remote countryside failed to break free from the yoke of tradition, but some noble yangbans who had the power to defend themselves against any turbulent wave refused to escape from the comforting womb of tradition and remained in the Confucian world.

In short, it was an era in which the two currents of modernity and premodernity violently collided. In the midst of such turbulence, Chosŏnese, who were immersed in Confucian tradition for several hundreds of years, began to move toward modernity. Naturally, some devastating scenes were presented in which traditional people were suffering from absurdity and inconsistency caused by rapid urbanization and social changes. In the vivid image of the era when civilizations intersected, it was possible to guess what kind of collective memory emerged in the minds of those living there.

Another modern novel, “On the eve of the uprising (萬歲前, Manse-jön),” written by Yom Sang-söp in 1924, illustrates how Chosŏnese were throwing off Hanbok (한복, 韓服) knitted from cotton, the long-established Korean traditional costume, and replace it with the Western attires. The writer describes how the Japanese despised such behaviors of workers from the lower classes. Such a scene shows the way they are living in the chaotic situation under Japanese colonial rule.

The next memory, found in narratives of modern Koreans from 1945-1999, presents the story of Koreans who once had believed ‘laziness is the best policy in life’ vanished and was replaced with the story of “Koreans working hard by mobilizing even the energy they used to suck mother's milk when they were a baby.” This period was when the Rhee Syngman government struggled to construct a nation-state for the first time in the entire history of Korea. It was also when the concept of ‘nation’ was transfused into the pure Confucian tribalism of Chosŏn. After the Korean War in 1950-3 and recovery from the war, Koreans experienced the peak of high economic growth. They witnessed how society was changing through the Saemaül Movement. Workers dispatched to construction sites in the Middle East learned what patriotism was like. Although authoritarian regimes prevailed, it was an era in which ordinary Koreans, who had to survive in the field of life, felt rewarded. The collective memory of Koreans formed during this time had a profound influence on the formation and development of a modern-oriented value system.

In “Narratives of Koreans, 2000-the present,” the last stage of tracing the collective memory of Koreans, the desire for democratization and individual needs came to the fore. Since

the establishment of the '87 Regime,<sup>362</sup> the political passions that the authoritarian government had suppressed deep in Koreans' psyche emerged in the form of conflicts between different factions, such as left-right, progressive-conservative, nationalistic ethnic-nationalism, among others. During the 2000s, many concerns and debates prevailed throughout society.

According to Kang Kyu-hyŏng, Korean society is losing the essence of individual freedom and responsibility. He argues that populism, irresponsibility, and false consciousness are on the way to taking root in modern Korean society as a social pathology. In a word, the political struggle for political power has swallowed everything up in a whirlpool of 'populism full of irresponsibility and misconceptions' as South Korea's party leaders, especially presidential candidates, have made increasingly firm populist pledges as a means of gaining votes. He described this social pathological phenomenon in the following terms: "Is Korean society regressing to a pre-modern society? Do we want to build a post-Chosŏn society?"

This study looked at the landscape of collective memory working deep in the hearts of Koreans recently based on the narratives of three representative events in this period. Firstly, protests against the import of mad cow disease beef. Secondly, the 2016 'Sun-sil Choi scan and impeachment of President Park Geun-hye. Thirdly, the historical debate over the so-called Japanese colonial history. The results of this search for the collective memory of modern Koreans are broadly divided, revealing that the worldview of tradition-oriented vs. modern-oriented on one axis opposes. On the other axis, the life values of survival-oriented vs. self-realization-oriented

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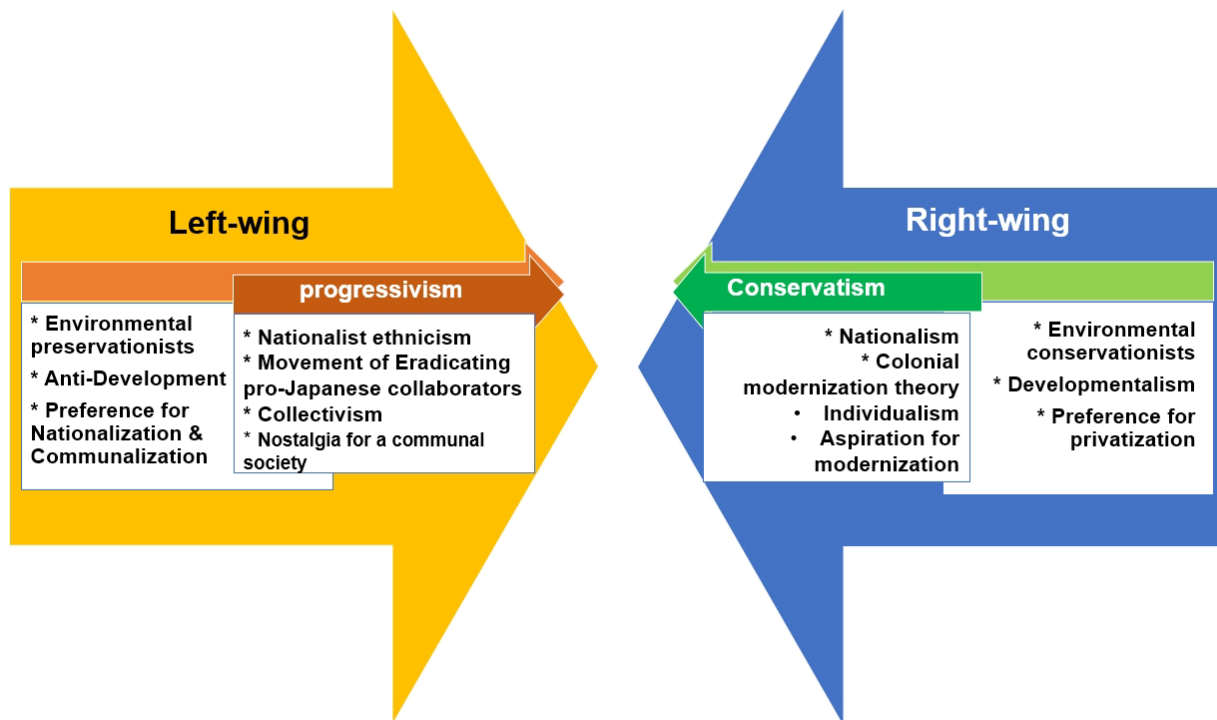
<sup>362</sup> '87 Regime refers to the democratic regime and related discourses established by the changing political system and social order of Korean society caused by the June Struggle of 1987

conflict. The various factions coalesced into representative two factions: left vs. right-wing. This can be represented in the diagram below.

## 2. The findings of the survey result

This study conducted a survey based on the collective memories extracted from the above qualitative study. According to the results, the collective memory of the pre-modern Chosŏn has not yet wholly vanished but is hiding like a ghost deep in the inner world of modern Koreans and is actively working as a driving force to evoke nostalgia for the traditional world of the past. However, the stronger the collective memory of the pre-modern tradition, the more likely it will

*[Fig. 8] The mode of social confliction in Korean society*



inevitably cause social conflicts with the modern value system required today. If the two different value systems of pre-modernity and modernity in Koreans' minds conflict in Koreans' social life, many questions arise. First, what type of value system exists in Korean society today? Second, in what pattern is Korean society divided based on different collective memories? Third, is it possible to measure and express the hybridity of Koreans' collective memory and value orientation in the statistical data of the Korean Value System (KVS) by integrating the above qualitative research results?

Methodologically, this study conducted a KVS survey and visualized the results on a scatter plot. The KVS study set the sample size to 520 and conducted an online survey by diversifying respondents by gender, age, and educational background in consideration of the proportion of the Korean population. It was found that Koreans, on the whole, have the same pattern of collective memory/consciousness as in [Plot 10] in the overall dimension. Looking at this pattern, the consciousness structure of the entire Korean population and its mixed value system is streamlined in the upper right direction toward the value of modernity and self-realization. At first glance, it looks like a flying comet and has a dense and thick pattern centered on the (0,0) coordinates.

The study shows that the movement of modernization, which started from the (-5, -5) coordinates representing the time of the Chosŏn society, gradually shifts the consciousness of Koreans to the upper right toward the first quadrant. As shown in [Plot 11], the consciousness structure of the Koreans as a whole today was found to be a total average (0.28, -0.13). It means that the collective consciousness of Koreans stays at the y-axis coordinate (-0.13), which means

almost the midpoint between premodernity and modernity. The x-coordinate value representing the survival-self-realization value is (+0.28), which shows that Koreans have just left the survival-value-oriented society and entered into a self-realization value-oriented society. Korean society shows a very long upper rightward-sloping meteorological pattern on the value axis of traditional premodernity vs. modernity and survival vs. self-realization, so there is a very deep and wide gap between the traditional/survival value-oriented group and modern/self-realization value-oriented group. In Korean society, the most traditional group has a consciousness structure close to the Chosŏn or Japanese colonial era, whereas the most modern oriental group already accepts the world's cutting edge modern rational values.

In summary, the tendency between two ends of tradition/survival value orientation and modern/self-realization value orientation is divided into three groups: the most tradition/survival value-oriented group (A), the most rational modern/self-realization group (B), and the moderate group (C). When divided into three groups, group A accounted for 22.9%, group B was 34.9%, and moderate group C was 42.2%. These results are almost similar to the results of the social integration survey of the Korea Institute of Public Administration and Security. The distribution pattern of the collective memory/consciousness of Koreans appears in the upper rightward comet with a long tail, so it is difficult to integrate the two extremes due to the too-wide gap between the two ends. In addition, the shift of consciousness of all Koreans has a slope of almost one and shows right-upward sloping. This indicates that it is developing toward modern self-realization values at an appropriate tempo.

As seen in [plot15], the collective memory/consciousness of Koreans is divided into three

patterns, and people in each group have different value systems and perspectives. Among the nine value areas to be analyzed, Koreans have traditional/survival value-oriented perceptions regarding the view of religion, science and technology, ethics and social norms, and nationalism. When it comes to trust in neighbors, social capital, individualism vs. collectivism, openness to the outside world, and political consciousness, Koreans are found to have modern rational/self-realization-oriented perceptions. In addition, it is found that they had almost moderate awareness of the concept of freedom and equality as well as general values toward future achievement. Based on the previous [Plot 15], it shows that the conflict structure of Korean society is more fundamentally caused by the conflict between tradition and modernity than the conflict between survival and self-realization.

When it comes to understanding the conflict and confrontational structure of Korean society, the group that should be paid attention to is a center-oriented value-oriented group. The position of this group on the scatterplot is located in the fourth quadrant of the self-actualization value orientation. Although it looks like very weak, it still appears to be oriented toward adherence to traditional values rather than toward modern values. In a word, this group's value and consciousness orientation can be defined as future-oriented people based on a politically moderate swing vote. A characteristic of these groups is that they strongly desire for themselves and their children to pursue modern values while preserving traditional values to some extent in their minds. They tend to seek maximum freedom but also equality and security in life, too. Even amid severe left-right confrontation and various conflicts, the rationale for claiming that the waist of Korean society, which is distributed like a shooting star, is not split into two, is that the role of these middle

groups in balancing social power is very important.

### **3. Dismantling the Ghost of the Past**

Based on the results, half of the memories stored deep in the consciousness of Koreans consisted of traditional values passed down from the Chosŏn Dynasty. Half of those memories took the form of memories acquired in the process of modernization. Thus, whenever an overwhelming social conflict has been conjured up in Korean society as if an unexpected ghost suddenly intruded, these two confronting memories clashed in a memory war.

In the impeachment case of President Park Geun-hye, the president swirled into absurd propaganda that a shaman who was her friend, rule her soul entirely. So, the narrative of this occasion is that following Choi Soon-sil's shamanic teachings, President Park offered the lives of three hundred high school students on it as human sacrifices by sinking the Sewol ferry. All these cases circulate like the ghost of Hamlet's father appearing on the battlefield of Elsinore Castle or the ghost of Banquo appearing at the feast of King and Lady Macbeth. In today's ultra-modern society, it's hard to believe, but many Koreans believe the rumors to be true.

There are certain kinds of memories that cannot be forgotten. Sometimes, such memory is conjured up, and rises up like ghosts, grabbing Koreans who are faithful to the present in an instant and summoning them back to the past. What if there is a ghost of the past that intruded into the present at will, like ominous clouds? It is no other than the collective memories engraved in the deepest layer of Korean consciousness, which have been discovered on the way on the memory

journey to the past, such as firstly, the value system and rituals of a communal tribal society based on the agnatic lineage order, secondly, the remnants of the Chosŏnese slave system, for example, such as the slave mentality, the slave's survival skills, their tenacious will for survival, and the strong desire to possess one's own property. These are the driving force of Koreans' diligence who work to break their bodies if ownership is guaranteed, and the remnants of collectivism that can be easily stunned or exhilarating. Thirdly, it is the shamanic religion that inscribed the doctrine of the Confucian revolution in the souls of Chosŏnese. These are the three pillars of the collective memory of Chosŏnese.

Slavery and shamanism were the product of the "Confucian transformation of Chosŏn," as Deuchler argues in her work. However, for the very simple reason that the word 'nobi' is literally different from the word 'slave,' the controversy over nobi's identity has not ceased for over 70 years. From the claim that nobi was a slave to the theory that they were serfs in the Middle Ages and the theory that they were peasants after the enclosure movement in medieval Europe, there were contentious debates with each other. Until their true status is identified, the effect of researching nobi's collective memory and consciousness may become halved. This is because collective memory and consciousness become different in terms of their formations and contents, depending on one's own existential condition and social status. It is already an inarguable proposition in the fields of anthropology, history, sociology, etc.

This study traced the emergence and development of the Chosŏn slave system. As a result, it was revealed that the nobi institution of Chosŏn was nothing but slavery in general, and it began to form in earnest with the founding of Chosŏn. It was systematically completed with the

Confucian revolution in the mid-17th century. From the Three Kingdoms to the Koryŏ period, a specific class of lowly people called nobi existed as a slave of powerful families and took charge of housework. However, the proportion of nobis in that era was estimated to be less than 5% of the total population, so it was not enough to call such a society a large-scale slave society operated by slave labor. Finley defines a society as a genuine slave society if more than 30% of the population is slaves. Both Palais and Patterson agree to define a “large-scale slave society” when more than 30% of the population is slaves. Palais and Patterson argued that Chosŏn, as well as the Koryŏ Dynasty, belonged to a large-scale slave society. Consequently, Chosŏn was a large-scale slave society that continued for over a thousand years. The Chosŏn nobi system began to develop into large-scale slavery from the early 15th century, was institutionally completed in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, and legally abolished in the mid-1890s. The Chosŏn nobi system functioned as the material foundation of Chosŏn society for about 500 years. During that time, Chosŏn was a large-scale slave society.

During the Chosŏn Dynasty, a small number of yangban subordinately embraced the culture of many slaves. However, since the commoners and slaves occupied the absolute majority of society, most of Chosŏn's collective memory was created based on the slave-nobi culture. The representative bearers of collective memory in the Chosŏn Dynasty and its carrier to the next generation were the lowly and slaves. Based on the generally accepted idea of slavery, the life form of Chosŏn slaves and the memory contained therein were analyzed and traced in detail.

As Patterson argued, Chosŏn slaves were inherently alienated and treated as already dead in terms of social death. They had little opportunity to make their blood kinships or relatives within

their social community, and they were always on their own. Slaves, who were at the bottom of the community, were denied the right to own any property. Instead, their masters exercised ownership of their bodies, even their death and life. The only way for slaves to survive was submission to their masters, and their existential foundation was essentially fear itself. Second, the slave was the master's instrument. In a sense, a slave was an extension of the owner's limbs, body, and alter ego. Since all material labor is made of the body of a slave, it was difficult to imagine the life of a master without slaves. In that sense, the slave was definitely afraid of his master, but at the same time, cherish a feeling of contempt and ridicule for his master. Third, slaves wore their slave status symbol until death. From the clothes to the lowly-sounding name, and the life of bowing down to the owner's young baby and always using polite words, they believed that they were truly inferior to the owner of the yangban. In addition, human beings whose number of slaves was controlled by the dynasty's policy were not literally human beings but have imprinted their identity as livestock in their minds.

What was the survival method of a slave who had accumulated these kinds of memories in his mind for the rest of his life? Even the slave, who was deprived of ownership, even of his own body, mobilized all means to create some property for his own survival. One such method involved deceiving the slave master's eyes, embezzling intermediate products, or trading profits little by little or defrauding other slaves or commoners in the name of one's master and including usury, selling, or merchandising stolen or embezzled items. Various methods were used to obtain wealth. Of course, it was always one of the slaves' survival know-hows to always pay some of them back to the officials in case of unforeseen circumstances. Slaves were highly likely to accumulate wealth

through embezzlement in brokerage transactions, as they were in charge of most economic activities on behalf of their masters as well as a daily labor. This opportunity was given to both 'no' and 'bi.' When a slave owner sensed the property he had amassed, he took several measures to protect it. The first choice was to sell the land quickly, and the second choice was to deceive the owner again by all means. He hid it again, and if that didn't work, his last resort was to run away. The collective memory of the slaves, who had no choice but to make survival their only goal in life, had no choice but to be miserable in that way. The word, 'to pursue noble values for self-realization' was unimaginable in their lives.

As a next step, this study focused on the origin, historical development, and properties of Chosŏn shamanism, which deals with the life and death of Chosŏnese. The Confucian revolution in Chosŏn started with the condemnation of Buddhism and shamanism as heretical, confiscating the temple land including numerous paddy fields, temple nobis, handymen, and spongers owned by temples. Needless to say, the Chosŏn government could not feed them all for free, so they sold them as private slaves and distributed them to the meritorious subjects and public offices as public slaves. Nevertheless, Buddhism and shamanism, regardless of genre, appeared in various myths, folk tales, diaries, etc. The rich spirit of Chosŏn Buddhism and shamanism handed down from the Koryŏ Dynasty cannot be explained other than the collective memory of the past millennium that has been engraved in the minds of Chosŏnese. Like a ghost that appears suddenly no matter how restrained and repressed, collective memory suddenly dominates the mind and makes someone miss the past and the hometown you left behind. Nostalgia is like a powerful ghost that overwhelms a person's psyche until past memories are completely gone.

Shamanism was the only alternative of making up for the lack of the afterworld since neo-Confucianism did not subscribed to it. In that sense, the Chosŏn Confucian revolution deprived Chosŏnese of the rich vision for the next life that Koryŏ Buddhism had offered them. The *I-Ching* (易經) was recognized as the apex of Confucian classics in the Chosŏn Dynasty. The *I-Ching* was originally an ancient divinatory manual. Because Chosŏn shamanism did not reject the principle of Confucianism as the dominant ideology at all, it became a good model for gradually accepting it to reach a spiritual interpretation that Chosŏnese aspired.

While the yangban class, the bearers of neo-Confucianism, enjoyed fortune-telling with the four pillars of destiny for foretelling the fate and future of humans based on the *I-Ching*, shamanism provided such a function with very visual rituals by spiritual-connecting with supernatural gods and spirits. Chosŏn shamanism provided the function of visualizing the very difficult cosmological interpretation of *I-Ching*, including the principle of the *yin* and *yang*, the principles of four pillars of cosmology, which is based on the hexagonal combination according to *qi*'s operation, in a language that even the ignorant lowly and slaves of Chosŏn could understand easily. There was no way the noble yangban could reject such shamanism.

Chosŏn shamans were welcomed by noble yangbans, commoners, and the lowly alike. At the dynasty level, a separate office for fortune-telling was installed and operated. Divinators and fortune-tellers used to come and go for the royal family and the yangban's house. Another powerful element that Chosŏn shamanism embraced from neo-Confucianism was the practice of ancestor worship. Neo-Confucianism's teachings were based on the practice of filial piety, according to the *Family Rites of Zhu Xi*. Shamans invited the souls of their dead ancestors so that they are present

in front of the eyes of offspring who had extreme filial piety in the stage of a gut (꺤), the shamanic ritual of Chosŏn, where they could hear their dead ancestors' voice concerning their grudges and wishes directly through the shaman. It was a ritual and, at the same time, a festivity that no Chosŏnese could deny.

According to Deuchler, the Chosŏn Confucian Revolution culminated in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. It also was a time when the syncretic religion of Buddhism, traditional shamanism, and Neo-Confucianism merged through compromise, acceptance, and transformation. The shaman's recitation, which can comprehensively reveal such a scheme of the afterworld, is the Baridegi gut which was completed in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century.

Baridegi-gut was essentially a syncretic religious rite for the afterworld where ten-thousand gods and spirits actively work, conflict with each other, and intervene in ordinary human affairs living in this world. Figuratively speaking, it is similar to a rhapsodic fantasy in which various gods and spirits appear on the scene praising Confucian virtues, while simultaneously unfolding the stage properties of the Buddhist afterlife and Taoist nature gods. It could be argued that the final outcome of the revolution the victory of shamanism.

Chosŏnese did not believe in gods and spirits that they could not perceive. So, all the gods and spirits of their ancestors had to come down to earth to help acquire wealth and prestige for their descendants. As such traditional inheritances, the hedonistic tendency to pursue sensual pleasure was engraved in the soul of contemporary Koreans, and the ultimate goal of Koreans was to earn as much money as possible, enjoy everything, and praise life to the fullest.

#### **4. Future study and limitation**

This study was conducted to understand the mentality and character of contemporary Koreans at a deeper level by discovering the collective memories they have inherited from their long historical experiences and analyzing the collective consciousness that stems from them. This study holds that such work can lead to a deeper understanding of the extreme division and confrontation in today's Korean society and will help to find the cause. This study collected and analyzed the narratives that Koreans experienced and enjoyed through generations through a qualitative study at the beginning. As a result, it was possible to know the origin of how the collective memory and consciousness of Koreans are structured. Today's Koreans are still entangled in the traditional values and issues of survival handed down from the Chosŏn society. A quantitative study was conducted to investigate the hybridity of consciousness in modern Koreans by composing questionnaire items based on the collective memory and consciousness discovered through qualitative research. It was found that the collective memory and consciousness of Koreans extracted from the study were still half mixed with that of modern Koreans. In that sense, this work has achieved significant results, proving that Koreans are opposed to each other because of their different viewpoints and value orientations, rather than understanding the conflicts in modern Korean society as merely a superficial struggle for political power or conflicts to secure economic interests.

Naturally, it would have been better if a larger sample group had been secured. If the

sample size had been 5,200 or 10,000 instead of 520, a more realistic research result would have been achieved. In addition, it was felt that the number of questionnaire items for the survey was a little small compared to the purpose of the study. In order to analyze the pattern of the entire Korean population, a sample of 520 people and 100 questionnaire items given to them were insufficient. When it was distributed to analyze separately by value domain, the number of questionnaire items was too small. In the event of there being identical answers from the respondents, the scatter pattern tended not to be clearly revealed on the plot.

What this study realized was that the contents of collective memory and consciousness are continuously edited or changed. In contemporary society, where media and social media are rapidly developing, changes in the culture and values of a society can occur quickly as they continue to appear in the past. However, since there is no data to compare the results of this study in time series with the same research results from the previous era, it was difficult to accurately grasp the content or extent of the social changes. It is expected that meaningful results can be derived if the survey items are more elaborated, reconstructed, and prepared more abundantly and if the changes and differences are observed by measuring the values of Koreans in a specific period in the future in terms of time-serial analysis.

Based on the methodology of this study, it is possible to quantitatively measure each country's values and conflict structure by analyzing the cultures and histories around the world in terms of the analysis of the collective memory and consciousness of the societies. This study holds that these results can significantly contribute to creating appropriate political measures for establishing a country's education or economic development policy. It is possible to analyze such

variables through adjustment or mediation effects that can be applied to such fields as conflict resolution, communication, political participation, and consumer behavior.

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