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Contesting Seoul: Contacts, Conflicts, and Contestations Surrounding Seoul's City Walls, 1876-1919

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Contacts, Conflicts, and Contestations

Surrounding Seoul's City Walls, 1876-1919

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

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by

Sinwoo Lee

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Surrounding Seoul's City Walls, 1876-1919

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Doctor of Philosophy in Asian Languages and Cultures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor John B. Duncan, Chair

This dissertation explores the contacts, conflicts, and contestations surrounding Seoul's city walls, and how they shaped Seoul's transformation and Korea's transition from the opening of the ports to the early colonial period (1876-1919). One of the main goals in this dissertation is to assert the inseparable connection between the capital and its city walls in the premodern period, and thereby the importance of examining various contestations and negotiations over its city walls in understanding Seoul's transformation into a modern city. More specifically, not only was the construction of Seoul's city walls instrumental in establishing Seoul as a capital and Chosŏn as a dynasty, but also its very existence came to symbolize royal authority and national sovereignty within the changing sociopolitical conditions of the Chosŏn dynasty as well as the diplomatic relationships in

the larger East Asian contexts. In the same way, I argue that, the reverse, the destruction of the walls—both as symbolic and physical boundaries—played a significant role in Seoul's transformation and Korea's transition from the premodern to modern period in the global context. By largely focusing on forces from above and their intentions, the existing scholarship presents Seoul's transformation during this period as a progression from the royal capital Hansŏng (1394-1897) to the imperial capital Hwangsŏng (1897-1910), before being disrupted by Japanese rule as the colonial city Kyŏngsŏng (1910-1945). Stepping outside this teleological explanation, my dissertation challenges and adds complexities to the existing narratives by revealing how the Taehan Empire's efforts to make Seoul as a spatial manifestation of its imperial power were contested by other historical groups' attempts to respatialize the capital with different agendas: to an extraterritorial space, a democratic space, and a colonial space. Within a larger theoretical framework of the mutually constitutive relationship between space and society, this study argues that the transformation of Seoul from a walled to an open space was a process in which various historical actors competed against and cooperated with one another to make Seoul a new space of possibilities, at the crossroads of modernity in Korea.

The dissertation of Sinwoo Lee is approved.

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Chapter One

Introduction

In May 1916, amidst the demolition of Seoul's city walls and gates, the *Maeil sinbo* (Daily News), the official Korean-language mouthpiece of the Japanese colonial administration, announced "the grand project of walking around the city walls" (sunsŏng changgŏ).[1] It was an advertisement of a 40-*li* (13-mile) walking tour along the city walls, "the best historical remain of Hanyang," on a sunny Sunday in May. The tour was to leave from the South Gate at eight in the morning and go around the city's four main gates and four small gates along the ridge of Seoul's four inner mountains that were encircling the city's downtown, enjoying the scenic view of the Han River in the distance. Anyone who brings their own lunch, the newspaper advertised, could join a chance to explore the historical and cultural landmarks of downtown Seoul with a special lecture on city's geography, history, folk tales and war traces. Meanwhile, the newspapers serialized "Kyŏngsŏng's city walls," a piece on colonial Seoul, for a week until the day of the tour. It covered historical, architectural, and cultural features of the city walls from the moment when the walls were first constructed after the founding of the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1897), through the time of the Japanese and Manchu invasions of Korea at the turn of the seventeenth century, and until the Taehan Empire (1897-1910). The walking tour of Seoul's walls in 1916 was much more than a journey through the history of its vanishing walls; it was also a journey through the history of vanishing Hanyang and Chosŏn.

[1] *Maeil sinbo,* May 4, 1916.

In contrast to the nostalgic tone in the walking tour, contestations over Seoul's city walls were fierce before they were ultimately demolished. Although there were tensions surrounding the city walls before, it was the signing of the Treaty of Kanghwa with Japan in 1876, which brought Korea into the global system of capitalist modernity, that sparked unprecedented challenges to Seoul's city walls and urban space inside the walls. Seoul witnessed a growing number of foreigners venturing into the space inside the walls, whom expanded their communities with extraterritorial rights and strong capital resources, creating a new tension that was "scarier than gunboats and more troublesome than rebellions" for the Korean state and Seoul's residents.[2] Internal political upheavals made the situation in the capital even more volatile. Protesters forcing their ways into the space inside the walls to engage in central politics, despite continued warnings from the government, concerned the Korean state that a democratic revolution like the French Revolution could occur in the capital.[3] The contestations over the city walls continued and yet unfolded in different ways after Korea became a Japanese protectorate in 1905. Despite a growing recognition of their uselessness and impediment to modernization, the Taehan Empire held on to the walls to maintain public order in the capital, as it witnessed Koreans who were flocking into the capital from all across the country to participate in the growing nationalist movements—either popular movements or armed resistance—in the face of the imminent threat of Japan's colonization of Korea. It was the Japanese authorities that ultimately brought an end to the protracted contestations surrounding the city walls. After having Seoul's city walls and gates as a battlefield between Korean soldiers from the disbanded Korean army and the Japanese imperial army in 1907, the

[2] *Tongnip sinmun,* July 18, 1898.

[3] Chŏng Kyo, *Taehan kyenyŏnsa*, vol. 3, 103.

protectorate government began to demolish Seoul's city walls, which then transformed Seoul from a walled to an opened city.

This deeply intertwined trajectory between Seoul's transformation and Korea's transition from the premodern to modern period serves as a starting point for this study. This dissertation explores the contacts, conflicts, and contestations surrounding Seoul's city walls and urban space, and how they shaped Seoul's transformation and Korea's transition from the opening of the ports to the early colonial period (1876-1919). One of the main goals in this dissertation is to assert the inseparable connection between the capital and its city walls in the premodern period, and thereby the importance of examining various contestations and negotiations over its city walls in understanding Seoul's transformation into a modern city. More specifically, not only was the construction of Seoul's city walls instrumental in establishing Seoul as a capital and Chosŏn as a dynasty, but also its very existence came to symbolize royal authority and national sovereignty within the changing sociopolitical conditions of the Chosŏn dynasty as well as the diplomatic relationships with China and Japan in the larger East Asian contexts. In the same way, I argue that, the reverse, at the crossroads of modernity, the destruction of the walls—both as symbolic and physical boundaries—played a significant role in Seoul's transformation and Korea's transition from the premodern to modern period in the global context. The existing scholarship presents Seoul's transformation from the early Chosŏn period to early twentieth century as a progression from the royal capital Hansŏng (1394-1897) to the imperial capital Hwangsŏng (1897-1910), before being disrupted by Japanese rule as the colonial city Kyŏngsŏng (1910-1945), by largely focusing on forces from above and their intentions. Stepping outside this teleological

explanation, my dissertation challenges and adds complexities to the existing narratives by revealing how the Taehan Empire's efforts to make Seoul as a spatial manifestation of its own imperial power were contested by other historical groups' attempts to respatialize the capital with different agendas: to an extraterritorial space, a democratic space, and a colonial space. Within a larger theoretical framework of the mutually constitutive relationship between space and society, this study argues that the transformation of Seoul from a walled to an open space was a process in which various historical actors competed against and cooperated with one another to make Seoul a new space of possibilities, seeking different paths to modernity in Korea, at the intersection of imperialism, nationalism, modernity, and colonialism.

Seoul between Premodernity and Modernity in Korean Historiography

Despite the profound political and social transformations that Seoul underwent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, little has been written about this topic. Although the literature on the history of Seoul and its urban space is rapidly growing in recent years in both Korean and English languages, existing scholarship concentrates largely on either the Chosŏn or colonial period. As it is awkwardly placed between the premodern and modern periods, Seoul in this period currently lacks comprehensive study. Even in the few existing studies, the transformation of Seoul during this period was understood as either an extension of Korean attempts to insert power and authority—first by the Chosŏn dynasty and then by the Taehan Empire—into the urban space of Seoul, or as a precursor of the Japanese efforts to respatialize Seoul into a colonial capital. In this framework, the transformation of Seoul was characterized as a symbolic project with an

aim to incorporating the capital's Korean inhabitants into either the imperial subjects of Emperor Kojong or as the loyal subjects of the Japanese emperor.[4]

These perspectives stemmed in part from a general tendency in Korean historiography. Under the sway of the colonial perspective (singmin sagwan) that is best exemplified in the "stagnation theory" and the Weberian definition of the city that was derived from the European historical experience, Seoul and other cities in premodern Korea had not been treated as legitimate "cities" and Korean society had been characterized as fundamentally rural and stagnant, being unable to make important developments towards modernity.[5] In this view, Seoul became a modern city only after the colonial rule began the task of urban renewal projects (K: sigu kaejŏng; J: shiku kaisei), projects that were originally modeled after the urban renewal projects in Paris under Baron Haussmann (1809-1891) and in Tokyo which transformed the city into a modern imperial capital.

This colonial perspective on Seoul and other Korean cities, as being static before Japanese colonial rule, began to be challenged by post-liberation scholars associated with the "internal development theory" (naejejŏk palchŏn non). Since the liberation in 1945, historical scholarship in Korea has devoted energy to overcome colonialist historiography

[4] Yi T'aejin, "Seoul's Modern Development during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in *The Dynamics of Confucianism and Modernization in Korean History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007); Chŏn Uyong, "Taehan chegukki-ilche ch'ongi Sŏul konggan ŭi pyŏnhwa wa kwŏllyok ŭi chihyang," *Chŏnnong saron* 5 (1999): 39-72; Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empires: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea*, 1876-1945 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011); Todd Henry, "Respatializing Chosŏn's Royal Capital: The Politics of Japanese Urban Reforms in Early Colonial Seoul, 1905-19," in *Sittings: Critical Approaches to Korean Geography*, edited by Timothy R. Tangherlini and Sallie Yea (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008).

[5] The colonial perspective on Seoul first appeared in *A Developmental History of Kyŏngsŏng* (K: Kyŏngsŏng paldalsa; J: Keijō hattatsushi) published in 1912 by Japanese settler community in Korea, and further developed in *City History of Keijō* (K: Kyŏngsŏng pusa; J: Keijō fushi) by City Government of Keijō in 1934 (vol.1), 1936 (vol.2), and 1941 (vol.3); Max Weber, *The City* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1966); Max Weber, *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1959).

by refuting the stagnation theory in various ways, and has contributed much to advance our understanding of the historical development in Korea, particularly during the Chosŏn period. Nonetheless, the scholarly preoccupation with finding the driving force of socioeconomic development largely from rural society relegated cities and the field of urban history to a periphery in Korean historiography. To be sure, there are some important studies that have shed light on the economic development and the ensuing cultural changes in Seoul during the late Chosŏn period, however, the urban space in these studies was predominantly treated only as a "stage" or a "background" in which human activities unfolded.[6] It was not until the year 1994, the 600th anniversary of the establishment of Seoul as the capital of Korea, that Seoul and its urban space began to be examined in a new light. In line with the internal development theory, this new approach has paid particular attention to the Taehan Empire's urban reform efforts at the turn of the twentieth century to refute the colonial view, which had attributed the origin of Seoul's development into a modern city to the colonial government's urban renewal projects. This perspective further argues that the Taehan Empire's urban projects, which had its roots in the late Chosŏn period, were not just discontinued but rather were destroyed with the onset of Japanese colonialism.

Yi T'aejin whose study represents this approach notes that the Taehan Empire's making of Seoul into the imperial capital Hwangsŏng were the "first modern urban project(s)" in Korea and King Kojong was the prime mover in these projects.[7] According

[6] Yi Usŏng, "Chosŏn hugi Sŏul ŭi tosijŏk yangsang: silhakp'a tŭkhi iyonghusaeng ŭi sŏngnip paekyŏng," *Hyangt'o sŏul* 17 (1963); Kang Man'gil, *Chosŏn hugi sangŏp ŭi paltal* (Seoul: Koryŏ taehakkyo, 1983); Ko Tonghwan, *Chosŏn hugi Sŏul sangŏp paltalsa*. (Seoul: Chisik sanŏpsa, 1998).

[7] Yi T'aejin, "The nature of Seoul's modern urban development during the 18th and 19th centuries," *Korea Journal* 35, no.3 (1995): 5-30; Yi T'aejin, "1896~1904 nyŏn Sŏul tosi kaejo saŏp ŭi chuch'e wa chihyangsŏng," *Han'guk saron* 37 (1997): 181-206; Yi T'aejin, "Taehan cheguk ŭi hwangsŏng mandŭlgi:

to Yi, Seoul during the Taehan Empire witnessed the sanitizing and widening of the city's existing streets as well as the creating of a new radial road system emanating from Kyŏngun Palace, which served as the main palace of the Taehan Empire. The urban projects also included the introduction of new technologies and urban infrastructure, such as electricity, water pipes, streetcar lines, telephone lines, and the construction of buildings and structures that symbolized imperial power and national independence, such as the Temple of Heaven (Won'gudan) and the Independence Gate (Tongnipmun). Yi pays particular attention to the rise of public space in Seoul as "one of the most meaningful developments in modern Korean history." Highlighting that Seoul's first parks and squares, including Pagoda Park in Chongno, were created on sites where the Chosŏn kings in the eighteenth century used to stop during their royal processions to accept petitions from ordinary people, Yi argues that Kojong's creation of public space in particular and the Taehan Empire's urban reforms in general not only demonstrate a continuity from the Chosŏn period, but also manifest Kojong's political ideology which was grounded in the idea of "the emperor and the people as one body (*kunmin ilch'e*)."[8]

Since then, symbolic buildings and structures as well as public spaces that were constructed or reconstructed in the capital during the Taehan Empire have received scholarly attention largely under the rubric of "imperial space." In addition to the Temple of Heaven and the Independence Gate, scholars have examined previously neglected spaces such as Kyŏngun Palace, the Kojong Memorial, Pagoda Park, and Hyŏmnyul

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ch'oech'o ŭi kŭndaejŏk tosi kaejo saŏp," in *Kojong sidae ŭi chaejomyŏng* (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2000); Yi T'aejin, "Seoul's Modern Development during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in *The Dynamics of Confucianism and Modernization in Korean History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

[8] Yi T'aejin, 1997, 204.

Theater, and how the Taehan Empire created these spaces to strengthen Kojong's imperial power and, in turn, secure national independence.[9] Chŏn Uyong whose recent research focuses on Seoul's public spaces and the formation of the "public" in the Taehan Empire notes that Seoul witnessed a number of public spaces in which Seoul's residents were disciplined into a new order.[10] Building on Yi's study, Chŏn has argued that the imperial presence was instilled deeply in these new public spaces, as Kojong constructed these spaces as "contact zones between the king and the people."[11] In short, according to Chŏn, fundamental to the Taehan Empire's reconstruction of Seoul from the royal capital Hansŏng into the imperial capital Hwangsŏng was Kojong's intention to incorporate the Korean people into the foundation of his imperial authority. It was through these projects and as a part of his larger goal of creating a modern nation-state that Koreans who had been freed from the social status system were incorporated into subjects of the Taehan Empire.

While these previous studies have contributed much to our understanding of Seoul's urban development at the turn of the twentieth century, they leave us with an incomplete picture of Seoul's transformation into a modern city for the following reasons. Firstly, although Seoul before the onset of Japanese rule was indeed dynamic rather than

[9] Kim Chŏngdong, *Kojong hwangje ka sarang han chŏngdong kwa tŏksugŭng* (Seoul: Parŏn, 2004); U Sujin, "Hyŏmnyulsa wa kŭkchangjŏk kongkongsŏng ŭi hyŏngsŏng," *Han'guk kŭndae munkak yŏn'gu* 20 (2009): 241-273; Yi Yunsang, "Hwangje ŭi kunggwŏl Kyŏngungung," *Sŏulhak yŏn'gu* 40 (2010): 1-24; Pak Hŭiyong, "Taehan chegŭk ŭi sangjingjŏk konggan p'yosang," *Sŏulhak yŏn'gu* 40 (2010): 107-157; Mok Suhyŏn, "Taehan chegŭkki ŭi kukka sangjing chejŏng kwa Kyŏngungung," *Sŏulhak yŏn'gu* 40 (2010): 159-185; Chŏn Uyong, "1902 Hwangje ŏgŭk 40 nyŏn mangnyuksun ch'ingkyŏng yesik kwa hwangdo chŏngbi: Taehan cheguk e tamgin manguk kongbŏpjŏk cheguk hwa tongyangjŏk cheguk ŭi ijung p'yosang," *Hyangt'o sŏul* 81 (2012): 119-160.

[10] Chŏn Uyong, "Taehan chegukki Sŏul ŭi kongkong sisŏl kwa kongjung," in *Sahoejŏk netŭwŏkŭ wa konggan*, eds., Yi T'aejin kyosu chŏngnyŏn kinyŏm nonch'ong kanhaeng wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2009): 363-392.

[11] Chŏn Uyong, 2009, 371.

static, and the Taehan Empire's urban reforms were derived in part from these internal dynamics, their overemphasis on the "internal development" dismisses external forces that played an equally important role in shaping the urban space of Seoul at the turn of the twentieth century. As Chapter Three shows, after Seoul was opened to foreign trade and residence in 1882, the capital became increasingly multicultural as multiple foreign communities—largely Chinese, Japanese, and Western—were formed inside its city walls for the first time in its history. Not only did these foreign communities grow rapidly to the degree that Seoul's residents feared to "lose a space to exist in their own capital," but they also played a significant role in changing Seoul's landscape by building their communities with their own distinctive architectures.[12] Furthermore, as Todd Henry also pointed out, the reconstruction of the Taehan Empire's Kyŏngun Palace was carried out directly with and against imperial powers, this in part out of the contestation over the space of Seoul.[13] Therefore, it is necessary to examine how the foreign communities impacted the respatialization of Seoul in order to better contextualize the Taehan Empire's urban reforms.

Secondly, the previous studies' sole focus on Kojong's role in urban reforms has directed our attention away from other important Korean actors who participated either directly or indirectly in transforming Seoul into a modern capital. After the opening of the ports, the Korean government dispatched groups of Korean intellectuals to Japan and the US with a mission to survey "enlightened" cultures and facilities. Officials and elites such as Yu Kilchun, Pak Chŏngyang, Yun Ch'iho and Sŏ Chaep'il wrote much about

[12] *Tongnip sinmun*, July 18, 1898.

[13] Todd A. Henry, *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2014), 26-27.

their observations of foreign cities after their return, and Yun and Sŏ in particular, the main leaders of the Independence Club, engaged directly in the transformation of Seoul through the making of Independence Park, the first public park in Seoul. While much has been written about the Independence Club's reform movements and its complex relationship with the Taehan Empire, the club's park-making project has been largely neglected in previously studies.[14] However, as Chapter Four demonstrates, the creation of Independence Park calls for more attention in that it was constructed by the voluntary contribution from Koreans across boundaries of class, gender, and region, and was also used as the grounds for Korea's first national ceremonies that were completely open to the public. Furthermore, the fact that the Debating Society, which initially held its meetings in the park, evolved to take to the streets of the capital for more political participation, in a huge political demonstration also known as the Manmin kongdonghoe (Assembly of All People), behooves us to examine this park-making project and the ensuing mass protests more closely.

And lastly and most importantly, the nationalist view in previous scholarship conceals as much as it reveals about the urban reforms during the Taehan Empire. One of the main critiques of the nationalist narrative is that it sees the nation as the prime subject of history, thereby subsuming or even repressing all other voices under the category of

[14] For more on the Independence Club's reform movements, see Sin Yongha, *Sinp'an tongnip hyŏphoe yŏn'gu (sang): tongnip sinmun, tongnip hyŏphoe, Manmin kongdonghoe sasang kwa undong* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 2006); Sin Yongha, *Sinp'an tongnip hyŏphoe yŏn'gu (ha): tongnip sinmun, tongnip hyŏphoe, Manmin kongdonghoe sasang kwa undong* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 2006); Chu Chino, "Taehan cheguk kwa tongnip hyŏphoe," *Han'guk yŏksa immune* 3 (Seoul: P'ulbit, 1996); Chu Chino, "The Independence Club's Conceptions of Nationalism and the Modern State," in *Landlords, Peasants and Intellectuals in Modern Korea*, eds., Pang Kie-Chung and Michael D. Shin (Ithaca: NY, Cornell University, 2005); Vipan Chandra, *Imperialism, Resistance and Reform in Late Nineteenth Century Korea: Enlightenment and the Independence Club* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California Press, 1988).

nation.[15] Predispositions towards this view are glaring in Yi's study in particular. As in other studies reflecting this nationalist approach, Yi's discussion is largely situated in a binary of "imperialist repression" versus "national resistance." For example, while highlighting mass rallies held in the city to "protect the Emperor from the aggressive Japanese" after the Russo-Japanese War, Yi excludes from his narrative the creation of Independence Park and the aforementioned contestation over public spaces between Kojong and the Manmin kongdonghoe protesters. Also buried by this framework are opportunistic Koreans who utilized extraterritoriality and foreign citizenship to advance their interests in Seoul. As Chapter Three reveals, by adroitly operating between jurisdictional boundaries, this new group of Koreans who largely came from a marginalized position in the Chosŏn dynasty arose as a problematic issue both to the Korean authorities and the foreign legations in the capital.

Since Gi-Wook Shin and Michael E. Robinson proposed the application to Korean history of the concept of "colonial modernity," scholars over the past two decades have explored the multiple narratives of modernity and the complex and multilayered terrain of identity formation in the colonial context, which cannot fit neatly into the repression-resistance binary.[16] It was within this framework that a number of recent studies have examined "contact zones" or "gray zones" between the colonizer and the colonized in colonial Seoul.[17] This new historiography has contributed much to our

[15] Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson eds. *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 14.

[16] Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson eds. *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[17] Yun Haedong, *Singminji ŭi hoesaek chidae: Han'guk ŭi kŭndaesŏng kwa singminjuŭi pip'an* (Seoul: Yŏksa Pip'yŏngsa, 2003); Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empires: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea*, 1876-1945 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011); Todd A. Henry, *Assimilating Seoul:*

understanding of Korean colonial society by revealing the previously unexplored complexity of colonial identity and subjectivity. Nonetheless, it also leaves us trapped in historiographical boundaries that imply such "gray zones," or conditions of ambiguity and contingency for constructing diverse and competing forms of identities, emerged only with Japanese colonization of Korea in 1910. However, as Kyung Moon Hwang has pointed out, Korea's modern transformation and its search for different paths to modernity were most conspicuous in precolonial Seoul, as various social and political actors perceived an urgent "need to consider and embrace a new set of possibilities."[18] If colonial Seoul provided spaces for colonial modernity, "a modernity that produced cosmopolitanism without political emancipation" in the definition of Shin and Robinson, precolonial Seoul in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, as this dissertation shows, was a space where *both* cosmopolitanism and political emancipation were possible and indeed explored, not just in an abstract and literary space but also in a physical and material space. To this point, one might question the historical significance of this short-lived precolonial Seoul as a space of possibilities in that these possibilities largely had been unrealized or rearranged under colonial modernity in the end. By contrast, I argue that it is essential to examine these possibilities by emphasizing that it was precisely against this backdrop of lived experience of extraterritorial rights and political flux in precolonial Seoul that Japanese authorities had to remake Seoul into the colonial capital Keijō (K: Kyŏngsŏng) and incorporate the capital's inhabitants into loyal subjects of the Japanese emperor. Thus, a closer examination of precolonial Seoul from

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Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2014).

[18] Kyung Moon Hwang, *Beyond Birth: Social Status in the Emergence of Modern Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 9.

the opening of the ports and its transformation into colonial Seoul will allow us to have a more nuanced understanding of the Japanese strategies and thoughts behind their efforts to respatialize Seoul into a colonial space as well as the Koreans responses to the changing spatial orders.

Seoul and City Walls, Space and Boundaries

Different from the previous studies that have focused almost exclusively on the Taehan Empire's efforts to make Seoul into an imperial space, this dissertation argues that Seoul's transformation from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries was a process in which competing visions of new possibilities in Korea were played out to make Seoul a new space of possibilities at the juncture of imperialism, nationalism, modernity, and colonialism. Here, my approach to space is grounded in the concept of space offered by Henri Lefebvre. As emphasized in the title, in his *The Social Production of Space*, Lefebvre asserts that space is not a mere container or a static background for human activities, but rather a social production that embodies social relationships. Therefore, according to Lefebvre, each society and "each mode of production has its own particular space, and shift from one mode to another much entail the production of a new space."[19] This idea offers an illuminating insight into the understanding of Seoul's transformation from the premodern to modern period. What is important to note here is that those who lived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century—Koreans and foreigners alike—understood that Seoul was undergoing a transitional period and thus becoming a space of possibilities as much as, if not more than, present-day scholars do.

[19] Henri Lefebvre, *The Social Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 46.

Many foreign visitors to Seoul pointed out that this was one of the peculiarities of Seoul at the time. For example, an English explorer Isabella Bird Bishop (1831-1904) who visited Korea in the last decade of the nineteenth century wrote, "Seoul was in a curious condition" where "the old order was changing but the new had not taken its place."[20] A similar account can be seen in the founding prospectus of the first Korean vernacular newspaper the *Tongnip sinmun* (*The Independent*) in 1896.

> What Korea needs is a unifying influence. Now that the old order of things is passing away, society is in a state, which might be described as intermediate between two forms of crystallization. The old combinations of forces have been broken up or are rapidly breaking up and they are seeking new affinities. The near future will probably decide the mode of rearrangement of the social forces. It is at this moment when Korean society is in a plastic state that we deem it opportune to put out this sheet as an expression at least of our desire to do what can be done in a journalistic way to give Koreans a reliable account of the events that are transpiring.[21]

This quotation captures that the editors of the *Tongnip sinmun* viewed the Korean society at the time to be in an intermediate state between old orders and new orders where both challenges and opportunities existed. And it was precisely at this "opportune"

[20] Isabella Bird Bishop, *Korea and Her Neighbors: A Narrative of Travel, with an Account of the Recent Vicissitudes and Present Position of the County* (New York: Fleming H. Revell company, 1898), 261.

[21] *The Independent*, April 7, 1896.

moment that they strove to transform Korean society into a certain way by publishing newspapers in Seoul, where those changes were happening most dynamically.

This dissertation also highlights that venturing into Seoul to seize this opportune moment from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries in Korea was not limited to journalists. As mentioned above, it was not only Kojong and the *Tongnip sinmun* editors but also foreign settlers from China, Japan, and Western countries, as well as Korean natives, who came to the city either to realize their ambitions or simply to make a living, that were collectively making Seoul into a space of transformation. In existing scholarship, although foreign communities in precolonial Seoul remain largely unexplored, recent studies have examined Western powers' making of the "Western Legation Quarter" in Chongdong; the Japanese settler community's making of their own town; and Seoul's development as a "mixed residence" (chapkŏ) where racial and ethnic segregation was relatively unapparent before 1910.[22] This dissertation engages in these ongoing scholarly efforts to unearth the previously unexamined multicultural dimension of Seoul at the turn of the twentieth century, and yet attempts to move beyond their primary focus in tracing the historical development of individual communities in Korea by paying attention to how these communities were collectively shaping the transformation of Seoul together.

Another idea that I am borrowing from Lefebvre to frame my study of cities is his idea of the city as an oeuvre—a work in which all its citizens participate. In "Right to the

[22] Yi Sunu, *Chŏngdong kwa kakkuk kongsahwan* (Seoul: Hauljae, 2012); Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empire: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea, 1876-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011); Pak Chunhyŏng, "Ch'ŏng-Il chŏnjaeng ihu chapkŏji Hansŏng ŭi konggan chaep'yŏn nonui wa Han-Chŏng tongsang choyak," *Sŏulhak yŏn'gu* 25 (2011): 67-104; Pak Chunhyŏng, "Chapkŏ ŭi yŏksa, Han'gŭ hwagyo wa iut hagi," *Tongbang hakchi* 161 (2013): 77-118.

City," Lefebvre views the city as a space where different people with different projects struggle with one another over the shape of the city, and the city emerges as a work out of this struggle.[23] While Lefebvre writes about the city in the context of the 1960s urban unrest in France, his ideas resonate with other historical contexts where diverse social groups participate in the making of the city by contributing to the political, social, and cultural transformations occurring there. Thus, building on Lefebvre's concept of space and city, I demonstrate that Seoul's transformation from the premodern to modern period was a process in which various historical actors, ranging from Emperor Kojong, reform-minded Korean elites, ordinary Korean inhabitants, to foreign settlers from Qing China, Meiji Japan, and other Western imperial powers, competed against and cooperated with one another to produce a new space where their visions of new social relationships were to be realized in urban space as well as in every life.

This dissertation will show this process by focusing on the contacts, conflicts, and contestations over Seoul's city walls and urban space. Seoul's city walls and the spaces within and without the city walls, the focus of this study, offer a useful window into the understanding of Seoul and its transformation into a modern city. While the city walls have mostly disappeared from the present-day urban landscape as well as from the very identity of Seoul, as the capital has expanded so much over the last hundred years, they played an indispensible role in making and maintaining Seoul as a capital city of the Chosŏn dynasty. Above all, the inseparable connection between the concept of a capital city and its city walls in premodern Korea can be found in the term tosŏng (都城): a term that was used throughout the Chosŏn dynasty to refer both to the capital itself as well as

[23] Henri Lefebvre, "Rights to the City," in *Writings on Cities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996): 147-159; David Harvey, "The Right to the City," *New Left Reviews* 53 (2008): 23-40.

just to its walls. Since the walls were constructed immediately after the foundation of the Chosŏn dynasty in 1394, they stood strongly both as physical and symbolic boundaries until they began to be demolished in 1907. Although Seoul had grown outward much beyond its city walls such that almost half of its population was located outside the walls by the late eighteenth century, as Chapter Two shows, the distinction between the space inside and outside the walls remained clear and the capital was perceived to be limited to the space inside the city walls. As such, the city walls were fundamental to the definition of Seoul as a capital city, and meaningful not just to the city's inhabitants but also to the people in the entire country.[24]

Consequently, the demolition of Seoul's city walls meant much more than the removal of a physical object. The demolition of the walls was largely viewed as a symbol of Japanese colonization of Korea as it was implemented by the protectorate government in 1907 and continued by the colonial government throughout the colonial period. While there is no question about the political intention and implication of the Japanese demolition of Seoul's city walls on the eve of colonization, the sole focus on the contestation over the walls between the Taehan Empire and the colonial government has directed our attention away from other important conflicts and contestations over the city walls and the space inside the walls that were occurring around the same time. As the focus of this study, the city walls provide useful means to explore this complexity of Seoul's transformation. It was this space, defined by the city walls, that various historical actors competed over, hoping to produce a new space where their visions of new social relationships were to be realized. More specifically, the imperial powers' making of Seoul into an extraterritorial space played as an immediate backdrop for Kojong's efforts

[24] *Tongnip sinmun*, August 28, 1897.

to make the royal city Hansŏng into an imperial capital Hwangsŏng. The Independence Club's creation of a new public park, immediately outside the city walls, was a symbolic making of a new Korea that would be equal with and independent from all nations.[25] This initially began with the support of Kojong, but later became a source of contestation due to political activities that the making and usage of this public space entailed. Finally, when Japan obtained effective, if not formal, authority to respatialize Seoul into a colonial city in 1905 with the signing of the Protectorate Treaty, it not only had to deal with Kojong's efforts to make the city a symbol of his imperial authority, but also with the extraterritorial interests of other imperial powers, as well as with the efforts to use the space for political participation following the legacy of the Independence Club. These contestations among various historical actors were deeply entwined to the extent that only by examining them, both collectively and against one another, can we get a complete picture of Seoul's transformation from a walled to an open city.

Paying attention to Seoul's city walls also allows us to explore both continuities and discontinuities in Seoul's transformation from the premodern to modern periods. The primary temporal frame of this dissertation is the years between the opening of the ports in 1876 and the early years of the colonial period until 1919. The year 1876 serves as the starting point of this study because it was the opening of the ports that brought Korea into the global system of capitalist modernity that not only accelerated the existing tensions, but also sparked unprecedented challenges to Seoul's city walls and urban space. My

[25] The Independence Club erected the Independence Gate and created Independence Park in its vicinity in 1896 to commemorate Korea's severing of traditional tributary relations with China as a result of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895. The first article in the Treaty of Shimonoseki, a treaty signed between China and Japan to conclude the war, stipulated that China recognized the "full and complete independence and autonomy of Korea, and, in consequence, the payment of tribute and the performance of ceremonies and formalities by Korea to China, that are in derogation of such independence and autonomy, shall wholly cease for the future." This will be discussed in more details in Chapter Four.

examination of Seoul's city walls continues through the early colonial period through 1919, a time demarcating not just when the demolition of the city walls began, but more importantly, as the time representing the end of Korea's capability and efforts to preserve the city walls, efforts which had lasted over the last five hundred years. The Japanese colonial government redrew the administrative boundaries of Seoul, replacing those demarcated by the city walls, through the reorganization of administrative districts in 1914. Further demolitions after the 1920s were performed in order to make way for colonial architecture: the Korea Shrine (1925), the Keijō Train Station (1925), the Government-General Building (1926), and the Keijō City Hall (1926). However, in contrast to its earlier demolitions before 1919, the city walls in the post-1920 years were razed without much fanfare or resistance from the capital's inhabitants. The years in the 1910s were, as this dissertation shows, the time for the colonial rule to lay the groundwork for the construction of a colonial city Keijō that took place in earnest in the 1920s. With this temporal frame, this dissertation seeks to move beyond the historiographical boundaries that conventionally take the year 1910, the Japanese colonization of Korea, as the end point in examining Seoul's transformation into a modern city. The demolition of Seoul's city walls were carried out part by part for political, economic, social, and cultural reasons throughout the colonial period, rather than all at once in the 1900s and 1910s. Although this study limits its analysis to the years from 1876 to 1919, the focus on Seoul's city walls opens up the possibility of further tracing the history of Seoul before and after this time frame.

Lastly, the focus on city walls as an analytical lens provides a new way to situate Seoul's transformation into a modern city in a global context, instead of simply confining

it to colonial studies. The demolition of the city walls and the ensuing transformation of cities from walled to open spaces was a widely shared historical experience transcending regional, political, and cultural boundaries, and yet the particular ways in which each walled city reached an open space from the premodern to modern period varied in local contexts. In examining the defortification of the German city in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Yair Mintzker notes that an "unparalleled diversity of defortification projects in the German land" reflects Germany's distinctive trajectory from the premodern to modern period to be without "a centralized bureaucracy or a nation-state framework."[26] Through the examination on the contestations over Seoul's city walls at the crossroads of modernity and the demolition of its walls by the colonial authority, this dissertation hopes to engage with and contribute to the larger scholarship on the evolution of the modern city.

Chapter Outline

My dissertation consists of four chapters, organized both topically and chronically. Before delving into the question of how Seoul's modern transformation was shaped by the contacts, conflicts, and contestations surrounding Seoul's city walls and urban space, Chapter Two provides a historical overview of Seoul and its city walls from the founding of the Chosŏn dynasty in 1394 to the years before the opening of the ports in 1876. This chapter delineates Seoul's development into the political, economic, social, and cultural center with a constant gravitation of population toward the capital against the backdrop of the sociopolitical context of the Chosŏn dynasty as well as its diplomatic relationships

[26] Yair Minzker, *The Defortification of the German City, 1689-1866* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 6.

with Japan and China within the broader East Asian context. By doing so, I highlight that it was against a backdrop of threats, both from within and without, that Seoul's city walls came to symbolize the royal authority as well as national sovereignty.

Chapters Three, Four, and Five explore three contestations and negotiations over Seoul's city walls and urban space respectively. More specifically, three chapters examine how Kojong's attempts to make Seoul as a spatial manifestation of the imperial authority were challenged by other historical groups' efforts to respatialize Seoul with different agendas, with these efforts seeking to remake the capital into an extraterritorial space, a democratic space, and a colonial space.

Chapter Three examines the tensions surrounding the opening of Seoul to foreign trade and residence, and how mixed residence and extraterritoriality played a decisive role in eroding the spatial boundaries in Seoul as well as the jurisdictional and national boundaries of the Taehan Empire. Different from most treaty ports and cities in East Asia, Seoul was opened in 1882 as a city of mixed residence with no foreign settlements that were established exclusively for foreign residents. As a result, the entire space inside the walls became an area where multiple extraterritorialities directly challenged the Taehan Empire's sovereignty. I demonstrate that it was precisely against this backdrop of imperial powers' growing presences and their attempts to make Seoul into an extraterritorial space that the Taehan Empire strove to refashion the royal capital Hansŏng into the imperial capital Hwangsŏng, as a means to reinsert its power into the capital's space and residents. Despite its efforts, however, this chapter argues that the Korean government was losing its grip on both the capital's space and residents, and in turn Seoul became a space where Koreans were further alienated from, rather than

incorporated into, the state. To this end, this chapter explores the growing number of opportunistic Koreans who evaded the jurisdiction of the Korean authorities by taking advantage of extraterritoriality or obtaining foreign citizenship.

Chapter Four explores the Independence Club's creation of the first public park in Seoul, as well as the Manmin kongdonghoe's street demonstrations which evolved from public forums held in the park, outside the city walls, and forced their way into the space inside the walls for political participation. Recognizing the disunity and division among Koreans as a serious obstacle in building a modern nation-state, a group of reform-minded elites constructed Independence Park as an instrument to foster national knowledge and sentiment in Korea. The club and the park entered a new career with the creation of the Debating Society and its evolution into street demonstrations calling for various political reforms including the establishment of a representative assembly. Kojong and Confucian scholars saw the protesters forcing their ways into the streets, squares, and other public spaces inside the city walls as a serious threat to the Confucian Relations as well as Kojong's imperial authority. As Kojong finally placed a total ban on holding popular meetings inside the city walls, the efforts from below to make Seoul into a democratic space were largely blocked, and Seoul (at least the city within the walls) became a tightly controlled and highly regulated space. In doing so, this chapter shows that the negotiation over the city walls in this conflict was indeed a symbolic negotiation of political boundaries between "subjects" and "citizens" between Kojong and the demonstrators.

It was ultimately Japanese colonialism that brought about the demolition of Seoul's city walls as part of the making of Seoul as a colonial city. Chapter Five

delineates the contestation and resistance surrounding the demolition of Seoul's walls, and their implications in the process of Japan's colonization of Korea. In the face of the imminent loss of its sovereignty, the Taehan Empire firmly held on to the city walls for its policing role as well as for its symbolic meaning of political independence. The standing of Seoul's city walls, however, was significantly challenged when Korea became a protectorate of Japan in 1905. This chapter shows that the Japanese colonial government utilized the tearing down of Seoul's walls, both literally and figuratively, as one of the most apparent visual representations of its deterritorialization of Seoul, and in turn, colonization of Korea. The colonial authority incorporated Seoul into the map of Meiji Japan by the reorganization of administrative districts and the railroad construction in 1900s and 1910s, as part of its reterritorializing efforts. As such, Seoul's autonomous journey in its search of becoming a modern city finally ended with its becoming the colonial city of Kyŏngsŏng.

Chapter Two

Encasing Chosŏn: Seoul and its City Walls

1. Introduction

By the turn of the nineteenth century, Seoul's centrality and urban identity within the Chosŏn dynasty became readily apparent. Many literati wrote much about their urban lives, and some dedicated entire books to eulogize the urban prosperity in the capital as well as to express their sense of pride in being members of the urban community. In these writings, Seoul appeared as a "place where both nature and civilization were unmatchable in the country, and a place of politics and education, court officials and powerful families, celebrities and commodities, wagons and ships, relatives and friends, and literatures for scholarship where therefore people are coming from all directions."[1] Seoul also became a popular topic in late Chosŏn *yadam* narratives (unofficial stories) around this time. In these stories, a journey to Seoul (sanggyŏng) dealt with urban aspirants' desires, hardships, successes, and frustrations that they underwent in the city, reflecting the different sides of the city. Not only was it depicted as a place where naïve scholars and farmers who came to the city from the countryside in search of wealth and success realized their dreams, but it was also portrayed as a place where these people encountered desire and pleasure, corruption and fraud, as well as frustration and disillusionment.[2] There are stories of slaves who escaped from their masters to Seoul and became wealthy,

[1] Pak Chega, "Song Yi Chŏngjae wang Kongju sŏ," cited in *Kungp'iphan nal ŭi pŏt* (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2000) For more literary works on Seoul during the late Chosŏn dynasty, see *Kyŏngdo chapchi* (Miscellaneous Records in the capital) and *Hankyŏng chiryak* (Brief History of the Capital).

[2] For late-Chosŏn *yadam*, see Ch'oe Kisuk, "Tosi, yongmang, hwanmyŏl: 18, 19 segi "Seoul" ŭi palgyŏn – 18, 19 seji yadamjib sojae "sanggyŏngdam ŭl chungsim ŭro," *Kochŏn munhak yŏn'gu* (2003): 421-466.

and also stories of the yangban who squandered their family fortunes to return home empty handed, if not having been reduced to a vagabond or resorting to suicide. Despite these disparate images of the city, one thing that appears clear is that Seoul became the political, economic, social, and cultural center of the dynasty, a place that attracted people from all walks of life by the turn of the nineteenth century.

One might feel familiar with these images of the city, as they are not much unlike other urban centers around the turn of the nineteenth century or even present day. However, the changes of the city become astonishing in comparison to how Seoul used to be as a city in previous years. As the early Chosŏn reformers saw lax morals and disciplines as the source of all the problems in the late Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392) and desired to reform Korean society by utilizing Confucian moral principles, they strove to make Seoul, the capital city of the Confucian state, into a spatial manifestation of Confucian ethics, which would then serve as a model for the entire country.[3] Thus, the capital was made into a space filled with codes and symbols that reflected the Confucian ruling ideology, and it was Seoul's city walls that gave a physical shape to this abstract space. The identities of Seoul and its walls underwent significant changes since then. These changes began when Seoul was devastated from foreign invasions and domestic rebellions from the late sixteenth century to the early seventeenth century. During this time of great upheaval, the capital was not only abandoned three times by the Chosŏn court but was also devastated by both foreign invaders and domestic insurgents. It was only with fundamental changes in the defenses of the capital that Seoul was able to

[3] For the ideology of reform movements in the early Chosŏn period, see John B. Duncan, *The Origins of the Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000); James B. Palais, "Confucian Statecraft in the Founding of Chosŏn" in *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutions: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996).

witness stable development as a city. From the eighteenth century and onwards, Seoul became an unrivaled urban center within the country with a constant gravitation of people moving to the capital.

For better contextualization of the contestations over Seoul's city walls and urban space after the opening of the ports in 1876, this chapter provides a historical overview of Seoul's development into the political, economic, social, and cultural center of the dynasty by the end of the eighteenth century. I trace back to the early years of the establishment of the Chosŏn dynasty, and demonstrate that the early Chosŏn reformers envisioned Seoul and its city walls to be a spatial manifestation of Confucian ethics and ruling ideology. Seoul and its city walls gained new meanings and functions when it underwent devastations and ensuing reconstructions from multiple foreign invasions and domestic rebellions from the late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries. This chapter highlights that it was the change in the capital defense strategy that served as an important foundation for Seoul's development into a vibrant urban center in the late Chosŏn period.

2. Building Seoul, Building Chosŏn

The making of Seoul into a capital city was inextricably linked with the founding of a new Chosŏn dynasty from the beginning. In 1392, Yi Sŏnggye (1335-1408), the founding monarch of the Chosŏn dynasty, ascended to the throne as King T'aejo following the overthrow of the Koryŏ court at the palace in Kaesŏng, the capital of the Koryŏ dynasty. Just one month later, even before Yi selected a name for his new dynasty, he announced his decision to move the capital of the dynasty to Hanyang, present-day

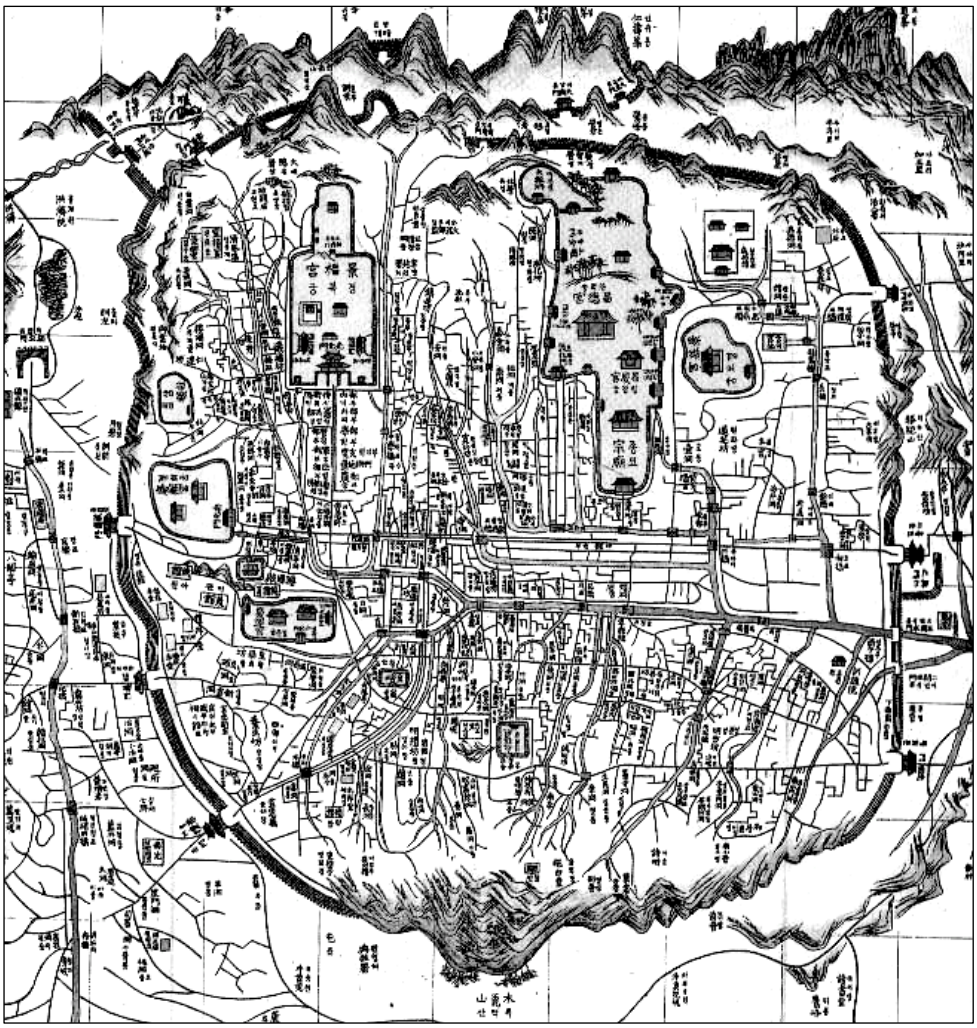
Seoul. Claiming that all rulers who had received the Mandate of Heaven have always relocated the capital since ancient times, Yi sought to establish the legitimacy and authority of the new dynasty by relocating the capital from Kaesŏng to Hanyang.[4] Hanyang had good reasons to be selected for the new capital. Not only did it have the geographical advantages of being located on the Han River basin in the center of the Korean peninsula, but it was also considered to be an auspicious place based on geomancy. According to the principles of Feng shui, the four mountains surrounding the heart of Seoul—Pugaksan to the north, Inwangsan to the west, Mongmyŏksan to the south, and Naksan to the east—served as the Four Celestial Guardians, offering both protection and prosperity to the city.

Yi's decision to move the capital encountered much resistance both from the Kaesŏng-based Koryŏ elites, and also from some of his own supporters who held different political stances and supported alternative locations for the new capital.[5] Thus, it was not until the tenth month of 1394 that Seoul became the royal seat of the Chosŏn dynasty. During the reigns of King T'aejo (r. 1392-1398) and King Chŏngjong (r. 1398-1400), which were years of transition marked by political instability, Seoul's position as the capital was as uncertain as Chosŏn's direction as a dynasty. Chŏngjong, who became the second king of Chosŏn amidst bloody conflicts surrounding the succession of the throne, reverted the capital back to Kaesŏng in 1399, reflecting his reactionary political position as well as his weak political foundation. Consequently, key buildings and basic

[4] *T'aejo sillok*, T'aejo 1, August 13; T'aejo 2. February 1.

[5] For the debates regarding the moving the capital to Seoul in the late Koryŏ and early Chosŏn periods, see Kim Wŏnmyŏng, "Chosŏn wangjo ŭi ch'anggŏn kwa hanyang ch'ŏndo," *Sŏul yukpaengnyŏnsa 1* (Sŏulsi P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, 1977); Yi Myŏngwŏn, "Hanyang ch'ŏndo e kwanhan yŏn'gu," *Hyangt'o Sŏul 42* (1984); Chang Chiyŏn, *Yŏmal sŏnch'o ch'ŏndo nonŭi wa hanyang mit kaekyŏng ŭi tosŏng kyehoek* (Master's thesis, Seoul National University, 1999).

infrastructure such as roads and bridges constructed during T'aejo's reign began to fall into decay. When King T'aejong (r. 1400-1418) finally returned to Seoul in 1405, records show that the layout of the city was unrecognizable, as it was developing in a disorderly fashion.[6] It was the consolidation of royal authority and the ensuing political stability in the early Chosŏn dynasty that allowed Seoul to serve as the capital city for the new dynasty until the end of the nineteenth century.



Map 1. Seoul by James S. Gale (circa. 1902)

[6] *T'aejong sillok*, T'aejong 7, April 20.

As it is widely known, the blueprint for making Seoul into the capital city of the Chosŏn dynasty was laid out by Chŏng Tojŏn (1342-1398), one of the leading supporters of the new dynasty, and also known as the "architect" of the early Chosŏn system. Scholars have noted that the early Chosŏn period was the zenith of Confucian statecraft ideas on practical administration, with most of the elements of these reform programs found in the writings of Chŏng Tojŏn.[7] Based on the urban planning principles for capital cities written in the "Records of Construction" in *The Rites of Zhou*, Chŏng designed and named the essential components of the city, including palaces, shrines, office buildings, market places, and thoroughfares inside the city walls as befitting a capital city of a new Confucian state.[8] Above all things, the priority of construction efforts was given primarily to three endeavors: the royal shrine, the royal palace, and the capital's city walls.

> The royal shrine is the place to exalt filial piety and veneration by enshrining ancestral tablets, and the royal palace is the place to issue government ordinances by showing the royal dignity and authority. The capital walls are to protect the country by maintaining order strictly within and without the country. [The construction of] all these three is what those who have countries must prioritize. Respectively speaking, Your Majesty founded the royal line [of the Chosŏn dynasty] by receiving the Mandate of Heaven, and chose Seoul as a capital by

[7] For Chŏng Tojŏn's political thoughts in particular, and Confucian statecraft thoughts in general, during the early of Chosŏn period, see James B. Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institutes: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996); John B. Duncan. *The Origins of the Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000); To Hyŏnch'ŏl. *Chosŏn chŏngi chŏngch'i sasangsa* (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2013).

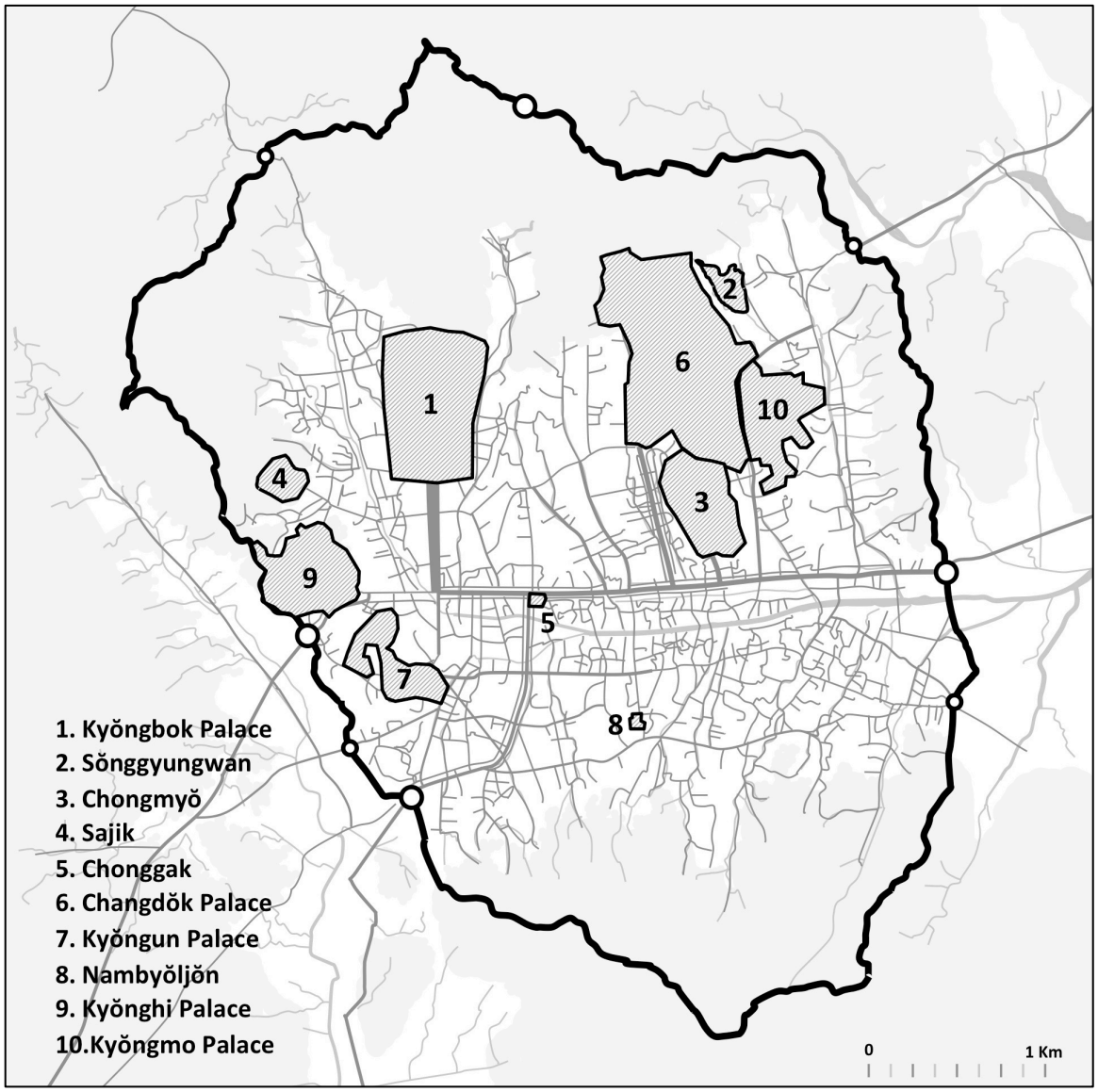
[8] For more details on the Chosŏn's urban planning, see Ko Tonghwan, *Chosŏn sidea sŏul tosisa* (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2007), 52-91.

meeting the expectation of the people. The foundation of the everlasting dynasty through all ages lies in [building these three facilities].[9]

Therefore, as soon as the construction of the Royal Ancestral Shrine (Chongmyo) and the Altar to the Gods of Earth and Grain (Sajik), which symbolized the dynastic state itself in the Confucian tradition, was completed, the Chosŏn government began to build the capital's walls in early 1396.[10] The government mobilized roughly 200,000 men for a total of 98 days during the agricultural slack season, mobilizing people from the Hamgyŏng, Pyŏngan, Kangwŏn, Kyŏngsang, and Chŏlla Provinces. The entire project was divided into 97 sections of 600 feet each, with each section named in the order of the characters in the Thousand Character Classic (*Chŏnjamun*). As Seoul was encircled by mountains, the walls were built along the ridges of the four mountain ranges, with stone walls on the ridges and earthen walls on the flatlands between them. This, the largest construction undertaking of the Chosŏn dynasty, resulted in the 11 mile long, 16-26 foot high wall surrounding Seoul, including four great gates (sadaemun) and four small gates (sasomun). Since the walls underwent a complete reconstruction in 1422 during the reign of King Sejong (r. 1418-1450) to replace the earthen parts of the walls with natural stone, there was no further major construction work on the walls until the reign of King Sukchŏng (r. 1674-1720) in the early eighteenth century.

[9] *T'aejo sillok*, T'aejo 3, November 3.

[10] For the construction of Seoul's city walls, see O Chongnok, "Chosŏn ch'oyŏp Hanyang chŏngdo kwajŏng kwa sudo pangwi," *Han'guksa y'ŏn'gu* 127 (2004): 211-242; Kim Ungho, "Chosŏn ch'o tosŏng ŭi ch'ukcho wa sudo kyŏnggye kinŭng," *Sŏulhak yŏn'gu* 47 (2012): 1-35; Chŏng Haeŭn, "Chosŏn ch'ogi tosŏng ŭi wisang kwa tosŏng pangŏron," *Sŏulhak yŏn'gu* 49 (2012): 101-130.



Map 2. Seoul during the Chosŏn period

The capital walls together with the eight gates performed an enormous function in defining Seoul as the capital of the Chosŏn dynasty, both physically and symbolically. The walls gave a physical shape to the city and defined the boundaries of Seoul's space. The space inside the walls was divided into the five administrative districts (*pu*), and the magistracy of Seoul also had authority over an area that extended 10 *li* outside the walls,

called the sŏngjŏ simni (城底十里).[11] Connecting the space inside the walls to the outer world were eight gates. Serving as an important means to control the traffic into and out of the city, the gates defined the daily rhythm of urban residents, and were opened and closed by the sound of the Bell Tower (Posin'gak) in Chongno. The gates functioned as a checkpoint as well. It was at the gates that gate guards levied tolls on travellers, examining the traveller's identity tags (hop'ae) to decide who to let in and who to keep out. For example, Buddhist monks and shamans were prohibited from entering the capital as the ruling elites of early Chosŏn considered Buddhism and Shamanism as heterodox.[12] Although Buddhist and Shamanic practices continued to play important roles in the religious life of Chosŏn, Seoul prohibited those practices inside the city walls in order to become a space befitting a capital of the Confucian state.

The Confucian vision for the new dynasty was reflected in the names of the gates as well. Four great gates (sadaemun) and four small gates (sasomun) were constructed roughly based on the four cardinal and four intermediate directions. The four great gates include Hŭnginjimun (興仁之門, Gate of Rising Benevolence) in the east, Sungnyemun (崇禮門, Gate of Exalted Ceremony) in the south, Donŭimun (敦義門, Gate of Abundant Righteousness) in the west, and Sukchŏngmun (肅靖門, Gate of Rule Solemnly) in the north. Built in areas between the four great gates were the four small gates, Hyehwamun (惠化門, Gate of Reformation by Grace) in the northeast, Kwanghŭimun (光熙門, Gate of Bright Light) in the southeast, Soŭimun (昭義門, Gate of Promotion of Justice) in the southwest, and finally Ch'angŭimun (彰義門, Gate of Displaying Righteousness) in the

[11] *li* is unit of length approximately equal to 590 yards.

[12] Son Sŏngp'il, "Chosŏn sidae sŭngnyŏ ch'ŏnin sinbunsŏl ŭi chaegŏmt'o," *Pojo sasang* 40 (2014): 52-81.

northwest. While each gate had a distinct function and unique story, which in itself revealed much about Seoul, what is of noteworthy importance here is their ideological contents. When Chŏng Tojŏn named the gates, he inserted the five cardinal Confucian virtues—ren, yi, li, zhi, and xin—into the names of the main great gates and the Bell Tower (普信閣) respectively.[13]

Related to this, the capital walls were seen as an ideological "fence protecting the country" rather than a military rampart to defend the capital.[14] This was not only because the Royal Ancestral Shrine and the Altar to the Gods of Earth and Grain, two buildings symbolizing the dynastic state in Confucian tradition, were located inside the walls, but also because the space inside the walls was considered as "the place of the court officials, the place of culture and civilization, and the model for the whole country."[15] While there was disagreement in certain aspects of the direction of reform for the new dynasty, all supporters of the founding of the Chosŏn dynasty desired to "effect a total moral, religious, and cultural conversion of the Korean people from the evils, corruptions, and barbarities of late Koryŏ dynasty life to the refined, glorious, ordered, and ethically superior heights of a society inspired by a Neo-Confucian vision."[16] Furthermore, in this Confucian transformation of Korean society, Confucian scholars emphasized that the role of the king was to display Confucian moral values and serve as an exemplary person to

[13] Sukchŏngmun, the name of the Great North Gate, does not include the character "zhi" (智, Knowledge) in its name. It is said that the name of this gate in Chŏng Tojŏn's original plan was Hongjimun (弘智門). However, Chŏng's original plan was not realized and instead the gate was named Sukchŏngmun, which implies "reform."

[14] *Taejong sillok*, Taejong 16, October 19.

[15] *Chŏngjong sillok*, Chŏngjong 2, July 25.

[16] Palais, 1996, 25.

his subjects. Therefore, Seoul, as the royal seat of the Chosŏn dynasty, was required to become a spatial manifestation of the king's civilizing influence (wanghwa).

3. Maintaining Capital Walls to Death

It was not until the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries when Seoul and the entire Chosŏn dynasty were devastated by a series of foreign invasions and domestic rebellions that Seoul's capital walls arose as a central issue in the Chosŏn court. As is widely known, Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea in 1592, or the Imjin War, was an unprecedented international military conflict that embroiled East Asia in turmoil, reshaping the historical trajectories of China, Japan, and Korea at the turn of the sixteenth century. After establishing domination over all the daimyo of Japan, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598) launched invasions to conquer Chosŏn Korea and Ming China as a means to mitigate the possible threat of domestic rebellion within Japan. His ambition, however, ended with his death and brought on the rise of the Tokugawa Shogunate. The Imjin War marked an important turning point for China as well. The Ming dynasty entered the war, responding in part to Korea's request and in part to Japan's threat to the sinocentric tributary system in the East Asian world order, but the heavy financial burden inflicted by the war eventually contributed to the fall of the Ming and the rise of the Qing in China. Although the Imjin War did not result in a change of the ruling power in Korea, the Chosŏn dynasty suffered significant casualties and devastation, and had to undergo a serious reconstruction of the country. Chosŏn's struggle for reconstruction was protracted as the dynasty was further engulfed in domestic political factional divisions intertwined with the Ming-Qing transition, which ultimately led to the Injo Restoration (*Injo panjŏng*)

of 1623, the Yi Kwal Rebellion of 1624, as well as the Manchu invasions of Korea in 1627 and 1636 respectively.

What became a controversial issue in this period of political upheaval was how Seoul fell into the hands of rebels and foreign troops with no resistance from King Sŏnjo (r. 1567-1608) and King Injo (r. 1623-1649), when their courts abandoned the capital city. Despite opposition from officials and scholars, King Sŏnjo fled Seoul to the north to P'yŏngyang and Ŭiju to avoid capture by Japanese forces surging from the south. Similarly, when General Yi Kwal (1587-1624) was advancing on Seoul with the northern border troops, King Injo took refuge southward to Suwŏn, Ch'ŏnan, and Kongju, and again, in the face of the Manchu invasions, fled the city twice more to Kwanghwa Island and the Namhan Mountain Fortress. The damage and destruction in Seoul during the Imjin War was particularly devastating. When Yu Sŏngyong (1542-1607), the Korean chief state councilor at that time, entered Seoul in April 1593 after Japanese forces had withdrawn from the city following a nearly one-year-long occupation, "less than one or two out of hundred people survived in the city and even those who survived looked like ghosts from hunger and fatigue. The entire capital stank to high heaven with rotten men and horses, and there were heaps of dry bones inside and outside the city."[17] Except for some buildings at the foot of Namsan where Japanese troops were stationed, most of the buildings inside the walls, including all three palaces and government offices, were destroyed. Therefore, when Sŏnjo returned to Seoul, he was forced to take the residence of Prince Wŏlsan (1454-1488) in Chŏngdong as a temporary palace, the same residence

[17] *Sŏnjo sillok*. Sŏnjo 26, April 26.

that later was turned into Kyŏngun Palace (now known as Tŏksu Palace) by Kojong at the turn of the twentieth century.[18]

Here, it is important to note that the domestic population as well as foreign troops did much of the destruction of the capital during these turbulent years. During the three weeks from when Japanese troops landed in Pusan until they reached Seoul, King Sŏnjo was secretly preparing to flee the capital for personal safety rather than making concrete plans for a national defense. Catching wind of his plan, some government officials and royal family members urged Sŏnjo to hold on to Seoul by arguing that to defend the capital was to defend the country.[19] Sŏnjo had stated that he would not go anywhere leaving Chongmyo and Sajik behind, nonetheless, a night before the arrival of Japanese troops in Seoul, Sŏnjo left the city through the West Gate, taking the tablets from Chongmyo and Sajik with him.[20] It is not surprising that the king's abandonment of the capital only accelerated an exodus of urban residents from the city, which had already begun. The yangban and commoners scattered, lamenting, "whom can we rely on if our own king abandoned us?"[21] Also, slaves and refugees that were left behind in the city attacked the Slave Agency (Changyewŏn) and Ministry of Punishment (Hyŏngjo) and put all the slave registers to the torch. It was also at this time that the Royal Treasury was looted, and Ch'angdŏk Palace and Ch'anggyŏng Palace were torched. In addition, historical archives collected in the Office of Special Counselors (Hongmun'gwan) and the Veritable Records (*Sillok*) stored in the Spring and Autumn Office (Ch'unch'ugwan)

[18] *Sŏnjo sujŏng sillok*, Sŏnjo 26, October 1.

[19] *Sŏnjo sujŏng sillok.* Sŏnjo 25, April 14.

[20] *Sŏnjo sujŏng sillok.* Sŏnjo 25, April 14.

[21] Yu Sŏngnyong, *Chingbirok*, vol. 1, April 30, 1592.

were lost.[22] The historical records further demonstrate that the situation in Seoul was not that different during the Yi Kwal Rebellion and the Manchu invasions.[23]

These tragic incidents were partly attributed to the military defense system before the Imjin War. Despite being the capital city of the Chosŏn dynasty, Seoul had not been given a priority in military defense before the Imjin War. The national defenses of the early Chosŏn period, which was grounded in the Five Guards (Owi) system and the Provincial Command Garrison (Chin'gwan) system, made no distinction in strategies between the country's borders and its inland areas.[24] Rather, military troops and facilities were concentrated near the front lines along the country's borders, and once enemy forces broke through these front lines, then the traditional strategy was to "clear the fields and enter the forts" (ch'ŏngya ippo), meaning that everyone in the town was to take their whole families and belongings, and flee to the nearest mountain fort. Seoul was not an exception in this military strategy. When the court engaged in a serious debate on the question of reconstructing Seoul's walls during the reign of King Sukchong (r. 1674-1720), Sukchong showed reluctance in rebuilding the walls by stating that Seoul's walls could not be strongly fortified, as it was originally designed and built without the purpose of military defense.[25] The Chosŏn court's indifference in the military function of Seoul's city walls before the Imjin War can also be seen in King Sŏngjong (r. 1470-1494)'s rejection of a proposal to build a semi-circular protective wall outside Seoul's South Gate.

[22] *Sŏnjo sujŏng sillok.* Sŏnjo 25, April 14.

[23] For more details, see Han Myŏnggi, *Yŏksa p'yŏngsŏl: pyŏngja horan* (Seoul: P'urun yŏksa, 2013).

[24] Kim Chunsŏk, "Chosŏn hugi kukpang ŭisik ŭi chŏnhwan kwa tosŏng pangŏch'aek," *Chŏnnong saron* 2 (1996): 3-45.

[25] *Sukchong sillok*, Sukchong 36. October 15.

His opposition was based on the idea that there would be no point to protect the country that allowed the enemy to reach the gates of its capital, as it would already indicate that the county had failed to do its duty of national defense properly.[26]

However, the humiliating experience of the capturing of Seoul for three times in forty years marked a turning point in the thinking about capital defense in the Chosŏn court. Scholars have noted that it was not only the military defense system of the early Chosŏn period that proved useless during the Imjin War, but also the continuing threat of foreign invasions as well as the increasing risk of domestic rebellions throughout the seventeenth century, that forced the traditional idea of "capital abandonment" (tosŏng p'ogiron) to give way to a new strategy of "capital adherence" (tosŏng kosuron).[27] Although this shift in capital defense was a complicated and protracted process as the reconstruction of military units was affected by the influence of factional politics of the seventeenth century, Chosŏn kings in the post-Imjin War period were determined to build up the military strength of the capital to protect their thrones. Sŏnjo authorized the establishment of the Military Training Agency (Hullyŏn togam, 1593) during the Imjin War to combat Japanese forces, Injo added three more capital units—the Royal Division (Ŏyŏngch'ŏng, 1623), the Anti-Manchu Division (Ch'ongyungch'ŏng, 1624), and the Defense Command (Suŏch'ŏng, 1626)—and Sukchong created the Forbiddden Guard Division (Kŭmwiyŏng, 1682). These Five Military Divisions (Ogunyŏng) of the capital

[26] *Sŏngjong sillok*, Sŏngjong 10, January 17.

[27] For more details on the changes in the military strategy in the late Chosŏn period, see Yi T'aejin, "Chungang ogunyŏngje ŭi sŏngnip kwajŏng," *Han'guk kunjesa* (1977); Kim Chunsŏk, "Chosŏn hugi kukpang ŭisik ŭi chŏnhwan kwa tosŏng pangŏch'aek," *Chŏnnong saron* 2 (1996): 3-45; Kang Sŏngmun, "Yŏngjodae tosŏng sasuron e kwanhan koch'al," *Ch'ŏnggye sahak* 13 (1997): 235-268; Yi Kŭnho, *Chosŏn hugi ŭi sudo pangwi ch'eche* (Seoul: Sŏulhak yŏn'gu, 1998).

region completed a new military system of the late Chosŏn period. As a result, Seoul was turned into one of the most heavily defended locations in the country.[28]

Unlike the program of the expansion of capital guards that began immediately in the wake the Imjin War and continued throughout the seventeenth century as part of the Chosŏn court's persistent efforts to strengthen the capital defense in the post-Imjin War period, Seoul's city walls had to wait more than a century to be repaired. To be sure, it was pointed out many times since the Imjin War that Seoul's walls had collapsed and were in urgent need of repair. However, the discussion of repairing Seoul's walls triggered a heated debate between advocates and opponents over the issue in the Chosŏn court. Instead of fortifying the city walls, this debate instead led to the construction of the Namhan Mountain Fortress, immediately to the southeast of Seoul in Kwangju, as an emergency capital in 1624, and also the construction of Pukhan Mountain Fortress, just to the north of Seoul in Koyang, as an emergency palace in 1711. Even after the protracted discussion of repairing Seoul's city walls was finally put into practice during the reign of Sukjong, the controversy between "capital abandonment" and "capital adherence" persisted until King Yŏngjo (r. 1724-1776) proclaimed his firm determination to "defend capital walls to the death" (tosŏng sasuron) in 1751, which will also be further examined later.

The rather surprising delay in the reconstruction of Seoul's walls, in comparison to the expansion of the capital guards, is largely attributed to the following two reasons. One reason originated from the tactical difficulties in defending Seoul, an issue arising from Seoul's city walls and Seoul as a city itself. Representing the opponents' point of

[28] See, Yi T'aejin, "Chungang ogunyŏngje ŭi sŏngnip kwajŏng," *Han'guk kunjesa* (1977).

view explicitly, Hong Chunghyŏ (1708-1772) in the Office of Special Counselors (Hongmun'gwan) argued in his memorial to Yŏngjo that it was impossible to defend Seoul's city walls because, first of all, the perimeter of the city walls was too wide to protect and the military command system responsible for defending the walls did not act in concert.[29] Moreover, Seoul could not be adequately provisioned for a siege as its population and livestock were too large for its food supply storage capability, and it would also be a serious problem if the enemy captured the city since the majority of Seoul's population lived outside the city walls. For these reasons, Hong continued, even if Sun Wu and Wu Qi rose from the dead, the authors of the influential military classics in East Asia such as *The Art of War* who were praised as the two greatest military strategists in Ancient Chinese history, it would be impossible to defend Seoul.

The second reason for the prolonged delay of the reconstruction of the city walls was interrelated with the Ming-Qing transition in China. In 1636, the Manchus adopted the new dynastic title of Qing and demanded from the Chosŏn court a conversion of Manchu-Korean ties from an elder-younger brother alliance to a suzerain-subject relationship. Out of a strong moral obligation to repay its debt to the Ming for saving the Chosŏn from the Japanese invasions as well as its sense of cultural superiority over the "barbarian" Manchus, the Chosŏn court rejected the Qing demand and maintained a hostile policy toward the Manchus, which served as the cause of the second Manchu invasion of Korea in 1636. What deserves attention here is that when the Qing forced the Chosŏn to accept the terms of peace to end the war, the Qing prohibited the Chosŏn

[29] *Yŏngjo sillok*, Yŏngjo 18, October 9.

dynasty from both repairing old walls as well as building new ones.[30] This peace agreement between the Chosŏn and the Qing, also known as Chŏngch'uk Agreement, stipulated that the Chosŏn break its traditional relationship with the Ming, and instead submit to a new tributary relationship with the Qing dynasty. It was also by this agreement that Injo's two sons, Crown Prince Sohyŏn and Grand Prince Pongnim, the latter who later became King Hyojong (r. 1649-1659), had to be sent to the Qing's capital Shenyang as hostages for a decade. It is noteworthy that the Qing included in this agreement the prohibition of Chosŏn's fortification as a means to establish its dominance as a suzerain state over the Chosŏn dynasty. For the Qing, it was important to keep a sharp eye on the Chosŏn's military rearmament projects to prevent any possible alliance between the surviving Ming restorationists and the Chosŏn court.[31] Indeed, when the Manchus found out that Hyojong rebuilt forts and walls against a possible Japanese attack, they were suspicious of Hyojong's motives and sent an envoy in 1650 to investigate the Chosŏn court.[32] Since this incident, even when Hyojong continued his efforts to expand capital guards as part of his unrealized plan for a "northern expedition" (pukpŏl) to "punish the Qing and restore the Ming," the Chosŏn court halted the repairing of Seoul's walls as well as other walls in the country for the following fifty years.

It was in this context of the Manchu prohibition of and surveillance on Chosŏn's fortification that Seoul's city walls in particular and Chosŏn's ramparts in general became even more significant symbols of national sovereignty as well as royal authority in the late Chosŏn period. When the decades-old debate over reconstructing Seoul's city walls

[30] Yi Kŭnho, *Chosŏn hugi ŭi sudo pangwi ch'eche* (Seoul: Sŏulhak yŏn'gu, 1998), 45.

[31] James Palais, 1996, 19.

[32] *Hyojong sillok*, Hyojong 1, March 7.

resurfaced in 1703, along with the debate on the construction of Pukhan Mountain Fortress as an alternative to rebuilding Seoul's city walls, Sukchong pushed forward with both projects even in the face of strong opposition from some officials. For both projects, opponents were concerned with violating the Chŏngch'uk Agreement and receiving a rebuke from the Qing court, and thus urged Sukchong to either stop the construction project or to ask the Qing court for permission, as Qing envoys to Seoul would clearly become aware of the fortification efforts.[33] According to the *Sukchong Sillok,* Sukchong became angry at this response and said, "I will assume the responsibility myself. I am not afraid. I am not afraid."[34] It was only after Sukchong showed his firm determination to continue the fortification projects even to the extent of standing up against the possible rebuke from the Qing court that Seoul's city walls were finally able to undergo major reconstruction for the first time after the Imjin War during the first decade of the eighteenth century.

If Seoul's city walls came to symbolize the national sovereignty from without and the royal authority from within in the late Chosŏn period, it is no coincidence that the completion of Seoul's fortification coincided with the reign of Yŏngjo. Scholars have generally recognized that Yŏngjo had made persistent efforts to strengthen the royal authority throughout his reign, and as a result, the Chosŏn dynasty enjoyed relative political stability during the reigns of Yŏngjo and his successor Chŏngjo (r. 1776-1800).[35] Yŏngjo adopted the policy of impartiality (t'angp'yŏngch'aek) in an effort to curb the

[33] *Sukchong sillok*, Sukchong 29, April 3; Sukchong 31, January 15.

[34] *Sukchong sillok*, Sukchong 29, April 3.

[35] For more details on the Yŏngjo's reign, see JaHyun Kim Haboush, *The Confucian Kingship in Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

factionalism that had weakened royal authority for two centuries. He also enlarged the Altar of Great Gratitude (Taebodan) in the Secret Garden (piwŏn) in Ch'angdŏk Palace, an altar built to perform rituals to the memory of the three emperors of the fallen Ming, to solidify his role as the legitimate successor of Chinese civilization in hopes of restoring the national pride wounded by the "barbarian" Manchus.[36] One important incident that spurred Yŏngjo to strive for strengthening his power was the Yi Injwa Rebellion of 1728, or the Musin Rebellion, a failed attempt led by the members of the Disciple's Faction (soron) to overthrow Yŏngjo. Occurring only four years after his enthronement, it was a shocking experience for Yŏngjo in that participants in the rebellion were well beyond the members of one political faction, and included people from various social groups.[37] Moreover, the fact that the final goal of the rebels was to capture Seoul further pushed Yŏngjo to solidify his position to defend the capital against the threats from within and without. Responding to a Chosŏn court that still continued to oscillate between "capital abandonment" and "capital adherence," Yŏngjo clarified his position to "hold on to Seoul to the last" on the grounds that Seoul's residents would be trampled to death if he fled the city for refuge.[38]

Yŏngjo's determination to defend Seoul took more concrete shape in the Booklet of Capital Defense (Susŏng ch'aekcha) published in 1751. It was with this document that

[36] The Altar of Great Gratitude was constructed in 1704 during the reign of Sukchong, sixty years after the fall of the Ming dynasty in 1644, to commemorate the Ming's fall. In 1749, the first Ming emperor Taitsu and the last emperor Ch'ung-chen were also enshrined. Sacrifices were regularly performed until Seoul was occupied by the Japanese troops on the eve of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894-1895. For more details on Taebodan, see Kye Sŭngpŏm, "Chosŏn sok ŭi Myŏng nara: Taebodan ŭl t'onghaesŏ pon Chosŏn chibaech'ŭng ŭi chunghwa insik," *Myŏngch'ŏng sahak* 35 (2011): 153-185.

[37] Cho Chunho, "Yŏngjodae 'Susŏng chŏlmok ŭi panp'o wa sudo pangwi ch'eche ŭi hwangnip," in *Choson hugi ŭi sudo pangwi ch'eche* (Seoul: Sŏulhak Yŏn'guso, 1998), 143.

[38] *Yŏngjo sillok*, Yŏngjo 18, October 14.

the Chosŏn court's long-standing debate regarding capital defense was finally concluded. Yŏngjo stated in the Royal Message in this Booklet:

> Hundreds and thousands of yangban and commoners in the capital are the people I have taken compassion for. How could I bear to abandon them and flee the city by myself? Seen from this, it can be said that I am of one mind with all the people. The intention of this order is in fact for the people...If there arises a disturbance, I will be the first one to take courage to climb up Seoul's city walls and console the people.[39]

Also included in this booklet was the guideline along the map that showed which military camp each household in Seoul belonged to, and which part of the city walls they were responsible for defending in case of emergency. This booklet was distributed to Seoul's residents so that they were well acquainted with the guidelines. It is important to note that the guidelines required everyone in Seoul's households, except for the old and the weak who watched the house, to climb and defend Seoul's city walls, regardless of social status. As some scholars have pointed out, it is one thing to propose as a guideline to mobilize all of Seoul's residents for defending the capital, regardless of social status, and it is quite another to actually put it into practice.[40] And to be sure, considering that the social status system was still in existence, it is more likely that the booklet served as an ideal rather than a realistic plan. Nonetheless, it cannot be overemphasized how

[39] *Yŏngjo sillok*, Yŏngjo 27, September 11.

[40] Kang Sŏngmun, "Yŏngjodae tosŏng sasuron e kwanhan koch'al," *Ch'ŏnggye sahak* 13 (1997), 139.

significant the role Yŏngjo's proclamation to "defend the capital to the death" with the entirety of urban residents played in transforming the defense of Seoul and its city walls into a matter of national importance. Moreover, as this transformation took place against the threats to Seoul, from within and without, during the late sixteenth to early eighteenth centuries, Seoul's fortification came to symbolize both the royal authority internally and the national sovereignty externally in the late Chosŏn period.

4. Urban Aspirations: Seoul, Seoul, Seoul

Yŏngjo's proclamation to defend Seoul to the death in the mid-eighteenth century was not only a result of 150 years of debate regarding the military defense strategy in the Chosŏn court, but also a reflection of the growing importance of Seoul within broader socioeconomic changes that were taking place in the Chosŏn dynasty after the Imjin War. Based on traditional Confucian thought placing constant moral emphasis on frugality, the early Chosŏn economic policy was marked by tight government control and restriction on commercial and industrial activity. As a result, the commercial activities were limited to the supply of necessary goods for the ruling class in the capital and bare necessities for sustenance for the peasants in the countryside, so that peasants would not abandon agriculture in pursuit of higher profits from commercial activity. However, the Chosŏn government had to devise measures to rebuild government finances and the national economy from the devastation of the Imjin War, and as a result the economic system in the late Chosŏn period witnessed a loosening of the regulations imposed at the beginning of the dynasty. One of the most important economic changes came with the implementation of the Taedong Reform. Scholars have noted that this reform marked a

turning point in Chosŏn's economic transformation and development as it converted an in-kind tribute system into a system of market purchases and sale of goods, which subsequently stimulated greater commercial activity as well as paved a way for the eventual introduction of metallic currency.[41]

It was against this backdrop that Seoul grew into a commercial hub that attracted various groups of people into the capital. Some came to Seoul seeking a living and others in search of wealth. Seoul's transformation into a commercial city became apparent by the mid-eighteenth century, as shown in expressions such as "Seoul makes a livelihood by money while eight provinces make a livelihood by grain" or "unlike the countryside, there is nothing that cannot be done if you have money in Seoul."[42] As various kinds of goods came into the capital from all over the country to be distributed and consumed, Seoul witnessed the expansion and specialization of licensed shops inside the city walls as well as commercial activity of various unlicensed merchants and hired laborers along the Han River. As a result, the city became a place where people even without a definite profession could find a means of livelihood. These material changes were coupled with shifting ideas on commerce. Witnessing the gradual expansion of commercial activity since the seventeenth century, reform-minded Confucian scholars such as Yu Suwŏn (1694-1755) and Pak Chega (1750-1805) criticized the conservative pursuit of frugality and the stigma attached to commerce, and described both individual and state pursuits of profit in a positive light. Chŏngjo also recognized that the people naturally have desires

[41] For the changes in the economic policies in the late Chosŏn period, see James B. Palais, *Confucian Statecraft and Korean Institution: Yu Hyŏngwŏn and the Late Chosŏn Dynasty* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), 104-121, 769-1001.

[42] Nam Kongch'ŏl, *Kŭmnŭngjip*. cited in Ko Tonghwan, *Chosŏn Sidea Sŏul Tosisa* (Seoul: T'aehaksa, 2007), 191.

for wealth and prestige, and the key to governing the people lay in fulfilling people's desires.[43] Reflecting this relaxed moral constraint on pursing commercial profits, there was an increasing number of rural yangban with large landholdings moving to Seoul and other cities to maximize their commercial interests, with some even selling their land estates that were passed down through their family in order to convert their wealth into commercial capital.[44] As such, the late Chosŏn period witnessed an unprecedented migration of various groups of people, ranging from the bottom to the top of the social ladder, leaving the towns, which their family had resided in for generations, for Seoul in search of opportunities and wealth.[45]

Another important reason for coming to Seoul was derived from the aspiration for higher social status, ultimately yangban status. One of the most significant social changes occurring in the late Chosŏn period was the rapid increase in the yangban population and at the same time differentiations within the yangban class by their political connections and economic resources. While there were both legal and illegal means to obtain yangban status, one important channel that attracted people with the desire for upward mobility to Seoul was the civil and military service examinations, which served as the primary means for the recruitment of government officials in the Chosŏn dynasty. As widely known, the Chosŏn government after the Imjin War gradually increased the number and frequency of special examinations (pyŏlsi), in addition to the regular examinations (singnyŏnsi), as a means to accommodate the strong desire for upward mobility among marginalized

[43] Kim Munsik. *Chosŏn hugi kyŏnghak sasang yŏn'gu: chŏngjo wa kyŏnggi hagin ŭl chungsim ŭro*. (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1996), 217-222.

[44] Yu Suwŏn, *Usŏ*. vol. 8, "Non sangp'an sari aekse kyuch'il."

[45] Ibid.

yangban and commoners.[46] Most of these special examinations were held frequently in Seoul and thus worked to the advantage for people residing in the capital, as demonstrated in the statistic that Seoul's residents constituted close to fifty percent of special examination passers.[47] As a result, eighteenth-century Seoul witnessed a surge of civil and military service examinees flocking into the capital from all over the country. Those from the countryside who failed to secure inns to stay in had to sleep out in the open. In addition, the large number of examinees flocking to the city contributed to an increase in prices in the city, forcing the government to postpone examinations in years of poor harvest.

For those aspirants seeking officeholding, the trip to Seoul was not often a short one. To be sure, there were many people who either took the examination to obtain the literary (chinsa) and classics (saengwŏ) licentiate degrees for the exemption from labor and military service, or to, upon passing, retreat back to their rural village and establish themselves as the political and social leaders of their local community. However, the rapid increase in the yangban population in the late Chosŏn period rendered the legal status that yangban achieved through obtaining degrees or official titles alone as not sufficient to maintain the political, social and economic prestige and privileges that they used to enjoy before the Imjin War. That is, in addition to economic power, officeholding became essential to preserve their status and avoid downward social mobility. The yangban without both wealth and power were considered as the "fallen yangban" (mollak

[46] Yi Wŏnmyŏng, *Chosŏn sidae mungwa kŭpcheja yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Kukhak charyŏwŏn, 2004), 272-273; Eugene Y. Park, "Military Examinations in Late Chosŏn, 1700-1863: Elite Substratification and Non-Elite Accommodation," *Korean Studies* 25, No. 1 (2001): 1-50.

[47] Cha Changsŏp, *Chosŏn hugi munbyŏl yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1997), 131.

yangban) and lived no better off, if not worse, than commoners. But the problem was that the central government came to be increasingly dominated by capital-based aristocratic lineages, or *kyŏnghwa sajok*, and it became almost impossible for the rural yangban to be appointed to central government positions in the late Chosŏn period, due to the lack of political connections as well as the growing sense of social discrimination against the countryside yangban (hyangban).[48] This growing sense of discrimination between the capital and countryside yangban can be seen in many scholarly writings in the late Chosŏn period. Yu Suwŏn, for example, pointed out that there was an absolute difference between the yangban residing in the capital and countryside. More specifically, he wrote that children from capital-based aristocratic lineages presented competence in the central and local government as they understood "the ways of the world," whereas the rural yangban were "unskilled and outdated" at all matters, such as debating current issues and political affairs, managing policies, or commanding defense security.[49] By the same token, Chŏng Yagyŏng (1762-1836), a reform-minded scholar who is generally recognized as the "synthesizer" of the reform ideas of the late Chosŏn period, also stated that the yangban family boasting power with a high government position should reside in a rented house on the hillside so as to not lose their real color as a scholar, whereas the unemployed yangban must live in downtown Seoul to "widen [their] cultural relevancy."[50]

[48] For more details on capital-based aristocratic lineages, see Yu Ponghak, "18-9 segi kyŏnghyang pungi wa kyŏnghwa sajok," *Kuksagwan nonch'ong* 22 (1991): 111-136.

[49] Yu Suwŏn, *Usŏ*, vol 2, "Non munbyŏl chi p'ae."

[50] Chŏng Yagyong, "*Kagye*."

The writings of Yu Suwŏn and Chŏng Yagyŏng show that the reason why people with aspirations for officeholding were desperate to reside in the capital was not limited to making political connections. As Seoul came to serve not merely as the royal seat of the Chosŏn dynasty but also as the commercial hub in the late Chosŏn period, tangible commodities as well as intangible knowledge and information began to accumulate in the capital, transforming Seoul into a cultural center as well. This provides an important context in understanding the rise of the practice of connoisseurship in the capital from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. Scholars have noted that the practice of connoisseurship became increasingly widespread among the capital-based yangban and some chungin (literally middle people) as a marker of social status and taste.[51] They created various connoisseur societies for collecting and appreciating antiquities and works of calligraphy and painting, and solidified their political and social connections through frequent gatherings.[52] Needless to say, the rise of cultural relevancy in addition to political and social connections as important qualifications for receiving an appointment to government positions or for obtaining recognition as a social elite created a strong desire to live in the capital among the late Chosŏn aspirants. In the early Chosŏn period, even for the yangban who gained their greatest fame and honor as members of the central government bureaucracy, it was a common practice to move out of the capital and to settle in a rural village when they withdrew from central politics, and in turn to regard

[51] For more details on the late Chosŏn connoisseurship, see Kang Myŏnggwan, "Chosŏn hugi sŏjŏk ŭi suip, ut'ong kwa changesŏga ŭi ch'ulhyŏn," *Chosŏn sidae munhak yesul ŭi saengsŏng konggan* (Seoul: Somyŏng Ch'ulp'ansa, 1999).

[52] Sim Kyŏngho, "Chosŏn hugi sisa wa tongh'oin chiptan ŭi munhwa hwaltong," *Minjok munhwa yŏn'gu* 31 (1998), 235-236.

their houses in Seoul as a temporary place akin to an inn.[53] In contrast, the capital-based yangban in the late Chosŏn period regarded the land beyond 10-*li* outside the city walls as "a desolate periphery or a dirty countryside," a place where they could not live even for a day.[54] This meant that the traditional idea of the yangban as scholar-officials who ought to live free from worldly cares and focus on advancing their scholarship in the rural village after retirement, which prevailed in the early Chosŏn period, was giving way to newly emerging urban aspirations.

Here, it is important to emphasize that this new gravitation of population from the country to the capital, both temporary and permanent, would have not existed without Yŏngjo's determination to fortify the capital city. The growing importance of Seoul and its residents helped to shape changes in the capital defense strategy, and at the same time, these changes in the defense strategy further stabilized the development of Seoul as a multifunctional city. If Yŏngjo fled the capital to Pukhan Mountain Fortress when the Yi Injwa Rebellion broke out in 1728 just like his predecessors, it is highly unlikely that Seoul could have developed into the political, economic, social, and cultural center of the Chosŏn dynasty. It was with the change in the military defense strategy taking place during the reign of Yŏngjo that Seoul became a place of opportunity for both those who struggled to break away from the existing order, as well as for those who strove to maintain the existing order and their grip on status and privilege amidst the changes.

Despite Seoul's rapid urban expansion far beyond its city walls in the late Chosŏn period, the city walls still stood strong to define the capital and the membership to the

[53] Sŏ Yugu. *P'ungsŏk chŏnjip,* "sit'aeson."

[54] Sŏ Yugu. *P'ungsŏk chŏnjip,* "sit'aeson."

capital. Seoul's deepening centrality in the country was reflected in its increase in population. According to Ko Tonghwan, Seoul's population was largely maintained around 110,000 to 120,000 before the Hideyoshi's invasions at the end of the sixteenth century, but increased to nearly 300,000 by the end of the eighteenth century.[55] This rapid increase in population rendered the space inside the city walls more densely populated on the one hand, and the space outside the city walls witnessing the rise of new towns on the other hand. More specifically, the suburb areas outside the West Gate and East Gate turned into agricultural towns to support the urban population, and the villages along the Han River, such as Sŏgang and Yongsan, developed into commercial centers, connecting Chongno to national markets. Thus, the population outside the city walls grew to make up nearly 50% of the total population of Seoul by the late eighteenth century.[56] That is, the area outside the walls, sŏngjŏ simni, came to be tied closer than ever before to the space inside the walls, as it performed indispensible functions to sustain the city and urban population. Reflecting this urban expansion, Chŏngjo incorporated new towns formed outside the walls into the administrative districts of Seoul in 1788. Nonetheless, the perception that the capital was limited to the space inside the walls persisted, both inside and outside the Chosŏn court. By the late eighteenth century, the Chosŏn court officially stated that "the foundation of the country lay in the people of capital," and "the capital's residents referred to the people inside the walls."[57]

[55] Ko Tonghwan, "Chosŏn hugi Sŏul ŭi ingu ch'use," in *Chosŏn sidea Sŏul tosisa*, 92-126.

[56] Ko Tonghwan, Ibid.

[57] *Pibyŏnsa tŭngnok*, Yŏngjo 50, February 14.

In addition, the people residing inside the walls had a strong sense of urban community and thus the late Chosŏn urban aspirants strove hard to live inside the city walls to gain that sense of belonging. For example, Chŏng Yagyŏng wrote in a letter to his sons:

> Although I had you stay in hiding in the countryside for the moment as my name appears on the criminal register right now, my plan for the future is only to reside within ten *li* from Seoul. If the family fortune is on the wane that it is impossible to reside deep inside the capital walls, then you should stay in the suburbs and maintain livelihood by planting fruit trees and growing vegetables for a while. It will not be too late to wait until you acquire sufficient wealth to get into the center of the capital.[58]

This strong sense of urban community inside Seoul's walls was in part derived from the stark difference between the material condition inside and outside Seoul's city walls. According to Pak Chega (1750-1805), a leading member of the School of Northern Learning (Pukhakp'a), one needed to venture only a few *li* outside the capital walls to see clear signs of a rusticated atmosphere.[59] The area outside the city walls was where the urban poor and the migrants from rural areas settled in. It was also this area that served as a home for the fallen yangban. According to *T'aengniji*, a book in the human geography written by Yi Chunghwan (1690-1752) in the mid-eighteenth century to help yangban

[58] Chŏng Yagyong, "*Kagye*."

[59] Sŏ Yugu, "P'ungsŏk chŏnjip"

elites to choose their residents, the east and west suburbs of Seoul were not a livable place, as the land was barren and the residents were poor.[60] The standard of living in the towns along the Han River lagged even further behind the neighborhoods inside the city walls. While the residents inside the walls all lived comfortably, the people residing along the river barely managed to stay alive, "eating the wind and sleeping on the dew" (p'ungch'an nosuk) by working as day laborers.[61] Furthermore, the people residing outside the city walls often suffered from double taxation from Seoul and the neighboring districts such as Yangju and Koyang, whereas the people residing inside Seoul's walls were exempted from taxation. Thus, the people who had come to Seoul in search of urban prosperity strove to make their ways into inside the city walls.

5. Conclusion

This chapter provided a historical overview of Seoul and its city walls throughout the five-hundred-years of the Chosŏn history from its founding in 1392 to the turn of the nineteenth century. Through this overview, it became evident that the meaning of Seoul and its city walls continued to change in the sociopolitical context of the Chosŏn dynasty as well as within the broader East Asian context. In the early years after the founding of the Chosŏn dynasty, the building of the city walls also represented the building of Seoul as a capital of the Chosŏn dynasty, and this project was ultimately interrelated with the building of the Confucian state Chosŏn. It was during the time of Seoul's devastations and the following reconstruction from the turn of the seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century that the city walls arose as one of the central issues in the Chosŏn

[60] Yi Chunghwan, *Taengniji.*

[61] *Pibyŏnsa tungnok,* Chŏngjo 15. July 17; *Sungjŏngwŏn ilgi*. Sunjo 9. August 29.

court. It was against this backdrop of the threats both from within and without that Seoul's city walls came to symbolize the royal authority as well as national sovereignty. Finally, Yŏngjo's proclamation to defend the capital with its residents was a reflection of the growing importance of Seoul as a commercial hub in the post-Imjin War period and also a driving force of Seoul's development into the political, economic, social, and cultural center, with a constant gravitation of population toward the capital. Seoul's city walls offered not just the physical boundaries to the city, but more importantly, offered the ideology, security, and identity to the city and its residents.

Seoul's centrality and the people's aspirations in the late Chosŏn period were not phenomena that were subtle and limited in scope that only the domestic population could sense. It was readily apparent, that even foreigners who took a short trip to Korea after the opening of the ports in 1876 could notice at a glance. Many foreigners described Seoul in their travelogues as "the Korean Mecca" or "the state" itself. For example, Isabella Bird Bishop (1831-1904), an English traveler who visited Korea at the end of the nineteenth century, wrote that "Seoul was Korea" in a sense, and "the heart of every Korean is in Seoul." She continued, "people who live in it, of whatever degree, can hardly be bribed to leave it even for a few weeks. To the Korean, it is the place in which alone life is worth living."[62] Bishop's statement confirms a few things that are examined in this chapter as well as provides an important background to the issue of mixed residence that will be examined in the following chapter: by the end of the nineteenth century, Seoul's status as a city only became more dominant; the capital was creating a strong sense of identity, belonging not just to its inhabitants but also to other Koreans in

[62] Isabella Bird Bishop, *Korea and Her Neighbors: A Narrative of Travel, with an Account of the Recent Vicissitudes and Present Position of the County* (New York: Fleming H. Revell company, 1898), 60.

the country; and finally, Seoul was a microcosm of Chosŏn to the Korean as well as to foreigners, the primary destination in Korea for almost all commercial, diplomatic, or religious purposes.

Chapter Three

Blurring Boundaries: The Issue of Mixed Residence in Seoul

1. Introduction

The last few decades of the nineteenth century in Korea in general, and the period around the opening of the ports in 1876 in particular, have been commonly described by the classical Confucian phrase, *naeu oehwan,* "internal disorder and external calamities." Most contemporaries including the Chosŏn court, as well as historians today, agreed that the crisis of the waning years of the dynasty resulted from a confluence of internal and external problems.[1] Internally, both a small number of powerful aristocratic lineages and peasant uprisings that plagued the country all throughout the nineteenth century severely undermined the state's ability to rule. From outside, externally, the gradual spread of the alien creed of Christianity and the arrival of foreign gunboats off the coasts of the Korean peninsula intensified the sense of crisis among Confucian scholars as they viewed "Western barbarism" as a serious threat to the very existence of the Chosŏn Confucian state. Just as in China and Japan, foreign gunboats off the shores demanding the opening of ports to trade relations with the West created great fear and anxiety among Koreans. The image of gunboats as a vanguard of foreign imperialism was only reinforced after attacks by the French in 1866 and by the U.S. in 1871. These two foreign attacks not only exacerbated anti-foreign sentiment but also strengthened the Taewŏngun's foreign policy of seclusion. This ultimately resulted in the erection of stone tablets inscribed with the stern warning, "Western barbarians are invading. The failure to fight amounts to

[1] Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002): 4-26.

appeasement. Appeasement is treason" in 1871 all across the country, undoubtedly starting in Seoul.[2]

Within this historical context, this chapter examines the opening of Seoul and how mixed residence played a decisive role in eroding not only spatial boundaries in Seoul, but also jurisdictional and national boundaries of the Taehan Empire from 1876 to 1905. During the Chosŏn period, foreigners were forbidden from residing inside the city, and a foreign presence was largely kept invisible from the urban scene of Seoul.[3] It was not until 1882, the year that foreigners were permitted the right to reside and trade in Seoul, that the city witnessed a discernible foreign presence as well as the development of distinctive foreign residential and commercial areas inside the city walls. Due to the centrality of Seoul in Korea, multiple imperial powers competed to increase their presence and to dominate the various spaces within the city, and this competition significantly changed not only the urban landscape of Seoul, but also the everyday life of Seoul's residents. It was in this context that the issue of mixed residence, *chapkŏ,* arose as one of the most urgent issues of the time.

In most open ports and cities in East Asia, foreigners established concessions and settlements within which they enjoyed extraterritoriality and thereby were not subject to the jurisdiction of the local authorities. In China, where the right to reside and trade was granted to foreigners for the first time in East Asia with the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842,

[2] Kyung Moon Hwang, *A History of Korea: An Episodic Narrative* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 125.

[3] For example, Hyojong (r. 1619-1659), known for his expedition to the Qing dynasty, allowed the Han Chinese who accompanied him on his return to Korea to (temporarily) reside in the vicinity of palaces in the capital. As a means to help them make a living, Hyojong assigned them to the Royal Treasury (*Naesusa*) and the *Abyŏng* in the Military Training Agency (*Hullyŏn togam*). Since it was a period of political rapid change due to the Ming-Qing dynastic transition, there were many times when their presence in Seoul had to be hidden. In 1790, King Chŏngjo changed the name of the *Abyŏng* that are specifically composed of the Han Chinese to *Hallryŏ* (*Chŏngjo sillok* 29, Chŏngjo 14, March 19).

foreigners established their own settlements and concessions that operated as entities that were almost completely separate from Chinese authority. It is fairly well established in Western historiography on China that the treaty system in general and extraterritoriality in particular were not simply forced on China by Western powers, but rather were a product of joint efforts to establish a new *modus vivendi*.[4] In Japan, according to J. E. Hoare, one of the distinctive features of the foreign settlements was their complete separation from the rest of the country. It was only after foreign settlements and extraterritoriality were abolished as a result of the revision of unequal treaties in 1899 that foreigners were allowed to reside anywhere in Japan and to purchase real estate. Until then, foreigners in Japan were largely confined to foreign settlements. However, some Japanese thinkers called for the implementation of mixed residence, as they viewed such strict separation between Japanese and foreigners as a hindrance to Japan's modernization. Mixed residence, from their point of view, would enable Japan to maintain its independence.[5]

However, Seoul reveals a more unique case and complex dynamic than any other ports and cities due to its status as a capital city, in conjunction with its development as a city of mixed residence. Different from other East Asian treaty ports and capital cities, Seoul had no settlements that were established exclusively for foreigners. Instead, Seoul developed as a city of mixed residence without having clear spatial boundaries between foreign and Korean communities, and this rendered the entire space within the city walls

[4] Par Cassel, "Excavating Extraterritoriality: The "Judicial Sub-Prefect" as a Prototype for the Mixed Court in Shanghai," *Late Imperial China* 24, no. 2 (2003): 156-182.

[5] Eiji Oguma, "The Debate on Mixed Residence in the Interior," *A Genealogy of Japanese Self Image* (Trans Pacific Press, 2002): 18.

as an area where multiple extraterritorial jurisdictions were overlapping and competing with each other. As a result, this comingling of bodies and the overlapping of jurisdictions created new tensions that Seoul had never experienced before. Bringing multiple layers of problems into the walled space of the capital city, the issue of mixed residence in Seoul became even "scarier than foreign gunboats and more troublesome than rebellion."[6]

2. Opening of Seoul

Although the Treaty of Kanghwa, signed between Korea and Japan in 1876, is generally regarded as the moment when Korea was "opened" by Japan to the global system of capitalist modernity, studies have shown that the opening of Korea was not at all a simple process and that Japan was not the only imperialist power engaged in this process. Instead, Korea's opening to the outside world was an overlapping process begun by Japan, then complicated by China, and ultimately settled by Western powers: Japan introduced Korea into the system of unequal treaties, and thereby challenged Korea's place within the Chinese world order; China reasserted its hegemony in Korea by arranging more treaty relations between Korea and the Western powers; and the Western powers spread their extraterritorial rights and other privileges from one to another via most-favored-nation provisions.[7] It was the same with the opening of Seoul. In fact, since multiple foreign powers actively participated in the opening of Seoul, due to the centrality of the city in Korean society, it was an even more complicated process than the

[6] *Tongnip sinmun,* July 18, 1898.

[7] Kim Key-hiuk, *Opening of Korea: A Confucian Response to the Western Impact* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1999).

opening of Korea. Serving as the capital city of the Chosŏn dynasty for nearly 500 years, Seoul solidified its position not only as the royal seat of the Chosŏn dynasty, but also as *the* political, economic, social and cultural center. Therefore, Seoul was the place where any imperialist power needed to establish its presence in order to maximize its influence and interests, regardless of the varying interests it had in Korea.

Before 1882, Seoul's gates stayed closed more firmly against foreigners than Korea's doors did. According to Son Chŏngmok, the opening of Seoul was, in fact, one of the most difficult issues for Japan and Korea to agree upon while negotiating the Treaty of Kanghwa.[8] Following the treaties that America and other Western powers had imposed on Japan, Japan attempted to insert a clause in the treaty stipulating the exchange of diplomatic representatives residing in the capital city. However, the Chosŏn government adamantly rejected the proposal on the grounds that there had been "no precedent for foreigners residing inside the city walls," and instead only permitted them to visit—either short-term or long-term—whenever certain matters arose.[9] In fact, there were precedents for foreigners residing inside the city walls in the five hundred years of Chosŏn history, but their presence had been kept almost completely invisible.[10] Even Chinese envoys visiting Seoul through officially sanctioned diplomatic channels were cloistered in Mohwagwan, outside the West gate of Seoul, and discouraged to make contact with local Koreans. Based on information he gleaned in the early 1870s, William

[8] Son Chŏngmok, "Kaehanggi ŭi Hansŏng nae oegugin kŏryu kyŏngwi," *Hanguksa yŏngu* 28 (1999): 110.

[9] Son Chŏngmok, 1999, 112.

[10] A case in point is Hendrik Hamel, a Dutch sailor who stayed in Seoul for nearly two years as a soldier. Hamel was shipwrecked on Cheju Island and sent to Seoul with 35 other surviving crewmen in 1653 during the reign of King Hyojong (r. 1619-1659). After thirteen years, he managed to escape to Japan and from there to the Netherlands. Later, he published *Hamel's Journal and a Description of the Kingdom of Korea, 1653-1666* in 1668, which was the first book on Korea published in Europe.

Elliot Griffis (1843-1928) noted, "while the entire body of Coreans [*sic*], dignitaries, servants, merchants, and cartmen enter Peking, and all circulate freely in the streets among the people, the Chinese envoy to Seoul, must leave his suite at the frontier, and proceed to the capital with but a few servants, and there dwell in seclusion."[11] Despite its success in opening the treaty ports in Korea, Japan failed to enter the city walls of Seoul. As a result, Japan had to take Ch'ŏngsugwan, a building inside the Kyŏnggi Garrison located outside the West gate of Seoul, as its first legation building.

The year 1882 marked a turning point in the history of Seoul. The military unrest in Seoul known as the 1882 Imo Mutiny resulted in opening Seoul's gates to foreign military as well as diplomatic presences. Chinese and Japanese troops remained in Seoul after the mutiny was quelled, seeking new ways to increase their power and influence over Korea. It is widely known that China strove to reassert its position in Korea utilizing both the traditional and new modes of relations in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.[12] China's use of these seemingly contradictory strategies is best exemplified in the Regulations for Maritime and Overland Trade between Chinese and Korean Subjects of 1882. In order to make the Chinese presence more visual and material than any other foreign powers in Korea, Li Hongzhang carefully designed the trade regulations of 1882 to promote trade and commercial activities between the two countries. These regulations granted Chinese and Korean merchants the right to reside and trade with extraterritoriality in Beijing and Seoul respectively. What deserves particular attention here is the first provision stating that the regulations are understood to "apply exclusively

[11] William Elliot Griffis, *Corea: The Hermit Nation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882), 220.

[12] See Kirk W. Larson, *Tradition, Treaties, and Trade: Qing Imperialism and Chosŏn Korea, 1850-1910* (Harvard University Asian Center, 2008): 72-127.

to the relations between China and Korea, the former country granting to the latter certain privileges as a tributary kingdom, with other treaty nations not included."[13] Although framing the regulations in a Western-style treaty format, utilizing its longstanding tributary relationship with Korea China attempted to claim the privilege to establish a presence inside the city exclusive to itself. The privilege to enter Seoul, however, did not remain exclusive to China as China had hoped. When British diplomat Harry S. Parkes found out about the trade regulations between China and Korea, he postponed the ratification of the British-Korean treaty and insisted on new negotiations to assert the same privilege to access Seoul for British citizens. After months of negotiating, Parkes was successful in obtaining a new treaty granting privileges to reside and trade within the city walls of Seoul near the end of 1883. As Germany, Russia, Italy, and other Western powers followed the new British-Korean Treaty in concluding their treaties with Korea, and Japan and the United States also obtained the same rights by claiming their most-favored-nation status, rights to reside and trade in Seoul became a common provision among all nations who had a treaty with Korea.

Once Seoul was opened, the number of foreigners continuously increased. As of 1897, the foreign population of Seoul was 3,257 in total: Japanese 1,758; Chinese 1,273; American 95; British 37; French 28; German 9; and Russian 57.[14] Although the foreign populations remained relatively small in comparison to the overall population of Seoul, they had a much greater impact than their size would indicate, and thereby brought about significant changes to the capital. As Isabella Bird Bishop noted in *Korea and Her*

[13] Kirk W. Larson, 89.

[14] Wang Hyŏnchong, "Taehan chegukki t'ochi kaok chosa wa oegugin t'ochi ch'imt'al taech'aik," *Sŏulhak yŏngu* 10 (1998), 28.

Neighbors, "in every part of the city, the foreigner, shut out till 1883, is making his presence felt, and is undermining that which is Korean in the Korean capital by the slow process of contact."[15] For the first time since it was designated as a capital in 1394, Seoul witnessed various foreigners forming their distinctive commercial and residential areas within its walls, and as a result, the urban landscape of Seoul became increasingly cosmopolitan.

The Chinese presence in Seoul began with Chen Shutang's construction of the official Qing buildings in Nambu Hoehyŏnbang Nakdong near the South Gate of Seoul, present-day Myŏngdong. A Guangdong native, Chen Shutang was appointed to the first commissioner of trade in Korea in recognition of his successful achievement as a consul in San Francisco. Constructed on a total of 730 p'yŏng of land (roughly 26,000 square feet), the main gate and central buildings of this complex were constructed in "the fashion of official Chinese buildings" decorated with "the usual guardian gods and a brick dragon screen."[16] According to Bishop, who had probably visited most of the Chinatowns in existence in the late nineteenth century, the Chinatown in Seoul was nearly as large as and no different than other Chinatowns elsewhere in 1894.[17] Under Yuan Shikai's proactive promotion of Chinese commercial interests in Korea, the Chinese presence grew fast to expand into other parts of the capital. Coming from various parts of China as well as treaty ports in Japan, Chinese merchants and immigrants established native-place associations known as *huiguan* in various locations within the

[15] Isabella Bird Bishop, *Korea and her Neighbors: A Narrative of Travel, with an Account of the Recent Vicissitudes and Present Position of the County* (London: John Murray, 1897): 37.

[16] Isabella Bird Bishop, 44-45; Kirk W. Larson, *Tradition, Treaties, and Trade: Qing Imperialism and Chosŏn Korea, 1850-1910* (Harvard University Asian Center, 2008): 110.

[17] Isabella Bird Bishop, 44-45.

city walls as a means to maintain their networks.[18] For example, Guangdong Huiguan was established in present-day Sogongdong, the Northern Huiguan around Sup'yogyo, and the Southern Huiguan in present-day Sŏsomun.[19] By the time of the Sino-Japanese War, Chinese shops were scattered all over from the South Gate, through Chongno, and to the East Gate, dominating commercial activities in Seoul.[20]

Meanwhile, Western communities developed in Chŏngdong. This small area situated between Kyŏngun Palace and the western edge of the city walls had once been a secluded neighborhood with only a few residences. As the Westerners set up their legations and consulates one after another, and the Western residences and shops followed to settle in, Chŏngdong became one of the most distinctive spaces with an international atmosphere by the turn of the twentieth century. When Bishop visited Chŏngdong in the 1890s, she noted:

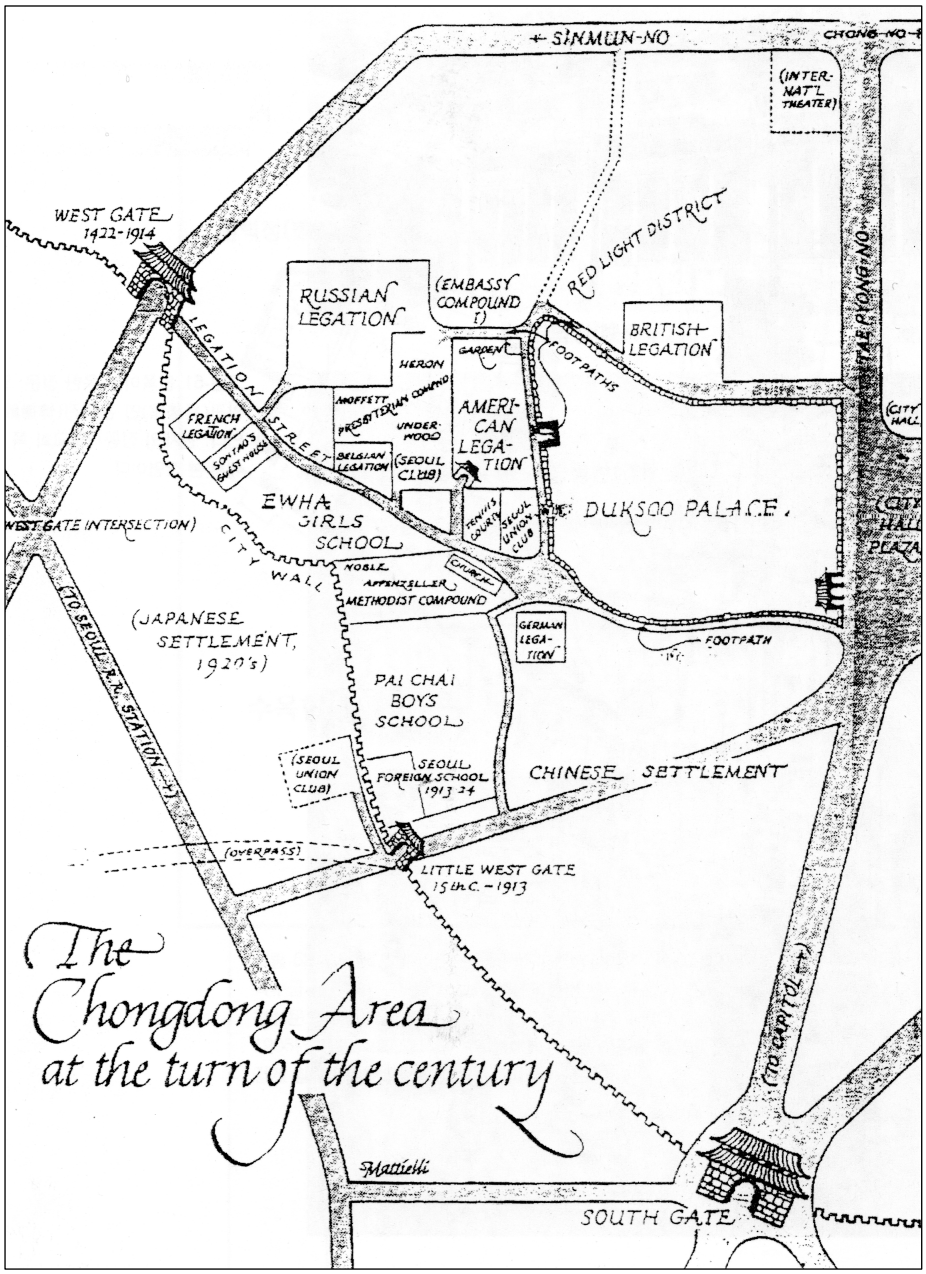
> Chong-dong...the quarter devoted to foreign legations, consulates, and mission agencies, would have nearly ceased to be Korean had not the Koreans set down the Kyeng-won Palace [*sic*] with its crowded outbuildings in the midst of the foreign residences. Most of the native inhabitants have been bought out. Wide roads with foreign shops have been constructed. The French have built a legation on a height, which vies in grandeur with that of Russia, and the American

[18] *Joongang Ilbo*, September 21, 1979.

[19] *Joongang Ilbo*, September 25, 1979.

[20] Kim Chŏnggi, "1890 nyŏn Sŏul sangin ŭi ch'ŏlsi tongmaeng p'aŏp kwa siwi t'ujaeng," *Han'guksa yŏn'gu* 67 (1989), 93.

Methodist Episcopal Mission has finished a large red brick church, which, like the Roman Cathedral, can be seen from all quarters.[21]

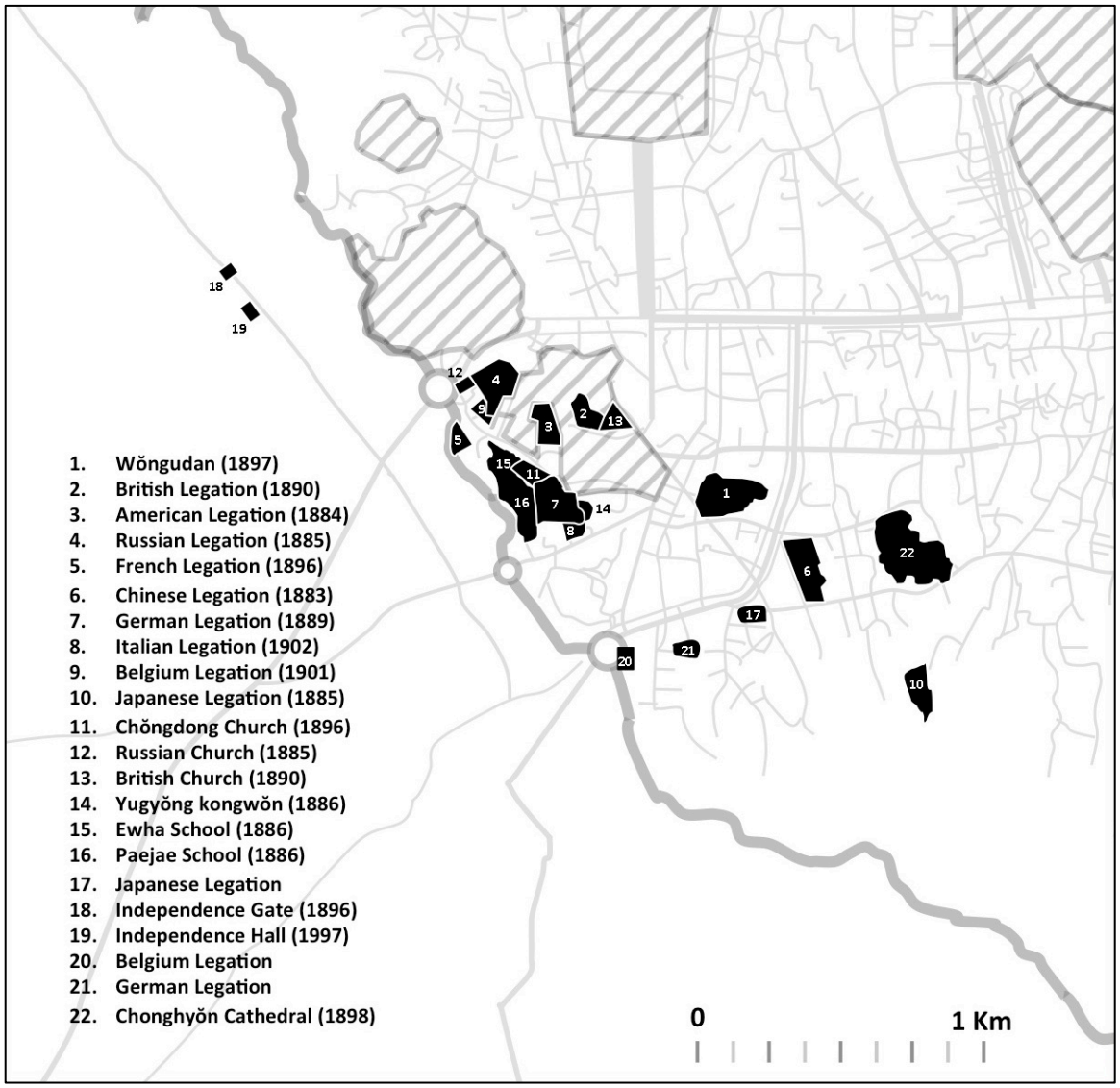


Map 3. "The Chongdong Area at the turn of the century"
Source: Kim Chŏngdong, *Kojong hwangje ka sarang han chŏngdong kwa tŏksugung* (Seoul: Palŏn, 2004), 73.

[21] Isabella Bird Bishop, 437.

What deserves attention here is that the Western countries were together forming one community vis-à-vis the Korean community, yet at the same time, vying with one another over the space of Chŏngdong. As the Western countries constructed their legation buildings in their own architectural style in order to show their power and civilization, as well as a means to distinguish themselves from other Western countries, the resulting concentration of various architectural structures in Chŏngdong created a cosmopolitan atmosphere. From the 1890s, the Western presence also began to expand into various other parts of the capital and beyond the walls by establishing missionary hospitals and dispensaries.[22] Above all, the most representative Western presence inside the city walls was the Chonghyŏn Cathedral (present-day Myŏngdong Cathedral). Completed in 1898 after six years of construction, the cathedral was the first piece of Gothic architecture in Korea, with its main building rising 23 meters and its steeple rising 45 meters in height. The dominance of this building was even further strengthened by its location. Built on the top of a hill overlooking downtown Seoul, this then-tallest building in the Western style presented a stark contrast to the "sea of low brown roofs" of the traditional thatched houses below the hill.

[22] Sonja Kim, "The Search for Health: Translating *Wisaeng* and Medicine during the Taehan Empire" in *Reform and Modernity in the Taehan Empire*, eds., Kim Dong-no, John B. Duncan, and Kim Do-hyung (Seoul: Jimoondang, 2006): 303.



Map 4. Southwestern Seoul during Taehan Empire

In contrast to the spread of the Chinese and Western presences within the city walls, the Japanese community stayed rather clustered around where they first settled until Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-1905. Just like other foreign communities, the Japanese community also began near where its legation was located in Chingogae, at the foot of Namsan. As Japan saw its legation set on fire and Japanese settlers being the target of attacks during the 1882 Imo Mutiny and the 1884 Kapsin Coup, Japanese settlers focused on transforming Chingogae into "Little Japan" rather

than venturing into other parts of Seoul. This transformation was facilitated as the Residents' Assembly and the Chamber of Commerce—established in 1885 and 1887—made steady efforts to fulfill the settlers' need for public utilities and other amenities that were essential to Japanese living. As a result, "Little Japan" also made an unique contribution to the growing cosmopolitan nature of Seoul, where "unveiled women and men in girdled dressing-gowns and clogs moved about as freely as in Japan" by the end of the nineteenth century.[23] With the postwar influx of Japanese after the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War, the boundary of "Little Japan" also gradually stretched out to Namdaemunno, taking advantage of the sudden Chinese withdrawal during the Sino-Japanese War. Keeping up with this expansion, the Japanese consulate moved to present-day Ch'ungmuro in 1896, and this relocation paved the way for the foundation of Namch'on, the southern half of the city where the majority of Japanese settlers resided during the colonial period.

3. Seoul Becomes Mixed Residence

As early as in 1885, Kim Yunsik (1835-1922), who was a representative figure of the "Eastern Way, Western Technology" advocates and also served as the minister of the Foreign Office (T'ongni kyosŏp t'ongsang samu amun), anticipated that the opening of Seoul would create new troubles and tensions that Seoul had never experienced before. Kim discussed the issues surrounding the opening of Seoul to foreign trade and residence at great length in his literary collection *Unyangjip*. He began by explaining how the trade regulations between China and Korea in 1882 unexpectedly functioned as a legal and diplomatic ground for foreign merchants with any citizenship to obtain a right of

[23] Isabella Bird Bishop, 43.

residence in Seoul. Before delving into eight potential problems that could arise from Seoul's opening, which will be further discussed later in this chapter, Kim emphasized that the root of the problem was less of the opening itself, but more of the manner in which Seoul was opened. To elaborate, Kim was fully aware of how the treaty ports that were forced open to foreign trade and residence were operating at the time in the East Asian region. Taking Shanghai and Tianjin as examples, two major treaty ports in Qing China, Kim noted that each treaty port had designated concessions and entry regulations with which Qing prevented the difficulties and problems that could possibly arise from the situation where foreigners with different customs and languages comingled with the Chinese, and protected their people as well. In the case of Seoul, however, foreigners formed mixed residence with Koreans, and therefore it was impossible to govern all of them with just one regulation. This was the most serious problem amongst many, Kim pointed out. After listing eight potential problems that would arise from Seoul's opening as a space of mixed residence, Kim finished his discussion by proposing to move foreign communities outside the city walls of Seoul to Yanghwajin or Map'o immediately in order to prevent his concerns from happening.

In fact, Kim Yunsik and the Korean government made repeated attempts to undo Seoul's opening as a mixed residence: first to relocate foreign communities outside the city walls of Seoul to Yongsan, and later to establish a foreign settlement within the city walls to which foreign residence was to be restricted.[24] Their final attempt in 1895, however, ended in failure as Chosŏn was plunged into political turmoil when the

[24] For more details, see Son Chŏngmok, *Han'guk kaehanggi tosi pyŏnhwa kwajŏng yŏn'gu: kaehangjang, kaesijang, chogye, kŏryuji* (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1982); Pak Chunhyŏng, "Kaehanggi Hansŏng ŭi kaesi wa chapkŏ," *Hyangt'o sŏul* 82 (2011): 179-212.

assassination of Queen Min was followed by King Kojong's flight to the Russian Legation in Chŏngdong. Since then, the foreign presence within the walls continuously increased, and mixed residence in Seoul rapidly accelerated.

Seoul's development as a mixed residence is, in some sense, rather natural when we take into consideration the fact that Seoul came to function not only as the royal seat of the Chosŏn dynasty, but also as *the* center of Korea, far more so than Beijing in China or Edo in Japan. As examined in Chapter Two, the space inside Seoul's walls was turned into a densely populated place, forcing newcomers to settle down mostly outside the city walls and in newly developing commercial centers along the Han River, such as Sŏgang and Yongsan.[25] Thus, the ratio of Seoul's residents living outside the city walls to the total population of Seoul increased from less than 10% in the fifteenth century to nearly 50% in the late eighteenth century.[26] Well before the opening in 1882, the walled portion of Seoul was already full. Evidently, what was awaiting foreigners entering into Seoul was utterly unlike small fishing villages like Inchŏn or Yokohama. Far from constructing their settlements on large plots of empty land with city plans, foreigners in Seoul literally had to squeeze themselves in between Korean residents. The only means for each ethnic group to form its community in a certain neighborhood inside the city walls, as seen earlier in this chapter, was through the purchase of houses, one after another, from Koreans who had lived there. Therefore, foreigners came to live side by side with, rather than completely cut off from, Koreans within the city walls.

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[25] Ko Tonghwan, *Chosŏn hugi sangŏp paltalsa* (Seoul: Chisik sanŏpsa, 1998); Ko Tonghwan, "Chosŏn ch'ogi Hanyang ŭi hyŏngsŏng kwa tosikujo," *Chibangsa wa chibang munwa* 8, no. 1 (2005): 52-89.

[26] This data was extracted from *Sejong sillok chiriji* (1454) and *Hogu ch'onggye* (1789). According to *Sejong sillok chiriji,* the number of households inside and outside the city walls of Seoul was 17,015 and 1,779, respectively. *Hogu ch'onggye* indicates that, in 1789, the total population of Seoul was 189,153 with 43,929 households. Within this number, the population inside the city walls was 112,371 with 22,904 households, and the outside was 76,782 with 21,835 households.

Hansŏngbu naegŏmun (Official Correspondence of Magistracy of Seoul) allows us to get a glimpse of the process through which Seoul developed into a mixed residence after its opening. This collection of Hansŏngbu's official correspondences with other government offices as well as with individual residents of Seoul from 1896 to 1907, covers matters dealing with foreigners, and reflects the rapid social changes resulting from the fast growth of foreign populations in the city. While the entirety of this collection offers an invaluable window through which we can understand the changes occurring in Seoul at the turn of the twentieth century, what is particularly illuminating in regard to the ways in which foreigners and Koreans were living side by side inside the city walls is *Kakkuk kagye* (Title Deeds of Foreigners), the list of property contracts made between foreigners and Koreans. Compiled in 1890, it consists of a total of 253 cases, in all of which foreigners bought houses or land from Koreans: 69 cases with Chinese; 88 with Japanese; 20 with French; and 76 with Americans. These documents clearly demonstrate that the foreign communities in Seoul were formed by individual purchases of houses and land between foreigners and Koreans. In such a process, it is not surprising that foreign residents came to comingle with native Korean residents. Also, individual title deeds provide even more vivid evidences of mixed residence. The majority of these contracts provide the name of a seller and a buyer, the location of the property, purchase price and date. Some contracts even go into details, such as the condition of the house, and most importantly, neighbors the house was sharing walls with. Taking an example of the contract between Korean Yun Kisŏn and Chinese Yi Shunsheng, Yi bought an 11 *kan* titled-roof house from Yun in 1889, which was located in Chungbu Changt'ongbang.[27]

[27] *Kan* is a Korean term referring to the square space created by 4 wooden posts in a traditional building (roughly 6~8 feet from post to post depending on the available length of the wooden posts).

According to the title deed, this house shared walls with a Korean with last name Kim to the west, with another Korean with last name Yi to the south, and with a Chinese merchant to the north.[28] In short, Chinese Yi lived literally next door to Korean residents inside the city walls of Seoul.

Another important aspect of mixed residence is that the increase in the number of foreign households directly resulted in the decrease in the number of Korean households inside the city. This shift in the composition of residents ensued from Seoul's development as a city of mixed residence is also well encapsulated in a newspaper report that reported how every time "foreigners' houses are constructed, Koreans' houses are demolished."[29] Thus, even the *Tongnip sinmun*, which reflected a hopeful and positive voice toward mixed residence in Seoul, later included many editorials and reports in its pages that were fraught with anxiety about the growing presence of foreigners. This anxiety was first and foremost rooted in a fear of Koreans losing a space to live, or space to *be,* to foreigners in their capital city. Korean merchants were losing in the competition over most of the important commercial areas against Chinese and Japanese merchants, and by 1898, newspapers noted that foreigners already occupied nearly one-third of the capital.[30] As it was certain that the number of foreigners would only increase in the future, the editors lamented that in the course of a few years "Koreans would be as cornered as Native Americans," and "Seoul would be entirely occupied by foreigners."[31]

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[28] *Hansŏngbu naekŏmun*, "*Kakkuk kagye.*"

[29] *Tongnip sinmun,* March 7, 1899.

[30] *The Independent*, September 22, 1898

[31] *Tongnip sinmun,* April 14, 1898; September 24, 1898.

> It may be asked, what objection can there be to a mixed residence? The influx of Japanese, Chinese, and other foreigners brings with it money and intelligence. The former gives the Koreans work while the latter, practical education. All this is no doubt very tempting. Only, we fear that Koreans will soon find no place to live in the city, however much they stand in need of capital and education. Seoul will, in [the] course of a few years, cease to be a city of Koreans.[32]

While the conflicts over space between Koreans and foreigners were occurring in various places within the city walls, Chŏngdong was at the center of this contestation. Since Kojong moved out of the Russian legation to Kyŏngun Palace in 1897, this confined space became the district of foreign legations stationed in Korea, but at the same time the seat of the imperial palace of the Taehan Empire. Previous scholarship has noted that Kojong's selection of Kyŏngun Palace—which was located in the closest proximity to the foreign legations among all the palaces—as his new residence reflects the Taehan Empire's precarious geopolitical position within the politics of imperialism within East Asia.[33] Facing Japan's growing encroachment after the Sino-Japanese War, Kojong felt the need to keep the Western imperial powers close in order for Korea to maintain its sovereignty. Therefore, Kojong moved to Kyŏngun Palace, which was not at all equipped to function as the seat of the imperial power, instead of returning to Kyŏngbok Palace.[34]

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[32] *The Independent*, September 22, 1898.

[33] Todd A. Henry, 20-21.

[34] Originally, Kyŏngun Palace was built as a residence for Prince Wŏlsan, the elder brother of King Sŏngjong (r. 1469-1494). After all other palace buildings were destroyed by fire during the Japanese Invasion of 1592, King Sŏnjo (r. 1567-1608) established a temporary residence here. King Kwanghae (r. 1608-1623), who succeeded King Sŏnjo, named the palace Kyŏngun Palace (present-day Tŏksu Palace) in 1611.

Such political as well as geographical proximity to the Western powers, however, became the biggest obstacle when Kojong sought to reassert his power and prestige.

In 1900, the Taehan Empire began full-fledged construction work on Kyŏngun Palace in order to transform what had almost been left as a private residence of the royal family into an imperial palace that could manifest the dignity of the new empire. To this end, not only were old buildings and palace walls repaired, but also new buildings were constructed. One of the most significant transformations was the construction of the throne hall Chunghwajŏn. It was not until 1902 when Chunghwajŏn was completed that Kyŏngun Palace completed the formalities to become an official palace.[35] Although the present-day Chunghwajŏn was restored as a one-story building, at the time of completion, it was originally a two-story wooden building constructed in the traditional Korean court architectural style. At a ceremony celebrating its completion, Kojong said as this "grand building stands up high and lights up the palace," there could be no other happier occasion than this.[36] Another important addition to the palace grounds was the construction of Western-style buildings. This is also an important feature that sets Kyŏngun Palace apart from other royal palaces of the Chosŏn dynasty. The most representative example of Western-style architecture within the palace complex was Sŏkchojŏn, meaning Stone Hall.[37] Designed by the British architect G. R. Harding,

[35] *Kojong sillok*, October 19, 1902.

[36] Ibid.

[37] During the colonial period, Sŏkchojŏn was turned into an art gallery. After liberation in 1945, the building was used for Soviet-American summits. After the Korean War, it became the National Museum of Korea until 1986. For more details on Sŏkchojŏn and other Western-style architecture in Seoul, see Kim Youngna, "Urban Space and Visual Culture: The Transformation of Seoul in the Twentieth Century" in *A Companion to Asian Art and Architecture.* edited by Rebecca M. Brown and Deborah S. Hutton (Oxford: Blackwell 2011).

Sŏkchojŏn was completed in 1910 after ten years of construction as a three-story building in a Neoclassical style, embellished with balconies. It became one of the most dominating pieces of architecture within the city walls of Seoul, vying for first place with Chonghyŏn Cathedral after its completion.[38] Despite its short eight-year life as an imperial palace due to the Annexation Treaty in 1910, Sŏkchojŏn held an interesting symbolic position in the landscape of the Taehan Empire. While this three-story Western-style building presented a vivid contrast in comparison with other single-story buildings in traditional Korean architectural style in the palace grounds, it was also envisioned to serve as an iconic symbol for both the Taehan Empire and the Korean imperial house.

The Taehan Empire's efforts to transform Kyŏngun Palace to befit an imperial palace, however, escalated the conflicts over the space within the city walls of Seoul between foreigners and Koreans to the national level. In 1901, perhaps bearing the construction plans for Chunghwajŏn and Sŏkchojŏn in mind, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Min Chongmuk sent all foreign legations a dispatch calling for the prohibition of the legations' citizens from erecting multiple storied-buildings in the vicinity of the imperial palace in Chŏngdong.[39] During the Chosŏn dynasty, the types of buildings one could erect were strictly restricted by the social status of the building's owner. Not only the size and height of the buildings, but also materials and decorations were determined according to the owner's social status.[40] However, foreigners were not subjected to such regulations when they were erecting buildings of more than one story inside the walls

[38] J. S. Gale. *Korea in Transition* (New York: Educational Department, The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1909), 145-146.

[39] *Ku han'guk oegyo munsŏ,* vol. 12*,* 221.

[40] *Sŏngjong sillok,* Sŏngjong 9, August 22.

because they enjoyed the right of extraterritoriality. Taken into this context, aforementioned Min Chongmuk's dispatch indeed reflects how the Kyŏngun Palace expansion projects were the Taehan Empire's attempt to reestablish its architectural hierarchy in the space inside the city walls of Seoul. This effort, however, was confronted with a series of difficulties. The foreign legations inquired about the exact height and the area in which the prohibition should be made applicable, and informed the Foreign Affairs that they decided not to take any measures until they received more clearly defined terms.[41]

Almost a year later, Hansŏngbu was able to send a follow-up report to the Foreign Affairs on this issue:

> We have received an order to inform regulations on building heights in the Chŏngdong District, and to present clear restrictions on building constructions in the vicinity of each palace with complete drawings. In the treasured areas surrounding palaces, regardless of whether the person is a foreigner or a Korean, people cannot buy and sell as they please. Each purchase causes administrative complications. In addition, if foreigners build towering Western-style houses in these areas, and look down at the inside of the palaces, what could surpass this in terms of extreme uneasiness?…Carefully examining the lay of land and the history of areas surrounding palaces, a complete ban [on building construction] within the five hundred meters from the palace walls will prevent loss of dignity. Attached is the list of all the palaces. Please review it, and do not allow anyone, whether a Korean or a foreigner, to build a new house as they please within the

[41] *Ku han'guk oegyo munsŏ,* vol. 12, 231.

five hundred meters from each palace. In case of buying and selling existing houses, one must receive permission from the government office. It is only afterwards that one can announce the intention of selling to each legation.

Kwangmu 6, October 14 (1902)
Governor of Hansŏngbu Chang Hwasik
Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Ch'ŏ Yŏngha

Kyŏngun Palace, Chongmyo, Sajik, Wŏn'gudan, Kyŏnghŭi Palace, Kyŏngbok Palace, Ch'angdŏk Palace, Yŏnghŭi Palace, Chŏkyŏng Palace, Yuksang Palace, Sŏnhŭi Palace, Ch'angŭi Palace, Kyŏngu Palace, Pyŏlgung Andong[42]

Hansŏngbu's new construction regulations became not only concrete and specific, but also more comprehensive. In order to avoid potential controversies that could arise from using the loosely defined terms "multiple storied-buildings" and "the vicinity of the imperial palace," Hansŏngbu placed a complete ban on constructing new buildings within the five hundred meters surrounding the palace. The limit of five hundred meters from the palace was devised to function as new boundaries to protect the imperial house, and by extension the Taehan Empire. In addition, Hansŏngbu also came up with a measure to control foreigners' ownership of the existing buildings within that boundary by requiring its permission a prerequisite for transactions between Koreans and foreigners. Finally, and most importantly, Hansŏngbu attempted to extend its control over space in other

[42] *Hansŏngbu naegŏmun*, October 14, 1902.

parts of the city beyond Chŏngdong by applying these new regulations to other imperial residences and ritual spaces inside the city walls.

Contrary to the Taehan Empire's hope to clear up ambiguities, however, these new regulations provoked considerable diplomatic controversy between the Taehan Empire and foreign authorities. To elaborate, foreign authorities in Seoul took Hansŏngbu's new regulations as a serious violation of the treaties signed in the 1880s. Among many foreign authorities stationed in Seoul, French Consul-General Collin de Plancy took the lead in denouncing Hansŏngbu's announcement. Collin de Plancy claimed that French citizens in Korea were granted the right to reside, and to construct residences or warehouses within the limits of the concessions at ports or places open to foreign trade by the French-Korean treaty.[43] Furthermore, the treaty stipulated that "all arrangements for the selection, determination of the limits, and laying out of the sites of the foreign settlements…shall be made by the Korean authorities in conjunction with the competent foreign authorities." Viewed in the light of this treaty, Collin de Plancy continued, Hansŏngbu's new regulations infringed upon French residents' rights stipulated in the treaty. Moreover, Hansŏngbu failed to discuss this matter with him prior to the announcement; therefore the French consulate would not comply with these construction regulations.

The Taehan Empire could not acquiesce in this matter as well. Indeed, it was a matter of great consequence because it was directly related not only to the reconstruction of Kyŏngun Palace, but also to establishing the Taehan Empire's sovereignty over space in its capital. After carefully reviewing treaties, Hansŏngbu responded to foreign consuls:

[43] *Hansŏngbu naegŏmun*, December 3, 1902.

> However, [those clauses] apply to various ports such as Chemulp'o, Wŏnsan, and Pusan, but not to the capital city of Hanyang. Therefore, the clause such as "all arrangements shall be made by the Korean authorities in conjunction with the competent foreign authorities" applies specifically to aforementioned ports and places in Korea open to foreign trade. The capital city is different from various ports and places on the coast. But now that you attempt to enforce the treaty that takes effect in ports and settlements on the capital city, we have no choice but to refute it.[44]

Considerable correspondence took place between the foreign consuls and the Taehan Empire on this matter, but it seems that Hansŏngbu failed to implement its new construction regulations in the end. Once again, the Taehan Empire's attempts to define new spatial boundaries in Seoul were largely frustrated.

4. Extraterritoriality: Maladies or Opportunities

Another problem that mixed residence brought into the walled space of Seoul was the problem of extraterritorial jurisdictions, which significantly undermined Korean sovereignty in different ways. As mentioned earlier, Seoul had no boundaries for foreign communities, and thereby no boundaries for foreign jurisdictions. This lack of boundaries meant that the entire space of the capital, if there were foreign bodies, could be immune from the jurisdiction of the Taehan Empire. Undoubtedly, this was a serious undermining of Korean sovereignty. Meanwhile, Seoul witnessed the rise of a new group of Koreans who took advantage of the looseness of the Taehan Empire jurisdiction, seeking for better

[44] *Hansŏngbu naegŏmun*, December 6, 1902.

livelihood and interests. In *New Frontiers*, Robert Bickers and Christian Henriot notes that the treaty port system in East Asia led to "the creation of new grey areas of contested sovereignty and control," and also gave rise to "a vast array of nationals engaged in the pursuit of their livelihoods and interests in the interstices of empire, adroitly operating on the margins of treaty legality and using extraterritoriality."[45] Due to its status as a capital, as well as its development as a city of mixed residence, Seoul presents a fascinating example to examine such new tensions. What was underlying at the heart of the tensions was, while the Taehan Empire saw how dangerous extraterritoriality could be to the state, the opportunistic Koreans saw how advantageous it could be for individuals.

The aforementioned Kim Yunsik's concerns about Seoul's opening as a mixed residence capture well the Taehan Empire's perspective on this issue. In fact, it was precisely this issue of extraterritoriality and its infringing effects on Korean jurisdiction and police authority that was largely underlying Kim's concerns. For this reason, Kim listed Chosŏn's granting of the right to reside and trade in Seoul to British citizens in the Korean-British treaty—which unexpectedly resulted in Seoul's opening as a city of mixed residence—as one of the three biggest mistakes Chosŏn made in concluding treaties with foreign nations. He lamented that officials who were in charge of negotiating the treaties took this matter lightly without knowing its implications for Korea, and now it became "a malady without a remedy."[46]

[45] Robert Bickers and Christian Henriot, *New Frontiers: Imperialism's new communities in East Asia, 1842-1953* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 3-5.

[46] Kim Yunsik, *Unyangjip*.

Within the city walls, the good and the vicious coexist. Some become hired help for the foreign merchants, while others become interpreters. They stir up trouble and do all manners of wickedness. Already it can be seen more and more. If our authorities want to investigate their crimes, the vicious then complain to their diplomats and consuls. Diplomats and consuls cover up all their deeds, and even request permanent passports and ignore our authorities. If the officials cannot control the people and allow these sorts of people, who do not fear the law, to reside in the capital city, to do as they please, and to cause chaos with no one to stop them, then the officials have no means to enforce ordinances. The good can turn into the vicious. This is the sixth harm. Also, if those who flout the law flee and hide in foreign warehouses, the Korean officials have to follow the provision in the treaties with foreign countries which stipulates that, if a Korean who violates the law is hiding at places like foreign merchants' residences and warehouses, the Korean officials cannot enter those places to search and arrest that Korean on its own authority. Hence, foreign merchants' warehouses become refuges for fugitives. How can refuges for fugitives so easily exist inside the capital? This is the seventh harm. Furthermore, there are already many thieves inside the city walls. If foreign warehouses are established, there will be even more cases of thievery. Foreigners will demand our government to make arrests and recover the stolen goods. The suffering is already unbearable. Moreover, based on just a hint of suspicion, some foreigners will take the law into their own hands and try to make arrests themselves. The innocent will be taken as thieves

and be tortured. The people of the city will live their life in constant fear. This is the eighth harm. Only these are the eight harms.[47]

Kim's prediction proved true to a surprising degree. The governor of Hansŏngbu Yi Ch'aeyŏn said in 1898 that Seoul's crime rate increased since Koreans and foreigners began to reside together in the capital.[48] Among others, matters associated with foreigners in particular came to account for a large part of Hansŏngbu's tasks, and caused a great deal of difficulty in resolving matters due to their extraterritorial nature. Foreigners residing in Seoul were not only protected by extraterritoriality, but also by their own police powers.[49] Furthermore, as the Korean police authority was losing its power, it was not uncommon that Koreans, who got involved in disputes with foreigners, were beaten up by foreigners, or arrested and detained by foreign guards.[50] Particularly in the 1890s, the lawlessness of Seoul can be attested to by numerous newspapers and criminal reports on a variety of cases where Chinese and Japanese residents in Seoul violated the local laws and regulations, but Korean police were powerless to do anything about them. A case in point is opium smoking and the opium dens run by Chinese residents. Opium smoking arrived in Seoul with the influx of Chinese immigrants after 1876, and soon attracted Korean residents. As opium smoking not only gradually evolved into social and health problems in the city, and Chinese opium dens served as a breeding ground for crime, Hansŏngbu issued ordinances on prohibiting opium smoking as well as opium

[47] Kim Yunsik, *Unyangjip.*

[48] *Hansŏngbu naegŏmun*, October 19, 1898.

[49] *Tongnip sinmun*, January 14, 1897; January 26, 1897.

[50] *Tongnip sinmun*, September 15, 1896; February 13, 1897; October 9, 1897; May 21, 1898.

trading.[51] However, it was difficult for Hansŏngbu to crack down on these crimes, since Chinese citizens had extraterritorial rights. When Hansŏngbu arrested a Chinese resident who was engaged in illegal opium trafficking in 1898, the British consulate lodged a strong protest with Hansŏngbu against the Korean police's entering of a Chinese residence without the prior permission from the British Consul General. Moreover, the British consulate went on to criticize Hansŏngbu for ascribing the problem of opium trafficking to the Chinese, insisting that Chinese sold opium only because Koreans bought it.[52]

What further challenged Korean sovereignty and authority was the question of who was to exercise ultimate jurisdiction over Korean subjects who were working for foreigners. Since foreign residents in Seoul depended largely on assistance from Korean servants and employees in conducting business as well as living everyday lives, they extended their extraterritorial privilege to shelter their Korean helpers from the Korean authorities. Thus, even Korean lawbreakers, not to mention foreigners, became beyond the reach of Korean authorities once they were inside their foreign employer's residences. When the Korean police entered American property to arrest a Korean employee of Americans, even if that Korean turned out to be guilty, the American legation demanded that the arrested Korean be released on the grounds that Korean authorities had violated the property rights of the American citizens.[53] As Koreans who were hired as official employees of foreign legations and consulates were under even stronger extraterritorial

[51] *Tongnip sinmun*, April 15, 1897; July 30, 1898.

[52] *Hansŏngbu naegŏmun*, January 29, 1898.

[53] *Ku han'guk oegyo munsŏ,* November 7, 1898.

protection, their misconduct often became the source of diplomatic clashes between Korean authorities and foreign legations. Such conflicts can be glimpsed through the following newspaper report:

> Yŏn T'aihŭng, the interpreter of the Police Headquarters of the Japanese Consulate, dressed in Japanese clothes and entered the house of a Korean policeman, Yi Kyŏngsul, knowing that Yi was on duty at the time. He insulted Yi's wife and made a disturbance. The neighbors heard the noise and informed Yi, and Yi arrested Yŏn on the charge of housebreaking. Yŏn tried to pass himself off at the police station as a Japanese [citizen], but his identity was soon established, and he was put in prison awaiting trial. The Japanese legation demanded Yŏn's release on the grounds that Yŏn belonged to the Japanese legation. However, the police authority refused to comply on the grounds that the prisoner was a Korean and therefore amendable to Korean law.[54]

Here, what is interesting to note is that for Koreans, working as interpreters at foreign legations served as new opportunities, particularly for the marginalized groups who were excluded from the center during the Chosŏn dynasty. Although having belonged to the secondary status group for centuries, seizing the opportunities that contact with the outside world had to offer, the interpreters who may have been "mere nobodies at first, have grown rich, influential, infamous."[55] A striking example is Russian

[54] *The Independent*, April 25, 1896.

[55] *The Independent*, August 27, 1898.

interpreter Kim Hongnyuk, also known for causing political chaos with his failed attempt to poison Kojong in 1898. Despite, and perhaps owing to, his humble origins in Hamgyŏng Province—the border region between Korea and Russia—he acquired knowledge of the Russian language and became an interpreter at the Russian legation. Under the growing influence of Russia over the Taehan Empire, Kim obtained wealth, honors, and "almost unlimited power" while retaining his position in the Russian legation.[56] It was said that he advanced his own interests in every possible way by false pretenses so much so that "his insolence, intrigues, and rascality filled the country with his creatures, the city with his sensual scandals, and the people with indignation."[57]

As cases like Yŏn and Kim were not only increasing in numbers, but also causing thorny issues between Korean authorities and foreign consulates, the Foreign Affairs Department of the Taehan Empire decided in 1897 to give jurisdiction over this category of Koreans to the relevant foreign consulates.[58] This decision, however, served as a chance for many Koreans, even without any association to a foreign presence, to become fully aware of the advantages offered by extraterritorial protection. Consequently, Seoul witnessed a noticeable increase in the number of Koreans taking advantage of extraterritorial immunity in the pursuit of their livelihoods or interests in many different ways. To begin with, many Koreans fabricated their national identities with simple lies and tricks. Similar to the aforementioned Yŏn case, the newspapers frequently reported on cases in which Koreans, while dressed in foreign attire, were making troubles and

[56] *Korean Review* 3 (1903), 108.

[57] *The Independent*, August 27, 1898.

[58] *Tongnip sinmun*, April 6, 1897.

indulging in extortion.[59] Some registered their names with foreign religious institutions, seeking extraterritorial protection.[60] Others willingly worked for foreign legations and consulates, and even for foreign armies and guards. In short, Seoul witnessed an increase in the number of Korean subjects who were not subjected to Korean jurisdiction through various channels.[61]

Foreign legations also began to express their discomfort with these opportunistic groups of Koreans, as these Koreans were slipping from their grip. In 1899, for instance, French Consul-General Collin de Plancy extradited to the Taehan Empire two Koreans who were charged with defrauding Koreans of their property under the false authority of representatives of the French railroad company. In his words, these two Koreans were the same as thieves as they not only "defamed the French company's reputation, but also caused harm to Koreans" by taking advantage of loopholes in the law.[62] The Russian Legation faced a similar problem. Reflecting Russia's strong influence over the Taehan Empire, it seems that there were many numbers of Koreans trying to impersonate Russian citizens. The following notice showed up in the *Tongnip sinmun* in 1899 and continued to appear until the newspaper ceased publication at the end of the year.

> As for Koreans who registered for Russian citizenship, or Koreans who claim that they became Russian citizens, allow them to buy something on credit only when

[59] *Tongnip sinmun*, November 12, 1896; March 13, 1897; June 12, 1897.

[60] *Tongnip sinmun*, March 4, 1897.

[61] *Tongnip sinmun,* October 2, 1897.

[62] *Hansŏngbu naekŏmun*, April 5, 1899.

they present formal proof issued from the Russian legation. Otherwise, it is a merchant's mistake, and therefore the legation has no responsibility.[63]

This notice published in 1899 by the Russian legation allows us to take a glimpse into a new situation where an opportunistic group of Koreans was turning into a troubled category to Korean merchants as well as to the Russian legation. Although it is difficult to grasp the entire picture only with this one notice, it seems clear that the Russian legation was receiving a large number of complaints from Korean merchants who suffered a loss from the credit transaction with ethnic Koreans who had actually acquired, or falsely claimed, Russian citizenship. What deserves particular attention in this notice is the existence of ethnic Koreans with Russian citizenship. According to the editors of the *Tongnip sinmun*, the Taehan Empire witnessed a growing number of Koreans in the border regions leaving the country and acquiring foreign citizenships. More specifically, the editors noted that many Koreans residing in Hamgyŏng Province, P'yŏngan Province, and Kyŏngsang Province were leaving for Russia, China, and Japan respectively, in order to escape restrictive ordinances of the Taehan Empire.[64] A government official of the Taehan Empire, Kim Unbaek, presents another striking example. Kim was an ethnic Korean with Russian citizenship who was arrested but later released due to his citizenship status in 1898.[65] Here, it is important to note that Kim was a government official of the Taehan Empire, not an employee of foreigners. Taking one more step forward from the earlier group of Koreans who took advantage of extraterritoriality by working for a

[63] *Tongnip sinmun*, October 30, 1899.

[64] *Tongnip sinmun,* September 27, 1898.

[65] *Tongnip sinmun,* September 27, 1898.

foreign legation, Kim represented a new type of opportunistic Korean who sought an even more direct means to evade the jurisdiction of Korean authorities by registering for foreign citizenship.

Another important point to note is that Kim's acquisition of Russian citizenship did not involve his physical relocation to Russia. Unlike an ethnic Korean with Russian citizenship living in Manchuria, for example, Kim was an ethnic Korean and a Russian citizen residing in Seoul as a government official of the Taehan Empire. In examining the unprecedented growth of Korean communities abroad at the turn of the twentieth century, Andre Schmid writes that migration, or the crossing of territorial boundaries of the nation, challenged the assumed congruency of nation, territory, identity, and patriotism.[66] According to Schmid, these diasporic Koreans were crossing not merely territorial boundaries, but more importantly, the conceptual boundaries in the conventional definitions of a nation. In this light, Kim Unbaek represents a new group of Koreans who challenged the conventional congruency of nation, territory, and identity without physically crossing of territorial boundaries. Taking Kim's case as an example, the editors of the *Tongnip sinmun* urged the Taehan Empire to carry out law reforms, otherwise, it warned, unable to withstand harsh laws, "all subjects of the Taehan Empire would register for foreign citizenship."[67] This quotation indicates that, through the lived experience of multiple foreign presences and their overlapping extraterritorial jurisdictions in Seoul, some Taehan Empire's subjects grasped not only a sense of citizenship, but also how to utilize the institution of citizenship to further their own ends.

[66] Andre Schmid, 236-246.

[67] *Tongnip sinmun,* September 27, 1898.

Needlessly to say, these opportunistic Koreans were a great source of anxiety to the Taehan Empire as many of them were actively engaged in shady and illicit activities for their own interests under the umbrella of extraterritoriality. However, an even more serious problem that the issue of extraterritoriality brought into Seoul was the rapidly growing sense of dissatisfaction with the Taehan Empire among the people in the capital. Despite the establishment of the Taehan Empire and its claim of equality with all nations in the world, what Korean inhabitants in Seoul experienced in everyday life was a deepening subordination of their status to foreigners, rather than "associating with foreigners on an equal footing" as they hoped. In 1899, the editors of the *Tonggnip sinmun* complained, in the format of a conversation between a foreigner and a Korean, that the Taehan Empire was treating foreigners better than its own subjects. Taking an example of how the gates of Seoul's lockout time at night was unfairly forced on Koreans while it was lifted for foreigners, the editors commented that "the various rules and regulations troubles only the subjects of the Taehan Empire."[68] Particularly in juxtaposition with foreign legations' active protection of their citizens, and by extension their Korean employees, for Korean inhabitants in Seoul, even more than other places on the peninsula, the Taehan Empire appeared to be impotent in protecting them from foreign encroachments. As a result, by the end of the nineteenth century, the target of at least some Korean residents' resentment about their mistreatment in Seoul was gradually shifting from foreigners toward the Taehan Empire.[69] For Kojong and Korean elites who strove to arouse patriotism as a means to protect the nation, this growing sense of

[68] *Tongnip sinmun,* January 31, 1899.

[69] *Tongnip sinmun,* May 21, 1898.

alienation of Koreans from their loyalty to the Taehan Empire was indeed a serious challenge.[70]

5. Conclusion

This chapter examined the opening of Seoul and the unprecedented formation of multiple foreign communities within the city walls of Seoul. As the capital city of the Confucian state Chosŏn, the space inside the city walls of Seoul had been devoted to express royal authority and Confucian epistemology, thus foreigners and foreign presences were largely kept invisible from the urban scene of Seoul. It was not until the opening of Seoul in 1882 that Seoul witnessed the formation of foreign communities inside the city walls of Seoul for the first time in its history. Here, instead of narrowly focusing on Japan's efforts in respatializing Seoul at the turn of the twentieth century, this chapter demonstrated that the opening of Seoul and the following respatialization inside the city walls was a process that involved multiple foreign powers. Regardless of varying interests in Korea, foreign powers competed against one another over space, and this competition significantly changed not only the urban landscape of Seoul but also the everyday life of Seoul's residents.

It was against this backdrop of multiple foreign presences in Seoul that the issue of mixed residence arose as one of the most urgent issues in the late nineteenth century. Seoul's status as a capital city further magnified the seriousness of problems that mixed residence brought into the space inside the city walls. With no clear boundaries of foreign communities, foreign and Korean citizens comingled together under multiple jurisdictions. Mixed residence in Seoul blurred more than just the spatial boundaries

[70] For more details on patriotism, see Andre Schmid, 55-80.

between residences of different citizenships. But, more importantly, it blurred the jurisdictional boundaries over people residing in Seoul, and this, in turn invited a group of Koreans to take advantage of extraterritoriality in the pursuit of their own interests, which even further blurred national boundaries.

Chapter Four

Negotiating Boundaries: Conflicts over Public Space in Seoul

1. Introduction

Japan's victory in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 marked an important shift in the East Asian regional order as well as in the ways in which Korea navigated its paths to a modern nation-state. To Korean reform intellectuals, China's defeat by Japan represented the failure of China's Yangwu Movement, and demonstrated that Japan's Western-style modernization was the direction that Korea needed to follow.[1] This shift provided momentum to the Enlightenment Party (*Kaehwap'a*), which had its ideological foundation in the Japanese concept of "civilization and enlightenment" (K: *munmyŏng kaehwa*; J: bunmei kaika), among competing visions for reform movements in Korea at the turn of the twentieth century.[2] In July 1896, the Enlightenment Party members founded the Independence Club (*Tongnip hyŏphoe*) with the support of the royal family and government officials in order to push for continuing reforms. Despite the club's elitist hue and its view of the population not as the subject but as the object for reforms, what still set the Independence Club apart from the previous reform movements was that the club turned its attention and reached out to the people through wide-ranging

[1] The Yangwu Movement, or the "self-strengthening movement" refers to China's reform efforts implemented in the 1860s and onwards. In the wake of its defeat in the Opium Wars, China saw it necessary to adopt Western technology in order to strengthen itself against the West, but it largely limited its reform programs, in the scope of economic and military modernization, and remained uninterested in political and social reforms.

[2] For more details on the concept of "civilization and enlightenment" (*munmyŏng kaehwa*) and the Enlightenment thinkers, see Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). Also, for a general overview on the intellectual terrain in Korea during the period from the opening of the ports in 1876 to the colonization by Japan in 1910, see John B. Duncan, "The Confucian Context of Reform," in *Reform and Modernity in the Taehan Empire* (Seoul: Jimoondang, 2006) Kim Dong-no, John B. Duncan, and Kim Do-hyung. eds..

enlightenment campaigns.[3] This change was the result from the lessons learned from previous reform movements. There was a general consensus among the leaders of the club that the lack of support from the people had been a critical reason for the failures of the Kapsin Coup in 1884 and the Kabo Reforms in 1894. Thus, the club carried out a variety of social and cultural reform campaigns that would lay the groundwork for political reforms.

Two main instruments that the Independence Club utilized to push this goal were the *Tongnip sinmun* (The Independent) newspaper and the *Tongnip kongwŏn* (Independence Park). As the first of their kind respectively—the first vernacular newspaper and the first public park in Korea—both mediums worked hand in hand to maximize the club's outreach and impact on the people. Numerous studies have shown that the *Tongnip sinmun* played an important role in the rise of nationalism in Korea's transition to modernity. In *Korea Between Empires*, Andre Schmid notes that the *Tongnip sinmun* not only delivered new knowledge about events both at home and abroad, but also produced national knowledge across a wide spectrum.[4] If the *Tongnip sinmun* was established to function as a vehicle to foster national knowledge and sentiment in an abstract and discursive space, then Independence Park was constructed to serve the same purpose but in a concrete and material space. Although it has been largely overlooked due to the importance of the *Tongnip sinmun* in relation to the rise of nationalism in Korea, in fact, the initial members of the Independence Club organized themselves into a

[3] For studies on the Independence Club, see Sin Yongha, *Sinp'an tongnip hyŏphoe yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 2006); Chu Chin-oh. "The Independence Club's Conceptions of Nationalism and the Modern State" in *Landlords, Peasants, and Intellectuals in Modern Korea*. edited by Pang Kie-Chung and Michael D. Shin; Vipan Chandra, *Imperialism, Resistance, and Reform in Late Nineteenth Century Korea: Enlightenment and the Independence Club* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asia Studies, University of California Press, 1988).

[4] Andre Schmid, 8.

society not for the publication of the newspapers, but rather for the construction of three commemorative projects: Independence Park (Tongnip kongwŏn); the Independence Gate (Tongnimmun); and the Independence Hall (Tongnipgwan). The construction of these three projects was under the general plan of creating Independence Park, with the erection of the Independence Gate and the Independence Hall being a part of this larger park-making project.[5] Just like the *Tongnip sinmun*, the members of the Independence Club created Independence Park as a means to materialize its goals and to extend its reach to the broader population as well as into the everyday life of Seoul.

This chapter examines the conflicts over using public space inside the city walls for political participation among Emperor Kojong, reform-minded Korean elites, and the Korean residents in Seoul. One focus of this examination is on the enduring impact of the Independence Club's street demonstrations known as the Manmin kongdonghoe (Assembly of All People), which called for various political and social reforms including the freedom of speech and assembly in 1898. Having evolved from the public forum held in Independence Park, demonstrators forced their way into streets, squares and other public spaces inside the city walls. As these street demonstrations pressed Kojong for political and social reforms, and with participants continuously growing in number and diversity, transcending the categories of age, region, class and gender, Emperor Kojong saw them as a serious threat to his political authority. In tracing the evolution of the club's street demonstrations, I highlight the fact that the conflicts over the rights to freedom of speech and assembly between Emperor Kojong and the demonstrators quickly

[5] According to the *Tongnip sinmun*, when the club first proposed the erection of the Independence Gate, it organized a meeting with government officials for the purpose of discussing "the feasibility of making a public park" (*The Independent*, December 30, 1897).

turned into contestations over space, as residents' rights were undermined by spatial restrictions on where one could speak and assemble. Ultimately, I will demonstrate how the negotiations over the city's walls in these conflicts were also a symbolic negotiation of the political boundaries between Kojong and the demonstrators. In addition to this, this chapter reveals how, during this period, Seoul not only witnessed efforts from above to make it into an imperial capital, but also saw attempts from below to change it into a more democratic space.

2. Making Independence Park: Staging Ground for a New Korea

Before the last decade of the nineteenth century, political participation was largely confined to a small number of the *yangban* elite. In his study on the relationship between the traditional political system and the growth of political participation in Korea before the colonial period, James B. Palais has noted that traditional political institutions and cultures proved resistant to the expansion of mass political participation.[6] The Chosŏn dynasty was a centralized bureaucratic monarchy in which only the members of the state bureaucracy were allowed to participate in the formulation and implementation of state policy in accordance with their rank in the administrative hierarchy.[7] While Confucian values gave officials and scholars the ability and the obligation to remonstrate the king, it was nonetheless just a moral obligation and not a legal right that was protected by a constitution, legal precedent, or a court system transcending the authority of the monarchy. Moreover, the Confucian emphasis on the importance of listening widely to

[6] James B. Palais, "Political Participation in Traditional Korea, 1876-1910," *Journal of Korean Studies* 1 (1979): 73-121.

[7] James B. Palais, 1979, 77.

the opinions of the people, even to a farmer in the countryside, was largely no more than ritualistic rhetoric, as people without government positions were devoid of the opportunity for political participation. Due to this political culture during the Chosŏn dynasty, according to Palais, "the creation of nationalistic sentiments and the political mobilization of the masses for national goals was a vastly difficult task for Korean leaders."[8]

This issue became one of the most important problems in the late nineteenth century when the Chosŏn court and elites strove to reform the country to the level of Western nations and Japan, to ensure Korea's political independence. Facing a national crisis, nearly all reform-minded intellectuals, regardless of their different political stances, recognized that the bond between the king and the people was the key to the strength and prosperity of Western countries. In this regard, Korea was in urgent need of instilling the sentiment of unity and solidarity among the people, across various boundaries, in support of the king and the government. The reform-minded elites saw that the ways in which Koreans were disunited and divided was as serious a problem, if not more, as their ignorance. More specifically, despite its legal abolition during the Kabo Reforms, the social status system did not collapse immediately after, but rather continued well into the twentieth century. In addition, the political and intellectual worlds were also increasingly divided regarding the directions they set forth for modern reforms. The gap between the capital and local societies was manifested in a series of rural unrest that plagued the Chosŏn dynasty throughout the entire nineteenth century, starting from the Hong Kyŏngnae Rebellion of 1811, the Chinju Uprising of 1862, and to the Tonghak

[8] James B. Palais, 1979, 80.

Rebellion of 1894.[9] Furthermore, as examined in Chapter Three, these existing divisions were not only magnified but also became more complicated with the introduction of extraterritoriality after the opening of the ports in Seoul.

> What makes Korea so weak as a nation is that the people are not united in their sentiments... A nation cannot become a power with such a state of sentiment. The cause of this is that they do not appreciate the common fate in which they are bound together. But when they begin to realize that they are part of one fabric and one nation, they will stand when their hearts are united in the common cause of patriotism, and they will fall when divided.[10]

It was against this backdrop that the Independence Club created Independence Park, the Independence Gate, and the Independence Hall in 1896. The park was constructed as a means to enact social reforms and to foster patriotism and unity among the people. As the above quotation shows, the club members considered the task of sentimentally uniting the people to be just as important as making them intellectually enlightened, for the country's independence and prosperity. These three projects were constructed to commemorate the historical significance of Korea's severance of its tributary relationship with China as a point of departure for a new Korea.[11] Despite the

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[9] Sun Joo Kim, *Marginality and Subversion in Korea: The Hong Kyŏngnea Rebellion of 1812* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009); Sun Joo Kim. "Taxes, the Local Elite, and the Rural Populace in the Chinju Uprising of 1862," *Journal of Asian Studies* 66 (2007): 993-1027; Anders Karlsson, "Central Power, Local Society, and Rural Unrest in Nineteenth Century Korea: An Attempt at Comparative Local History," *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* 6 (2006): 207-238.

[10] *The Independent,* September 3, 1986.

[11] *The Independent*, June 20, 1896.

international recognition of Korea's "independence" as the result of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, the general populace in Korea was still indifferent or doubtful about their nation's newly gained status as an independent state, particularly because all they could "see was nothing but the fact that His Majesty [was] still enjoying the hospitality of the Russian legation."[12] To redress this issue, club members thought of erecting an arch as a visual representation of Korea's independence and new beginning. There was no better place for this symbolic monument than the site where the "Welcoming Imperial Grace Gate" (Yŏngŭnmun) used to stand, the gate through which Chinese envoys came to Seoul for nearly five hundred years. Standing about a quarter of a mile outside the West gate of Seoul, this gate had served as a "perpetual reminder" of Korea's "indebtedness" to and "dependency" on China.[13] To make it function as a visible negation of this message, the Independence Gate was erected on the same spot where the old monument was razed, and also bore the inscription of Tongnimmun in Han'gŭl on the side facing Seoul, with the same inscription in Chinese characters on the other side facing China. In addition, Independence Hall replaced the "Cherishing China Hall" (Mohwagwan) that had been used as the reception hall for the Chinese envoys to Seoul.

[12] *The Independent*, June 20, 1896.

[13] Samuel A. Moffett, "The Transformation of Korea," *Church at Home and Abroad* (August 1895), 136.

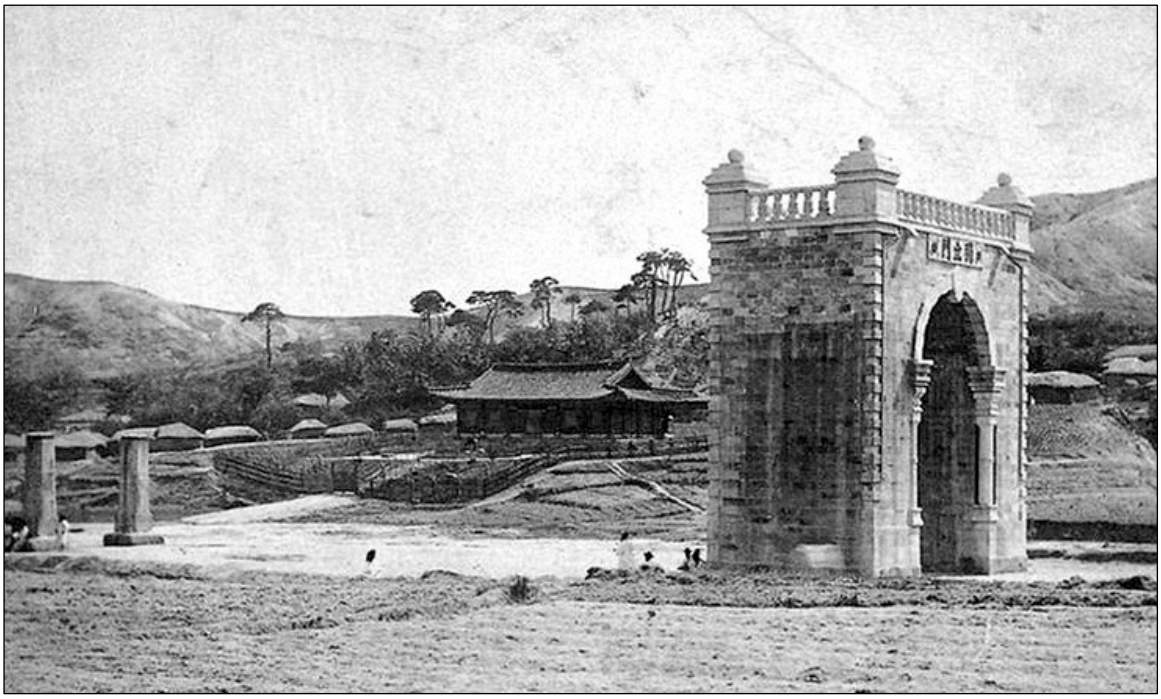

Figure 1. Independence Gate and Independence Hall (circa. 1897)

From the outset of the park-making project, Independence Club members pushed forward with campaigns to encourage the participation of the people in this symbolic making of a new independent Korea. In particular, the club's decision to construct the park with private contributions was carefully designed to meet this objective.[14] In a *Tongnip sinmun* editorial, the Independence Club emphasized that the park should be constructed with people's money rather than only with the government money, because "Korea's independence was a matter for celebration not only for the government but for the entire nation."[15] The club promoted voluntary contributions by regularly publishing a list of contributors as well as celebrating them as "public-spirited" Koreans in the *Tongnip sinmun,* both in vernacular and English columns. The club's fundraising

[14] *Tongnip sinmun*, July 2, 1896; July 4, 1896.

[15] *Tongnip sinmun*, July 4, 1896.

movement was well received by the people. The *Tongnip sinmun* reveals that the club's initiative received support from a wide range of contributors transcending boundaries of class, gender, race, and region. For example, contributions ranged from the large sum of 1,000 wŏn to small amounts of a few chŏn, donated by the crown prince, officials, merchants, students, as well as women.[16] American Diplomat Allen and Russian Minister Waeber were among the many foreign contributors. Contributions also came from various parts of the country and even from abroad. Reading about the club's park-making project in the *Tongnip sinmun*, for example, Pak Yusan and his wife Esther Pak (Kim Chŏmdong, 1876-1910), the first Korean woman who gained Western-style medical education in America and became a doctor, sent in a contribution from New York.

The club's efforts to involve the people in the making of the first public park in Seoul continued thereafter. If Independence Park was to serve as a staging ground for a new Korea, then it needed be the stage for events that represented the ideals of a new Korea. From the beginning, club members understood the impact that national ceremonies could have on both domestic and international audiences, and envisioned Independence Park to serve as a site for the staging of these ceremonies. The most conspicuous public ceremony came with the laying of the cornerstone of the Independence Gate. In November 1896, this, the first Korean modern public ceremony, was held in Independence Park and was attended by more than eight thousand people. A week before the ceremony, club members sent invitations to high government officials, various schools in Seoul, foreign diplomats and notables, and their wives. The club further encouraged the participation of the people by putting a public notice in the

[16] *Tongnip sinmun*, July 4, 1897.

Tongnip sinmun informing readers of the upcoming event. With the construction of the new arch forming a backdrop to the ceremony, the park was decorated with the different flags of Korea and tricolored bunting. One side of the arch foundation, rising about six feet high, served as the platform for the speakers, while the other side was used as a stage for students from the Paichai College Glee Club, who sang patriotic songs such as "Korea" and "Independence" during the ceremony. This was then followed by speeches from both the president of the Independence Club, An Kyŏngsu, and from other speakers, with the key messages urging the people to "unite their hearts in the work of maintaining sovereignty."[17]

This ceremony was a performance that was deliberately planned and conducted by the club, not merely to demonstrate changes occurring in Seoul but rather to shape those changes in certain ways. This point becomes more evident when we take into consideration the deepening disparity between foreigners and Koreans, as well as the Koreans' growing sense of alienation from the Taehan Empire, as examined in Chapter Three. It was against this backdrop that the club members conceived patriotism as a powerful tool that could level social differences and bring the people together as one community. Reporting on the celebration for Kojong's forty-fifth birthday held in the Independence Park in 1896, the editors of the *Tongnip sinmun* wrote:

> This meeting shows two important facts. First, that they have a desire to meet together in a public place, join their hearts and voices in praying for their King and their country...Secondly, officials, merchants, artisans and coolies united

[17] *The Independent*, November 24, 1896.

together under one tent for the purpose of demonstrating their patriotic feelings and sentiments, forgetting all about the differences in their stations and castes.[18]

In *Splendid Monarchy*, Takashi Fujitani has noted that imperial pageantry and ritual events played an important role in Tokyo's transformation into an imperial capital of Meiji Japan.[19] Fujitani draws attention to the importance of the Imperial Palace Plaza in front of the newly constructed Imperial Palace, which served as the stage for the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution in 1899 and the regime's other most spectacular public ceremonies. More specifically, the very location of this new public space provided "historically unprecedented relationships of sight or visibility between the emperor and the Japanese people" and it was through this mutual visibility that the people imagined themselves as members of a modern nation state with the emperor at its center.[20] However, unlike the Imperial Palace Plaza in Japan, Independence Park, the space that served as a staging ground for Korea's first national ceremonies, was located outside the city walls and beyond Kojong's gaze. Kojong also established national holidays and held national ceremonies after the proclamation of the Taehan Empire. Although these ceremonies centered around royalty, just as the Western and Japanese counterparts did, Kojong neither presented himself nor was presented as the main actor or center of these ceremonies. Furthermore, these ceremonies were neither held in public spaces nor were

[18] *The Independent*, September 3, 1896.

[19] Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

[20] Takashi Fujitani, 80-81.

accessible by the urban masses. Reporting on the 506th anniversary of the founding of the Chosŏn dynasty, the *Tongnip sinmun* stated:

> The day was celebrated in the Palace and also in the Independence Park in front of the Independence Gate. Over two thousand tickets had been issued, but the actual number of guests was nearly twice as many. The surrounding area was closely packed with an immense number of spectators. The event was arranged and carried out by the committee of the Club without any assistance of an outsider. The people of Seoul have contributed nearly a thousand dollars to celebrate the day.[21]

It is not unlikely that this newspaper article was intended to celebrate the efforts of the Independence Club in holding national events. Nonetheless, it still allows us to see that Seoul witnessed two ceremonies for the founding of Chosŏn dynasty independent of each other: one held by the Taehan Empire and the other held by the Independence Club. More importantly, it was the Independence Club that held public ceremonies for the national holiday in Independence Park, but were always in the absence of Kojong himself. When the club held other public ceremonies for national holidays such as the emperor's birthday (Mansu sŏngjŏl), the crown prince's birthday (Ch'ŏnch'u gyŏngjŏl), the founding of Chosŏn dynasty (Kaeguk kiwŏnjŏl), and the anniversary of the emperor's coronation (Kyech'ŏn kiwŏnjŏl), Kojong and the royal family often granted the Independence Club funds to cover the expenses, but had never showed up out in front of

[21] *The Independent*, September 3, 1898.

the people. There can be little doubt that Kojong's absence from these public celebrations was not unnoticed by the Independence Club and by the residents of Seoul.

3. Creation of Debating Society

Initially Independence Park was envisioned to include many projects in addition to the Independence Gate and the Independence Hall. However, despite the great interest and enthusiasm expressed in the celebration of laying down the cornerstone of the Independence Gate, the construction of the other facilities in the park could not be fully realized due to insufficient funds. With rapidly waning support and popularity from the people, the park was rather turning into a "place where officers met once a week to smoke and talk away their superabundant time." The *Korean Repository* stated an interesting account in this regard. When the Independence Gate was completed in January 1898, thirteen months after its celebration, "no one knew anything of it or seemingly cared at least" about "the enterprise that was begun under such auspicious circumstances." It continued, "someday the historian will perhaps give us the reason for this very marked change of feeling on the subject of the independence of this country."[22]

One contributing factor to the waning political meaning of the park can be found in the ideological differences of the Independence Club's membership. Due to the club's origins as focused on the creation of the park rather than grounded in specific political ideas, the club's original constituents came from a broad spectrum of government officials, including those with conflicting beliefs. In addition, as the club maintained an open-door policy on its membership as an effort to promote itself as a patriotic body

[22] *The Korean Repository* 5 (1898), 286-287.

representing the nation as a whole, the Independence Club was a "conglomeration of indigestible elements" where the conservatives and progressives, the royal family and "the pariahs of Korea" came together by mutual interest.[23] Scholars have also noted that a variety of political groups within the Independence Club made it "impossible" for historians to attain a proper understanding of the club by examining only the activities and political thoughts of a few leading figures like Sŏ Chaep'il (1864-1951) and Yun Chi'ho (1865-1945).[24] It indicates that from the beginning the club had great potential for division if faced with sensitive political issues such as how to define the rights of the people and the sovereignty of the state.

Moreover, Kojong's proclamation of the Taehan Empire and reinvention of the Korean royal house in October 1897, after his return from the Russian legation, made the Independence Club's position and direction further complicated vis-à-vis the Taehan Empire. As Andre Schmid pointed out, central to this reinvention was an offer for a "new definition of an independent Korea with an emperor as its symbolic center, or as the foundation of independence."[25] Scholars have noted that the task undertaken most urgently in the Taehan Empire's reforms, also known as the Kwangmu Reforms, was the strengthening of the imperial authority. While a new set of reforms was carried out through a "negotiation between old foundation and new participation" (*kubon sinch'am*),

[23] Yun Ch'iho, *Yun Ch'iho Ilgi*, July 25, 1897.

[24] Chu Chin-Oh. "The Independence Club's Conceptions of Nationalism and the Modern State," in *Landlords, Peasants and Intellectuals in Modern Korea*, eds., Pang Kie-Chung and Michael D. Shin (Ithaca: NY, Cornell University, 2005), 55. According to Chu Chin-Oh, there were two leading groups within the Independence Club whose opinions differed on the form of monarchical government. The first group, led by Yun Ch'iho and Namgung Ŏk, strove to establish a strong absolute monarchy, whereas the second group, led by An Kyŏngsu and Chong Kyo, sought to limit the authority of the monarchy. For more details, see, Chu Chin-Oh, Ibid, 72-77.

[25] Andre Schmid, 74-76.

one fundamental that the Taehan Empire adhered to was the strengthening of the monarchical authority. One example of Kojong's strengthening of the imperial authority was the abolition of the cabinet system that was established during the 1894 Kabo Reforms to limit royal authority. Instead, Kojong restored the old State Council System (Ŭijŏngbu) and endowed himself with the authority to preside over the State Council.[26] According to Kim Dohyung, although the Taehan Empire actively sought to incorporate the reform ideas from the Enlightenment thinkers, one area that Kojong and the Enlightenment thinkers held stark differences of opinions on was the political system they envisioned for a new nation. The Independence Club's leaders such as Sŏ Chaep'il and Yun Chi'ho favored the U.S. and Japan as exemplary models of Western civilization, whereas Kojong showed more interest in Russia and its political system that revolved around an emperor.[27] This different political view between the Independence Club and Kojong contributed to the waning interest in the park-making project, and this tension surfaced with the Independence Club's creation of the Debating Society and exploded with its evolution into mass street demonstrations at the end of 1898.

The Independence Club and Independence Park entered on a new career with the creation of the Debating Society (t'oronhoe) in August 1897. Sŏ and Yun with other club members decided to create a debating society that would involve the larger public to help transform the club into a more "useful institution." The club members intended the club's Debating Society to be "more of an education institution than a political wigwam" that

[26] Kim Do-hyung, "Introduction: The Nature of Reform in the Taehan Empire," in *Reform and Modernity in the Taehan Empire*, edited by Kim Dong-no, John B. Duncan, and Kim Do-hyung (Seoul: Jimoondang, 2006), 12-13.

[27] Kim Do-hyung, 11.

would "create public opinion which [had] been totally unknown in Korea" through "discussing matters concerning national improvements and customs, law, religions and various pertinent affairs of foreign lands."[28] The first Debating Society was held in the Independence Hall in August 1897 with the proposition that "education is the urgent task of Korea."[29] Since then, the club held thirty-four meetings in total on various topics in the Independence Hall until December 1898.[30] The debates were held on a variety of topics ranging from hygiene, customs, law, industry, slavery, women's education, foreign concessions, international relations, the people's rights, and the representative assembly (ŭihoe). In terms of procedure, the debates proceeded under prescribed guidelines and principles. Each meeting began by making a roll call and providing the records. After the president announced the subject for the debate, two speakers from the affirmative and negative sides respectively delivered their speech on a given topic, followed by the discussion with other club members. Each debate was then resolved by majority vote of the club members and audience members in attendance.[31]

The Debating Society's influence rapidly grew with its popularity. With its first meeting attended by seventy some people, the number of club members and the general audience participating in the debating meetings increased week after week. When the editors of the *Korean Repository* visited the eighth debating meeting with the proposition that "slavery is a crime morally and politically, and should not be tolerated," there were five hundred Koreans assembled in and around Independence Park. Yi Wanyong, who

[28] *The Korean Repository* 5 (1898), 286-287.

[29] *Tongnip sinmun*, August 31, 1897.

[30] For details on these topics, see Sin Yongha, 324-329.

[31] *Tongnip sinmun*, August 31, 1897.

later became a pro-Japanese minister of Korea and signed the Annexation Treaty in 1910, participated in the debate as a speaker in the affirmative side, and argued how it was the determination of slave owners, more than a change in laws, that would result in the abolition of slavery, further revealing that he freed thirty one slaves and burned their slave deeds before coming to the meeting.[32] At the end of the meeting, the resolution was carried in the affirmative and it was determined that ones who voted were obliged to manumit their slaves. According to the *Korean Repository*, at least one hundred slaves were freed in the capital as the result of this debating meeting.

Far from being limited to Seoul, the Debating Society's influence and popularity was growing beyond the capital. In June 1898, the *Independent* published a letter from a man named Yi Ch'iŭng who lived in Chŏnju in Chŏlla Province with a "speech song" (yŏnsŏlga) that he wrote. When Yi visited the Independence Hall to watch the "speeches that had not existed for five hundred years" in Korea "for sightseeing" during his last trip to Seoul, Yi wrote in his letter how much he was impressed by the patriotic content and the orderly process, and excited by the audio and visual aspects of the debating meeting. Yi's letter shows that the Debating Society served as a spectacle that drew in not only Seoul's inhabitants, but also people from outside the capital. It indicated that visitors like Yi played an important role in spreading the influence of the Debating Society to people outside the capital. Other regions across the country also witnessed the spontaneous organization of similar debating societies whose rules and regulations were directly taken from the Independence Club's Debating Society.[33]

[32] *Korean Repository* 4 (1897), 437.

[33] *The Independent*, February 5, 1898.

Recent studies have noted that the Independence Club's Debating Society offered an important experience through which Seoul's urban crowds recognized themselves as political subjects whose participation could make meaningful changes, rather than merely serving as objects of an elites' top-down enlightenment program.[34] From the beginning, the Debating Society was a training ground for practicing "public speaking and fundamental rules of conducting public meetings" among the club members, rather than a one-way channel for distributing knowledge.[35] Conforming to the club's open-door policy on membership, the debating meetings followed democratic principles without age, class, wealth, and gender barriers. Anyone could have a chance to express their ideas openly and discuss various subjects "on equal footing" with others in the meetings.[36] Moreover, the majority vote that resolved each debate rendered all members as equal participants in the decision-making process, regardless of one's background. In order to facilitate this new procedure, Yun Ch'iho translated in 1898 *Pocket Manual of Rules of Order for Deliberate Assemblies*, the book written by Henry M. Robert (1837-1923) to introduce the basic parliamentary procedures modeled after those used in the United States House of Representatives. He then distributed it to club members and general publics. Its impact on Seoul's residents was immediate and conspicuous. In the summer of 1898, the British consul observed the Debating Society and noted that "the proceedings are conducted with the most perfect regularities, resolutions being moved

[34] Yi T'aehun, "Hanmal chŏngch'i undong ŭi hwaksan kwa chŏchi yŏnsŏl ŭi yŏkhal," *Yŏksa munje yŏn'gu* 27 (2012): 7-32; Kim Do-hyung, "Introduction: The Nature of Reform in the Taehan Empire" in *Reform and Modernity in the Taehan Empire,* eds., Kim Dong-no, John B. Duncan, and Kim Do-hyung. (Seoul: Jimoondang, 2006).

[35] *The Independent*, August 31, 1897.

[36] Frederick Arthur McKenzie, *Korea's Fight for Freedom* (London: Simpkin Marshall, 1920), 68.

seconded and adopted with all the formality observed at public meetings in Western countries."[37] As such, Independence Park was turned into a space where Seoul's urban inhabitants experienced new social relations by "quickly [grasping] the intricacies of parliamentary rule."[38]

The growing interests in politics among the urban masses were channeled into direct political action through a club-organized mass demonstration against the growing Russian inroads in March 1898. In its February debating meeting on the foreign concession, the Independence Club decided to present a memorial to the throne to block the government's concessions to Russia and the Western powers. Before its submission to the throne, the memorial was signed by 136 members of the Independence Club and read out loud in front of more than seven hundred people who gathered in the Independence Hall. Upon submission, those in the capital were "carefully watching the actions of the government."[39] The club also decided to mobilize the urban masses to bring increased pressure to bear on the government. The club announced a mass meeting in the *Tongnip sinmun*, and invited "gentlemen of good sensibilities" to attend.[40] On March 10, 1898, close to ten thousand people turned out for this first mass meeting, known as the Manmin kongdonghoe (Common Assembly of All People), at Chongno, the main thoroughfare inside the city. The mass meeting proceeded with the same procedures as the Debating Society. Under the presidency of a rice merchant Hyŏn Tŏkho, who was

[37] *Reports and Communication from the British Consul in Seoul* 79, July 24, 1898. cited in Sin Yongha, 336.

[38] Frederick Arthur McKenzie, 68.

[39] *Korean Repository* 5 (1898), 74-75.

[40] *Tongnip sinmun,* March 10, 1898.

selected as a chairman of the meeting, the meeting proceeded with speeches by club members and by students from the Paichai and Kyŏngsŏng Schools. It was then resolved by the club that the withdrawal of Russian financial advisors and military trainers was the "uniform desire of the people," and delivered this resolution to the Foreign Ministry.[41] As the government notified the Russian legation of its decision not to hire foreign advisors the next day, this first mass protest in the capital had resulted in success.

The Manmin kongdonghoe's success marked an important turning point for both the club leaders and urban masses. Witnessing its apparent ability to produce immediate and dramatic results, the club shifted its tactic to the mobilization of the urban masses.[42] It also marked a significant expansion of political consciousness and participation by the urban population. Seoul witnessed subsequent meetings organized spontaneously by the urban masses without the leadership of the Independence Club. On March 12, a few officers of the Imperial guard and a dozen people from the Hamgyŏng Province, a northern region sharing a border with Russia, organized a mass meeting in Chongno in response to the meeting two days ago. According to the *Tongnip sinmun*, several thousand people gathered from all parts of the city, and as a result, Chongno became "simply packed with humanity of all descriptions."[43] Here, it is significant to note that in addition to the initial organizers from the Hamgyŏng Province, people from the audience also gave speeches spontaneously upon permission from the audience. As Sin Chiyŏng argues, with the spontaneous expansion of these mass meetings, the boundaries between the speaker and the audience became obscured and voluntary audience members in the

[41] *Tongnip sinmun*, March 12, 1898.

[42] Palais, 1979, 96.

[43] *The Independence*, March 15, 1898.

meetings were transforming themselves into active participants.[44] This collective experience left an enduring impact on urban inhabitants. For example, Chang Wujin, who participated in the Manmin kongdonghoe's mass demonstration as a student, recalled in 1929 that his experience of giving a speech there was a "heart-throbbing experience of a lifetime."[45]

In short, the Manmin kongdonghoe in March opened a new space for the people who had not been previously entitled to participate in central politics to make themselves visible in the political arena and, in turn, see themselves as meaningful political actors. Following this success, the club began to more directly make various political demands and reforms, which culminated in the demand for the establishment of the representative assembly. With this shift in its direction, the inherent tension between the club and Kojong began to surface. The following section shows how this tension resolved into the contestation over the public space inside the city walls.

4. Marching into the City

On June 30, 1898, the Independence Club decided to present another memorial to Kojong in regard to evils of the day and the best ways to redress them. This time, the members gathered in the Music Hall (Changagwŏn) inside the city walls instead of the Independence Hall to discuss the issue and how to draft the memorial. The editors of the *Tongnip sinmun* wrote that when they decided to protest against the government they

[44] Sin Chiyŏng, "Yŏnsŏl, t'oron iranŭn chedo ŭi yuip kwa kamgak ŭi pyŏnhwa," *Han'guk kŭndae munhak yŏn'gu* 6 (2005): 9-41.

[45] *Pyŏlgŏngon* 21 (1929), 61-62.

deemed it "necessary to move their headquarters."[46] For them, the problem with the Independence Hall, was that it was located some distance outside the West Gate, such an out-of-the-way place that they had little chance to be seen and heard. After experiencing the successful mass demonstrations at Chongno inside the walls, this issue of the location of its meetings became more important to club members. In this sense, the Music Hall provided a better gathering place for club members. Not only had it a large and open space that could accommodate a large number of people, but the Music Hall was also located near the center of the city, the present-day Ŭlji-ro in Myŏngdong. To make political demands and to attract public attention and get themselves seen by the urban masses, it was indeed "necessary" to take the space inside the city walls.

In the memorial submitted under the name of Yun Ch'iho and over six hundred club members, the club stated that it was the corrupted government officials, whose sole objective was to promote their own interests instead of the state's interests, that brought the present perils of the country. It continued to urge Kojong to dismiss conservative officials and fill the vacancies with "wise and good men" and to "seek public opinion" in political matters. Despite the club's seriousness, the memorial elicited nothing but a gentle rebuke from Kojong. In his reply to the club, Kojong said not to "rashly" discuss government affairs without being in official positions. Agitated by Kojong's reply, the club presented another memorial, stating there could be no bound between an official and a subject, and decided not to disperse until their demands were satisfied.[47] On August 5, after about a month since the club occupied the Music Hall, the club members found the

[46] *The Independent*, June 30, 1898.

[47] *The Independent*, July 16, 1898; Chŏng Kyo. *Taehan kyenyŏnsa,* vol. 3, 100.

Music Hall and the streets to the hall surrounded by hundreds of soldiers and policemen with fixed bayonets. A notice from the Police Department on the main entrance stated:

> The Independence Club was originally established by people actuated by motives of loyalty and patriotism; that, of late, the club, in its frequent meetings in the Music Hall, departed from its primary object; that the improper language which a member of the club used in referring to His Majesty showed neither loyalty nor patriotism; that the club should hold its regular meetings in its own hall outside the West Gate; and that no more popular gatherings of any sort shall be allowed in the city after the notice.[48]

In contrast to the modest tone in the *Tongnip sinmun*, the club's occupation of the Music Hall as a form of protest created much pressure for the government. The British consul in Seoul stated in its reports that "at present [Seoul] affords the strange example in a purely Oriental city of a sort of popular and representative assembly freely criticizing the administration of the country."[49] Not wanting to be alienated from the government, the club decided to retreat to the Independence Hall and arranged a public celebration of the 506th anniversary of the founding of Chosŏn in Independence Park on September 1, as if to prove their "loyalty and patriotism." In the opening ceremony, Yun Ch'iho devoted a good amount of his speech to denying the supposed "anarchist tendencies" of

[48] *The Independent*, August 9, 1898.

[49] Reports and Communication from the British Consul in Seoul, July 24, 1898. cited in Sin Yongha, 392.

the club.[50] The Music Hall incident, however, proved to be a prelude to the contestations between the Taehan Empire and the Independence Club's public gatherings, over the use of public space inside the city walls for political participation.

On September 1898, a few months after Kojong banned public gatherings inside the city walls, the members of the Independence Club once again gathered inside the city walls. This gathering marked the beginning of the political turmoil that engulfed the Taehan Empire and Seoul in the last several months of 1898. The incident that triggered this political unrest was the former Russian interpreter Kim Hongnyuk's assassination attempt on Kojong by poisoning his evening coffee. While conducting an investigation into this treasonable plot, the conservatives attempted to revive the guilt-by-association system and other repressive laws that were abolished during the Kabo reforms. Responding immediately to this move, the club mobilized several thousand people and held a series of all-night demonstrations, for over a week, in front of various government buildings, such as the Privy Council (Chungch'uwŏn) and the Supreme Court, and also in front of Kyŏngun Palace. As the demonstrations kept on growing with the participation of students and with merchants who also closed their shops in the capital, Kojong gave in to the protesters and dismissed seven ministers who the club charged with conservatism. The vacancies were filled immediately by some figures with progressive tendencies.[51]

With the momentum created from this last success, the Independence Club began to negotiate in earnest with the government by proposing the reorganization of the Privy

[50] *Tongnip sinmun*, September 5, 1898.

[51] Regarding this change, the U.S. Consular Allen wrote on his diplomatic report under the title of "Change in Cabinet, Peaceful Revolution, Independence Club" that Seoul had passed through "a period of intensive excitement" as "a peaceful revolution [had] taken place, and at the demand of the masses, almost a complete change of cabinet [had] been made." (H. N. Allen. *Communications to the Secretary of State from U.S. Representatives in Korea*. No. 152, October 13, 1898.)

Council into a representative assembly in October.[52] The Independence Club envisioned the reformed Privy Council to be a "semi-popular assembly" in which one half of the seats were to be elected by the government and the other half by the Independence Club.[53] On October 28, the Independence Club made a final push for its demand by convening an "Assembly of Officials and People" (Kwanmin kongdonghoe) in Chongno. As the name of the meeting demonstrates, the club organized a mass meeting where "ministers of state, yangban and common people of every trade and grade" gathered "to consult together as to the best means for delivering the country from its present condition of helpless wretchedness."[54] Indeed, a wide range of participants attended this historical event, ranging from students, members of various associations, and also marginalized peoples, such as women, monks, and "butchers [and] the pariahs of Korea."[55] It was after giving an opening speech in this meeting that Pak Sŏngch'un, a butcher (paekchŏng), one of the most despised social positions in the status system, gave an rousing opening speech and rose to become one of the most celebrated figures of the Manmin kongdonghoe.

This mass meeting was another success. After day-to-day negotiations with the government, Kojong gave his consent for the formation of a national assembly. This resulted in the publication of the Constitution of the Privy Council (Chungch'uwŏn kwanje) and produced a six-point resolution (Hŏnui yukcho), "the first joint agreement

[52] *The Independent*, October 18, 1898.

[53] *The Independent*, October 18, 1898.

[54] *The Independent*, November 1, 1898.

[55] Associations participating in the mass meeting included the Hyŏpsŏnghoe (the Mutual Friendship Society), the Kwangmu hyŏphoe (the Kwangmu Society), the Ch'anyanghoe (Female Education Society), the Hwangguk chungang ch'ongsanghoe (the Imperial Central Chamber of Commerce), the Posinsa (the Faith Protection Society) and even the Hwangguk hyŏphoe (the Imperial Society). For more details, see Sin Yongha.

between government officials and the people in five hundred years."[56] The Independence Club was to elect twenty-five members of the reformed Privy Council on November 5 in the Independence Hall. This would have produced "Korea's first close approximation of a modern national assembly." According to Chandra, this proclamation constituted a fundamental institutional innovation in Korea's political structure. By "redefining the functions and place of the monarch, the State Council, and the Privy Council, and by granting an official role to a civic organization in matters of state, the proclamation projected the potential of giving an entirely new direction to modern Korean political history."[57]

While the protesters were excited about their collective achievement, Confucian scholars saw the club-led mass demonstrations as a serious threat to Confucian social relations and distinctions. In the eyes of the Confucian scholars, the ways in which the protesters were jumbled together without distinctions between men and women, and elder and younger, noble and mean, to discuss the affairs of state were simply unthinkable in the Confucian tradition, which emphasized the importance of maintaining the hierarchical social relations.[58] Among the Confucian social relations, the protesters' demands for political reforms from Kojong were deemed to be the most serious threat transgressing the traditional relationship between the ruler and the subject. For example, An T'aewŏn, a Confucian official, wrote in his memorial to Kojong:

[56] *Tongnip sinmun*, November 1, 1898.

[57] Chandra, 199.

[58] *Kojong sillok*, December 11, 1898.

> [The protesters] held meetings at the crossroads and clamored out even in front of the palace gate. Hundreds and thousands of people clustered together and responded to each other by shouting back and forth. Even peddlers, *kisaeng*, Buddhist monks, and butchers flocked around noisily and watched the meetings. On the pretext of gaining reputation and power, they propagated untruth and openly slandered [the government] on various newspapers and foreign reports... And then lastly, they established [the resolution] article by article, and requested approval by posing a threat [to the government]. This was as if the fierce enemy in a strong neighboring country demanded an agreement by force. Such trouble indeed has not existed for all ages.[59]

Criticizing the government officials involved in the meeting for "taking the people's discussion of threatening the king more importantly than the king's order for ruling the people," An warned Kojong that these officials were attempting to reduce the sovereign's rights and to reform the absolute monarchy by "deluding the king's mind and deranging the people's mind." The Contract Society (Toyakso), a group of Confucian scholars, also strongly denounced the club's motive of organizing the mass meetings and demonstrations as, after all, a trick "to prepare a short cut to office and title."[60] In their memorials, they argued that through its mass actions the club tried to "encroach upon the prerogatives of the sovereign after the custom of a democratic country," and such was as

[59] *Kojong sillok*, December 9, 1898.

[60] *The Independent*, October 25, 1898.

same as treason in a country that had been an absolute monarchy for five centuries and "the foundation of politeness and righteousness in the whole world."[61]

Needless to say, Kojong also saw the unceasing mass demonstrations as a serious threat to his imperial authority, especially as they continued to be held inside the city walls, despite of his imperial ordinance prohibiting such gatherings. As examined in Chapter Two, the Chosŏn dynasty constructed Seoul as a tightly controlled and highly regulated political space, a space that was far away from the hurly-burly of street politics. Even when the sinmungo and kyŏkchaeng system were allowed, representative communication channels through which the people could petition the king directly, by beating a drum or a gong during the Chosŏn period, were risky at best, as petitioners faced the potential of punishment for disrupting the calmness and making a noise in the capital.[62] Furthermore, as capital cities came to serve as a staging ground to display countries' modernity and authority both to domestic and international audiences in the end of the nineteenth century, maintaining orderliness in the capital became an extremely important task for Kojong more than ever before. Thus, for Kojong, the protestors reminding one of "a swarm of bees or locusts because it was over everything and everywhere" in Seoul was a serious problem that must be settled without delay.[63]

Witnessing the criticizing of government policies and officials in mass meetings and demonstrations, many people voiced anxieties over the political direction of a new Korea. Newspapers and personal writings reflected some of these concerns as they

[61] *The Independent*, October 25, 1898; *Kojong sillok*, January 1, 1899.

[62] For the *sinmun* and *kyŏkchaeng* system, see Han Sanggwŏn, *Chosŏn hugi sahoe wa sowŏn chedo: sangŏn, kyŏkchaeng yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1996).

[63] *The Independent*, November 17.

compared the people's assemblies (minhoe) with the radical political parties in Western countries, such as the Party of People's Rights in Germany or the Anarchist Party in Italy.[64] Anxiety over the possibility of a democratic revolution was acute. The conservatives continued to urge Kojong to dissolve the Independence Club immediately, warning that a popular revolt (minbyŏn) like the French Revolution would occur soon in Korea.[65] As such anxiety was not only steadily growing both inside and outside the Court, but also aggravating the relationship between Kojong and the Independence Club, the editors of the *Tongnip sinmun* attempted to appease these concerns and suspicions by denying the possibility of a democratic revolution in Korea. Under the title of "what are the people's rights," the *Tongnip sinmun* editorial directly compared the current situation in Korea with that of France on the eve of the revolution, and concluded that the Korean people were not ready and the time was not ripe.[66] However, an anonymous letter posted on the main streets in the capital on November 4, a night before the election meeting for the reformed Privy Council in the Independence Hall, stated that the Independence Club was to establish a republic and elect Pak Chŏngyang as president and Yun Ch'iho as vice-president. This letter turned Kojong firmly against the club. Immediately after, Kojong ordered the dissolution of the Independence Club as well as all things that were labeled as an association, and subsequently arrested seventeen of the club's leaders.

[64] *Tongnip sinmun*, August 23, 1898

[65] Chong Kyo, *Taehan kyenyŏnsa*, vol. 3, 124.

[66] *Tongnip sinmun*, July 9, 1898.

> We learn that in foreign countries where there are private clubs and parliament clubs established by private persons for conversation and society. A national parliament is a public institution organized for the purpose of deliberating and deciding measures of national importance. There are also in our country private clubs. They were started to help forward the civilization of the country. The discussion of politics and the interference with the [resignation] or appointment of officers are not within the sphere of the clubs. As to holding meetings outside of the regular places of assembly; memorializing the Throne in front of the Palace; coercing high officials without any bounds—such privileges are not exercised even by a parliament, much less by a club. Thinking of these (irregularities) our heart is exceedingly sad. Henceforth, let the Home Department instruct the Police and local authorities everywhere to strictly prohibit all associations, which may disturb the peace and order of society by holding disorderly meetings. All who disobey the orders of the government shall be held responsible to the law of the realm. No indulgence shall be shown to an offender.[67]

In response, Yun Ch'iho and other club members who escaped arrest mobilized the urban masses to demand the reinstatement of the club and the release of its leaders. The protest was joined by various voluntary participants and continued for forty-two days in front of various government offices inside the city walls. Kojong tried to negotiate with the protesters by allowing them to have assemblies instead in their regular meeting

[67] *The Independent*, October 25, 1898.

place, the Independence Hall. However, the protesters did not yield an inch on the issue of the place of assembly on the grounds that they were composed not only of the members of the Independence Club but also of "all castes, guilds, and associations in Seoul."[68] They continued, that Chongno served as the right place for their assembly as it was "the streets of the people" (manmin).[69] Unable to find a means to repress the mass demonstrations in other ways, on December 23, Kojong finally enforced martial law and mobilized military to crackdown the protesters. 400 members of the Independence Club were arrested and a total ban on free speech and assembly was placed in Seoul. Soldiers and police kept tight control over the city to maintain public order, and detectives dispersed even small groups of three or four gathered on the streets.[70] As various newspapers criticized the Taehan Empire's military crackdown on the protesters, Kojong promulgated the Taehan Imperial System (Taehan'guk kukche) in August 1899, which declared "the Taehan Empire has been an absolute polity (chŏnje chŏngch'i) for the past five hundred years and will stay unchanged in eternity."[71] With this promulgation Korea's contested search for a new political system ended in an absolutist polity.

V. Conclusion

This chapter examined the Independence Club's making of Independence Park and the contestation between the Taehan Empire and the club-led mass demonstrations

[68] *The Independent*, November 1, 1898.

[69] *Tongnip sinmun*, December 10, 1898.

[70] Lillias Horton Underwood*, Fifteen Years Among Top-knots* (Boston: American Tract Society, 1908), 215.

[71] *Tongnip sinmun*, August 22, 1898.

inside the city walls. The Independence Club created the public park to commemorate Korea's severance of its tributary relationship with China after the Sino-Japanese War in 1895. From the outset of its construction, the club strove to engage the people into its social and cultural reforms by holding public ceremonies and organizing the Debating Society in Independence Park. The club's Debating Society in particular played an important role in the expansion of political consciousness and participation among Seoul's inhabitants. The Independence Club activists further mobilized the urban masses and forced their ways into the city walls to add even more pressure on the government. Taking this action as a direct threat to Confucian social relations and to the proper relationship between the ruler and the ruled in particular, Kojong enforced several imperial ordinances restricting assemblies inside the city walls. For protesters, it was through this making of space inside the city walls for political participation that the masses who were previously excluded from central politics made themselves visible in the political arena and in turn saw themselves as political members. For Kojong and Confucian scholars, on the other hand, the demonstrators surging into the city walls and occupying the public space inside the city walls to insert their voices into political matters were not only harmful to Confucian social relations but were also tantamount to the transgressing political boundaries between an emperor and his subjects.

Although this making of space for political participation was short-lived due to Kojong's enforcement of martial law in 1898, it indeed left an enduring impact on the ways in which Seoul's inhabitants used space for political participation. It was not until the break of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, also a year before Korea became a protectorate of Japan that political and social organizations once again grew in numbers

and flourished in their activities. In the face of imminent danger of Korea's loss of sovereignty and also by taking advantage of the Taehan Empire's weakened control over the assemblies and political rallies, various groups were organized including the Ilchinhoe (Advancement in Unity Society), a renowned pro-Japanese political society. Following the legacy of the Independence Club, these organizations mobilized mass demonstrations in the capital, again by violating an imperial ordinance not to hold assemblies inside the city walls. Participants in the mass demonstrations were not limited to the urban masses this time. Many were flocking into the capital from all across the country to participate in these popular movements. Witnessing surging Imperial Japanese Army and Korean protesters from inside the city walls of Seoul, Kojong and the Taehan Empire government once again found itself in a situation where they had to deal with threats from within and without. This served as an important backdrop for Kojong's holding on to the city walls around 1904-1905, which will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

Demolishing Walls

1. Introduction

Many of the foreign visitors to Korea from the West in the late nineteenth century wrote a great deal about Seoul and their time-travel-like experiences of being in Seoul. Burton Holmes (1870-1958), one of the most famous American travelers at the time, wrote that a visit to Seoul in 1901 was "one of the most choicest [*sic*] tidbits on the menu of modern travel."[1] In the eyes of foreign visitors, Seoul was like being in a "palace in the fairy tale, everything remained as it had been centuries before."[2] It was the city walls of Seoul more than anything else that left the "impression of medievalism" on Western visitors to Seoul after the opening of diplomatic relations in the 1880s.[3] As the first piece of architecture of the city that came into view amidst a "barren landscape" to visitors approaching Seoul, the city walls left a striking first impression of the capital of Korea. Furthermore, Westerners wrote that the walls gave them a "decided medieval flavor" to find themselves in a city begirt with massive walls and with the gates shut after dark.[4] Percival Lowell (1855-1916), an American astronomer who visited Korea in the 1880s, wrote that inside the city walls, the "perfect stillness of the city" at nightfall was

[1] Burton Holmes, *Burton Holmes Travelogues: Seoul, the Capital of Korea. Japan, the Country. Japan, the Cities* (Chicago: The Travelogue Bureau, 1914), 5.

[2] Percival Lowell, *Choson: The Land of the Morning Calm; a Sketch of Korea* (Boston; Ticknor and company, 1886), 7.

[3] George Gilmore, *Korea from its Capital: With a Chapter on Missions* (Philadelphia; Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1892), 45.

[4] George Gilmore, Ibid. 44.

extraordinary in comparison to nights in Tokyo or Canton, much less to the glare of street lamps and lights from café windows in nighttime Paris or London, and it struck him as similar to the ancient curfew system in England.[5]

Acutely conscious of the gaze of the Others, some Korean intellectuals expressed discomfort at Seoul's city walls serving as a representation of Korea's backwardness and current predicaments. One editorial in the *Tongnip sinmun* wrote in 1896 that with the introduction of gunpowder weapons, which fundamentally changed the nature of the defense of cities, Seoul's city walls became not only "perfectly useless" but also "less a pleasure to the sight."[6] In the days of scientific warfare, it continued, the walls no longer served as a protection but rather a "stand for trouble" and a "constant reminder that Korea must be protected and that enemies surrounded it. Furthermore, as Seoul with its walls falling into decay and crumbling down reminded one of a "house with its dilapidated fence," the editors lamented that they could not expect foreigners to not look down on Koreans who lived in such a "poor, ugly and careless Seoul." Despite their harsh criticism on the uselessness of Seoul's city walls, however, the editors of the *Tongnip sinmun* did not go further to argue for the tearing down of the walls. Instead, they suggested planting trees along the city walls, which would be both useful to the health of the community as well as beautiful to the eye. For many Koreans like the editors of the *Tongnip sinmun*, the city walls were still fundamental to the city's definition of itself and thus it was almost unthinkable to imagine Seoul without its walls.

[5] Percival Lowell, 227-228.

[6] *Tongnip sinmun*, October 29, 1896.

If Seoul's city walls still mattered for some people largely due to their symbolic importance in defining the city's identity and membership by the end of the nineteenth century, they held greater importance for the state both for practical and symbolic reasons. As examined in Chapters Three and Four, Kojong faced threats to his political power not only from without but also from within in the late nineteenth century, and in such a time of great upheaval, Kojong still held on to the city walls as the last bastion to protect his authority. Kojong's efforts were standing in a tradition of the Chosŏn government's continuous emphasis on the walls. Although the skepticism on the usefulness of the walls as a military defense mechanism had continued since the Japanese and Manchu invasions in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Chosŏn government had repaired existing city walls as well as built new city walls such as the Hwasŏng Fortress in Suwŏn. In this context, it is not surprising that the Chosŏn government's emphasis on the walls was intensified with Taewŏn'gun's "closed-door policy" and was further continued by Kojong during the Taehan Empire until the walls were finally demolished by the Japanese colonialists.[7]

This chapter delineates the contestation and resistance surrounding the demolition of Seoul's city walls, as well as their larger implications in the process of Japan's colonization of Korea. I begin this chapter by demonstrating the Taehan Empire's continuing efforts to maintain Seoul's gates and walls by examining its restoration of the curfew system and the construction of a streetcar system running through the gates, connecting districts inside and outside the walls. Seoul's walls persisted despite calls for demolition, as they were still playing an important role in regulating and policing the new

[7] In fact, the aforementioned editorial in the *Tongnip sinmun* was written precisely in response to Kojong's repairing of Seoul's city walls in 1894. Kojong's efforts on repairing Seoul's walls continued until as late as 1902 (*Hwangsŏng sinmun*, August 12, 1902).

forces coming into the city as well as symbolizing the political sovereignty of the Taehan Empire. The standing of Seoul's city walls, however, was significantly challenged when the Japanese Residency-General set up in Seoul in February 1906. Here, I argue that the Japanese colonial government utilized the demolition of Seoul's walls, both literally and figuratively, as one of the most apparent visual representations of its deterritorialization of Seoul, and in turn its colonization of Korea. As Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari have pointed out the double dynamic of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, Japan's deterritorialization attempt on Seoul as the capital of the Taehan Empire accompanied its efforts for reterritorialization of Seoul into the colonial city of Keijō (Kyŏngsŏng).[8] Finally, I demonstrate that it was through the colonial government's reorganization of administrative districts in 1914 and railroad construction that Seoul was incorporated into the Japanese Empire and into its network in East Asia. In this way, Seoul's navigation in its search to become a modern city ended with it becoming the colonial city of Keijō.

2. Streetcars Breaking through City Walls

The city gates of Seoul controlled all access to the city. Just like many premodern walled cities elsewhere in the world, Seoul had been operating under a curfew called *yagŭm* during the Chosŏn dynasty. The *yagŭm* was operated closely with the Posin'gak Bell hung in the tower of the city where the roads join from the four points at the main intersection of Chongno. It was also this bell that gave Chongno its name, which literally means Bell Street. Functioning as a curfew bell of the city, the bell was rung everyday to signal the opening and closing of Seoul's gates, and its ringing served as an important

[8] In fact, Kyŏngsŏng, the Korean name of Keijō, was used to refer to Seoul throughout the Chosŏn period. See Kim Chejŏng, "Kŭndae Kyŏngsŏng ŭi yongnye wa kŭ ŭimi ŭi pyŏnhwa," *Sŏulhak yŏn'gu* 49 (2012): 1-29.

tradition defining the everyday life of the urban community. According to Chosŏn's *Kyŏngguk taejŏn* (Grand Code for State Administration), the capital's gates closed with *injŏng* and opened with *p'aru*.[9] *Injŏng* refers to the ringing of the bell twenty-eight times at ten o'clock at night, and with *injŏng* the gates were closed until *p'aru* was rung thirty-three times at four o'clock next morning to announce the opening of the gates.

The curfew was strictly enforced inside the walls of Seoul after dark to ensure public order as well as national security. The Hansŏngbu ran night patrols throughout the Chosŏn dynasty and punished those who violated the curfew law with floggings.[10] Thus, when Seoul had "fallen asleep" with the ringing of the curfew bell, nocturnal city streets inside the walls were quiet and human movement was rare.

> At nightfall the massive wooden doors of the city gates, clad in their iron armor, are swung to; and from that time till dawn no one–man, woman, or child–is allowed to pass the limit of his own threshold. The whole little world is forced to remain, each family separately, at home. The streets are deserted; any one found upon them is at once taken to the police station and flogged.[11]

This policing role of the walls began to decline when the curfew was abolished during the Kabo Reforms. From July 1894 to February 1896, these sweeping reforms announced more than 600 reform decrees across a wide range of institutions and social

[9] *Kyŏngguk taejŏn.* Pyŏngjo. Mungaep'ae.

[10] Yu Sŭnghŭi, "Sipch'il sipp'al segi yagŭmje ŭi unyŏng kwa pŏmyaja ŭi silt'ae," *Yŏksa wa kyŏnggye* 87 (2013): 85-109.

[11] Percival Lowell, *Choson: The Land of the Morning Calm; a Sketch of Korea* (Boston; Ticknor and company, 1886), 227.

legislation to advance the government and society to a modernized state, and the abolishment of the curfew law was one of them. On September 29, 1895, the *Kungnaebu* (Ministry of Royal Household) issued a decree, modeled after the practices of modern cities elsewhere, to abolish the ringing of the bell for *injŏng* and *p'aru*, and to ring the bell at noon and midnight instead.[12] With this decree, the traditional curfew system and the opening and closing of the gates, which had served as a means to control access to and departure from Seoul for five hundred years, were finally abolished. That is, Seoul's gates were kept open all night and the city became accessible to everyone anytime.

This complete openness of the city, however, was short-lived. As irony would have it, or precisely because the curfew was abolished ten days earlier, before the dawn on October 8, 1895, Queen Min was murdered in her own palace by Japanese assassins. Fearing for his own safety after this incident, Kojong fled to the Russian legation in February 1896, and also ordered the police to keep the gates closed at night, even without a revision of the curfew law.[13]

The revived custom of the closing of the city gates at night caused inconvenience for foreign travelers and merchants, and became a source of conflict between Korean policemen and the foreigners coming into Seoul. Most foreigners reached the city from Chemulp'o (Inch'ŏn) that served as a gateway to Seoul after the signing of the Kanghwa Treaty. The problem was that the river steamers from Chemulp'o generally arrived in Yongsan at midnight, after Seoul's gates were already closed.[14] It created "great anxiety"

[12] *Kojong sillok*, September 29, 1895.

[13] *Tongnip sinmun*, August 24, 1897.

[14] *The Independent*, August 24, 1897.

for foreign travelers and merchants because those who missed the gates' lock-out time had to seek accommodation in the suburbs or even spend the night in an open field. However, the area outside of the city walls was becoming unruly and unsafe at night.[15] Although *sŏngjŏ simni*, the area immediately outside the city walls, belonged to the legal sphere of the capital, the Hansŏngbu's police force did not maintain a firm grip on public order in this area from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards.[16] Consequently, the neighborhoods outside the city walls had a higher crime rate than inside the walls, and the number of theft cases was particularly high.

Therefore, the foreign merchants transporting goods into Seoul at nighttime in particular forced their way into the city by any means necessary. They sometimes hired thugs and other times enlisted the help of the legation guards from their ethnic communities inside the walls to forcibly open the gates.[17] Aware of the fact that the curfew law was abolished in 1895, the foreign guards stationed in Seoul claimed that the Korean law allowed the gates to be kept open both day and night, and that foreigners had "a right to go in and out whenever it is necessary."[18] Having no legal ground to object such claims, the Korean policemen had difficulty in dealing with these conflicts. Moreover, as both sides refused to yield an inch, the conflicts over the gates between Korean police and foreign guards often escalated into physical confrontations. When a Japanese merchant named Kimura arrived at the South Gate with two packhorses on the

[15] Henry Norman, *People and Politics of the Far East: Travels and Studies in the British, French, Spanish and Portuguese Colonies, Siberia, China, Japan, Korea, Siam and Malaya*. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1895), 339-340.

[16] Yu Sŭnghŭi, Ibid.

[17] *Tongnip sinmun*, September 26, 1896.

[18] *The Independent*, August 24, 1897.

night of September 1896, for example, he found out that the gate was already closed. He demanded the Korean authorities to open the gate, but the policeman rejected his entry into the city, stating that without permission from the Police Department, the gate would not be opened. Instead of giving in to the policeman, Kimura climbed over the city walls and brought with him a Japanese legation guard from the Japanese settlement in Chingogae. After the scuffle over the legal issue regarding the gates, the Japanese guard beat the Korean guard and opened the gate arbitrarily to let the Japanese merchant in the city.[19] As the physical confrontations between the foreign guards and the Korean policemen guarding Seoul's gates at night increased, the Korean Police Department requested the Home Department in 1897 to issue clear regulations concerning the gates so that the police could be guided by these rules.[20]

With daybreak Seoul's gates faced a different set of problems. Since all travel into and out of the city had to pass through one of them, the gates were turning into one of the busiest locations of the city as soon as the nighttime curfew was lifted. It was commercial traffic that constituted the largest volume of traffic into the city. Scholars have noted that Seoul's urban population had depended on the merchants and peddlers who mediated the commercial activities in Chongno with those in major ports along the Han River outside the city walls.[21] Such dependency was a direct result of Seoul's economic development during the late Chosŏn period. As the small port towns on the Han River such as Map'o and Yongsan were developing into centers of maritime transportation, Seoul also grew

[19] *Tongnip sinmun*, September 26, 1896.

[20] *The Independent*, August 24, 1897.

[21] Ko Tonghwan, "The Characteristics of the Urban Development of Seoul during the Late Chosŏn Dynasty: With a Focus on the Changes in Urban Structure," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 10 (1997): 95-123.

into the center of a nationwide market zone from the late eighteenth century onwards. Needless to say, the flow of traffic at the gates in the morning was more into the city than out of it, as Seoul was, and still is, the biggest consumer city in Korea.

> "The horses flooding into the city through the South Gate every morning amounted to a large number of two to three thousand. In those days when the South Gate was kept closed at nighttime, [merchants] waited from dawn for the gate to open in order to enter the city before anyone else. As they began to compete even two to three hours before the opening of the gate while waiting to enter the city first, there were unceasing fights every day. When the gate finally opened, then horses, oxen, people, and cargo crowded in all at the same time in raging waves. As the gate was only as wide as four *kan*, when it was time for rice, firewood, and vegetables to come in to be sold in the city, then it was impossible to get out of the gate. It was so interesting to watch that I often went to see the sights by the gate. Who will come in first today? Ox? Horse? Or a man?"[22]

This memoir of Emile Martel (1874-1949), who served as a teacher at the French Language School in Seoul during the Taehan Empire, vividly captures the mayhem created at the South Gate when the nighttime curfew was lifted at dawn. It attests to the fact that Seoul's gates in general and the South Gate in particular were already at their maximum traffic capacity even before the introduction of new modes of transportation, such as the streetcars and railways, to the degree that it created an interesting scene worthy of watching. Thus, if modern transportation and communication infrastructures

[22] *Keijō fushi*, vol. 2 (1936), 275.

were constructed with the city's walls and gates intact, it was evident that the traffic congestion at the city gates would only get worse. Nonetheless, the Taehan Empire was determined to maintain Seoul's walls. Nothing symbolizes this firm determination more than the construction of streetcar tracks and telegraph wires running *through* Seoul's gates. According to Burton Holmes:

> In line with the surveyor's instrument is a street that leads to the West Gate of Seoul, one of the lesser portals. Through that medieval arch run trolley-wires and tramcar tracks, over it telegraph and telephone wires are festooned; for the spider of modern enterprise is spinning its web of steel about this dormant Oriental metropolis. But just as the clanging, chunking car comes arrogantly bursting through the gate, an official sedan-chair, borne silently and with slow dignity in the opposite direction, tells us that the manners and methods of the Middle Ages still persist in this quaint city of Seoul despite the advent of electricity. Sharp indeed are the contrasts.[23]

Unfortunately, there seems to be no documents that demonstrate how this unique juxtaposition of the "spider of modern enterprise" spinning "its web of steel" through the "medieval arch" of the "dormant Oriental metropolis" came into being. Nonetheless, this scene serves as a visual representation of the nature of the Taehan Empire's modernizing reform projects, which are often said to be based upon the concept of "old foundation and new participation." However, despites the fact that traffic congestion at the city gates was

[23] Burton Holmes, 19-21.

already pointed out as one of the serious urban problems in Seoul, one thing that seems certain is that Kojong and the Taehan Empire remained strongly resistant to the demolition of Seoul's city walls. This point becomes even more evident when looking at the Taehan Empire's continued effort to maintain the curfew system in Seoul.

Scholars generally recognize that the introduction of streetcars to Seoul in 1899 finally brought an end to the long-standing curfew system that prohibited anyone without government permission from being in a public space between 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. in Seoul. These scholars have noted that the streetcars constructed to run through Seoul's gates inevitably resulted in the abolition of the practice of closing the gates, as well as in allowing Seoul's residents to enjoy previously unexperienced freedom of movement within and without Seoul at nighttime. According to Min Suh Son, a scholar who examined Seoul's electrification as a central part of the modernizing projects of the Taehan Empire, the introduction of streetcars along with electric lighting and telegraphs brought about the breakdown of the boundaries of space and time, the abstract boundaries that had been manifested in and maintained by Seoul's city walls and gates.[24] Son argues that the popular fascination with streetcars in conjunction with the new desire for urban leisure greatly facilitated urban mobility in and out of Seoul's city walls at nighttime. This rendered Seoul a "nightless city," in the terms of a Japanese observer. In regard to the widespread negative assessment of the demolition of the walls carried out later under the pro-Japanese Yi Wanyong cabinet as a symbol of Japanese aggression, Son continues, as the city walls no longer served a function as spatial and temporal boundaries but rather came to be considered as an "impediment to change, commercial development and urban

[24] Min Suh Son, "Enlightenment and Electrification: The Introduction of Electric Light, Telegraph, and Streetcars in Late Nineteenth Century Korea" in *Reform and Modernity in the Taehan Empire*, 291.

growth," that they were doomed to be demolished anyways either by Japanese or Koreans.[25] Rather, Son emphasized that the introduction of streetcars and the ensuing abolition of the practice of closing the gates represented the Taehan Empire's significant commitment to social reforms to free people from the restrictions on their movement as well as from the existing political and social orders.[26]

There is no question that the introduction of streetcars in Seoul played an important role in facilitating urban mobility and contributed to shaping the new desire of Seoul's residents for urban leisure and entertainment. However, the naming of Seoul as a "nightless city" with no restrictions on people's movement can be misleading, as it directs our attention away from the important political contexts wherein the Taehan Empire was situated at the turn of the twentieth century. When streetcars commenced operations in May 1899, the popularity of riding streetcars was indeed high, as it served as a new form of amusement. The line operated at full capacity and some traveled to Seoul from across the country simply to ride them. Thus, the Seoul Electric Company, in an effort to satisfy public interest in the streetcars, extended the hours of operation from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.. Nonetheless, the hope that streetcars would allow urban residents to "enjoy moonlight excursions" outside of the city walls, as expressed in the newspapers before the opening of the first streetcar line, ended in wishful thinking.

As examined in Chapter Four, Kojong and the Taehan Empire were increasingly shifting more towards political and social conservatism after witnessing Seoul plunged into complete chaos by the Independence Club's public demonstrations in 1898, also

[25] Min Suh Son, "Electrifying Seoul and the Culture of Technology in Nineteenth Century Korea," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2008.

[26] Min Suh Son, 146.

known as the *Manmin kongdonghoe*. Following its imposition of a strict ban on public gatherings in Seoul, the Korean government not only tightened its control of public order inside Seoul's city walls but also stepped up the inspection at Seoul's gates at nighttime.[27] Kojong's continuing efforts to control the use of space in Seoul was reflected in the restoration of the curfew ordinance immediately after the opening of the streetcar line. Ten days after the streetcar began to run through Seoul's gates, connecting the inside and outside of the city walls, the Metropolitan Police Office (Kyŏngmuch'ŏng) announced an increase in the number of night guards in Seoul by 125.[28] Within a month, the imposition of a new curfew ordinance followed. On June 18, the Metropolitan Police Office announced a curfew ordinance that was even more stringent than the one that had existed before. According to this new curfew, everyone, now including government officials, was prohibited from passing in public spaces of the city between 8 p.m. and 4:40 a.m. The only exceptions to this rule were soldiers and Metropolitan Police officers. Furthermore, the new ordinance intensified the punishment for those who violated it: anyone who defied the curfew and walked on the streets was to be arrested and treated as "arsonists" (hwajŏk, a group of robbers) so that there would be "not even a single child, a single woman, and a single old man" on the streets in the city during curfew hours.[29]

This new curfew system seems to have continued until the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War in February 1904 when the precariously maintained political stability of the Taehan Empire was broken up. The Russo-Japanese War brought another political unrest to Seoul. Even before the war was officially declared, Japanese forces occupied Seoul.

[27] *Tongnip sinmun*, January 13, 1899; January 31, 1899; February 2, 1899; February 18, 1899.

[28] *Tongnip sinmun*, May 17, 1899.

[29] *Tongnip sinmun,* June 20, 1899.

Subsequently, the Japan-Korea Protocol of February 1904 was signed, which pledged the Japanese to "guarantee the independence and territorial integrity" of Korea and to "take necessary measures" if the territorial integrity of the country was endangered. Witnessing the Japanese forces marching towards Seoul, Horace Allen reminisced: "we have seen the Chinese drive out the Japanese, leaving the streets littered with the dead, which the dogs ate, as I frequently saw in passing. In 1894 we saw the Japanese drive out the arrogant Chinese, who seemed to fear the same treatment they had meted out the Japanese, but were mistaken. Today we saw the Japanese drive out the haughty Russians."[30] This protocol, which paved a road to the Protectorate Treaty in 1905, stirred a strong public reaction. In the face of Korea's loss of sovereignty, there was a rise of the nationalist movement, both in popular movements and armed resistance. Many organizations including the Ilchinhoe followed the legacy of the Independence Club and the mass demonstrations in 1898, and Seoul witnessed Koreans flocking into the capital from all across the country. For Kojong and the Taehan Empire government seated inside Seoul's city walls, it was a moment of a crisis.

3. Deterritorializing Seoul

Seoul witnessed changes in the policies of its city walls with the establishment of the Japanese Residency-General in Seoul in 1906 as the result of the Protectorate Treaty. When Itō Hirobumi (1841-1909) arrived in Seoul in March 1906 as the first Resident-General of Korea, he expressed that the goal of his administration was to "nurture Korean self-rule" under Japanese protection. In the name of the "civilizing mission," Itō declared

[30] Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 180.

that the major task of his administration to bring Korea the same blessings of civilization that Japan enjoyed, by accelerating Korea's reform projects that had been hindered, according to him, by the corruption and backwardness of the Korean elite.[31] As Peter Duus pointed out, however, Itō's "policy of nurturing self-rule" was a deliberate tactic to find and build reliable partners in the Korean government who would either willingly or passively preside over the steady encroachment of Japanese colonialism.[32] To that end, as soon as he took up his duties as the Resident-General of Korea, Itō created the "Council for Improvement of Korean Administration" (Han'guk sijŏng kaesŏn hyŏbŭihoe) and held regular meetings with the Korean government. Until Japan formally annexed Korea in 1910, it was this council, under the supervision of Itō and the Japanese advisors, that the Korean cabinet made all the major policy decisions in various areas such as finance, economy, education, internal security, local administration, and the royal household. For this reason, when we examine the policy changes that took place during the protectorate period, it is important not to dismiss Japan's imperialistic agenda lurking behind the "civilizing mission," even if reforms were proposed by the Korean cabinet.

This applies particularly to the examination of the demolition of Seoul's city walls. In fact, since the demolition process was intertwined to a surprising degree with Korea's incorporation into the Japanese Empire, it is only when the political context surrounding Protectorate Korea and Meiji Japan is taken into consideration that we can fully understand the meaning behind the demolition of Seoul's city walls on the eve of Japan's annexation of Korea. In March 1907, Pak Chesun, the first prime minister under the

[31] Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910*, 205-220; Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empire: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea, 1876-1945*, 98-103.

[32] Peter Duus, 205.

protectorate, along with Minister of Interior Yi Chiyong and Minister of Army Kwŏn Chunghyŏn, proposed to Kojong the partial tearing down of the city walls in order to alleviate traffic congestion at the East and South Gates.

> Connected to the main street of Hwangsŏng, the East Gate and the South Gate are crowded with people and congested with wagons and horses coming in and out of the gates. Besides, as the streetcars running across the middle of the gates make it more difficult for the traffic to avoid each other, there are a number of collisions and accidents. Thus, there is a necessity to devise special measures to increase convenience of traffic conveyance. If we move the streetcar lines by tearing down eight compartments of the battlements on both right and left sides of the gate towers respectively and designate the original gates for pedestrian use only, the troubles with heavy traffic will disappear.[33]

Although the Pak cabinet presented its demolition proposal as a response to urban expansion and traffic congestion, what was at stake in the project was much more political than social or economic. For Kojong, witnessing resurgent public gatherings and the growing number of anti-Japanese movements disturbing the peace in the capital city in the wake of the Russo-Japanese War, his continued efforts to maintain the walls were now turning into a reluctance to tear down the walls. This reluctance can be seen in the delay of the demolition project. Although Kojong gave an immediate approval for the project, it was only after he was forced to abdicate in July 1907 due to his secret dispatch of the Korean delegation to the Hague Peace Conference that the demolition was pushed

[33] *Kojong sillok*, March 30, 1907.

forward in earnest. On July 30, only six days after the Yi Wanyong Cabinet signed a new protectorate agreement granting the Resident-General the complete control over Korea's domestic as well as foreign affairs—which is often said to signal a de facto annexation of Korea—the "Committee for City Wall Disposal" (Sŏngbyŏk ch'ŏri wiwŏnhoe) was formed by the Cabinet Decree Number 1.[34] The political importance of the demolition of the city walls to Japanese authorities can be seen from the following: Firstly, the order for demolition was the first decree issued after the cabinet system was restored and the State Council (Ŭijŏngbu) was abolished under the protectorate government in June; secondly, this decree preceded the decree that disbanded the Korean army by a day, the event that marked one of the most important turning points in the process of the Japanese colonization of Korea.[35]

According to this decree, the committee was given the full authority to handle the entire demolition process of the city walls in Seoul, as well as all over the country, under the supervision of the Ministers of Interior, Finance, and Army. The demolition project was pressed ahead as part of the preparation for the Japanese Crown Prince's visit to Seoul in October. Beginning with tearing down the walls on the north side of the South Gate in September 1907, the committee demolished the walls connected to Seoul's major gates, such as the south side of the South Gate, the south and north sides of the East Gate,

[34] *Sunjong sillok*, July 30, 1907.

[35] The State Council was the highest organ of government during the Chosŏn dynasty. It was led by three officials known as the High State Councilors, whom were entrusted to deliberate over key problems of state, advising the king, and conveying royal decisions to six ministers. During the Kabo Reforms, the State Council was abolished and the cabinet system was formed. However, the State Council system was restored with the establishment of the Taehan Empire's effort to strengthen the imperial authority. According to the first decree in the official document *The State Council System*, the monarch had authority to rule over all and preside over the State Council as his government. See Kim Do-hyung, "Introduction: The Nature of Reform in the Taehan Empire," in *Reform and Modernity in the Taehan Empire*.

parts near the Southwest Gate, and the Ogansu Floodgate near the East Gate.[36] Until the committee's dissolution in September 1908, the walls in other cities, such as Taegu, Chŏnju, and Namwŏn, were also destroyed.[37] Later, *Keijō fushi* stated in 1936 that the demolition was "the boldest decision" that at last took down the "iron fortress and steel walls" (K: kŭmsŏng ch'ŏlbyŏk; J: kinjō teppeki) that had stood for almost five hundred years since the reign of King T'aejo, the founder of the Chosŏn dynasty.[38]

Here, in addition to the domestic situation in Protectorate Korea, an understanding of Meiji Japan's policies on the walls and castles provides a more nuanced understanding of the demolition of Seoul's walls. On June 18, 1908, at the eighteenth meeting of the "Council for Improvement of Korean Administration," Prime Minister Yi Wanyong suggested selling the city walls in order to raise money for road and river improvement projects in Seoul. In his speech, Yi noted that if Seoul took the lead in demolishing the city walls, other cities in the country would likely follow Seoul's example. Itō responded to Yi's suggestion with great enthusiasm. Stating that Japan also carried out the same policy, Itō emphasized that the city walls had become "useless" in this modern day and age.[39] In 1873, the newly formed Meiji government indeed passed the "Castle Abolishment Law" to take down the castles of the Tokugawa Shogunate, and within two years, more than two-thirds of Japanese castles had been demolished.[40] Quite contrary to Itō's statement justifying the reason for the demolition of the walls, because of their

[36] *Keijō fushi*, vol.2 (1936), 271.

[37] *Hwŏngsŏng sinmun*, July 23, 1908; July 9, 1909.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Stephen Turnbull, *Strongholds of the Samurai: Japanese Castles 250-1877* (Oxford: Osprey, 2009).

[40] Ibid.

uselessness in the modern era, the controlling of the walls and castles was a matter of great importance for the Meiji government as it was for the preceding political authorities in Japan. Scholars have noted that, in the long history of feudal warfare, Japanese castles came to serve not merely as a military defense system but also as the residence of the daimyō and, in turn, as a symbol of their power and wealth.[41] Therefore, after completing the unification of Japan at the turn of the seventeenth century, in order to forestall the amassing of power the daimyō, the Tokugawa Shogunate enforced regulations that limited the number of castles to one per *han* (feudal domain), and even further, prohibited the construction of new castles and the restoration of old ones without direct permission from the Shogunate.

When the Meiji Restoration brought an end to feudalism in 1868 by overthrowing the Tokugawa Shogunate to create a strong centralized state, the continuing existence of Japanese castles along with feudal domains, semiautonomous areas ruled by the daimyō, was increasingly viewed as a symbol of the previous ruling elites and thereby an obstacle to the creation of a centralized state.[42] This was particularly true as some castles played a role in the initial resistance to the Meiji Restoration. Thus, the abolition of the *han* system and establishment of the prefecture system, known as *haihan chiken* in 1871, followed by the demolition of the castles in 1873, was a matter of the utmost importance for the Meiji leaders in that all daimyō were required to return their feudal domains as well as political authority back to the emperor. With this change, the daimyō of all the *han* subsequently became imperial governors of their former domains, and the previous domains were

[41] Marius B. Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000).

[42] Ibid.

turned into either urban prefectures (*fu*) or rural prefectures (*ken*).[43] Having been viewed as a symbol of feudalism, it is not difficult to assume that the demolition of the castles constituted an important part of the Meiji Restoration. Here, what deserves attention is Itō's assessment of this change. In his memorial on constitutional government in 1880, Itō pointed out *haihan chiken* before anything else as "one of the greatest changes" that was "inevitable" in the work of the Meiji Restoration.[44] This provides an important context that needs be considered when examining Itō's aforementioned response to Yi's proposal in 1907 for demolishing Seoul's city walls. Although Itō explained that Seoul's walls needed to be demolished due to their uselessness in the modern era, the very fact that he was referring to Japan's experience makes it evident that the protectorate government led by Itō was attempting to follow the practice of the Meiji government with a similar objective of Japanese centralized state control.

Another compelling reason why the demolishing of Seoul's city walls was such an important task for the Japanese colonial government can be seen in the writing of Adachi Kenzō (1864-1948) on assimilation and remembrance. After coming to Korea as a war correspondent during the First Sino-Japanese War, Adachi made a considerable contribution to the development of the Japanese settler community in Seoul. Not only did he establish two Japanese-language newspapers, the *Chōsen Jihō* and the *Keijō Shimpō*, but he was also deeply involved in the expansionist project of Meiji Japan. He was charged with being one of the central organizers of the assassination of Queen Min, but

[43] There were roughly 300 domains, the number of which was reduced to 72 in the latter part of 1871, and then further to 47 in 1888. In 1871, the government designated Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto as *fu*, and relegated the other *fu* to the status of *ken*. It was in 1943 that Tōkyō became a *Tōkyō-to*, Tokyo Metropolis.

[44] David John Lu, *Japan: A Documentary History: The Late Tokugawa Period to the Present* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Shapre, 1997), vol. 2, 334.

was acquitted along with Miura Gorō. Since then, Adachi served as a politician and cabinet minister in Japan and promoted a hard-line policy towards Korea and China during the Taishō and Shōwa periods.[45] In 1910, Adachi contributed an article to *Chōsen*, a magazine that served as the Japanese-language organ of the Japanese colonial government.[46] Under the title of "Assimilation of Koreans and Sites of Remembrance," Adachi argued in 1910 for the removal of ancient monuments and historical remains in Korea as they served as an obstacle to the colonial assimilation of Koreans.

> There is something that cannot be overlooked for the Korean assimilation. It is the site of remembrance that provides Koreans with the sources (materials) for the resistance to Japan historically. Every time Koreans see and hear about such sites of remembrance, it hinders assimilation in no small measure. Therefore, although we cannot rapidly change customs and habits, I think that it is necessary to take measures to gradually reform them and to remove such sites of remembrance from the eyes and ears of Koreans. For example, there are fortresses everywhere in Korea. Almost every famous and old temple has historical materials of resistance to Japan. Fortresses were built for no other reason than to defend against the Japanese pirates, our ancestors…In other words, if the stories of anti-Japanese movements from the old days remain like that, greeting Koreans days

[45] For more information on Adachi Kenzō, see *Concise Dictionary of Modern Japanese History.* edited by Janet Hunter (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 2.

[46] Adachi Kenzō, "The Korean Financial Problem and Assimilation Policy," *Chōsen* 32 (1910), 11-14.

and nights, they would become the materials that negate the Korean assimilation historically.[47]

In his influencing book *How Societies Remember*, Paul Connerton has noted that bodily social memory plays an essential role in shaping the present experience as well as legitimizing the present social order of any given society.[48] According to Connerton, it is powerful, as the past can be preserved in the body through habitual memory even without explicitly representing itself in words. This provides a useful conceptual framework for analyzing Adachi's writing on assimilation and sites of remembrance. More specifically, Adachi was concerned about Koreans' bodily experience of Seoul's city walls and other fortresses widespread across the country as they could serve as the materialization of the memory of resistance against the Japanese that Koreans could not only *see* and *hear* but also *pass through* everyday. Furthermore, as the theory of shared ancestry of Japanese and Koreans (Nissen dōsoron) was central to the justification of assimilation policy as well as Japan's annexation of Korea, Adachi thought that it was certain that the memory of resistance recollected through the bodily practices of Seoul's walls would be detrimental to assimilation and ultimately Japanese rule of Korea.

Related to this, it is also interesting to note here that it was this very role of the walls and gates, as sites of memory, that brought different fates to Seoul's city walls, and to the South and East Gates. The Japanese settler community in Seoul was expanding rapidly to became four times larger than what it was when the Russo-Japanese War had ended with Japan's victory. The settler community sought to expand Honmachi Street to

[47] Ibid.

[48] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

expand their presence in the direction of the South Gate and further towards the boomtown of Yongsan.[49] The greatest barrier to this plan, settler elites thought, was the South Gate itself as well as its surrounding walls. Hasegawa Yoshimichi (1850-1924), who first served as a commander of the Korean Garrison Army and later as the second Japanese Governor-General of Korea from 1916 to 1919, strongly called for the demolition of the South Gate because such an "obsolete gate" caused trouble to the passing of gun carriages. However, such attempts to destroy the gate were frustrated, surprisingly enough, by Nakai Kitaro (1864-1924), the chairman of the residents' association. In response to Hasegawa and other demolition advocates, Nakai brought to remembrance the fact that the South Gate is the gate that Japanese commander Katō Kiyomasa (1561-1611) passed through when he captured Seoul during the Japanese Invasions of Korea in the sixteenth century. Emphasizing that there were only two or three buildings left in the city from those days, Nakai persuaded the demolition advocates into maintaining the gate.[50] It was also for this reason that the East Gate—another gate associated with the memory of Japan's capture of Seoul during the war—was able to survive the demolition, while the West Gate was destroyed in 1915. In short, when unable to provide a historical justification that was supportive of the Japanese appropriation of Seoul's landscape of memory, the city's other gates including the West Gate had to be demolished.

[49] Pak Ch'ansŭng, "Rŏ-Il chŏngiaeng ihu sŏul ŭi ilbonin kŏryuji hwakchang kwajŏng," *Chibangsa wa chibang munhwa* 5 (2002): 117-163; Kim Paegyŏng, *Chibae wa konggan: Singminji tosi Kyŏngsŏng kwa cheguk ilbon* (Seoul: Munhak kwa chisŏngsa, 2009), 277-285.

[50] According to Ōta Hideharu, this discussion regarding the preservation of the South Gate occurred between September 1904 and December 1905. See Ōta Hideharu, "Kŭndae han'il yangguk ŭi sŏnggwak insil kwa ilbon ŭi chosŏn sinngminji chongch'aek," *Han'guk saron* 49 (2003): 185-230.

In *Assimilating Seoul*, Todd Henry notes that Seoul's public spaces served as an important locus of various forms of Japanese assimilation projects in colonial Korea. By closely examining three major public places in the colonial capital Keijō (Kyŏngsŏng)—Namsan's Shinto Shrines, the former Kyŏngbok Palace grounds which later became the site of the new Government-General building, and the Korean neighborhoods in Seoul—Henry has argued that the Government-General's deconstruction and reconstruction of Seoul's "microspaces," such as symbolic architectures and infrastructure, demonstrated the Government-General's efforts to transform Koreans into the colonial subjects of the Japanese Empire.[51] If the colonial government's making of public spaces, projects which began in earnest mostly after 1925, examined in Henry's analysis attest to its interests in the city's microspaces to promote assimilation, then the protectorate government's demolition of the city walls, deterritorialization of the city's boundaries or dismembering of the city's identities in the 1910s, was a task that was needed to be done prior to the permeating of the city's microspaces.

4. To Keijō, Toward Empire

> From today, this land, this peninsula, is to be called Chōsen (Chosŏn), not the Taehan Empire. Hansŏng is to be Keijō (Kyŏngsŏng). [Korean residents] are still attached to the Taehan Empire more than to Chōsen, dwell on the name Hansŏng rather than Keijō, and desire to be the Korean nation rather than the imperial

[51] Todd Henry, *Assimilating Seoul: Japanese Rule and the Politics of Public Space in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2014), 4.

subjects of the Empire of Japan. Nonetheless, believe in me and do your duty as instructed.[52]

As demonstrated in the above instruction by Terauchi Masatake (1852-1919) whose title was changed from the last Resident-General to the first Governor-General of Korea with Japan's annexation of Korea in August 1910, one of the most important tasks for the colonial government was to give its newly gained territory and people a new identity, and it started with renaming them. Thus, instead of the Taehan Empire, a name devised to claim equal status with surrounding empires including the Empire of Japan, the name of Chōsen was revived. In addition, Hansŏng, which had enjoyed the privileged status as the capital city as well as an independent administrative district, was relegated to a colonial capital of Keijō and incorporated into Kyŏnggi Province. In the following years, the renaming of places took place intensively. The Government-General enacted a series of ordinances from 1910 to 1912 that allowed the governors to rename their local districts with either Japanese or Korean names, whichever was more commonly used, in consultation with the Land Survey Bureau personnel. To be sure, the Japanese style names had been already used with the development of the Japanese settler communities in the Taehan Empire. If these Japanese place-names were customarily used for the convenience of Japanese settlers before the annexation, they now became official designations after the annexation. These early ordinances allowing the renaming of places were just one part of the Japanese colonial authorities' efforts in the recoding, or reterritorializing of the urban space of Seoul into the colonial capital Keijō.

[52] Sŏul tŭkpyŏl sisa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe. *Ilche ch'imnyak araesŏ ŭi Sŏul*, 14.

It was in 1914 that the more serious measure of reterritorialization took place in Seoul as well as across the entire peninsula. As the colonial administration stabilized, the Government-General carried out the nationwide reorganization of administrative districts in March and April 1914. The administrative districts of Korea had undergone a series of changes since the Kabo Reforms, and this new local administrative system reorganized the peninsula from the division of 13 provinces (*to*), 12 cities (*pu*), 317 counties (*kun*), and 4336 townships (*myŏn*) into a division of 13 provinces, 12 cities, 220 counties, and 2522 townships.[53] Scholars have generally paid attention to two aspects of this new system, those aspects that marked the most radical changes from the previous system: the first is how the township came to serve as the main administrative unit in facilitating the penetration of colonial rule into rural society; and the second being how the abolition of extraterritoriality of the Japanese settlers in the new system of urban administration (*puje*) reflected the growing tension between the colonial state and the Japanese settlers over assimilation policy.[54]

In addition to these two aspects, it is important to note that the new administrative district system also played a crucial role in reterritorializing Seoul. As mentioned earlier, Seoul's administrative districts largely consisted of the space inside and outside the city walls, and consequently the walls were the most important line of demarcation in Seoul's administrative districts. However, as the walls continued to "crumble down everyday," part by part in the 1910s, the boundary that had traditionally divided Seoul's urban space

[53] For more on the changes in the administration districts in Korea, see Son Chŏngmok, "Ilche ch'imnyak ch'ogi chibang haengjŏng chedo wa haengjŏng kuyŏk e kwanhan yŏngu," *Chibang haengjŏng* 32 (1983): 79-92; Son Chŏngmok, *Ilche kangjŏmgi tosi kyehoek yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Iljisa, 1990).

[54] Gi-Wook Shin and Do-Hyun Han, "Colonial Corporation: The Rural Revitalization Campaign, 1932-1940" in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*; Yun Haedong, *Chibae wa Chach'i* (Seoul: Yŏksa pipyŏngsa, 2006).

into inside and outside was also disappearing.[55] For the colonial administration, this was not a small problem. As examined in Chapter Two, Seoul's residents inside the walls had been enjoying various kinds of privileges, the biggest of which was tax exemption. These privileges were derived from Seoul's status as the royal capital of Chosŏn, a city that was originally planned for the royal family and central government officials whose status as *yangban* exempted them from taxation. Despite a series of reform efforts implemented throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such privileges given to the people inside the walls had continued under the rule of the Government-General.

To be sure, this created problems for the colonial administration from multiple aspects. In an administrative aspect, it caused a lack of tax revenue from Seoul. As Seoul's foreign residents were also exempted from taxation due to their extraterritorial privileges as shown in Chapter Three, *no* one who lived in Seoul—whether Korean, Japanese, or foreigners with other citizenship—was subjected to taxation under the colonial authorities.[56] Related to this point there was a problem from a symbolic standpoint as well. For the colonial government, any privileges imposed on Seoul's residents from previous political authorities had to be decoded, because otherwise these residents, with their privileges from the Chosŏn dynasty intact, could not be successfully recoded as dutiful subjects of the Japanese emperor. Thus, there was the urgent necessity for the Government-General of Chōsen to redraw Seoul's administrative boundaries, which were crumbling down with its city walls, and ultimately to reterritorialize Seoul anew as a colonial capital of Keijō.

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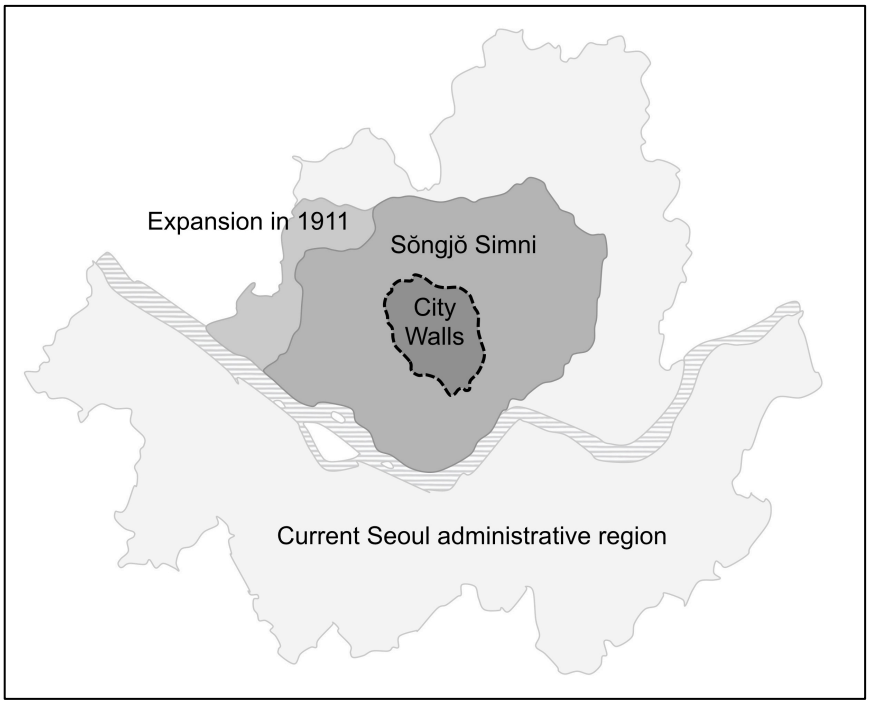
[55] *Maeil sinbo*. June 24, 1916.

[56] *Keijō fushi* states that the fundamental purpose of the new administrative district system was to unify administration and establish the authority to impose taxes on everyone, regardless of citizenship. See *Keijō fushi,* vol. 2, 314-317.

The most noticeable change in redrawing the administrative boundaries of Seoul in 1914 was the significant downsizing of the city. As mentioned earlier, Seoul's official name was changed from Hansŏngbu to Keijōfu with the annexation in 1910. A year later, the colonial government reorganized the neighborhoods inside the walls into five districts (*pu*), and the areas outside the walls into the eight townships (*myŏn*) of Yongsan, Sŏgang, Sungsin, Tumo, Inch'ang, Ŭnp'yŏng, Yŏnhŭi, and Hanji.[57] While Seoul's official name and its administrative divisions underwent changes, its city limits had been maintained as they were, and it was not until 1914 that Seoul witnessed a radical reduction in size. The Government-General issued a decree to hand over the majority of the neighborhoods outside the city walls to Koyang County in Kyŏnggi Province, with the only exceptions being the small areas of Yongsan, Sungin, Tumo, Inch'ang, and Hanji. With this change, the size of Keijō's administrative districts became only one eighth of what it used to be before 1914. This change is significant in that it was the first and the only time in the history of Seoul as a city until today that the city underwent downsizing in its administrative districts.

[57] *Keijō fushi,* vol.2, 442.



Map 5. Seoul's Administrative Boundaries over Time

What deserves further attention in Seoul's downsizing are the areas outside the city walls that continued to be part of the administrative districts of Keijō. The new Keijō largely consisted of the space inside the walls and the areas surrounding the boomtown of Yongsan. Yongsan began to develop from a traditional port town into a military compound of the Imperial Japanese Army with the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War. Since then, the Japanese settler population grew rapidly to establish one of the twelve residents' associations (*kyoryūmindan*) of the Japanese settlers in Korea in 1907. According to Kim Paegyŏng, Yongsan held a strong identity as a military town. The Imperial Japanese Army built a military base at Yongsan from 1906 to 1913 to support over four thousands troops that were stationed to quickly enter the city to maintain law

and order. The Yongsan garrison served as the headquarters for the Imperial Japanese Army in Korea until 1945 when U.S. Forces accepted the surrender of Japanese Forces.[58]

Lastly, Keijō's position as a colonial capital in the territorial configuration of the Japanese Empire was further solidified when Japan completed the major railroad lines piercing the Korean peninsula in 1914. It is widely noted that railroad construction played an important role as a tool for Japanese imperialist expansion. Borrowing words from Peter Duus, the railway line for the imperialist was a "highway for the spread of commerce and a rampart of military power."[59] It is certainly no coincidence that the destruction of many traditional walls in Korea and elsewhere resulted from the construction of railroads. As expressed in a Japanese statement, which defined the managing of railways in Korea as "the gist of Japanese rule of Chōsen," the political, economic, and military importance of a railway system in Korea was fully understood by Japanese leaders.[60] In the beginning, Japan was not successful in the scramble for railroad concessions in Korea, but by 1904, it was able to secure exclusive rights for what was to become the core of Korea's modern railway system. By 1906, Japan also completed the nationalization of the dispersed ownership of the railroads.[61] As a result, a unified railway system consisting of five railway lines was completed to make two transects crossing the peninsula from NW to SE and NE to SW: the Seoul-Inchŏn line (1900), the Seoul-Pusan line (1905), the Seoul-Ŭiju line (1906), and lastly, the Seoul-Wŏnsan line and the Taejŏn-Mokp'o line (1914).

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[58] Kim Paegyŏng, 296-302.

[59] Peter Duus, 137.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Chŏng Chaejŏng, *Ilche ch'imnyak kwa han'guk ch'ŏldo* (Seoul: Seoul University Press, 1999).

It was within Japan's long-standing expansionist plan into the Asian continent that Seoul's geographical advantage as the center of the Korean peninsula made the city a cornerstone in Japan's railway ambitions. From the beginning, Japan envisioned the railways of Korea as a connection link between Japan and Manchuria—a connection link to a larger market for Japanese goods. In as early as 1896:

> When the trans-Siberian railroad is eventually completed, the Seoul-Pusan line will connect our country with Russia, and [as] a main line piercing the European and Asian continents, inevitably it will be of the utmost importance in the intercourse between East and West.[62]

Since Japan is an archipelago, two rail lines held particular importance for Japan to realize its continental expansion plans: the line from Pusan to Seoul, the port city on the eastern end of the Korean peninsula right across the strait from Japan; and the line from Seoul to Ŭiju, a town on the Manchurian border. The Seoul-Pusan line in particular was seen as a "gateway to the great railway between Asia and Europe" that would allow Japan to "have a chance of spreading out [its] limbs." Within this grand vision, the steamship line (Kampu ferry) began to run between Pusan and Shimonoseki, the southern terminus of the main railway lines in Japan in 1905. It was the same year that the Seoul-Pusan line began to operate, and as a result, Seoul was then linked to Kobe, Osaka, Yokohama, and Tokyo. An even more historic link was made in 1911 as a part of the South Manchurian Railway. This included the construction of a bridge between the

[62] Peter Duus, 141

Korean city Sinŭiju and a Chinese city Antung (present-day Dandong), over the Yalu River, a river forming the boundary between North Korea and Manchuria, and the reconstruction of the Antung-Mukden (present-day Shenyang) line. According to the *Railway Age*, an American magazine on the rail transportation industry, with the completion of the railway bridge over the Yalu River, the "Korean railways assumed worldwide importance as a link in communication between China and Japan, and hence between Europe and Japan." This bridge's importance was also recognized at the Moscow Conference in 1913 as a "part of three great international transportation routes, i.e., via Siberia, via Siberia and Suez, and the round-the-world route via Siberia and Canada."[63]

Accordingly, Seoul was more firmly drawn into this new web of railroad connections spun by the Japanese Empire in East Asia, and its position as a connecting hub of railroad traffic in the Japanese Empire was further strengthened. Now the city was connecting the empire to the continent: directly to Beijing as well as major cities in Manchuria such as Shenyang, Changchun, Harbin, and Mudanjiang, and even to Moscow and Paris through the Trans-Siberian Railway after 1916. Far more than merely serving as a center of the intra-peninsula railway network, Seoul came to serve as an indispensible node for passenger and freight traffic flows between Japan, Korea, and Manchuria. Indeed, the railroad network played a key role in reterritorializing Seoul anew as a colonial capital of the Japanese Empire.

[63] *Railway Age* 64 (Simmons-Boardman Publishing Company, 1918), 512.

5. Conclusion

This chapter examined the last years of Seoul's city walls before its demolition. Previous studies have generally viewed that by the turn of the twentieth century Seoul's city walls became nominal or even an impediment to the urban development of Seoul. According to this conventional view, the Taehan Empire's construction of modern transportation and communication infrastructures in the capital, such as streetcars and telegraphs, brought a complete end to the curfew system and the practice of closing city gates at night, and thereby Seoul became an open city with ever growing movement inside and outside the city, both day and night. In contrast to this understanding, this chapter demonstrated that the Taehan Empire strove to maintain the city walls until the Japanese protectorate government demolished them in 1907. It was against the backdrop of the Independence Club's mass demonstrations in 1898, and then the political upheavals ensued by the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, that the Taehan Empire held on to the city walls for their policing and symbolic roles. By the same token, it was this "usefulness" of the city walls, rather than the "uselessness" of them, that the colonial government had to demolish Seoul's city walls to further their ambition to colonize Korea. Thus, the protectorate government hastened to demolish the city walls as a visual representation of its deterritorialization of Seoul as well as its colonization of Korea.

The colonial efforts to deterritorialize Hansŏng were accompanied with its efforts to reterritorialize it into a colonial city. Colonial reterritorializing efforts began with the renaming of the territory, thereby giving the colonized a new identity. Immediately after Japan signed the Annexation Treaty with Korea in 1910, the Government-General changed the names of the colony from the Taehan Empire to Chōsen, and of the city from

Hansŏng to Keijō. More serious measures to reterritorialize Seoul into a colonial capital took place in 1914 with the nationwide reorganization of administrative districts. Not only did this new decree draw new administrative boundaries for the city in the replacement of the vanishing city walls, it also further relegated the position of the city by downsizing it into one eighth of what it was before 1914. Furthermore, it was also through this decree that Seoul and the whole peninsula was positioned in the imperial administrative system of Meiji Japan. Seoul became more firmly established as a colonial city by Japan's railroad project, which connected the Japanese archipelago to Manchuria through the Korean peninsula. As Seoul came to serve as an important connection hub in Japan's imperial railroad network, its navigation in the search to becoming a modern city ended with its becoming the colonial city Keijō.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

The demolition of Seoul's city walls and gates continued in silence throughout the rest of the colonial period. While the tearing down of the walls was primarily concentrated in the areas surrounding the gates for the building and widening of roads in the 1900s and 1910s, the demolition programs in the 1920s and 1930s were much larger in scale. The most conspicuous efforts took place when the Government-General began the construction on two colonial architectural monuments, the Chōsen Shrine (Chōsen Jingū) and the Keijō Stadium (Keijō Undōjō) in the 1920s. The shrine and the stadium were built with the intention of spiritual assimilation and bodily discipline, respectively, of the colonial subjects in Seoul. Known to have played a central role in the Japanese colonial policy of assimilation (*dōka*), the Chōsen Shrine was completed in 1925 atop Namsan, looking down at downtown Seoul. For its construction, a massive demolition of city walls on the western ridge of Namsan was undertaken immediately after its groundbreaking ceremony in 1920. About 700 meters of walls were razed, marking this as the largest scale destruction of Seoul's city walls for a single purpose.[1] The Keijō Stadium was opened for use in 1926 on the former site of the walls, nearby the Chosŏn's Hullyŏnwŏn military training ground located outside the East Gate. Constructed to commemorate the royal wedding of Crown Prince Hirohito in 1925, the Keijō Stadium, at the time of its completion, was the second largest sports complex in Asia, next to the Kōshien Stadium in Hyōgo Japan. Such a grand scale of the stadium's construction, to be

[1] Kang Tonggyun, "Sŏul songgwak chubyon tosi chosik e kwanhan yŏn'gu," Masters diss., *Sŏul sirip taehakgyo* (2009), 41.

sure, also entailed a grand scale of the destruction of Seoul's city walls. Nonetheless, by contrast to its earlier demolitions before 1919, the city walls in the 1920s and onward were disappearing relatively quietly from the sight and the mind's of the capital's inhabitants.

This dissertation has examined the contacts, conflicts, and contestations surrounding Seoul's city walls, and how they shaped Seoul's transformation and Korea's transition from the premodern to modern period. The main objective of this study has been to show that the transformation of Seoul from a walled to an open space, was none other than the making of Seoul into a new space of possibilities, in which various historical actors participated, at the crossroads of modernity. While the main analysis has focused on the period from the opening of the ports in 1876 to the early years of the colonial period, I have demonstrated that it is only against the backdrop of Seoul's development into the political, economic, social, and cultural center of the Chosŏn dynasty, with a constant gravitation of population, that the depth and complexity of Seoul's transformation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries becomes apparent.

As commonly captured in the Confucian phrase, "*naeu oehwan*," internal disorder and external calamities, late-nineteenth-century Korea faced challenges from within and without, and those challenges were manifested more clearly in the capital than anywhere else in the country. After opening Korea through the signing of unequal treaties, imperial powers including Japan, China, and Western countries ventured into the space inside the walls where, it was essential to have a presence in order to advance their interests in Korea. Here, Seoul witnessed the formation of foreign communities inside its walls for

the first time in its history. Japanese settlers made "Little Japan" on the foot of Namsan, Chinese sojourners constructed "Chinatown" around Sup'yo Bridge over the Ch'ŏnggye Stream, and Westerners developed the "Legation Quarter" in Chŏngdong near the West Gate. Backed up by strong capital resources and extraterritorial rights, foreign presences inside the walls grew rapidly to the extent that Korean residents feared to lose a space to exist inside the city walls. This anxiety was greatly felt to Kojong and the Korean royal house. After the promulgation of the Taehan Empire, Kojong sought to reestablish its imperial authority in the urban landscape of Seoul by placing restrictions on foreigners' building constructions as well as by transforming Kyŏngun Palace into a space befitting an imperial palace. Kojong's attempts to establish architectural hierarchy in the space inside the city walls, however, faced daunting challenges as foreign legations refused to comply with the Taehan Empire's regulations by claiming their extraterritorial rights. Greater challenges came from the opportunistic Koreans in the capital who were slipping from the Taehan Empire's jurisdictional boundaries. Seoul witnessed a growing number of Koreans invoking extraterritorial rights and claiming foreign citizenships, through legal and illegal measures, as a means to elude the Taehan Empire's reach in the pursuit of their livelihoods and interests. This new group of opportunistic Koreans in the capital was a serious threat to Kojong who strove to establish a modern nation-state by strengthening his imperial authority, and at the same time, they were also crossing national boundaries by utilizing the legal institution of citizenship.

Witnessing the people's growing alienation from the Taehan Empire in the capital and elsewhere in the country, the Enlightenment thinkers viewed instilling patriotism and a sense of unity among the people as one of the most urgent tasks for ensuring the

national sovereignty. In particular, these elites who had first-hand experience of Western civilization through their trips to the U.S. and Japan, such as Sŏ Chaep'il and Yun Ch'iho, saw the consolidation of the bond between the king and the people as essential for national strength and prosperity. The Independence Club created Independence Park outside the West Gate in part as a means to realize these reform ideas. Independence Park, with the Independence Gate and the Independence Hall on its grounds, were constructed to commemorate Korea's severance of tributary relations with Qing China after the Sino-Japanese War, and to mark Korea's new departure from control of foreign powers. From the onset, the club strove to engage the people in this symbolic making of a new Korea through various activities and ceremonies. Of particular importance is the club's Debating Society. The Debating Society played an important role in expanding political consciousness and participation among Seoul's residents. Conducted with parliamentary procedures, the Debating Society served as a training ground for a new social relation where the participants in the meetings freely discussed various topics on equal footing with others, without age, class, wealth, and gender barriers. The growing political consciousness was channeled into direct political actions through club-led mass demonstrations against growing foreign encroachments and government policies, the culmination of which was the demand for the establishment of a representative assembly. As the debating society evolved into political demonstrations, the club activists forced their ways into the city walls and took to the streets and other various public spaces to add more pressure on the government. Kojong and Confucian scholars saw this action as a direct threat to Confucian social relations as well as to the proper relationship between the ruler and the ruled. Concerned of the possibility of the outbreak of a popular

revolution in Korea, Kojong finally mobilized the military to crackdown on the protesters, and enforced martial law on December 1898. With the 1899 promulgation that declared that the Taehan Empire was an absolute polity, Korea's contested search for a new political system ended.

Since the crackdown of the Manmin kongdonghoe protests, the Taehan Empire tightened control of public order inside Seoul's city walls as well as increased restrictions on traffic through Seoul's gates. While the introduction of streetcars running through the city gates brought an end to the practice of closing the gates at night in 1899, the curfew system nonetheless seems to have been maintained until 1904 when the Taehan Empire's sovereignty became weakened with the Russo-Japanese War. With the break of the war, Seoul was plunged into political turmoil once again. At this time, Japanese forces occupied Seoul and signed the Japan-Korea Protocol of 1904, which directly paved a road to the Protectorate Treaty in 1905. In the face of the imminent danger of Korea's loss of sovereignty, many flocked into the capital from all across the country to join the nationalist movement, either in popular movements or armed resistance. Watching the surge of both Japanese armies and Korean demonstrators from inside the city's walls, Kojong viewed the walls as the last bastion of defense to protect his authority. It was precisely for this reason that Japanese authorities demolished Seoul's city walls as one of the most apparent visual representations of its deterritorialization of Seoul, and by extent, the colonization of Korea. In addition to the spectacle of the demolition of the walls, the demolition was important to Japanese colonial rule from a long-term perspective as well. As Seoul's city walls and other fortresses across the country symbolized a historical memory of resistance against the Japanese, the maintaining of them was viewed to be

detrimental to the Japanese colonial policy of assimilation. As a result, Japanese authorities took the demolition of the city walls as a priority in its colonization, and began razing them in 1907, starting with the areas surrounding the city's main gates. Colonial efforts to deterritorialize Seoul were accompanied with its efforts for reterritorialization into the colonial city Keijō. An important reterritorialization effort took place in 1914. Amidst the nationwide reorganization of administrative districts, the colonial government redrew Seoul's administrative boundaries anew, replacing the borders defined by the city walls and located this colonial city in the larger imperial administrative system of Meiji Japan. Keijō was more firmly incorporated into the Japanese Empire through Japan's railroad construction projects. As Seoul became a hub connecting the Japanese archipelago to the continent, Seoul's navigation in its search to becoming a modern city ended with its becoming the colonial city Keijō.

In this study, I have highlighted a few important aspects of the transformation of Seoul from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. While previous scholarship has narrowly focused on just one historical group's efforts to respatialize Seoul, I have demonstrated that the making of Seoul at this time was a process in which different historical actors cooperated with and competed against each other, namely Kojong and the Taehan government, foreign imperial powers, reform-minded elites, and the ordinary inhabitants of Seoul. By doing so, I have showed how these contestations and negotiations amongst the various actors had shaped Seoul into a new space at the crossroads of modernity. To begin with, imperial powers' efforts to make the capital into an extraterritorial space as a means to further their interests in Korea directly challenged the authority of Kojong and the Taehan Empire. I have shown that this extraterritoriality

in Seoul played an important backdrop against Kojong's attempts to make Seoul into the imperial capital Hwangsŏng. Furthermore, strong foreign presences in the capital served as a key backdrop in the creation of the first public park in the city. Through the creation of Independence Park, Enlightenment Party members sought to instill a sense of unity and patriotism, and to promote a "public spirit" amongst Seoul's inhabitants. Lastly, amidst these contestations of Kojong and foreign powers, I have explored how Seoul's ordinary residents were an important participant in this making of Seoul into a new space from the premodern to modern period. Some of these residents expanded extraterritorial boundaries through both legal and illegal measures, and in turn, brought about constraints on Kojong's efforts to make Seoul into a spatial manifestation of his imperial authority; while others took to the streets and participated in mass demonstrations against foreign encroachment and demanded political reforms from the Taehan Empire, turning Seoul into a space for political participation. This indicates that the ordinary urban residents in Seoul, who have been largely buried in existing studies, were active subjects rather than passive objects in the transformation of Seoul from the premodern to modern period.

This dissertation also has offered a new way to rethink the role of Emperor Kojong in the making of Seoul as a modern city in particular, and in the making of Korea as a modern nation-state in general. I have explored three contestations Kojong had over the maintaining of the city walls with different historical actors at the turn of the twentieth century: 1) extraterritorial bodies; 2) the Manmin kongdonghoe protesters; and 3) the Japanese authorities. Much research has been carried out on the Taehan Empire and Kojong's political inclinations. Scholars have examined the various projects undertaken during the Kwangmu Reforms and have noted the contributions and

limitations therein. However, the studies dealing with the Taehan Empire's urban reforms or Seoul's transformation during this time have tended to focus on Kojong's contributions rather than his limitations. This tendency largely resulted from the Kojong-centered approach in previous studies. This approach attempted to restore Kojong from an "incapable king" who allowed Korea to fall into a Japanese colony into an "enlightened monarch" who revived the Korean tradition of "ideal monarchs." These studies have tended to assume that, similar to Emperor Meiji's role in Tokyo's becoming an imperial capital, Emperor Kojong's presence loomed large in the urban space of Seoul, and Kojong actively sought to incorporate Koreans into loyal subjects of the Taehan Empire through the recreation of Seoul into the imperial capital Hwangsŏng. However, by closely examining how the urban space of Seoul was actually used and lived in, not just how it was planned and constructed, from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, this dissertation has pointed out that the impact of Kojong's role and presence in the making of Seoul was rather limited. In a comparative perspective, different from Tokyo where public ceremonies were carried out under the emperor's controlling gaze, Seoul's first public ceremonies took place outside the city walls and were mostly in the absence of Kojong. The fact that the Taehan Empire's official national ceremonies were performed inside the imperial palace, a space that was not accessible by the urban masses, tells us that the emperor's role and presence in becoming a modern capital in Seoul was different from Tokyo at the turn of the twentieth century.

Through a focus on contestations and negotiations over its city walls, this study also has explored both continuities and discontinuities in the development of Seoul from the premodern to modern periods. Different from previous studies, which have largely

taken the year 1910 as the historical demarcation between Seoul's premodern and modern periods, this dissertation has sought to move beyond historiographical boundaries by demonstrating how the aforementioned lived experience of Seoul during the Taehan Empire, and before, had an enduring impact on the spatial practices of colonial Seoul. More specifically, Kojong's implementation of martial law to curtail street demonstrations in 1899 set a precedent, which was carried over by Japanese authorities in 1907. In addition, Seoul's challenges with extraterritoriality during the Taehan Empire, I argue, led the Government-General to abolish extraterritorial rights of the Japanese and other foreign communities in 1914, even despite fierce opposition from its own Japanese settler community. Furthermore, my effort to view the development of colonial Seoul in a continuation from precolonial Seoul offers a new way to understand the experience of the massive political demonstrations in 1898 as an important historical background to the March First Movement of 1919, one of the most significant nationalist movements in Korean history, where tens of thousands of Korean demonstrators took Pagoda Park and other public spaces in Seoul to declare Korea's independence from Japanese colonial rule. This indicates that, even as they were demolishing the city walls, the colonial authorities continued to engage in the earlier contestations and negotiations over Seoul's urban space. That is, while the maintaining of Seoul's city walls as boundaries defining its urban space was discontinued with the colonial demolition of the city walls, the spatial practices of Seoul nonetheless continued through Japanese rule.

The focus on Seoul's city walls further provides us a window through which to examine the continuities and discontinuities in Seoul's development between the colonial period and the post-liberation years after 1945. First constructed after the founding of the

Chosŏn dynasty, Seoul's walls continued to suffer demolitions under Japanese authorities and also under authoritarian regimes in the post-1945 period. A strong commitment to the "modernization of the motherland" (choguk ŭi kŭndaehwa) and economic development through industrialization in the post-liberation period led to the tremendous expansion of Seoul and the continuing demolitions of its walls. It was not until the year 1975, in the wake of the Blue House Raid of 1968, when North Korean spies, Kim Sinjo and others, sneaked into Seoul to attack the presidential residence of South Korea, that a restoration of the city walls began in earnest. As part of its efforts to stress national security, the Park Chung Hee regime designated Seoul's city walls as "historical remains of national defense" (kukpang yujŏk) and undertook restoration projects in the 1970s. Recently, the symbolic significance of Seoul's city walls is resurfacing in a new way. Over the past several years, Seoul Metropolitan Government has carried out a massive restoration project of Seoul's city walls with an intention to register them on the UNESCO World Heritage list. In addition, the government has held various programs, such as conferences, exhibitions, and education and tour activities, in order to arouse public interest in the city walls' historical value. Seoul's walls are now reborn as one of the city's representative historical remains that highlight the cultural uniqueness of Seoul in the increasingly globalized urban landscape of the city. Far from being a mere relic of the past, the city walls of Seoul are still playing an important role in defining the characteristics of the city.

Finally, my examination of the contestations over Seoul's city walls and urban space, including the demolition of its city walls, engages with and contributes to the scholarship on the rise of modern cities elsewhere in the world. The demolition of city walls and the emergence of open cities in the urbanization process was a widely shared

historical experience both in the East and the West, such as Chinese cities and European cities. While the examination of city walls offers a useful way to compare Seoul with other better-studied cities with similar historical experiences, the examination of Seoul's urban experience can additionally serve as an important example of the impact of colonial urbanization. This suggests that a further examination of Seoul in this light can not only complicate existing understandings and theories, as largely formulated from Chinese and European models, but can also offer a new typology for the urban study of traditional capital cities that have undergone colonial development and emerged to dominate its country as a political, economic, social, and cultural center, with other examples being Baghdad, Cairo, and Mexico City.

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