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How South Koreans Interpreted Modern China: *South Korean Studies of Modern Chinese History during the Cold War Era*

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Abstract

The purposes of this paper are to analyze how three South Korean scholars—Kim Jun-yop, Min Tu-ki, and Rhee Yeung-hui—interpreted modern China during the Cold War era and thereby show that the development of South Korean studies on modern Chinese history was linked to the global Cold War. It was only after the Korean War that South Koreans began to study modern Chinese history in earnest. Despite anticommunist pressure on academic interests in the field, South Korean interpretations of modern Chinese history at the time were not uniform. For example, Min viewed it as the history of the establishment of a modern state, while Rhee saw it as the history of the revolutionary movement to overcome Western modernity. What is also interesting is that each type of interpretation matched its proponent's attitudes toward and understanding of modernization. More precisely, each researcher's understanding of modernization was an important and powerful argument for his interpretation and description of modern Chinese history. In this sense, it can be said that South Korean studies of modern Chinese history during the Cold War era were the products of intellectual activities that included selective acceptance, reinterpretation, and criticism of the cultural Cold War symbolized by modernization theory.

Keywords: modern Chinese history, Cold War, modernization theory, Kim Jun-yop, Min Tu-ki, Rhee Yeung-hui, Chinese modernization

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Introduction

In 1997, Min Tu-ki (1932–2000), who is regarded as a representative South Korean scholar of modern China, recalled that when the study of modern Chinese history in South Korea began in earnest after the Korean War, maintaining interest in China's recent past was difficult work that had required a great deal of "intellectual courage" (Min 1997, 408). He explained that Cold War ideology, which treated the researchers' interest in China as a form of sympathy with communism, was prevalent in South Korean society at that time (1997, 407). His recollection suggests that the birth of South Korean studies of modern Chinese history was inseparably related to the Cold War.

The Cold War is, in fact, a crucial period in South Korean studies of modern Chinese history because it was during that time that South Korean scholars were finally able to interpret modern Chinese history from their own perspectives. Although the Japanese colonial period (1910–1945) saw the introduction of an academic system for studying Chinese history, and some Koreans had studied Chinese history in Japan (Baik 2004, 97–107), Koreans' view of China at that time was under the influence of Japanese Orientalism. Japanese Orientalism held that China was only one part of *tōyō* (the Orient), which was created by modern Japan. China was no longer seen as the center of civilization and was called *shina* (China) by Japanese Orientalists; it was considered to have fallen behind in modernization, and was interpreted and reconstructed as belonging in the past and periphery of modern Japan (Tanaka 2004, 286–287). Korea's liberation from Japan meant that Korean scholars were free from the influence of Japanese Orientalism and seemed to have the opportunity to interpret modern Chinese history for themselves and position China from a Korean perspective. However, reality was not so simple; Korean scholars were not free from the influence of the Cold War being waged by the United States and the Soviet Union. Korean interest in modern Chinese history was expressed in competing ways by leftist and rightist nationalists (Ha 1989, 223–226) and was divided into South and North Korean camps on the division of the Korean peninsula and because of the Korean War.

South Korean studies of modern Chinese history took place under the US-led East Asian Cold War order and were therefore strongly influenced by anticommunism, as Ha Sae-bong noted (1989, 235). However, South Korean studies of modern Chinese history during the Cold War cannot be understood in their entirety through the lens of anticommunism. The more we emphasize the influence of anticommunism, the more difficult it is to understand all of the contents and characteristics of modern Chinese history studies—which, as Min Tu-ki recalled, he and other South Korean scholars had engaged in with "intellectual courage." In particular, if anticommunism is given too much weight, it is likely that South Korean studies of modern Chinese history will be understood as timid research constrained by anticommunism, which creates a serious risk that the intellectual activities of the South Korean scholars who actively responded to or criticized anticommunism will be underestimated.

What is an effective way to analyze South Korean scholars' interpretations, including anticommunist interpretations, of modern Chinese history during the Cold War era? I believe that it is not enough to pay attention only to positivism and objectivism and their political implications, which have been determined by previous studies (e.g., Hwang 2012) to be characteristics of South Korean studies of Chinese history. Although Hwang's study convincingly demonstrated the political implications of the attitudes chosen and research methods employed by scholars, it could not sufficiently explain how South Korean scholars interpreted and constructed modern Chinese history during the Cold War. To do this, I believe it is necessary to pay close attention to modernization theory, as it provided South Korean scholars with new logic and a new perspective for interpreting modern Chinese history.

Modernization theory emerged in American academia in the 1950s and 1960s as a paradigm for the social scientific understanding of social changes in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. However, it was not just a social scientific formulation. It also presumed that through the provision of long-term and continuous development aid to underdeveloped or third-world countries, the United States could foster in them the ability to defend themselves against the spread of communism. Therefore, it was also an ideology rooted in the Cold War era (Latham 2000, 5).

Modernization theory was introduced into South Korea as a part of US foreign policy toward the country and as a social science theory in the late 1950s. It not only served as a powerful logic for the promotion of modernization, but also had a profound impact on the formation and development of humanities and social sciences fields in South Korea. This was because the theory was widely accepted in the country's academia as a tool for analyzing and understanding East Asian societies, including South Korean society itself (I. Chung 2005, 80).

The influence of modernization theory on the humanities and social sciences has been wide and deep, but existing studies of it have focused mainly on the fields of politics and sociology (e.g., Y. Jung 2003; Yoon 2003). Moreover, these studies have failed to dynamically analyze the influence of modernization theory on South Korean academia. I believe that while this was extensive, it cannot be understood completely through examination only of the United States' intentions. This is because South Korean scholars considered the theory an object of selective acceptance, reinterpretation, and criticism.

Considering the above problems in existing studies, Sin's (2016) analysis of the influence of modernization theory on South Korean studies of Korean modern history is noteworthy. It not only expanded on existing studies into the humanities, especially in the field of history, but also persuasively analyzed the relationship between the subjective[1] acceptance of modernization theory by Korean history researchers and the emergence of a new Korean history studies in the mid-1960s. However, because of its focus on the 1960s, this study did not fully explain how Korean history research changed throughout the Cold War era.

In consideration of these conclusions and limitations of existing studies, I would like to examine the influence of modernization theory on South Korean studies of modern Chinese history. I believe that the best way to do so is to analyze and compare the works of Kim Jun-yop (1920–2011), Min Tu-ki, and Rhee Yeung-hui (1929–2010), three scholars who pioneered South Korean studies on modern Chinese history.

1. Throughout this paper, I use "subjective" in its meaning of "expressive of agency."

Kim, a professor at Korea University, founded the Asiatic Research Institute there and elevated it to a "world-class level" institute, enabling its researchers to address issues in East Asian studies (M. Chung 2009, 230). He was one of the earliest researchers to take up issues related to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) (Suh 2012).

As a professor at Seoul National University, Min systematically interpreted Chinese modern history from the perspective that the country's development was intrinsic, and brought South Korean studies of modern Chinese history to the global level (Bae 2000). In terms of research methods, processes, and perspectives, he is also considered to be a scholar who formed "his own unique discourse" (Im 2009, 364–374) and whose work became "a standard research model" (Ha 2010, 97) for the study of modern Chinese history.

Rhee, a journalist and a professor at Hanyang University, was a unique researcher who maintained an interest in the Chinese revolutionary movements during the time of anticommunism. Although he was not a professionally-trained historian, his writings had a significant influence on other intellectuals, including college students who were critical of the political and social situation in South Korea. Kim Hee-gyo (2001, 262) and Baik Young-seo (2012, 590) have claimed that his approach to China laid the foundation for "critical Chinese studies," a field that pursues the goals of academic and political change in South Korea.

Given their respective statuses and roles within and outside of the academy, as well as their research outcomes, it is safe to say that Kim, Min, and Rhee represented three different types of Cold War-era South Korean scholars. To a certain degree, they also exemplified different points in the intellectual trajectory of that period. Notably, the interest of these three scholars in modern Chinese history and studies was based on their different understandings of modernization. Through a comparative analysis of their works, therefore, we can reveal the influence of modernization theory on South Korean studies of modern Chinese history. Specifically, we will be able to clarify how modernization was understood differently by South Korean scholars who studied modern Chinese history in the context of the

Cold War, and how that caused them to interpret their subject in new ways.

Three Understandings of Modernization Theory

With the help of *Sasanggye* (World of Thought), a journal that influenced the South Korean intellectual community from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, Walt Whitman Rostow (1916–2003) played a large role to transplant and diffuse the modernization theory within South Korea. His article entitled "Rostow on Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto," which had been published in an August 1959 issue of *The Economist*, was translated and serialized in *Sasanggye* in three installments, starting from the January 1960 issue. At that time, Kim Jun-yop was serving as the journal's Editor-in-Chief. The essence of Rostow's (1960a, 147–157; 1960b, 317–327; 1960c, 100–108) arguments, as translated in *Sasanggye*, can be summarized as follows: (1) Every country in the world develops through five stages of economic growth (traditional society, preconditions for take-off, take-off, drive to maturity, and high mass consumption); (2) Modernization is Westernization centered on economic growth; (3) Westernization is brought about by new elites, including intellectuals and military officers, changing traditions in response to external challenges and shocks; and (4) Modernization is essentially anticommunist. These arguments were typical of modernization theory.

How did Kim understand Rostow's arguments? We cannot be certain, because Kim did not publicize his own views on them. However, it should be noted that he was already a cultural nationalist before he read Rostow's work (G. Kim 2003, 56–61). According to Michael Robinson (1990, 121), Korean cultural nationalism, which surfaced in the 1920s and was rooted in the Patriotic Enlightenment Movement of the late-Joseon dynasty, was based on the belief that the West was a model for Korea to emulate. It pushed the modern elite to educate and enlighten the public in order to produce a national culture, society, and economy.

Given that Kim was a cultural nationalist, it is not difficult to hypothesize about how he reacted to Rostow's arguments. First, he likely agreed that

modernization was essentially Westernization, that Westernization was a response to external influences—the Western shock and challenge—and that the elite lead the masses to such a response. Second, he would not have agreed, however, that modernization is limited to economic growth or development; rather, he regarded it as a broader concept that included changes to politics, society, culture, and so on.

In particular, Kim emphasized the realization of liberty and democracy in the process of Westernization. In his memoirs, he mentioned that when he was the Editor-in-Chief of *Sasanggye*, he focused on the development of civil liberties and civil rights movements (J. Kim 2001, 89). For him, the realization of liberty and democracy was a key factor in determining whether modernization was achieved. He believed that economic growth and development without this was not modernization. From this perspective, he argued that not only the establishment of the PRC but also the industrialization that it energetically pursued had nothing to do with the realization of modernization (M. Chung 2009, 245).

However, other Chinese history researchers evaluated the PRC differently from Kim. Min Tu-ki was one such researcher. He interpreted the establishment of the PRC as the realization of Chinese modernization. Why did he see it this way? I believe that the reason is related to his understanding of modernization itself. Like Kim, he considered modernization to be synonymous with Westernization. His understanding of modernization can be deduced from his extraordinary interest in Max Weber (1864–1920). In Min's (1985, 51) memoirs, he mentioned that from the 1950s to the 1960s, he gave great attention to Weber's work and recalled that books such as *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and *Science as a Vocation* "made a deep impression" on him.

The main contents of Weber's historical sociology were an analysis of the historical background of the formation of capitalism. According to Weber, or at least as his thesis was presented in South Korea, capitalism could only be formed in modern Europe because the Orient did not have an immanent motive to modernize itself. Therefore, the Orient could evolve into a modern society only by accepting the culture and practices of developed Western capitalism. Given that Weber's work "made a deep

impression" on Min, we can conclude that Min's idea of modernization was similar to that of Weber.

However, Min's understanding of *how to achieve* modernization was different from that of Weber. Min's questioning of the work of Joseph R. Levenson (1920–1969) provides us with a clue as to his thinking on this subject. According to a 1999 interview (J. Jung 1999, 271–272), Min became interested in Chinese modern history in the early 1960s after reading Levenson's book *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*, but he questioned the book's interpretation of modern China. Levenson's (1958) work clearly distinguished between tradition and modernity and argued that China had failed to modernize. Min found reading it to be a sort of academic torment because its thesis did not allow China an active role in its own modern history. He wondered how subjective Chinese activities could be detected within the process of modernization. According to Im Sang-beom (2009, 347), Min found his answer shortly afterward in the work of Benjamin Schwartz (1964) on Yan Fu (1854–1921). Schwartz's research on the role of tradition in the adaptation of Western ideas by the Chinese gave Min an important perspective that allowed him to overcome the limitations of Levenson's work.

Min's interest in the subjectivity of modernization was not unique; it was part of a trend of intellectuals beginning to think about modernization differently. By the mid-1960s, South Korean intellectuals had started to actively discuss problems related to the subjectivity of modernization. This discussion was closely related to the Korea-Japan treaty pursued by the Park Chung-hee (1917–1979) government. By the end of 1963, Park, who had seized power through a coup on May 16, 1961, had reneged on his promise to transfer power to a civilian government and instead established the Third Republic. He also actively pursued the Korea-Japan treaty, seeking economic development and the normalization of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Korea and Japan. Park's broken promise and promotion of the Korea-Japan treaty led to a conflict between the government and intellectuals. According to Chang Kyu-sik (2014, 309–318), some intellectuals criticized the nationalism espoused by the government as "fake nationalism" and the modernization it pursued as "foreign-dependent,

antinational modernization." And they argued for the necessity of promoting "nationalistic and subjective modernization" (G. Kim 2009, 82).

In addition, at about the same time, some South Korean historians were studying modern Korean history from the viewpoint of the "internal development theory" (I. Kim 2000; Sin 2016), which held that there were internal motives that could help the country evolve into a modern society. Through studies of *silhaksasang* (Practical Thought) and socio-economic changes in the late Joseon dynasty, they sought to reconstruct Korean history by criticizing and overcoming colonial views of it. The results of these studies based on the internal development theory caused to spread among intellectuals the belief that modernization could be achieved simply through subjective force (K. Lee 2010, 362).

Min's construct of the subjectivity of modernization reflected these intellectual trends. In particular, just as Korean history scholars studied modern Korean history based on internal development theory, he studied the inner motives for Chinese modernization and attempted to describe the subjectivity of modernization in China. Min's articles on the gentry of the late Qing period and their political thought, published from 1965 through 1967, were the result of such study and set forth his ideas of modernization. He stressed that the subjective efforts of the members of society were important to the process of "true modernization" (Min 1976a, 104–105).

While Kim and Min had different understandings of the modernization process, both agreed that modernization should be a goal for developing countries. However, Rhee Yeung-hui viewed it as a target for criticism. His understanding of modernization was related to his criticism of South Korean society since the mid-1960s. In the mid-1960s, while the Korea-Japan treaty was being concluded and combat troops were being dispatched to Vietnam, Park Chung-hee made an appeal to the citizenry for the promotion of economic development and the participation of the society in that process. This effort was referred to as the Modernization of the Fatherland.

South Korea achieved rapid economic growth through the Modernization of the Fatherland, but this achievement came at a dear price. In the 1970s, the negative consequences such as deepening external dependence of the

economy and expanding economic inequality became apparent and the number of intellectuals who criticized modernization as led by the military regime increased. There was skepticism among many of the intellectuals about economic growth and Western modernization (S. Lee 2007, 242–246).

Rhee was one of these intellectuals. He argued that the Modernization of the Fatherland was dependent on Japanese capital, and that with this national strategy South Korea would be unable to rid itself of its inferiority complex in relation to Japan as well as the West (Rhee 2006c, 42–43). Specifically, he emphasized that modernization should instead be pursued independently and subjectively, just as Min had believed. However, Rhee went one step further and began to criticize modernization itself. He wrote that economic inequality was a result of modernization and that the gap between the rich and the poor was continuing to worsen. He also claimed that materialism was a serious problem that was becoming widespread because of modernization, with human beings becoming commercialized, and both society and individuals becoming morally and ethically degraded (2006e, [1974] 2006b).

Rhee criticized modernization not only for its emphasis on economic growth but also for its anticommunism. He also opposed the authoritarian government that unilaterally pushed modernization. As a result, he was called a "mentor of critical thinking" by progressive students and intellectuals at the time, while the government labelled him "an evil source of indoctrination" (Shon 2013, 120–121). His desire to reform South Korean society by turning it away from materialism and mammonism is what led him to take an interest in Chinese history. Through his analysis of the history of modern China, especially socialist China, he attempted to find alternatives to modernization as well as grounds for rethinking South Korean society.

Deviant Modernization and Modernization the Chinese Way

How did Kim, Min, and Rhee, three scholars who had different understandings of and attitudes toward modernization, interpret modern

Chinese history? How were their research conclusions and the images of modern Chinese history they constructed different from each other? It was in the 1960s that Kim—who had begun to study the CCP in the 1950s with an anticommunist mindset—expanded his research into modern history more generally. He published his first book on the larger subject, *Jungguk choegeunsesa* (History of Modern China), in 1963. In it, he outlined his views that modern Chinese history was simply an example of the modernization process and that modernization was Westernization (J. Kim [1963] 1976, 1–2). According to him, Chinese modernization was initiated by external shocks and stimuli; he argued that it began after China was defeated by Great Britain in the Opium Wars ([1963] 1976, 24) and manifested in movements like the Self-Strengthening Movement (Yangwu Yundong) and the Reform Movement of 1898 (Bianfa Yundong) ([1963] 1976, 231, 273).

This interpretation was very similar to John K. Fairbank's "Western impact-Chinese response" framework. Fairbank (1907–1991), a professor at Harvard University, was the foremost scholar on Chinese studies in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. He thought China would be able to enter modernity via a series of responses to Western challenges and impacts. As noted by Paul Cohen (1984, 9–12), this framework was closely connected to modernization theory, and was a typical perspective on modern Chinese history in U.S. academia at that time.

The similarity of Kim's interpretation to Fairbank's was not a coincidence. According to Kim's (J. Kim 2001, 45) memoirs, he worked at Harvard University as a visiting professor for one year in 1958, and at that time he had a very close relationship with Fairbank. Not only were they able to communicate easily in Chinese, but they also had shared experiences of the anti-Japanese movement in China as members of the Office of Strategic Services during World War II. These commonalities promoted academic exchanges between the two and further influenced Kim to have a favorable attitude toward Fairbank's framework.

Kim believed that there were two conditions necessary for the successful modernization of China. First, the emergence of a leader who fully accepted that Western culture was needed, and second, that leader overthrowing the Qing dynasty, which symbolized traditional China.

For these reasons, he greatly admired Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925) and the Revolution of 1911 (Xinhai Geming). He appreciated that Sun was a creative thinker who accepted Western culture and embraced it fully while also being a revolutionary who overthrew the Qing dynasty and established the Republic of China (J. Kim [1963] 1976, 269–270). Kim believed that the Revolution of 1911 was the turning point for Chinese modernization and the beginning of China's modern history, partly because the Qing dynasty had been overthrown, but more importantly because liberty and democracy, which he identified as the essence of Western culture, emerged then as real problems for Chinese modernization (1968, 13).

Kim (1968, 14) interpreted the history of Republican China as the history of the realization of liberty and democracy and considered the May Fourth Movement (Wusi Yundong) in 1919 an important development that spread modernization throughout Chinese society. His assessment of the May Fourth Movement led him to call Hu Shi (1892–1962) "a representative figure among the thinkers of modern China, whose goal was to realize liberty and democracy" (1968, 15).

In summary, for Kim (1968, 18), Sun was the initiator of modernization and Hu was its cultivator. He also saw Jiang Jieshi (1887–1975), the head of the Nanjing Nationalist Government (Nanjing Guomin Zhengfu) and the Republic of China in Taiwan, as a faithful adherent of Sun's doctrine. Therefore, in his view, the main personalities that led the modernization of China were Sun, Hu, and Jiang, and not the communists (including Mao Zedong [1893–1976]). Kim interpreted modern Chinese history from an anticommunist point of view.

His understanding of Chinese history, therefore, was centered on the Nationalist Party of China (Zhongguo Guomindang hereafter GMD). Needless to say, his interpretation reflected the vigorous academic exchange between South Korea and Taiwan during the Cold War; but more importantly, it was also formed through his study abroad in China and Taiwan. From 1947 to 1949, he studied Chinese history under the guidance of Professor Guo Ting-yi (1904–1975) at National Central University (Guoli Zhongyang Daxue) in Nanjing. And after the establishment of the Republic of China in Taiwan, he studied Chinese Communist Movement at National

Taiwan University (Guoli Taiwan Daxue) for four years (M. Chung 2009, 249–250).

It is noteworthy that Guo understood modern Chinese history in terms of modernization. He interpreted Chinese modern history as the process of the Chinese coming to understand and adapt to Western modern civilization, and he assessed that Chinese modernization was successfully accomplished by Sun Yat-sen and GMD (M. Chung 2015, 153–157). Since moving to Taiwan in 1949, he has been a professor at Taiwan Normal University (Taiwan Shifan Daxue) and as a director of the Institute of Modern History (Jindaishi Yanjiusuo) at Academia Sinica (Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan), and led the studies of Chinese modern history in Taiwan from the 1950s to the 1960s (M. Chung 2015, 147–153).

Therefore, Kim's anticommunist and modernizationist interpretation of history was first influenced by the interpretation of modern history of Taiwanese academia led by Guo, and these experiences likely made him receptive to Fairbank's framework. Given all the above, Kim's interpretation of modern China can be described as the product of Cold War-era academic exchanges between South Korea, Taiwan, and the United States.

How did Min Tu-ki, with his emphasis on subjectivity in the process of modernization, construct modern Chinese history? In order to examine subjectivity in Chinese modernization, he focused his research on the efforts made by the Chinese to establish a modern state. Min (1976c, 51–53) took note of the Reform Movement of 1898 because he believed that it was China's first effort to establish a modern political community, and his assessment of it was different from Kim's. For Kim, the movement was merely an unsuccessful attempt at modernization, limited by its failure to accept Western culture as a whole; for Min, it was the starting point for the pursuit of Chinese subjective modernization. Furthermore, Min, unlike Kim, saw the role and function of tradition in this process as a powerful argument for proving subjectivity in Chinese modernization.

There were two dimensions of tradition that Min emphasized: tradition as the agent of modernization and tradition that served as the logical grounds for the foundation of a modern state. He regarded the gentry, the major social class in traditional society, as being part of the latter and

considered the feudalistic ideas of the Qing period to fall under the former (Min 1965, 1966, 1967). He maintained that, in reaction to the tradition of the Qing dynasty's feudalistic ideas, the gentry had embraced Western politics and led discussions regarding the establishment of a parliamentary system and local-level governments in China. Facing an escalating national crisis, the gentry attempted to seize power, but failed. However, simply by leading a constitutional movement, the gentry successfully envisioned a modern state in China. To Min (1967, 80–82), modernization was a process of the transformation of traditions.

As a result of his study of Chinese modernization, Min suggested new perspectives on the relationship between tradition and modernity in the course of modernization. Min, unlike Kim, viewed tradition not as an obstacle to modernization but as a logical basis for and agent of modernization. The objective of Min's study and perspective was to criticize research based on modernization theory and the Western impact-Chinese response framework. U.S.-based scholar Philip Kuhn (1976), who sought to newly define the relationship between tradition and modernity, brought international attention to Min's work in the 1970s, using it as a valuable foundation for his own arguments (Min 1997, 410).

Since the mid-to-late 1960s, U.S. academia that focuses on Chinese history has criticized the interpretation of modern Chinese history based on modernization theory. U.S.-based scholars, including Kuhn, began to analyze the traditional elements that persisted in various ways during China's modernization process (Cohen 1984, 84–85). Through analyses in the fields of politics, economics, and society, they came to understand Chinese modernity as an intricate series of connections between traditional and modern elements, and were thus able to break away from interpretations of Chinese history based on modernization theory and a Western-centered perspective.

After many complications, attempts to establish a modern state in China—which began with the Reform Movement of 1898—were finally completed with the establishment of the Republic of China through the Revolution of 1911. Min favorably evaluated the establishment of the Republic of China, arguing that it ended a 2,000-year-old monarchy and

made China a modern state. According to Min (1976b), the Nanjing Nationalist Government (established through the Nationalist Revolution (Guomin Geming) of the 1920s) and the PRC were created to achieve the goals of anti-imperialism and public participation in politics. In particular, the founding of the PRC meant the establishment of a modern state, which had been sought since the Reform Movement of 1898, and symbolized the realization of Chinese modernization.

Rhee, like Min, considered the establishment of the PRC to be the realization of Chinese modernization, but the modern history of China that Rhee constructed was otherwise quite different. This difference was due to the two scholars' dissimilar understanding of modernization. Rhee's critical stance toward modernization was reflected in his view of the West and of Chinese modernization. He did not consider the West to be a model for modernization, and he wanted to discover how the overthrow of the feudalist order in China's process of modernization could be used to critique the West generally and modernization theory specifically. For Rhee, Chinese modernization was not a process of the realization of liberty and democracy or the establishment of a modern state but one of liberation from both the feudalist order and Western power.

In his analysis of Chinese modernization and the Chinese revolutionary movement, Rhee ([1974] 2006a, 158) gave special attention to the emergence of the idea of revolution. He examined in detail how and when it was formed and how the revolutionary movement developed. He argued that revolution was an idea resulting from the acceptance of Marxism in the May Fourth Movement, and that the revolutionary movement thus entered a new stage that deviated from the West.

However, one issue that must not be overlooked is that the Marxism that Rhee ([1974] 2006a, 156) pointed out as a revolutionary idea was not exactly the Marxism of the West. He argued that the Chinese idea of revolution was formed through a combination of Western Marxism with "nationalistic and secular politics-oriented" Chinese traditional thought. Another important point in his analysis of the idea of revolution is that he characterized the Taiping Rebellion (Taiping Tianguo Yundong) as its source. He determined the rebellion to be the first revolutionary movement

that pursued modernization, based on a revolutionary construct that combined the traditional Chinese universalism and Western Christian egalitarianism. For him, the Taiping Rebellion was "a fountain of modern Chinese revolutionary ideas" ([1974] 2006a, 160).

He argued that Chinese modernization was rooted in the Taiping Rebellion and finally achieved by the establishment of the PRC through the May Fourth Movement and the Anti-Japanese War. He argued that by establishing the PRC, China not only liberated itself from the feudalist order but also overcame Western modernity ([1974] 2006a, 172–173). To him, the main people who helped in China's realization of modernization were Chinese communists armed with Chinese Marxism. His perception of Chinese modernization, especially in relation to Chinese communists and the PRC, clearly contrasted with that of Kim Jun-yop, who maintained an anticommunist stance, criticizing the CCP as "a faithful slave to the Soviets and the Comintern" and "a monster that threatens human peace" (1958, 5–6).

Rhee (2006d) took the revolutionary historical view of modern Chinese history. This was the orthodox viewpoint of Chinese historical scholarship in the PRC until the advent of the "reform and opening up" (*gaige kaifang*) policies in the late 1970s. How could he sympathize with the PRC's view when there was no cultural exchange between it and South Korea because of ideological differences? An interview with Rhee in 2005 provides important clues. In the interview, Rhee said that until the 1970s, most of his sources of intellectual and spiritual stimulation came from Japanese scholars' works issued by the progressive publisher Iwanami, and that this was true of many other critical intellectuals in South Korea (Rhee and Im 2005, 201). From this, we can infer that he was influenced by the views of postwar progressive Japanese scholars who studied modern Chinese history. They paid great attention to the Chinese Communist Revolution and Mao's thought, and regarded the revolution as not only successful in overcoming Western modernity but also in creating a new type of socialism distinct from that of the Soviet Union (Koschmann 1997; Namiki 1993, 9–14).

Rhee's (2006e) interpretation of history based on the revolutionary historical view was most clearly expressed in his interpretation of the Chinese Cultural Revolution (Wenhua Dageming) in the PRC. In a 1977

paper, he stated that the revolution was a great attempt to create a new type of moral and ethical human that both capitalist society and Soviet socialism had failed to produce. The interpretation of the revolution as a revolution in humanity was, at the time, unusual in South Korea. It was more commonly interpreted as a fierce struggle for power within the leadership of the CCP (M. Chung 2010, 111–127); in fact, this was Kim Jun-yop's (1979) interpretation. It appeared that Rhee had idealized the revolution; he barely mentioned the power struggle, acts of vandalism by the Red Guards, and other similar incidents. However, it is noteworthy that he presented a fresh interpretation of the revolution—one that was contrary to mainstream interpretations in South Korean society, including that of Kim—based on his critical thinking about modernization.

Conclusion

It was after the Korean War that South Koreans began to study modern Chinese history seriously. At that time, South Korea was at the forefront of the anticommunist camp within East Asia, and China was regarded as a hostile country. Therefore, South Korean scholars' interest in modern China was greatly influenced by anticommunist sentiments. It was not a coincidence that the representative Chinese modern history research published after the Korean War was Kim Jun-yop's (1958) study of the CCP, meant to prepare South Koreans for the anticommunist struggle. However, anticommunist sentiment was a problem for the interpretation of modern Chinese history because it was difficult for scholars to escape from its biases. Moreover, modern Chinese history could never be replaced by the history of CCP. Therefore, it was necessary to have a viewpoint that could both address anticommunism and interpret Chinese modern history in its entirety without any bias. American modernization theory, which was introduced to South Korean academia in the late 1950s, was initially believed to meet this need.

Kim Jun-yop, a cultural nationalist who had studied the CCP, tackled modern Chinese history more broadly after accepting modernization

theory; and he was also active in introducing this theory to South Korea. He thought that modernization was Westernization, and that the success of modernization was dependent on how fully a developing country embraced Western culture. In particular, he emphasized the importance of the realization of liberty and democracy. From this perspective, he criticized the establishment of the PRC as a failure to achieve modernization and a deviation from it.

Modernization theory as understood by Kim was reinterpreted by Min and Rhee. Min believed that modernization should be pursued by developing countries, but that the process should be subjective. Rhee took this one step further and said that modernization itself was an object to be criticized and overcome. The perspectives of the two scholars represented intellectual trends among South Korean scholars, who began to insist on the necessity of independent modernization in the mid-1960s and to criticize the promotion of modernization that centered on economic growth in the 1970s.

These reinterpretations and critiques of modernization led to the emergence of new interest in and rethinkings of modern Chinese history by researchers such as Min and Rhee. Min's concern was how to explain China's subjectivity in its modernization, and he sought to find the solution in tradition. As he regarded the establishment of a modern state as a key task of Chinese modernization, he took special note of the Reform Movement of 1898, which he interpreted it as the first attempt to do so. Rhee, however, argued that the Chinese overcame Western modernization and described how they found alternatives to it. He analyzed the country's revolutionary movements and attempted to explain how and when the idea of revolution was formed in Chinese history.

As described above, these three scholars interpreted modern Chinese history differently and created disparate images of different parts of it. The emergence of these differences implies that South Korean interpretations of modern Chinese history during the Cold War cannot be uniformly explained by anticommunism. Despite the pressure of anticommunism, scholars such as Min and Rhee constantly put forth new and even opposing interpretations. These attempts were accompanied by reinterpretations as

well as criticisms of modernization theory and its ties to anticommunism. As such, modernization theory influenced South Korean interpretations of modern Chinese history in myriad ways during the Cold War era.

I believe that the comparative analysis I have provided above will lead to a dynamic understanding of the cultural Cold War's South Korean manifestation. The term "cultural Cold War" encompasses the culture, information, and media strategies that the United States deployed around the world to expand its cultural influence (Kishi and Tsuchiya 2009, 11–12). As Oh Byung-soo (2015, 44–45), who analyzed American cultural Cold War policy in Hong Kong, noted, the purpose of this expansion was to spread anticommunism and demonstrate the superiority of the liberalistic system. Modernization theory was the ideology best suited to this purpose.

The propagation of modernization theory in South Korea represented the spread of American values, world views, and scientific paradigms; therefore, modernization theory can be said to be a very important part of the cultural Cold War that the United States waged in South Korea. The reality of the cultural Cold War and its dynamics can be successfully explained when the varying responses of South Korean scholars are fully considered. For this reason, in analyses of the cultural Cold War, it is necessary to pay attention to the selective acceptance and reinterpretation processes of the locals with regard to the United States' cultural policy and strategy. Through this paper, which focuses on the diverse interpretations of modernization theory by South Korean scholars, I hope to contribute to a multifaceted and dynamic understanding of aspects of the cultural Cold War in South Korea.

I would like to conclude this paper by briefly mentioning how the interpretation of Chinese modern history in the Cold War era influenced the research of the next-generation scholars on Chinese modern history. Since China's implementation of the reform and opening up policies and the establishment of the diplomatic relations between it and South Korea, the ideological tension between South Korea and China has lessened and anticommunist interpretations of Chinese history based have disappeared. However, the understandings of modernization and interpretations of modern history formed during the Cold War period, as well as their

critiques, were handed down to the next generation of scholars. These scholars carried on the legacy of the Cold War-era scholars in three ways.

First, they extended the study of modern Chinese history from the perspective that saw modern history as the history of establishing a modern state. They focused on various social forces such as students, peasants, and merchants, as well as political forces including the GMD and CCP, as the agents effecting the establishment of the modern state. They also dynamically analyzed this process and the compromises and conflicts faced by these political and social forces (Baik 1994; Im 2000; Jeon 2002; Kang 2003; M. Chung 2004; Yu 2004; B. Lee 2006).

Second, they deepened understanding of Chinese modernity by conducting in-depth analyses of the role of tradition in the process of modernization. In particular, they focused on the fact that tradition was constantly recalled, utilized, and reconstructed during the process of modernization, and they analyzed the cultural background of China's Rising Power (*daguohua*) (e.g., Jeon 2016) and the logic of the conservative thought that has recently become dominant (e.g., Cho 2016).

Third, they attempted to understand the establishment of the modern state in a multilayered way. These attempts were based on the view that Chinese modern history was not only a history of national liberation and construction but also one of oppression of the people. Some scholars analyzed from this viewpoint the historical experiences of those who were marginalized and excluded in the process of modernization. And they suggested that modernization researchers needed to utilize an East Asian perspective (Baik 1993, 13–18). In particular, they argued that by analyzing Chinese modern history from the perspective allowed it to be viewed from inside and outside of China. In addition, perspectives developed in East Asia made it possible to better understand the various historical experiences of Chinese and East Asian people (Bae 2007; Hwang 2013; Baik 2013; Yu 2017).

What is most interesting, however, is the fact that most of the researchers involved in these new research trends were strongly aware of critical Chinese studies, another legacy of the Cold War era. Accordingly, they thought that the study of Chinese history should not be considered a

purely academic activity. Instead, they hoped it would enable them to gain a critical understanding of the realities of China and South Korea and to explore the possibility of changing those realities and that of East Asia as a whole. The legacy of critical Chinese studies is continually recalled by scholars who want to study Chinese history in connection with the current situation and future prospects of South Korea and East Asia.

GLOSSARY

Bianfa Yundong 變法運動
daguohua 大國化
gaige kaifang 改革開放
Guo Ting-yi 郭廷以
Guoli Taiwan Daxue 國立臺灣大學
Guoli Zhongyang Daxue 國立中央大學
Guomin Geming 國民革命
Hu Shi 胡適
Jiang Jieshi 蔣介石
Jindaishi Yanjiusuo 近代史研究所
Kim Jun-yop 金俊燁
Mao Zedong 毛澤東
Min Tu-ki 閔斗基
Nanjing Guomin Zhengfu 南京國民政府
Rhee Yeung-hui 李泳禧
Sasanggye 思想界
shina 支那
silhaksasang 實學思想
Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙
Taiping Tianguo Yundong 太平天國運動
Taiwan Shifan Daxue 臺灣師範大學
tōyō 東洋
Wenhua Dageming 文化大革命
Wusi Yundong 五四運動

Xinhai Geming 辛亥革命
Yan Fu 嚴復
Yangwu Yundong 洋務運動
Zhongguo Guomindang 中國國民黨
Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan 中央研究院

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