Article

The "Korea Problem": Moritani Katsumi and the East Asian Community in Colonial Korea, 1931-1945*

Seok-Won LEE

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Introduction: Moritani Katsumi and the East Asian Community

Moritani Katsumi (1907-1960) is a largely unknown figure in the intellectual history of colonial Korea and imperial Japan. Because he spent 19 years abroad between 1926 and 1945 at Kyungsung Imperial University, he has received little attention from students of Japanese intellectual history for his prolific writings on Marxist theory and his involvement in major scholarly debates within Japanese Marxist circles. On the other hand, he has often been labeled a typical Japanese intellectual who represented a colonial historical perspective 植民主義史觀 in the field of Korean intellectual history (Noh 2010). Apparently his early writings about Korea show that Moritani, a Marxist social scientist, never challenged the reality of colonialism. However, his involvement in the production of colonial knowledge underwent significant changes in the late 1930s as he attempted to link colonial Korea to the notion of the East Asian Community 東亜協同体, a theory of Pan-Asian empire that gained currency among Japanese and Korean social scientists during the wartime period. Producing a wide range of writings on colonial Korea, Moritani emerged as an influential social scientist among Korean intellectuals in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Advocates of the East Asian Community were mostly Japanese social scientists—economists, political scientists, sociologists, and geographers—who grappled with the same question; how to rationalize a Japan-led East Asian empire and convince China and the rest of Asia of their voluntary participation in empire building (Han 2006; Koschmann 2006; Lee 2014). To this end, they had to be more evolved supporters of Japanese imperialism and put forward seemingly "forward-looking" theories and practice such as anti-racism and economic development in the colonies. Their intellectual endeavors to provide optimized theoretical framework for Japan's war efforts and empire building first tell us that their perceptions of Asia were not premised upon the intrinsic and biological notion of Asian commonness. Rather, they were convinced that a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Japan-led East Asia empire must be constructed by social, political, and cultural engineering and policies. For this

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reason, they called for imperial Japan to map out economic development plans in the colonies, together with a new set of "anti-racist" ethnic policies.

Moritani was also one of these imperial social scientists in the 1930s and 1940s who showed an affinity with the notion of the East Asian Community. First, this indicates that his logic of serving imperial Japan greatly differed from that of the group of existing colonialist intellectuals whose writings on Korea are characterized by their emphasis on the nature of Korean society as stagnant and underdeveloped. He was aware that the simplistic framework of a stagnant Korea versus an advanced Japan would not attract Korean subjects for Japan's war efforts and empire building.

Second, Moritani's unique position as a Japanese social scientist in colonial Korea enables us to explore the question of how social scientific discourses on a Pan-Asian empire, the East Asian Community in particular, were contextualized in the broad context of colonial intellectual history in 1930s and 1940s Korea. Unquestionably, these Japanese advocates of the East Asian Community—Royama Masamichi, Shinmei Masamichi, Kada Tetsuji, and Ezawa Joji—all centered their inquiries on the "China problem." Nevertheless, recent studies of Korean intellectuals during the wartime period show that the notion of the East Asian Community received an enormous amount of attention in Korean academic circles (Jung 2011; Cha 2009). While many Korean intellectuals, philosophers in particular, showed interest in the philosophical aspect of the East Asian Community presented by the renowned converted Marxist philosopher Miki Kiyoshi (Cho 2007; Workman 2013), Moritani played a central role in shaping Koreanized social scientific approaches to a Pan-Asian community. As Kim's studies show, the writings of In Jeong Sik, one of the most prolific pro-Japanese intellectuals, were deeply influenced by Moritani's scholarship (Kim 2012).

This article consists of three parts. First, I will discuss how Moritani encountered the question of Asia and Asian stagnation as he was involved in the Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP) debate in the early 1930s. Here, this study will show that Moritani's writings already showed significant methodological transformations in his critiques of both "colonialist" portrayals of Korea as fundamentally stagnated and his Marxist colleagues in Japan proper who attempted to detach the question of Asian backwardness from Japan. Second, this article moves to the question of how, then, Moritani positioned colonial Korea in his conceptualization of Asia as a cultural and social unit that

would be developed under Japan's leadership. Finally, this study will focus on how Moritani provided "Koreanized" prescriptions in the sectors of agriculture, social policy, and national land planning for Japan's war efforts.

The Asiatic Mode of Production Debate and the Question of Asia

Beginning in the late 1920s, a group of the Soviet and Western Marxist social scientists launched a series of theoretical debates over the historical stages of economic development in Asia, often called the Asiatic Mode of Production (hereafter AMP) debate. This AMP debate would continue to ideologically haunt Asian intellectuals and radical intellectuals in particular during the wartime as well as postwar periods. The debate was ignited by Marx's statement on Asian economic development in relation to Western imperialism. Marx himself, in concert with other Western intellectuals such as Adam Smith, James Mill, and Friedrich Hegel, offered up a closed perception of Asian society as stagnant and lacking any internal force of revolutionary development.[1] From this, one can infer that for Asian Marxist social scientists, their problematization of the AMP was not a mere passing concern but a fundamental problem, one with the power to change the destiny of Marxist scholarship in the context of Asia.[2]

Japanese Marxist social scientists' initial responses to the AMP debate are characterized by their Japan-centered mentality. Leading intellectuals such as Aikawa Haruki, Hayakawa Jiro, and Hirano Yoshitaro presented their own interpretations of the Asiatic Mode of Production. Their perceptions of Japan's stage of economic development, although in different contexts, converged on the point that the stagnation-oriented Asiatic Mode of Production model would not explain the nature of Japanese society. This line of thinking was naturally combined with the observation that the AMP was concerned not with Asia in general, including Japan, but more with the presence of village

1. Marx wrote, "*The question is, can mankind fulfill its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about the revolution*" (Husain 2006, 16-17).
2. Many previous studies on the Asiatic mode of production debate in Japan and China deserve attention and some of them include Fogel 1988, 56-79; Hoston 1986; Brook 1989.

communities in China. Hirano Yoshitarō's 1934 book, *The Constitution of Japanese Capitalist Society*, clearly demonstrated this tendency. In this work, Hirano, who actually taught Moritani Katsumi Marxist economics at Tokyo Imperial University, emphasized that Japanese peasants still existed under conditions of what he called "half-slavery" (Hirano 1934, 293). However, Hirano's description of the Japanese peasantry shaped conspicuously different images of Japanese agriculture in relation to other Asian countries, and China in particular. Hirano argued that communal labor, arguably the epitome of Chinese village-community-oriented agriculture, never existed in Japan and concluded that a proper capitalist mode of production would occur as soon as the "liberated-from-the-village-community" of contemporary peasantry in Japan absorbed modern technology and nurtured a political awareness.

Unlike these interpretations of the AMP produced in Japan proper, Moritani did not center his inquiry on rescuing *Japan* from the specter of Asian stagnation. Instead, he was more inclined to challenge the concept of Asian particularity inherent in the AMP that would eventually intensify the civilizational configuration of the world, in terms of the "advanced" West versus the East as "stagnated." In this respect, Moritani's adherence to the concept of Asia played a significant role in forming his early perceptions of China and Korea, and more importantly his active involvement in Asian discourses during the wartime period. Another point that deserves attention in Moritani's writings on the AMP was that he aimed to differentiate the term stagnation from the perception of underdevelopment. For him, the former designates the primordial and irreversible conditions of a certain mode of society which necessitate change through external forces, while the latter pertains to structural and institutional issues that cause a relatively low degree of development. Based on these observations, Moritani revisited Marx's early writings and reasoned that Marx's theory of the AMP was based on factors of "stagnating despotism" in Asia and the "village community," both of which, Marx observed, prevented the emergence of a surplus-value-oriented economy (Moritani 1937, 38-42).

Apparently, Moritani understood the gravity of Marx's choice of words like "stagnation." And he highlighted that these negative perceptions of Asia were not present in the ideas of Marx prior to the publication of *A Critique of*

Political Economy (Moritani 1937, 39).[3] Moritani then analyzed that Marx's critical approaches to Asia were theoretically influenced by Hegel's writings on Asia. However, Moritani also pointed out that the term Asiatic mode of production was described in Marx's work as one of the stages of economic development that preceded the ancient modes of production. For this reason, Moritani took a very cautious stance and argued that as long as the AMP was periodized as a developmental stage in Marx's thinking, it would be misleading to conclude that the existing perceptions of stagnant Asia directly stemmed from Marx's concept of Asia as *particular*. That is, Asia is from the beginning positioned outside the universal path to economic development (ibid. 70-72). Moritani's interpretation of Marx's work provided a certain break to the vicious circle of the AMP, as the previous notions of Asian particularity and Asian underdevelopment had reinforced each other. By reducing the historical temporality of the Asiatic mode of production to a limited time period, Moritani attempted to reverse the perception that the geographical and historical dimension of the Asiatic Mode of Production encompassed Asia in its entirety, as well as its history from antiquity to the present (ibid. 73).

In this way, Moritani intended to overcome the negative connotations attached to the Asiatic mode of production, and he considered that that his interpretation of Marx's concept of the AMP was the most orthodox. I argue that Moritani's positioning within the AMP debate was not unrelated to his personal circumstance as a scholar teaching at a colonial institution. His concern was to defend Asia from two distinctive challenges. On the one hand, from the Western thinkers who argued that the Asiatic mode of production characterized Asia's inferiority to the West *throughout* history, and from Japanese Marxist social scientists who tended to avoid this question entirely.

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3. The exact sentences written by Marx are as follows: "*The stationary nature* of this part of Asia, despite all the aimless activity on the political surface, can be completely explained by two mutually supporting circumstances: 1. The public works system of the central government and, 2. Alongside this, the entire Empire which, apart from a few large cities, is an agglomeration of villages, each with its own distinct organisation and each forming its own small world…. In some of these communities the lands of the village cultivated in common, in most of them each occupant tills his own field. Within the same, slavery and the caste system. Waste lands for common pasture. Home-weaving and spinning by wives and daughters. These idyllic republics, of which only the village boundaries are jealously guarded against neighbouring villages, continue to exist in well-nigh perfect form in the North Western parts of India only recently occupied by the English. No more solid basis for *Asiatic despotism and stagnation* is, I think, conceivable" (Marx and Engels 1983, 346-47).

They instead argued that the Asiatic mode of production itself did not exist in Japan, but only in China, India and Korea. A position which logically endorsed Japan's colonization of the rest of Asia.

However, his ideas were not welcomed by his academic peers in Japan and Korea. Critiques of Moritani's understanding of the AMP were centered on the absence of any analytical thinking in his writing. Whether or not they agreed with Moritani's method to overcome the challenge of the Asiatic Mode of Production debate, they observed that a more detailed scientific approach was necessary to confront the question of the Asiatic mode of production or Asiatic society. Since Moritani adhered strongly to the perspective that the Asia-related debate was concerned only with interpretive differences regarding the writings of Marx, he was less interested in analyzing what actually constituted modes of production in each time period, in each part of Asia. In that respect, Moritani's critiques of the Asiatic mode of production lacked any convincing social scientific explanation as to what modes of production actually existed in each part of Asia and how they would be situated in the universal trajectory of historical materialism. Instead, Moritani maintained that the Asiatic mode of production was simply a description of a transitory village style community. This Marx and other Western Marxists had problematized the village community as the epitome of Asian underdevelopment, but the actual mode of production had also existed in Europe in a similar way. For this reason, Moritani's essential intent, the need to defend the oriental from the shadow of inferiority, greatly differed from even that of Korean Marxist social scientists who were preoccupied with the question of the historical development of the modes of production in Korean society.

Lee Chung Won, a Korean Marxist, was one such critic. He attacked Moritani's understanding of Asian society for its obscure relevance to the current state of affairs. According to Lee, Marx's notion of Asiatic society and the contemporary debate over the Asiatic mode of production were two different things and the gravity of Asia-related discussions lay in the latter since it directly targeted contemporary Asian society, while Marx predominantly discussed premodern times (Lee 1935). Lee contended that a mode of production must accompany visible systems and the power relations that determined the social-political structure of a certain society. In that respect, Lee maintained that there are as many as 7 characteristics of the Asiatic mode of production which he defined as a "variant form of Western feudalism" (ibid.

129). He went on to argue that according to these categories, a socio-economic relation called the Asiatic mode of production had existed in Korea from the unified Silla Kingdom period (A.D. 676-) onwards (ibid. 137). Ostensibly, Lee's analysis of the AMP and Korean society sounded more scientific and specifically critical than that of Moritani. Lee without hesitation affirmed the continuation of stagnating elements in Korean society. For him, the village community in traditional Korea was nothing but a feeder that provided the material basis for the despotic central government (ibid. 146). Lee might have believed that a Marxist intellectual must remain objective and acknowledge that his or her own country contained aspects of stagnation. Perhaps such objectivity gave him the confidence to evaluate that Moritani and other Japanese Marxist intellectuals had not nurtured any functional understanding of historical materialism. However, Lee himself could not solve the issue of how it was that Chosun (1392-1910) overcame these elements of the Asiatic mode of production and entered on to the stage of capitalism. In contrast to his acute analysis of premodern Asian and Chosun, Lee also simply concluded in passing that commercialization and industrialization had taken place in Chosen Korea, without providing any tangible historical evidence in support of why or how (ibid.).

Moritani's Early Concept of Korea

As examined so far, the Asiatic Mode of Production debate reveals each Marxist social scientist's different approaches to the concept of Asia and Moritani took a highly interpretive position to denounce the logic of Asian stagnation by revisiting Marx's own writings. What, then, did he face the actual question of positioning colonial Korea in the making of a Japan-led Pan-Asian empire? While challenging Marx's and Japanese social scientists' writings on Asian stagnation, Moritani began shaping his perceptions of Korean society in the mid-1930s.

Here, it is important to emphasize that Moritani's early perceptions of Korean history and society show some unique aspects compared to those of other Japanese Marxist social scientists. While leading Marxist social scientists in Japan proper showed little interest in Korea as their field of study, Moritani's position at Kyungsung Imperial University exposed him to a substantial

amount of research on Korean history and society, mostly conducted by Japanese scholars. Not surprisingly, their conservative and colonial approaches to Korea focused on demonstrating the "historical inevitability" of the Japanese colonization of Korea by highlighting the stagnant aspects of Korean society. As I have discussed, Moritani's close involvement in the Asiatic Mode of Production debate first detached him from these stagnation-oriented approaches to Korea. However, this does not mean that Moritani himself had developed his own methodological framework to overcome conventional and colonial interpretations of Korean history and society. In recalling his years at Kyungsung Imperial University, Moritani wrote.

> First, I believed that I had maintained the acute critical viewpoint that the *minzoku* problem in East Asia is the problem of the nation of colonization. However, after settling for the present as a faculty member at Kyungsung Imperial University, I was influenced by the atmosphere so much as to consider that *existence somehow determined meaning*. Therefore I could no longer critically think that the colonial problem of Chosen *minzoku* was to liberate it from the home country of imperialism. (Moritani 1965, 150-51)

It appeared that Moritani made a sort of confession of his collaboration with the Japanese empire during the wartime period. However, this personal statement does not tell us that his "pre-conversion" writings between 1926 and 1937 reflected his anti-colonial standpoint. In fact, he himself acknowledged that his early understanding of Korean society and history was greatly influenced by the works of Fukuda Tokuzo, one of the leading Marxist social scientists in early 20th century Japan, who attempted to denounce the universal developmental path to Korean history (Moritani 1965, 142). As I will discuss in detail, Fukuda's writings on Korea were preoccupied with the Japanese version of stagnation theory—that Korea failed to undergo a modern transformation and as a result became part of "advanced" Japan. For this reason, I argue that a colonialist view of Korea was one important facet of Moritani's identity during his years in Korea, regardless of his ideological transformations in the name of conversion.

Influenced by stagnation-theory-oriented approaches to Korea and also having being exposed to newly emerging social scientific works by Korean scholars such as Paik Nam Un's 1933 work, *The Socio Economic History of*

Chosun, Moritani was searching for his own social scientific tool to explain the reality of colonial Korea. In that respect, his encounter with the German social historian Karl Wittfogel had an enormous impact on Moritani's prolific writings on Korea and a Japan-led East Asian empire in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

As I have discussed, most Japanese Marxist social scientists in the mid-1930s were concerned that Japan should not be categorized as part of the Orient in the Asiatic Mode of Production debate. To complete this task, they had to address the question of Japan's place on the universal path to capitalist development, and the idea of the Chinese economy as the epitome of Asiatic stagnation. Importantly, Wittfogel did not explicitly reiterate Western Marxist theoreticians' existing value-laden thesis and instead used the term "underdevelopment" to describe the nature of the Chinese feudal system.[4] His primary interest was to explain why the Chinese agricultural system had given rise to a particular governing structure, which he later conceptualized as "oriental despotism." Here, he contrived the famous theory of a "hydraulic society," which prioritized the usage and management of water resources in a geographic area with excessive and unpredictable flood and drought. He reasoned that the Chinese government absolutized its power to help control these geographical conditions. This irrigation-oriented agricultural crisis management system, he stressed, precluded guild-types of commercial groups from emerging under feudalism that are essential in the rise of the capitalist economy (Wittfogel 1939; Bailey and Llobera 1981). Driven by a massive amount of data and historical evidence, Wittfogel's "scientific" study of China quickly made him the champion of a "scientific and objective" China studies in 1930s Japan. Wittfogel published his seminal work *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas* (*Economy and Society in China*) in 1931 and Hirano Yoshitaro began the massive project of translating it into Japanese. This nearly 900+ page two-volume translation finally came out in 1934 with the Japanese title *Kaitai katei ni aru Shina no keizai to shakai* (*Chinese Economy and Society in the Process of Dismantlement*, hereafter *Shina no keizai to shakai*) (Wittfogel 1931; Hirano 1934). Given that the 4th edition was published in 1939, *Shina no keizai to*

4. Ishii Tomoaki's recent study shows how Wittfogel's concept of "Oriental Society" and underdevelopment in traditional China has been appropriated in postwar scholarship on totalitarianism and Asian studies (Ishii 2008).

shakai seemed to be well accepted by the Japanese audience in spite of its substantial volume. Hirano was in charge of supervising the whole translation project, but three other Japanese intellectuals actually translated it, and among them Moritani took the second part of the first volume which was about 270 pages (Hirano 1935, 2; Yorokawa 1935).

For most Marxist social scientists in Japan proper, Wittfogel was accepted as the "terminator" of the debates over the stagnant nature of Chinese society. Their main concern was to reconfirm through Wittfogel's writings that Japan's path to modernity was substantially different from that of China. Interestingly, Wittfogel visited Japan in 1935 as a part of commemoration of the translation of *Shina no keizai to shakai* into Japanese (Fukuritu 1935, 133-41). At a meeting with Japanese Marxist intellectuals, Wittfogel was asked four major questions, two of which were about the differences between Chinese Confucianism and Japanese Confucianism, and the difference between the Chinese family system and the Japanese family system (Hirano 1935, 189-91). Wittfogel had written in a clear tone in the foreword of *Shina no keizai to shakai* that Japan had undergone a quite different process of economic development from China (Wittfogel 1935a, 57-78).[5] This short remark provided Japanese Marxist social scientists with a powerful basis for their claim that Japan had already passed through the stage of the Asian village community, characterized by stagnation and the despotic political structure.

Moritani's 1934 work *Socio-Economic History of China* best demonstrates Wittfogel's considerable influence in his scholarship. Describing the historical period of ancient China as an "immature feudal system" and explaining the Ming and Qing period (14^{th}-19^{th} centuries) through the concept of the centralized bureaucratic feudal system, Moritani provided a narrative of Chinese history which held a striking resemblance to Wittfogel's depiction

5. Wittfogel's view on the stage of Japanese economic development can be found in other writings. In "The Foundations and Stages of Chinese Economic History," he wrote on Japan as follows, "Attempted explanations based on metaphysical or racial considerations are evidently incapable of making intelligible why *Japan, at the end of the nineteenth century, could so promptly evolve into industrial capitalism, while China has not even yet been able to do so*. But comparison of the socio-economic systems of the two countries quickly shows that Japan, in contrast to China, was not an "Asiatic" country in our sense. It had indeed an "Asiatic" tinge (irrigational economy on a small scale), but was nevertheless fundamentally more akin to the European nations: her advanced feudal economy in the nineteenth century had already taken the preliminary steps toward the evolution of industrial capitalism (ibid. emphasis added).

(Moritani 1934a; Koyasu 2012). This unchanging society, Moritani observed, was now experiencing massive transformations, and the concept of "old society in dismantlement" was tacitly borrowed from Wittfogel.

Moritani's early writing on Korean history was also linked to Wittfogel's scholarship. Beginning with the condition that the socio-economic constitution of Korean society was similar to that of China, Moritani argued that as Korean society's central bureaucratic system was being dismantled so was China's (Moritani 1934b). Since Wittfogel never mentioned Korea in his China-centered research, Moritani attempted to borrow Wittfogel's "grand theory" of Asiatic society to interpret Korean history and filled the missing content by introducing some existing works on Korean history which, he believed, might correspond to Wittfogel's general framework. Moritani's 1934 article entitled "Old Korean Society That Entered the Era of Dismantlement" illuminates the level of Moritani's understanding of Korean history and society. In this article, he basically referred to the renowned Japanese economist Fukuda Tokuzo's writing on the Korean economy in the early 20th century. Fukuda ruthlessly concluded that the economic status of late 19th and early 20th century Korean society was commensurate with Japan in the 11th-13th centuries, due to Korea's failure to constitute a modern national economy (Fukuda 1925, 1-56; 77-162). Fukuda's scholarship on Korean history illustrates how Japanese intellectuals who were influenced by liberal and progressive scholarship in Taisho Japan were preoccupied by their own version of Asian stagnation outside Japan. Under these circumstances, one could easily infer that Wittfogel's theory of Asiatic society and static bureaucratic feudalism had become a timely source to theoretically underpin the legitimacy of Japanese colonial rule in Asia. Although Moritani was hesitant to acknowledge the notion of Japanese exceptionalism either in the AMP or Wittfogel's theory of Asiatic society, he failed to develop his own understanding of Korean or Chinese society beyond borrowing from existing literature, much of which eventually converged to the point of stagnation theory vis-à-vis an "advanced Japan."

Nonetheless, what differentiated Moritani from other Japanese Marxist social scientists of the time was his peculiar concept of the Orient. To be sure, Moritani never provided an alternative narrative to the perception of a static Korean society in his somewhat naïve reception of the previous value-laden scholarship on Korea. However, he never agreed that the contemporary economic gap was persuasive evidence of fundamental civilizational differences

between Japan and the rest of Asia. Instead, Moritani maintained the standpoint that "stagnation" in early 20th century China and Korea should be attributed to institutional failure. Moritani stressed that Chosun from the 17th century onward was characterized by the collapse of taxation systems and the large-scale occupation of land by uncontrolled local aristocrats (*yangban*), both of which resulted in the failure to promote a national economy. (Moritani 1942a, 227) Moritani's observation sounds similar to those of other groups of Japanese scholars who put forth the Korean stagnation theory. However, he did not simply reiterate the existing skeptical views of Korea, that is, Korea was destined to stagnation, since he was aware that the East Asian empire building process required Korea to be an integral part of a Japan-led East Asian community. To this end, he was searching for a new set of discourses on colonial governance and East Asian regionalism. In this respect, it is not surprising that Moritani showed keen interest in the notion of the East Asian Community by leading imperial philosophers and social scientists—Royama Masamichi, Miki Kiyoshi, Kada Tetsuji, and Shinmei Masamichi—in Japan proper. However, lacking in their project of building an East Asian community was a detailed prescription for restructuring colonial Korea, and it was in the late 1930s that Moritani attempted to present the concept of "renovating" Korea in his close reading of the theory of the East Asian Community.

In order to rationalize colonial Korea's presence in Japan's new multi-ethnic and multi-cultural empire building project since 1931, Moritani had to reject the idea of the Orient as a counter concept to the idea of the West. In other words, the Orient, Moritani stressed, existed in the northeastern area of the "old world" in a geographic sense, particularly within the Western Christian tradition based on the bible. Here, the "old world" refers to the Greek-Roman world and thus the area present-day called West Asia was designated as the Orient in ancient times (Moritani 1939b). What Moritani intended to present was that the concept of the Orient had been shaped as a counter area to the West politically and culturally, not as a natural geographical unit. However, he contended that the Orient had maintained its own cultural self-sufficiency and thus the world map of civilization must be drawn by recognizing 3 spheres of living spaces along with the Anglo Saxon and the European spheres (Moritani 1942a, 19). In this respect, the Orient, Moritani argued, was now transforming itself into the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity sphere, the official slogan of imperial Japan during the Asia-Pacific War.

Needless to say, he, like other Japanese intellectuals, endorsed imperial Japan's Pan-Asian rhetoric, and he seemed to be influenced by German geopolitics as he introduced the concept of an oriental "living-space" (*lebensraum*) and published a full-length book with the same title. To be sure, Moritani adopted in his wartime writing common rhetorical expressions such as the *Hakko Ichiu* (Eight Corners of the World, indicating the entire world under the Japanese emperor, or the Imperial Way). He also acknowledged that Japan did not follow the same "oriental path" as traditional China, but he also stressed that the differences between Japan and China would not be sufficient to place Japan as part of the universal west. More importantly, he was convinced that Japan had shared several important similar elements with the rest of Asia such as irrigation-oriented agriculture, the village community and patriarchy (ibid. 41). For this reason, Japan's "uniqueness" or ostensible advancement, Moritani observed, only came from what he termed "adaptive renovation," that is, modern Japan institutionally modified its traditional values to fit the trend toward modernization effectively (ibid.). In this way, Moritani intended to avoid both the intrinsic or geographically determined discussion of the Orient and Japan's exceptionalism vis-à-vis the rest of Asia and instead advocated the logic of constructivism, that is, how contemporary East Asia can and should be structurally recreated in the service of a new idea of Asia.

Renovating Colonial Korea

As discussed so far, Moritani's encounter with an East Asian Empire in the late 1930s was decorated by his somewhat peculiar understanding of Asian space and its historical and cultural constitution. However, his logic of the Orient was not premised upon any epistemological ideal of rehabilitating Asian traditional value systems, something which often served as a cultural and spiritual vehicle for an idea of Asian unity under Japanese leadership against Western colonialism. Instead, he took a different route, and pursued a developmentalist perspective which stressed Japan's realistic role in developing the Asian region. To this end, he had to historicize and endorse Japan's successful modernization as tangible evidence of the value of renovation from within, and support the expansion of the Japanese way to the rest of Asia. Therefore, tracing the trajectory of Japan's colonization of Korea emerged

as an important issue through which Japan's capability for the inspirational "renovating" of the rest of Asia could be tested. In doing so, Moritani intended to create discursive spaces within the intellectual arena of an East Asian imperial order. This position certainly resulted in the increase of Moritani's influence among Korean intellectuals, many of whom were concerned with the marginalization of colonial Korea with the dominance of the "China problem," amidst the background of the ongoing Sino-Japanese War.

However, Moritani's intention to revisit Korea was accompanied by several intellectual and political challenges. For the most part, he had to overcome the trap of stagnation which had engulfed most Japanese Marxist social scientists. As examined so far, Moritani did not produce an alternative narrative to the perception of stagnated Korea and China until the mid-1930s. How, then, did he respond to these questions? A short article he contributed to the *Newspaper of Kyungsung Imperial University* a year after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War indicates his new standpoint toward the Korea problem. In this article entitled, "The so-called Asiatic Mode of production and Chosun," Moritani first acknowledged that major elements of what Karl Wittfogel pointed out as Asiatic characteristics existed in colonial Korea. Referring to Wittfogel's theory of hydraulic society, Moritani contended that the difficulty in obtaining water for agriculture due to erratic precipitation and unpredictable drought and flood patterns had determined the nature of Korean agriculture. As a result, controlling the water supply and managing irrigation projects emerged as one of the most important tasks for the Chosun government (Moritani 1942a, 173-77). Moritani was however aware that the logic of this explanation was in sync with the popular social scientific notion of Japanese superiority, and inconsistent with his argument that "the Orient exists."

The next year, he published an article that contained a more detailed discussion of how the problem of Asian stagnation presented by Wittfogel might be solved in colonial Korea. The title of this article— "The position of Korean agriculture in East Asian agriculture"—suggests Moritani's intention to indicate the general direction of Japan's agricultural policy as regards the rest of Asia by specifically discussing the Korean case. Moritani began with a strong argument that the Asiatic mode of production in Korea remained in place due to the institutional failure of the Chosun government, not because of any intrinsic geographical characteristics of Korean agriculture, or any other fundamentally irreversible problems (Moritani 1942a, 242). This

statement was logically linked to Moritani's assessment of the success of Japan's industrialization as an example of "adaptive renovation." He intended to render the future of Chosun within the problem of governmental effectiveness. Accordingly, Moritani had no hesitation to celebrate Japan's colonization of Korea as a successful example of governance. He argued that Korean agriculture and industry had significantly developed since 1910 (Moritani 1942a, 242), although there remained a number of tasks to be completed before it could be considered as paradigmatic of a progressive new Asian Imperial order.

Perhaps, the most explicit prescription for the Korea problem during the wartime period was *naisenittairon* (Japan and Korea as one body). Although the context of re-making Koreans as Japanese subjects varied depending on who addressed the issue, it was premised upon the epistemological position that colonial Korea had completely become part of imperial Japan politically and culturally. On the other hand, Japanese social scientists put forward the wider notion of the East Asian community, and this idea rapidly gained currency in Japan proper. Moritani observed that *naisenittairon* must be redefined and armed with realistic policy changes in order to be considered as linked to the vision of an East Asian community by the Korean people. To this end, he contended that each nationalist perspective, including Korean ethnic nationalism, must be recognized within Japan's new order, but he also argued that not every form of nationalism would always result in the completion of a nation state project (Moritani 1939a, 18-19). Ironic as it may sound, he criticized Chinese nationalism for being associated with "imperialism" and asserted that it was only Japan that had achieved nationalism in a true sense (ibid. 20). Moritani's perception of the East Asian Cooperative Community indicated that he, like other imperial intellectuals, took it for granted that Japan must lead other ethnic groups in Asia. However, he was also aware that the socio-economic gap between metropole and colony would eventually hinder the incorporation of colonial subjects into the East Asian community. Therefore, he believed that *naiseittairon*, a Koreanized version of the East Asian Cooperative Community, must be associated with the "epoch-making development of the status of underdeveloped Chosun" (ibid. 21). To find solutions for the "Korea problem," Moritani became increasingly involved in realistic issues such as the problem of agriculture, social policy, and national land planning in Chosen Korea, all of which were closely related to "social problems" (*shakai mondai*), but all requiring solutions at a governmental level.

Reconstructing Korean agriculture drew special attention from Moritani, and it was not just Moritani who found agricultural issues in colonial Korea and China one of the most important challenges to realize within the limit of the new East Asian community. Coincidentally, the great drought of 1939 became a turning point in Japan's wartime agricultural policy. Although colonial Korea had been a major site for rice exploitation in the 1930s, the dramatic shortage of rice in 1939 ironically led Japanese intellectuals and bureaucrats to reconsider the importance of Korean agriculture. Not surprisingly, their discussion focused on increasing the production power of Korean agriculture, while normalizing the devastated Japanese agricultural sector. As a result, the notion of "reconstructing agriculture" proliferated in both Korea and Japan between 1939 and the early 1940s. A particularly large number of theories and policies were produced in 1941, so the year 1941 was often referred to as the year of the boom of reconstructing agriculture. The main issue in these discourses was the question of where the main problems of many within Korean agricultural production were actually to be located.

In a 1941 roundtable discussion hosted by *Ryokki Renmei*, Moritani pointed to irrigation and the landlord-peasant relationship as the two main problems in Korean agriculture (A round table discussion 1941, 149). These issues had been already discussed in full in Moritani's prewar writings on Asian agriculture. In order to manage hydraulic issues, the state also emerged as a great landlord and most peasants were tenant farmers. This unique landlord-peasant relationship did not change in 20th century Korea. Most peasants were still tenant farmers cultivating extremely small plots of land. Moritani described this characteristic of the Asiatic mode of production as intensive agriculture; that is, cultivation greatly depended upon laborers who possessed small plots of land (Iwata 1941, 6). Once peasant revolution was no longer the preferred prescription for the feudal system, how did imperial intellectuals like Moritani attempt to solve this issue and envision a new type of productive social community in colonial Korea? Here, it is vitally important to note that Japanese intellectuals and bureaucrats had a strong tendency to reduce the political nature of the tenant-landlord relationship to the issue of an excessive supply of labor. In other words, intensive labor-power-oriented agriculture in colonial Korea, they argued, resulted in overpopulation in rural areas and inefficiency in production. Therefore they observed that Korean agriculture could not meet the demand for rice in Japan proper, if these problems persisted.

Moreover, as Japan waged a total war against the United States, a shortage of manpower emerged as a major issue in relation to securing human resources on the battlefield as well as for the war industry. For this reason, discourses on restructuring agriculture in colonial Korea turned to increasing production power without destroying the feudal peasant-landlord relations. Although reshaping the landlord-peasant relationship was closely intertwined with the mode of production itself, many of these landlords were Japanese residents and pro-Japanese Koreans. Depriving them of their socio-economic privileges might result in destroying the backbone of the colonial structure. Instead, the term "productivity" or "production power" within the existing agricultural structure took the central position in their discussion. In this way, ironic as it may sound, these imperial intellectuals were envisioning a community filled with a highly capitalist productivist spirit, but a community in equilibrium with neither class struggle nor economic inequalities.

Hirano Yoshitaro, Moritani's colleague, was one of these converted social scientists who dreamed of an Asian agricultural utopia. To theorize it, he rediscovered the value of the Asian, or more correctly, the Chinese village system in Asia. After leading a massive fieldwork research project in China under the auspices of the East Asia Institute, perhaps the biggest think-tank of the wartime Japanese government, Hirano began reinterpreting village community structure in China and Southeast Asia. Among the characteristics of everyday life in the village community, special attention was paid by him to how the space of autonomous governance should be created. Hirano aimed to link this question to critiques of the modern legal system in the West, and to theorize moral codes in the Chinese village community as non-institutional but rather a highly effective self-sufficient lay system. He initially vehemently argued that the modern legal system in the West was characterized by its non-involvement in an individual's economic life in the name of liberalism, utilitarianism, individualism, and self-responsibility. He pointed out, however, that unless equality before the law was guaranteed, or if there was anything undefined by the law in one's life, the principle of nonintervention in an individual's private life was not respected (Hirano 1942, 27). Based on these observations, Hirano asserted that the Western law system precluded the relationship of metropole and colony from being transformed into a jointly prosperous cooperative community (ibid.). He wrote:

> National policy is based on the ideology of co-prosperity—autonomism and cooperativism and recognizes and acknowledges the life and tradition of indigenous society. Since it [cooperativism] aims to develop indigenous society toward its own direction, it is opposed to the lopsidedness of assimilation policy and takes the form of the individual and the particular. The national policy (*minzoku seisaku*) of Japan, a member of the co-prosperity sphere, that has led and protected national groups in East Asia is a cooperativism that has gone beyond *Europe's cooperativism originating from the aspect of economic profit*. (Hirano and Kiyono 1942, 234; emphasis added)

What, then, did Hirano suggest as the principle of a cooperative community to replace profit-oriented European imperialism? Among other aspects of the Chinese village community that interested him, what particularly captured his attention was the concept of national morality inherent in Chinese villages. He observed that national morality had controlled and enabled the cooperative life of Chinese village communities (Hirano 1943, 7-14). In contrast to Europe's legal system in which magistrates or administrators regulated the community, national morality, Hirano argued, constituted a system of law that permitted townspeople to mediate, regulate, and integrate socio-economic activities with the everyday life of the community. Hirano showed an especially keen interest in the Chinese tradition of keeping moral ledgers (*Gong guo Ge*). *Gong guo Ge* was a kind of everyday life manual that recorded the bad and good deeds and also provided townspeople with a way to compensate for misbehaviors by doing good deeds. In this way, Hirano believed that the indigenous legal system of *Gong guo Ge* created a political space where individuals in the community were given the autonomy to evaluate and criticize themselves, but their individual activities contributed to the general good of the community (ibid. 10-13). Hirano further argued that the Chinese village 鄉黨 functioned as a space for negotiation and mediation in which elderly people minimized internal conflict and sustained the autonomy of the community (ibid.). Hirano held that this decision-making process, in spite of the fact that it had paradoxically isolated townspeople within the limited spatial boundary of the village community and prevented them from protesting against the despotic state, enabled them to live with minimal inter-class conflict (Hirano 1945, 135-68).

Lacking in Hirano's spiritual approach to Asian agriculture was the

blueprint for reconstructing agricultural systems. Unlike Hirano, Moritani took a substantially different standpoint and called for mechanization and industrialization. In addition, he believed that all these impending tasks for Korean agriculture would be completed by the government's "organized intervention" instead of relying on autonomous decision-making processes in the village communities Hirano so highly evaluated (Hirano 1945, 140). Moritani believed that if mechanization and efficiency reached a certain degree through institutional reforms, it would push superfluous rural labor powers to the city, where they could fill jobs in the war industries. In this way, he drew upon the picture of an East Asian economic co-prosperity sphere, and accordingly defined the relationship between metropole and colony:

> The intensification of *gaichi* (colonial Korea) as a military base or a stronghold in Japan's conducting of radical policies in East Asia must be accomplished by facilitating industrialization, once agriculture has been improved to a certain degree…. In the aftermath of the Manchurian Crisis, industrial policy in Chosun has changed from rice-cultivation-oriented agriculture to the uniform advancement of agriculture and industry. (Moritani 1942a, 192)

How, then, would "organized intervention" produce such an advancement of agriculture and industry? On the surface, Moritani's discussion of economic policy bore resemblance to the notion of the controlled economy promulgated by Japanese economists and bureaucrats in the name of the Japan-Manchuria-China economic bloc. In an attempt to overcome the capitalist system and control individuals' profit-oriented desires, these intellectuals insisted that major industries should be nationalized, and turned to spiritualism as a means to bind individuals to the state. Putting forth the Imperial Way, these intellectuals intended to create homogeneous subjects who functioned organically under the leadership of the state (Hijikata 1938).

The Imperial State Organ: Social Policy and National Land Planning in Colonial Korea

Taking charge of the Social Policy Lecture program at Kyungsung Imperial

University, Moritani did not explicitly reveal his identity as a social policy expert in the mid and late 1930s. Considering that social policy had long been regarded as a practical means of intervention by the state to relegate social problems, Moritani's social policy lecture at Kyungsung Imperial University might have at least functioned to dilute his Marxist ideology. Beginning in the 1940s, Moritani, however, began advocating social policy and attempted to construct his realist vision of creating a new Chosen Korea within the Japanese empire, along with other projects such as rehabilitating Korean agriculture and reorganizing Korean land.

A close look at his postwar memoir shows us why Moritani revisited social policy and other forms of socio-political engineering as important steps to create an East Asian community in colonial Korea. He wrote:

> As long as Korea was part of Imperial Japan, I could not help thinking about the direction of promoting the status of colonial Korea to that of the Japanese people. In this way, instead of looking at the problem of colonial Korea from the principle theory of liberating it from Japanese imperialism, I naturally transformed my viewpoint into the ways in which the *contemporary* problems of Chosen Korea are speculated with a view to promote the status of Chosen *minzoku within* Imperial Japan. (Moritani 1965, 151; emphasis added)

Writing two decades after the end of the Asia-Pacific War, Moritani frankly acknowledged that he had lost his critical standpoint toward Japanese imperialism soon after Japan had begun to conduct its imperial war. The above statement also contains a highly nuanced evaluation of Moritani's wartime writings and political activities in colonial Korea. Instead of negating a positive involvement in Japanese imperialism, Moritani justified his wartime commitment through the notion of "promoting the status of the Korean people," a perspective naturally aimed to engender a new Asian order led by Japan. Such thinking process eventually led him to observe contemporary socio-political issues in colonial Korea from a different angle. In other words, social problems (*shakai mondai*) in the Chosun dynasty must be also resolved in the same way as Japanese social scientists, and liberal and progressive intellectuals in particular, endeavored to solve social problems in Japan of the 1920s and the early 1930s. While Japanese intellectuals during the Taisho period appropriated the issue of "social problems" as a way to challenge the

dominance of the state over society, Moritani's involvement in contemporary colonial Korea took the opposite path. He contended that new political spaces ought to be created between individuals and the state and this could only happen through the involvement of the state in individual sectors. It is at this point that Moritani came to terms with the logic of state-oriented economic development and the necessity of social engineering to promote the living standards of the Korean people. In this respect, it was natural that he revisited the discipline of social policy as an important force to integrate Korean subjects into the Japanese empire.

At stake is the question of how the concept of social policy would shed a new light on changing the empire-colony relations, given that the political dimension of social policy was often confined to a single nation-state. In two articles contributed to the Legal Studies Association at Kyungsung Imperial University in 1942 and 1944 respectively, Moritani (1944a, 125) first defined social policy as a discipline that "problematizes the balance of the social configuration of a nation (*minzoku*) within the state." However, his seemingly conventional understanding of social policy as the state's intervention in people's life drastically changed as he encountered the contemporaneity of imperial war. Moritani articulated that the conventional notion of social policy would not correspond with imperial Japan's empire building project. At first, it was Mori Kojiro's *Introduction to Social Policy* (*Shakai seisaku yoron*) that Moritani labeled "conventional." Moritani observed that Mori had narrowly defined social policy as the state's political intervention to resolve distribution problems caused by the capitalist-oriented bourgeois economy (Moritani 1942b, 226). Professor of Economics at Kyushu Imperial University and a leading scholar in the field of social policy, Mori's academic career was unique compared to other social scientists. Studying classical economists such as David Ricardo and Adam Smith in Europe and the United States, he showed a keen interest in bourgeois economic theories and social policy as a means to create a buffer-zone between capitalists and workers. In this respect, labor became the primary concern of Mori's social policy; how to prevent labor exploitation, guarantee a reasonable working wage and institutionalize a minimum wage (Mori 1935).

What Moritani found more compatible with the circumstance of wartime conditions was the new concept of social policy presented by Okochi Kazuo who was teaching social policy and economics at Tokyo Imperial

University. Beginning in the 1940s, Okochi wrote extensively on the necessity of redefining Japan's social policy and called for attention to be paid to the logic of productivity (*seisansei*). According to him, social policy is no longer a set of policies to protect workers from exploitation within the capitalist economy. On the contrary, Okochi stressed that as the capitalist economy increased both in its external size and at its internal technological level, the problem of configuring labor powers based on the advancement of the entire economy emerged as a main issue. Okochi (1940, 21) maintained that in this frame "it became important for workers to voluntarily nurture themselves to cope with rapid technological developments and socially cultivate capabilities that subjectively understand these technologies." Through this process, he believed that the state would increase the level of production and reproduction to its highest potential, and for this reason Okochi emphasized that the primary focus of social policy must be transformed from simply protecting labor powers into productively configuring or arranging them.

Okochi's concept of social policy reveals one important facet of wartime Japanese social sciences. Not content to just endorse imperial Japan's Pan-Asian rhetoric, social scientists also endeavored to contrive theory that would serve the purpose of total mobilization. Needless to say, Okochi intended to maximize the power and efficiency of wartime production by nurturing a next generation of laborer who could subjectively absorb technological development and turn it into enhanced productivity for Japan's war efforts. If such new approaches to social policy reflected the highly advanced level of the Japanese capitalist economy, the question remained as to how Moritani would bring them into the reality of colonial Korea, given that he aimed to promote the living standards of the Korean people to the same level as that of the Japanese. Toward this challenge, Moritani seemed to be aware of the imbalance between metropole and colony. While he also fully agreed with Okochi's call for increasing labor productivity through a new social policy, Moritani observed that colonial Korea would not be an ideal place to put such cutting-edge social theories into practice. In a 1940 article, Moritani basically reiterated this standpoint. Accusing Nazi Germany's theory of an Aryan national community of subordinating all other aspects of society to the state, Moritani (1940) advocated that social policy in Chosun must work for the acknowledgement of a national community by the Korean people and necessary steps should be made to develop social policy in Korea.

Geographically speaking, Okochi's and other Japanese social scientists' discussion of social policy predominantly focused on Japan proper. While catching up with latest social theories produced in Japan, Moritani was at the same time concerned with finding common value systems in East Asia from within the perspective of a social policy. What captured his attention was the historical trajectory of social policy in China. As examined so far in this study, Karl Wittfogel's notion of the ancient Chinese state as despotic prevailed in the writings of converted Japanese Marxist social scientists. Moritani, however, constantly attempted to find alternative historical evidence that might challenge Wittfogel's linear historical perspective. Based on this, Moritani critically revisited two reformist politicians in traditional China, Wang Mang (B.C. 45-A.D. 23) and Wang An Shi (1021-1086). Both are known for their strong state-driven reform policies within traditional China during periods of national crisis. Citing Hu Shi, often called the father of Chinese literary modernization, Moritani (1942a, 280-98) evaluated Wang Mang's reform policy during the Shin period (a new empire between former Han and later Han, B.C. 45 to B.C. 25) as the first evidence of state-socialism in world history. In the same vein, Wang An Shi's reform during the Song period was positively interpreted as expanding social mobility (ibid. 298-304). As is well known, both Wang Mang and Wang An Shi were upholders of so-called statecraft, that is, that a reformed bureaucracy would bring impoverished, and socially marginalized peasants back under the control of the state by providing for them basic economic means of survival. In this respect, Moritani's keen interest in these Chinese reformers clearly shows that he had made the diagnosis that the living conditions of destitute Korean peasants had already reached a critical point and immediate state involvement was required.

Such seemingly "forward-looking" stances in Moritani's diagnosis of the problems of colonial Korea played an important role in differentiating him from other Japanese intellectuals, many of whom simply resorted to spiritual and Imperial-way Pan-Asianism. Another example of Moritani's state-oriented approach to colonial Korea was his involvement in the National Land Planning project in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The concept of national land planning emerged as one important stream for the construction of East Asia within the Japanese academia and the government. Eventually, a review committee for national land planning was established in Japan proper in 1939 under the direct control of the Planning Bureau and it was followed by the

launching of the National Land Planning Committee in colonial Korea in October 1940. Moritani was appointed as an external committee member in December 1940 (Chosen sotokufu 1940), and his involvement in the Governor General's Office continued until 1945, when he was appointed as a member of the Research Committee for Resources (Chosen sotokufu 1945).

While Japanese social scientists' discussion of national land planning focused on redesigning Japan proper, Moritani was from the beginning concerned with examining its validity and urgency within the grand plan of creating an East Asian regional sphere. Revisiting two previous examples of national land planning, the German and Russian cases respectively, Moritani took a very cautious stance to extract only positive aspects from them. Interestingly, he was more critical of the German way. According to him, Germany's national land planning was strikingly different from what Japan would pursue, since Germany was already an established industrialized country by the time national land planning was mapped out (Moritani 1942a, 354-56). He observed that Germany's plan basically targeted industrial sectors that shared more than 40% of the whole industry, while marginalizing agricultural sectors that were less than 30% of the German economy (ibid. 355). For Moritani, the Russian case seemed to be much closer to and compatible with colonial Korea and Manchukuo, given that Russia's national land plan aimed to transform its agricultural economy into an industrial one. However, he did not consider it suitable to follow Russia's national socialist direction in Chosun, although he emphasized the colonial government's leading role in reorganizing Korea's geography and economy (ibid. 356). If one removes the shadow of socialism from Russia's state-centered planned economy, I argue that Moritani's affinity with the Russian case would be far more conspicuous. Notably, Moritani was the person who translated the former Frankfrut School neo-Marxist economist Friedrich Pollok's study of the Soviet controlled economy, and he continued to meticulously examine the legacy of the socialist controlled economy even before he finally discarded Marxism in the late 1930s.[6]

Moritani also problematized the theory of industrial location, formulated by the German economist Alfred Weber, younger brother of sociologist

6. The German title of Pollock's work was *Die planwirtschaftlichen Versuche in der Sowjetunion, 1917-1927* and it was published in 1929 and Moritani translated it into Japanese in 1932. Katsumi Moritani trans., *Sovieto renpō keikaku keizai shiron* (Tōkyō: Dōjinsha Shoten, 1932).

Max Weber. According to Weber, an industry had to be located where the transaction cost of raw materials, labor, and transportation was minimized. Moritani (1944b, 264-66) found this theory suitable for the case of colonial Korea, where the Governor General's Office was supposed to construct basic infrastructure for industrialization such as roads, factories, and ports. Expanding this idea to East Asia, he intended to draw upon the picture of a self-sufficient East Asian economic sphere. This economic sphere, he believed, would then need to be extended into a *lebensraum* (living space) in East Asia, supported by the historical and cultural affinities among Asian people (Moritani 1941, 29). Through this thinking process, Moritani's gaze pointed to one specific space as a perfect spot to bring both China and Korea to the construction of an industrialized area that would represent the success of a Japan-led developmentalist approach. It was the *Amrok* river (the Yalu river in China) across the northern border between Chosun and Manchuria (ibid.).

Moritani was not the only one who considered the Amrok river area as a significant site. Immediately after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, there existed a strong demand to create military supply bases adjacent to Japan's war front in mainland China. As a result, northern Manchurian first received attention from Japanese bureaucrats. This government-led development plan to increase productivity was epitomized by the construction of the Su'pung Dam, a hydropower plant which is often compared to the Hoover Dam in its size and electricity production capacity (Moore 2013). I argue that Japan's wartime development project in the Amrok River appeared to provide a special significance to Moritani. The dam was an ideal example of how the government-led planning economy could bring industrial development and thereby the promotion of living standard to colonial subjects. But more than this, the construction of Su'pung Dam ironically brought to mind that the hydraulic society of traditional China and Korea, the main cause of the region's underdevelopment and despotic politics, had now become the basis for a world-level industrial plant.

Conclusion

Moritani initially undertook a similar elite path to most Japanese intellectuals until he graduated from Tokyo Imperial University in 1926. At that point he

was a product of Taisho liberalism and radicalism, and he stood his Marxist ground until the 1930s. However, Moritani's encounter with colonial Korea caused him to convert from being a theoretical Marxist to an imperial social scientist with a strong Pan-Asian aim. Deeply concerned with the perception of China and Korea as the epitome of "Asiatic" stagnation and underdevelopment, he realized that the construction of an East Asian empire led by Japan would not be feasible without providing alternative narratives to Western universalism and Asian particularity. This explains why he hardly resonated with the other main stream of Pan-Asianism that emphasized the recovery of traditional Asian values vis-à-vis Westernization. Revisiting Japan's modernization as a successful example of innovative changes within Asia itself, Moritani intended to take colonial Korea as a testing ground to measure whether imperial Japan's ambition to create an East Asian empire would be possible. Therefore, his blueprint for a new Asia and a reconstructed Korea included seemingly "forward-looking" plans that were aimed to reduce the political and economic distance between Japan and her imperial territories. Unquestionably, Moritani's writing during the wartime period illustrates one version of how Japanese social scientists left the ivory tower and became harbingers of an imperialist "area studies." To borrow from Wallerstein's critique of postwar area studies in the United States, this was to be achieved by producing knowledge and policies which explicitly served Japan's Pan-Asian imperial project.

Moritani's peculiar shift from being an orthodox Marxist to an imperial intellectual through his 19-year stay in colonial Korea is not the only reason why this study has paid special attention to his intellectual trajectory. The content of his Pan-Asian plan was filled with a raft of developmentalist ideas for colonial Korea and China. Moritani believed that the process of building an empire could be compatible with bringing qualitative and quantitative development to the colony. Not surprisingly, Moritani's writings had an enormous impact on Korean social scientists during the wartime period, the prolific converted Marxist Pan-Asianist In Jeong Sik in particular. From this new Korean intellectual commitment to Japan's empire building arises another important question, one of how this imperial social science as presented by Japanese intellectuals was accepted and challenged by colonial intellectuals, who eventually created another set of knowledge, a new form of knowledge that might be best conceptualized as a colonial social science.

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Seok-Won LEE (lees@rhodes.edu) is an Assistant Professor of History at Rhodes College. His areas of research include 20th century Japanese intellectual history, colonialism, and imperialism in East Asia and Pan-Asian discourses. He has published several articles in *Social Science Japan Journal, Inter-Asia Cultural Studies, Yoksapipyung,* and *Journal of Northeast Asian History*. He is now completing a book manuscript on social scientific Pan-Asian discourses in wartime Japan, 1931-1945.

Abstract

Beginning in the late 1930s, the notion of the East Asian Community gained currency among Japanese intellectuals as Imperial Japan attempted to justify its invasion of China and colonization of its Asian neighbors. The East Asian Community was characterized by Japanese intellectuals' new logic of an East Asian empire that incorporated Chinese and colonial subjects and was led by Japan. Moritani Katsumi was a converted Marxist social scientist who found the project of building an East Asian community feasible in colonial Korea. Involved in a wide range of academic and political activities in the late 1930s and early 1940s, Moritani called for imperial Japan to restructure the Korean economy, the agricultural sector in particular. His writings on Korea show one important facet of Japanese intellectuals' wartime concepts of colony as he tried to change Korean society to a total-war-optimized one for imperial Japan in the name of economic development.

Keywords: Moritani Katsumi, The East Asian Community, Korean agriculture, Asiatic mode of production, *Naisenittairon*

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