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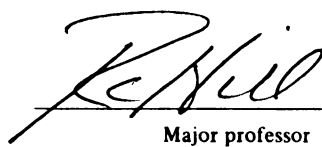
**A Socio-Economic Analysis of the GAB-O (1894)  
Peasant Revolution in Korea: A Formation of Self-  
Consciousness in the Korean Working Class**

presented by

**Tae Shin Chung**

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
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Masters degree in Sociology



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**A SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF THE GAB-O (1894) PEASANT  
REVOLUTION IN KOREA: A FORMATION OF SELF-  
CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE KOREAN WORKING CLASS**

By

Tae Shin Chung

**A THESIS**

Submitted To  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS**

Department of Sociology

1988



## ABSTRACT

### A SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF THE GAB-O (1894) PEASANT REVOLUTION IN KOREA: A FORMATION OF SELF- CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE KOREAN WORKING CLASS

By

Tae Shin Chung

The Gab-O (1894) peasant war in Korea is interpreted as a historical peasant revolution in the context of class struggle. By employing documents and bibliographic research methods, I investigated and analyzed the development of internal contradictions and class conflicts especially between agricultural production forces and feudal surplus extraction relations, including foreign imperialist exploitation.

Historical materialism is employed as a view of history, not wholly relying on structural mechanisms, but rather emphasizing the class struggle as an ongoing process in the history of Korea.

It is argued that the Gab-O peasant war must be understood not only as an anti-feudal, anti-imperial, and anti-aggression movement, but also as a class movement occurring between the feudal classes with the rise of early agricultural capitalism and prior to industrial capitalism in Korea. The Gab-O peasant war was a historical movement from the bottom up. It was reenforced by the resistance potentialities of the exploited and alienated peasant class

who were closely involved in and subject to the economic and power structure relationships of the wider society. They, as subjects of resistance and change, struggled against those structural contradictions. Thus the Gab-O peasant war developed into a political movement and the peasantry acted as political revolutionaries.

The Gab-O peasant war can be understood from the perspectives of the development of productive forces, the historical inter-relations among peasant uprisings prevalent in the nineteenth century, and the advent of radical social thought in the 1860s.

Social thought, prophecy ideas, and "Tonghak" can be regarded as ideological driving forces in the Gab-O peasant revolution. These ideas helped the development of consciousness within the Yi-state peasantry who formed a class and acted as a class in 1894.

**To the unknown Gab-0 peasant soldiers.**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation to those people whose contributions of time, advice, and support made the completion of this thesis possible. I am largely indebted to the chairman of my committee, Dr. Richard Child Hill, for his many hours of help and direction in the development of this research as well as for his patience and encouragement. I have been grateful for his practical advice: he encouraged me to cope with my shyness positively, and also provided a relaxed atmosphere in which I always felt comfortable in expressing my intentions.

I also wish to recognize the contributions and useful course offers by my other committee members: Dr. Ruth Hamilton, and Dr. Kevin Kelly.

My friend, Sang-ki Han, provided feedback on an early draft of the article that became Parts II and III. More importantly, we shared our view of the appropriate history needed in the study of Korean affairs - a "history from the bottom up".

A very special thank-you goes to Dr. Kuniko Fujita who took the time to translate Japanese bibliographies into English. I want finally to express my appreciation to Ock-geum Cheon for her clerical assistance.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND THE PROBLEM

The ceaseless disturbance and the class conflict in Korean society have clearly revealed their origins after the Second World War. Without removing the colonial and feudalistic remnants, the modern history of Korea has deteriorated into the deep fetters. There have existed tendencies such as foreign dependent bourgeoisie class, exploited and alienated proletariat class, foreign oriented social ideologies and thoughts, and cultural and academic dependencies. These are the main causes of the present chaotic situation. Those kinds of problems are oriented not only by the process of rapid industrialization, urbanization, and modernization, but also by the past. Therefore, I think that Koreans need to consider their past, especially the late nineteenth century, because in some respects the situation of 1980s is too similar to that of a century ago. The emergence of conservative protectionism, regionalism, the erupting internal class conflicts, diffusion of new technologies, and capital accumulation are characteristics of the internal and external situation in both ages.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw profound disturbances in the existing world order in East Asia as a result of new waves of Western expansion. The changes on



the international scene in Far East Asia can not, however, be ascribed to western perspective alone. The rise of Meiji Japan, stimulated partly by the impact of the West, presented an immediate challenge to the position of supremacy that China held over the East Asian World since early times. The subsequent disintegration and ultimate demise of the traditional world order in East Asia was as much as that of the broad cultural conflict between the East and West. No other event better illustrates this than the transition of Korea from a feudal tributary state of the Ching China Empire to a member of the modern world community.

The political and social life of Korean society in that time was dominated by the power of the Yangban ruling class, the landed aristocracy, who retained all power, filled every office, and were bitterly divided into cliques and factions which incessantly intrigued against each other, paralysing all initiative and stultifying all possibilities of change or advance.

The economic phase of Yi-Dynasty Korea has shown great development in the forces of production, gradual growth of capitalistic market economy, and the development of the monetary system since the 16th century. Also, there appeared various early capitalistic symptoms such as inflation, fiscal crisis, the emergence of counterfeit coins, etc. In particular, the development of the

agricultural sector, which was forced by the new agricultural technology, the increase of population, the improvements in transportation and communication, the expansion of foreign trade and the growth in commerce, promoted the market economy based on a monetary system. This accelerated the collapse of a feudalistic status system into a newly formed class system. As it advanced, this new relations of production threatened even the state system. This succinctly shows that Yi-Dynasty Korea possessed the immanent matured power of change for the next historical development stage; the bourgeoisie revolution.

It was Japan herself who, a few years after the Meiji Restoration (1868), moved to restore all her links with the peninsular kingdom, and threatened the Korean government to conclude its first treaty with an outside power in 1876, just as the United States did to Japan herself by using military power. The example of Japan was followed by the United States, a few years later, the treaty being signed in 1882, then operated to permit Britain and France, and other European powers to open relations with Korea.

The incompetent government and ruling class which sought only private benefit were no longer to sustain the Korean Sovereignty, while oppressed masses and poor peasantry and isolated intellectuals fought against the imperialistic foreign powers and domestic exploiting class and feudal state.

The greatest mass movement of Korean National history, the Gab-O Peasant Revolution (1894), broke out at this point. Just ten years before (1884), a radical group of Kaewha faction which consisted of young elites who were alienated from the center of power, had rebelled against feudalistic government with the reliance on the Japanese imperialist power. Even though they tried to change Korea's dependent relation on China by using another imperial Japanese power, they did not understand the nature of the emerging imperialist Japan, and more importantly, they were not based on mass supports. In other words, they did not connect the matured internal power with a revolutionary movement. They probably envisaged the restoration of Meiji in Japan, because their political reformatory idea was a constitutional monarchy and an economic system with a capitalistic market economy. This so called Kapsin coup ended in a Three Day Success, but left important sequelae. Firstly, the existence of a middle class (Chungin) and its desire for change and its role in Korean society. Secondly, the Kaewha faction played the center role in the Reform of Gab-O after the Gab-O Peasant Revolution. They executed a companion role, whether they wanted to or not, during the colonial invasion of Japanese imperialism. This was the limitation of the Yi-Dynasty intellectuals. In contrast, The Gab-O Peasant Revolution started with the peasantry economic grievances, but

developed into a struggle against the feudalistic government and state, imperialistic foreign powers including Ching China, and more importantly developed into the class struggle of poor peasantry and semi-proletariat against rich landowners and the semi-bourgeoisie (managerial wealth farmer).

Peasantry in Kobu county, Cholla province of Korea, uprising against the maladministration and economic exploitation of the Kobu magistrate in February 1894. However, the peasantry army had shown militant revolutionary tendencies since its preparation stages. This uprising developed in the Southern area of Korea with consolidating peasantry grievances and combining the Tonghak members and organizations. Two imperial powers, Japan and China, which wanted to secure their interests over Korea, brought their armies to support the feudal Korean government. The two powers clashed and the Sino-Japanese war evolved. Japanese victory confirmed the priority of Japanese interests in Korea. The peasantry army fought against the foreign invader, Japan, but the peasantry army was defeated in the war. In this process the revolutionary war showed nationalistic color. The leaders of peasantry were captured and beheaded and the war was aborted in 1895.

This peasant revolution parallels the Taiping revolution (1851-1864) in China, and Sepoy revolution (1857-1859) in India. These peasant revolutions have similar

characteristics in that peasants, subjects of the revolts, fought externally against the imperialistic Westerners or colonial Asian country and also fought internally against the feudalistic system. Those peasantry movements also have similarities. The organization and mobilization of peasantry was done under a religious guise and foreign armies had to be used to put down the peasants army. But Gab-O peasant war was neither fully documented nor adequately interpreted and frequently underestimated. Nevertheless, the spirits of this peasant war still exist in the Uipyong movement (righteous army under the Japanese seizure), and People's Liberation Movement (Korean War, Partisans, 1950-1953), and vanguards of the democratic movement, and labor and peasant movement today.

This thesis takes aim at a socio-economic analysis of the Gab-O Peasant Revolution, with a special emphasis on the sociological reinterpretation through application of a theoretical framework. Thus this thesis tries to interpret the Gab-O Peasant War as a class struggle. This thesis basically searched for answers to the following three questions:

- 1) What was the nature of Gab-O peasantry social relations in the class structure of the Yi-Dynasty?
- 2) What kind of state was the Yi-State and what was its role in encountering the internal and outer forces?
- 3) What was the main driving force and what was the highest struggle's purpose in the Gab-O peasants war?

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The previous studies of the Gab-O peasant war can be largely classified into 4 perspectives: colonialist-historical perspective, nationalist (anti-colonial)-historical perspective, nationalist (bourgeoisie) perspective, and Marxist-Leninist perspective. The colonialist-historical viewpoint has interpreted the meaning of the Gab-O movement to be a mere antagonism against foreigners such as the Boxer Incident (1899) in the late Ching China Dynasty. The nationalist-historical (anti-colonial) viewpoint has interpreted it to be a significant nationalist movement. The nationalist (bourgeoisie) viewpoint has given the Gab-O a nationalist and anti-feudalistic character. However, the Marxist framework has interpreted it as a proletariat revolution envisaged in Marxism-Leninism.

Another problem is whether the 1894 peasant revolution was a religious or peasant inspired one. This issue is very important for understanding the basic causes of the peasant war. Some nationalists' viewpoints are strongly connected to the religion-centered interpretation of the peasant revolution.

These 4 perspectives are classified on the different arguments into 3 categories; Colonialist (A), Nationalist (B), and Marxist and Leninist (C). The Nationalist category

includes the anti-colonialist and the anti-Marxist (Bourgeoisie) perspectives. The main arguments of each category may be briefly summed up in the following Table.

Table 1. The main arguments of the three categories in the study of the Gab-O Peasants War

	Main Arguments
A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The Tonghak religious movement was connected with the Gab-O peasants war</li> <li>2) The Gab-O war was based on the quasi-religion idea of Tonghak</li> <li>3) No revolutionary idea of Tonghak thought</li> <li>4) Two periods of the Gab-O war: religion movement and war period</li> <li>5) Stationary or stagnant view of history</li> <li>6) Exclusivism of Tonghak thought</li> <li>7) A quasi-religion movement</li> </ol>
B	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The relation of Tonghak religious movement and the Gab-O peasants war</li> <li>2) Emphasis of the pure religious idea of the Tonghak</li> <li>3) The reality negativism and the prophecy idea of Tonghak</li> <li>4) Three periods of the Gab-O war: religious movement anti-government war, and anti-foreign war period</li> <li>5) Anti-feudalistic, anti-estate movement</li> <li>6) Anti-imperialistic, anti-aggressive movement</li> <li>7) The advent of nationalism</li> <li>8) Racial consciousness and national movement</li> <li>9) The emphasis of international political characteristics</li> <li>10) Domestic political, economic situation</li> <li>11) Relation of Silhak thought and Gab-O leaders</li> <li>12) Socio-economic background; economic invasion of foreign capitalism</li> <li>13) The existence of internal developmental forces</li> </ol>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The Gab-O peasants war is unrelated with the Tonghak religious movement</li> <li>2) The revolutionary idea of Tonghak thought related to the Gab-O peasants war</li> <li>3) Historical materialism as a view of history (the role of Tonghak: religious disguise)</li> <li>4) Four periods of the Gab-O peasants war: anti-local government, anti-feudal state, class struggle, and</li> </ol>

	anti-imperial foreign period
C	5) The development of productive forces and new relations of production; basic driving forces of historical development of internal energy
	6) Peasantry as the subject of change, and as the subject of resistance; internal subjective causes
	7) The emphasis of the internal capitalistic developmental forces; commercial agriculture and domestic handicrafts industries
	8) The changes in mode of production; the petty commodity mode of production and the desire of profit accumulation
	9) The existence of internal class contradiction and conflicts of peasantry
	10) The development of social-consciousness in the peasantry
	11) The regional character of Three Southern Areas (Cholla, Chungcheong, and Kyungsang provinces); the degree of adaptation to the development
	12) The class struggle between poor peasantry and the wealthy farmer (managerial rich peasants)

A: Colonialist

B: Nationalist (Anti-Colonialist & Anti-Marxist)

C: Marxist and Leninist

The studies of the Gab-O Peasants War can be classified by its periods and countries in a comparative sense. The countries include the United States, Japan, and Korea. Time periods are: 1894-1910, 1910-1945, 1945-now.<sup>1</sup>

The first objective views of the Gab-O peasants war, with the exception of public or private documents, appeared by the American writers during the period of 1894-1910 from two perspectives. First came an understanding of the Gab-O peasant war as a revolutionary political movement which overcame the Tonghak religion written by Junkin (1895a, 1895b)<sup>2</sup>, Bishop (1897)<sup>3</sup>, Hulbert (1906)<sup>4</sup>, and Griffis (1907).

Junkin (1895a, 1895b), in particular, travelled Korea



at that time and experienced the War. He emphasized the political character of the War and evaluated it as a revolution. He was vexed at the suppression of the revolution by the foreign forces. Griffis (1907: 473-484) also treated the Peasant War as an academic object for the first time. The second perspective claimed that the exclusive anti-foreign movement was based on the fanatical devotion to the Tonghak religion, written by Ladd (1908)5. But this perspective seems to lose its objectivity due to Ladd being a pro-Japanese who worked for the Japanese imperialism as a braintruster.

The Japanese studies of the Gab-O peasant war during 1910-1945 mainly dealt with the religious perspectives and evaluated them as shamanistic cults and exclusive fanatical insurgents. This period can be characterized by colonial-historical perspective study. Under the guard of the Japanese Government, they tried to rationalize the seizure of Korea. Those kinds of materials have value only for dates, characters' names, and places of the peasantry struggles. Those studies, such as by Yoshikawa (1922), Murayama (1935: 18-292 & 934-940), Choson Tsong Tokbu (1938, 1940), Kikuchi (1939), Watanabe (1937), Tahohashi (1930) have worth in that they contend with real research. However, their purpose was to support the colonial invasion and the peculiar Imperial Road view of history presented by Ishii (1941: 17-60). These studies are used as the basic

arguments of the stagnant view of Korea history. They ignore the internal developmental force towards modernization. These studies, however, founded on the colonialist historical perspective, were later to be negated by the nationalist view of history.

The Korean studies of the Gab-O peasant war during 1910-1945 emphasized the religious perspectives. Tonghak transformed its name into Chondokyo (The Religion of The Heavenly Way) in 1906 and developed as a formal religion. The main trends of Gab-O studies can be divided easily into two different perspectives during this period: the religion centered view which regulated and emphasized the creeds of religion, by Lee, Don-hwa (1933: 56-95), Oh, Chi-Young (1940: 201-204) and the early unmatured socialistic interpretation of the Gab-O peasant war as seen in the Kaebuk (1920) magazine, Siningan (1926) magazine, and Sinin Chulhak (1924) magazine.

After independence (1945), Korean scholars showed great efforts to cope with the colonialistic view of history in their study of the Gab-O peasant revolution. There still exists the colonialist remnants and religion centered view. The main perspectives taken in the study of the Peasant Revolution look like a nationalistic perspective, religious perspective, and anti-Marxist perspective. Some scholars, in particular those who have a background in Christianity, acquired the role of misleading the peasant war. Tonghak,

that is, Eastern Learning, stands in conflict with Western Learning (Christianity). They insist that the roots on the Korean masses were in Christianity, but Gab-O peasantry have their roots in Eastern Learning. Even though Korean scholars agreed to the anti-colonialistic view of history, their scope of studies was limited contradictorily by themselves, showing their reluctance to the application of Marxism-Leninism. The first perspective emphasized the anti-feudalism, anti-imperialism, and anti-colonial nationalist historical perspective of the Gab-O peasants war, by Kim, Sang-Ki (1946), Baik, Se-Myung (1956), Park, Jong-Hong (1959), Cho, Chi-Hoon (1964). The second perspective is still shown as the colonialist historical view in that Gab-O was regarded as an exclusive bandit group or patriotic Hwarang group, the upper youth group of Silla state, by Lee, Pyung-Do (1958, 1960), Lee, Seon-Keun (1954). Finally, the socioeconomic background, which was affected by the invasion of Japanese Capitalism, was added to the analysis of Gab-O peasants war by Chon, Sok-Dam (1949). This perspective emphasized the social being of human and was based on the Marxist assumption and Leninist Proletarian revolution. This perspective could not prosper under the political, ideological circumstances in South Korea. More importantly, Kim, Yong-Sop (1958), and Han, Woo-Keun (1964, 1970, 1971) showed the possibilities of socioeconomic analysis of the Gab-O peasant war and suggested directions

for further studies emphasizing the development process of mass-consciousness, the internal causes of peasantry uprising, and the advent of change and struggles for the peasants, etc. They coped with the view of nationalist (anti-colonial, anti-Marxist), colonialist analysis as well as the religion centered analysis.

American scholars, including Korean-American scholars, after the end of World War II, presented a few arguments such as those of zealotism and the pro-Japanese group movement presented by Conroy (1960)<sup>6</sup>, the development process of nationalism and development as a religion presented by Weems (1961, 1964, 1967), anti-China centric world view movement and nationalism presented by Lee, Chong-Sik (1965). Weems, especially, showed a great affection for the peasant war, although he is recognized as having a religious perspective, he studied the Tonghak idea through the long historical perspectives. Also, he wrote his thesis, dissertation, and a book about the Tonghak idea.

Japanese scholars, including Korean-Japanese scholars, after the World War II, studied the Gab-O peasants war actively by the perspective of socioeconomic analysis by Park, Kyung-Sik (1953), Kang, Jae-Eon (1954), Park, Jong-Keun (1962), Kim, Young-Jak (1975), Kajimura (1968), Gura (1975), Mabuchi (1979), Cho, Kyung-Dal (1982), Yokokawa (1976), Seko (1979), and Hiraki (1980). They understood the Gab-O peasant war as a Korean mass revolution against

feudalistic system and outer forces.

Nevertheless, those studies on the socioeconomic perspectives of the Gab-O peasants war have several arguments claiming prior settlement, such as the pre-capitalist mode of production and its development process, internal class structure of peasantry and development process of class consciousness in the lower peasantry class as subjects of change, and Korea society's internal developmental forces.

Fortunately, Kim, Yong-Sop (1960, 1971) has argued that the structure of the late Yi-Dynasty land relationships deteriorated with the emergence of so-called managerial peasants, tenant-entrepreneurs, and the like. These new entrepreneurial elements within the peasantry began an indigenous process of commercializing agriculture. He notes that a substantial number of commoners (Sangmin) and even outcasts (Chonmin) moved upward into the Yangban status and commensurate landholding by dint of their own efforts. Thus, land relationships were not fixed. And he argued that the possibilities for establishing a native commercial agriculture were ruined by the intrusion of Japanese and Western capital and goods after 1876, which threw the agricultural village economy into bankruptcy and gave Yangbans and bureaucrats the opportunity to throw peasants off the land and confiscate their holdings. This argument improved the existence of the autogenous capitalistic

development prior to the transplantation of capitalism by the Japanese imperialism.

Kajimura, Hideki (1977, 1968) argued that the desire of profit accumulation by the petty commodity producers (especially textile producers) was the basic cause of the Gab-O peasants War. This argument, I think, includes the possible interpretation that the development of the managerial peasants (Kim, Yong-Sop, 1960, 1971) also resulted in the peasants war. Because these arguments gave the hints of the development process of mode of production. It is believed that the petty commodity mode of production emerged in the transitory phase between feudalism and capitalism. Also, money-commodity relations dominated the everyday life of the mass people in the petty commodity mode of production. The understanding of the mode of production in the 19th century is important to understand the driving forces of the peasant struggle. But the problem is the fact that the main driving force was the poor peasantry, and that they struggled for the further development of the petty-commodity production. The conflicts between the petty-commodity producers and the lower poor peasantry are clearly ignored. This indicates the importance of class conflicts among differentiated peasantry classes in Yi-Dynasty Korea.

Mabuchi, Sadatoshi (1979) argued that the peculiar socioeconomic conditions of the Three Southern areas

(Cholla, Kyungsang, Chungcheong provinces) distinguished the regional characteristics of Gab-0 peasant war. He proposed the difference of the contradictory structure between textile producer peasants and textile consumer peasants, and argued the contradictions and conflicts between the peasantry class centered on newly risen rich peasants, and bureaucrats and land owner class. He argued that the Gab-0 peasant war was the political struggle between the two classes through the competitive adaptation to the development of the commodity economy. This perspective also regarded the peasants war as an anti-feudalism, anti-imperialism, anti-religion centered revolutionary movement. Nevertheless, this argument has the problem of distinguishing between the interests of minor rich peasantry and that of majority poor peasantry. As Wolf (1969) and Moore (1966) argued, agricultural commercialization introduces new elites into the countryside and suggests that it is the conflict between old and new elites, landed gentry and rural entrepreneurs, with their respective political allies, that is the key to understanding rural social movements.

Cho, Kyung-Dal (1981, 1982) seems to oppose the previous two arguments due to their ignorance of the internal class struggle between the rich and the poor in the peasantry class. He also analyzed the peasantry factions (Bukchop, Namchop) as the class interests and traced the

peasants struggle against the rich people during the war period. His view is quite clear and a reasonable interpretation. But the relation between the Tonghak religious movement and the Gab-O peasant war is not clear in his argument and he does not mention anything about the main social thought of the peasantry class. In addition, it is necessary for us to understand the social situation of a poor peasantry majority and the development process of their class consciousness.

Furthermore, most studies did not try to define the Yi-state system, or assume some kind of Yi-state. Thus I think understanding of the mode of production, state system, and class structure are important questions and dialectically connected to each other. This thesis will try to briefly overview and define these items.

### 3. THE FOCUS OF STUDY

As B. Croce said "All history is contemporary history" (Carr, 1961: 15), it is necessary for us to reestimate and reinterpret a historical event from the viewpoint of contemporary history. This kind of scholarly attitude is very important for those who try to study a society as a unit of its own or a comparative unit. At the beginning point, my passionating problem was a comparative study of class structure and differences of class-consciousness



development among three Far East Asian countries: Japan, China, and Korea during the second half of the nineteenth century. But I realized that study on the Korean class during that period is scarce and that it is mislead by the historical situations in spite of its importance in mass movement historical perspective. The comparative study was deferred. Instead, the Gab-O Peasants Revolution has emerged as a historical event which shows a good prototype of class struggle in a feudalistic Korean society in the late nineteenth century. The Gab-O Peasants Revolution had not been precisely studied and existing studies are largely distorted in the contexts of socioeconomic history. The reasons why the revolution became so twisted are: the still remaining traces of Japanese colonialism, the capricious Korean scholars' tendency to give more priority to Western studies than to domestic affairs, the view of the North Korean scholars as a proletarian revolution, the devastation of Korean traditional culture under the banner of modernization, and the ruling class and privileged land-owner descendancy personal background of most Korean scholars. Definitely it could be explained by Korean history of the Japanese colonial ages (1910-1945) and the following anti-populistic and anti-democratic ages (1948-now). Therefore, the aim of this study is to shine light on the Gab-O peasant revolution which has been neglected or distorted in Korean history.

This thesis will focus on the following specific questions:

What was the status, class, state structure? What kind of relationship existed between class and state, class and landownership? How can we define the pre-capitalist mode of production in Yi-Dynasty Korea? What was the concept of peasants in Korea in the context of peasantry economy? What was the development process of peasants' self-consciousness as an oppressed class and social change subjects. What kind of evidence can we find, which shows the structural contradiction of the Korean social system in the late nineteenth century? How can we interpret the basic thoughts of the Peasant Revolution from the view point of socio-economic history?

By using previous concepts, I think I can find the origins of the revolutionary idea in Korean society through the study of traditional thoughts, prophecy idea, civil popular thoughts, and religion, etc. Furthermore, through analyzing the causal regularities of the Peasant Revolution, I can find the historical causes of the Gab-O peasants war throughout Korean history.

#### 4. THE METHODOLOGY

This thesis employs the bibliographic and documents research method in the gaining of the basic material resources and data. Bibliographic research tools, such as bibliographic sources of information, theses and dissertations, periodical indexes and abstracts, specialized sources, U.S. documents indexes, international statistical data sources, and U.S. National archives etc. are extremely important and used widely in initiating the argument of this research problem and supporting the argument. In addition, this research process extends to the Japanese and the Korean

documents and studies as well as the American documents and studies. I collected bibliographic materials and documents according to each country unit: Japan, the United States, and Korea (including North Korea). I could get the comparative understanding, through this process, of the previous studies in those countries in the context of the flow of the main arguments, differences, international academic relation, and academic exchanges.

I had to make my own research strategies because of my reading capability, judging ability, and the lack of time. These included: full use of annotated citations, use of topic related class materials, use of as many different libraries as possible, and use of library card catalogs which included the subjects index such as Korea, Tonghak, Peasants War, Gab-O Peasants War, or Sino-Japanese War, etc. in their subjects index. Because of the uniqueness and the specificity (historical event) of my research problem, several specific research tools were extremely useful. First, the bibliographic index was tremendously useful. I could get information which was published in the United States concerning my topic. Secondly, the comprehensive dissertation index showed several materials under the key words of Korea, Peasantry, and Religion in the subjects of sociology, history, and anthropology. Weems (1954), Han, Sang-bok (1972), Lee, Yur-bok (1966), Chay, Jong-Suk (1966), and Yoon (1979) dealt with the same historical period as

mine and peasantry problems in certain perspectives. They would be very useful for further bibliographic research. Thirdly, monthly catalog of U.S. government publications was probably the most useful research tool in this research process. The monthly catalogue, public affairs information service bulletin, and the government report index does include a lot of materials concerning my research problem. Unfortunately I could not investigate all of them because of the vastness of the materials. Because of the lack of time, I had to concentrate specifically on the Consular Report (1893-1896), Foreign Relations, Commercial Relations, and State Department Report. I think these documents need to be more thoroughly investigated and analyzed in the near future for the right understanding of historical events. I searched the five volumes (1894, 1895, 1905, 1906, 1910) of Foreign Relations of the United States published by the U.S. department of State and the Consular Report of volumes 42-50 & 56-60. Specially, consular reports of Jernigan (1895), Sill (1895), Stephen (1896), Allen (1896, 1897) were particularly useful. Fourthly, congressional information services, such as the U.S. Congress; Congressional Record (66th Congress 1st session, 66th Congress 2nd session, 68th Congress 1st session, 68th Congress 2nd session), Senate Executive Documents (Senate Executive Documents 104, no. 2901, 52nd Congress 1st session), House Report (House Report 1529{53-3}, 3345), Senate Miscellaneous Documents (23{53-3},

Vol. 1, 3281) and House Miscellaneous Documents(38{53-3}, Vol. 1, 3327) included the situations of Korea at the late nineteenth century.

These documents were very useful and rich in their contents, but they are not well sorted or edited. American scholar, Palmer (1963) collected an assortment of documents pertaining to the period of 1887-1895 to the Korean-American relationship. Palmer's collection is a really nice collection and a good attempt, however it needs to be edited and extended according to subjects. Except for the efforts of the Cumings (1981), who collected the documents in the periods of 1945-1953, lots of documents are still left untouched. There are also lots of unpublished U.S. national archives left untouched.

One more important research tool was the periodicals and Journals which were published at the late nineteenth century or early twentieth century. The Korean Repository and The Korea Review were especially useful. Even though they were published by a religious group (Christian), these periodicals included lots of articles, symposiums, political events, customs, Korean history, economic situation, travel sketches, proverbs, and weather, etc.

The research process of Korean and Japanese materials was mainly started with the bibliographic sources. A serious problem in doing the Japanese and Korean documents research was the language problem. In most Yi-government documents,

such as Yanghochotodamrok, Soonmuseonbongjjindamrok, and Kyongguktaejon are written in Chinese characters. Also, there are lots of Japanese documents and studies concerning the peasant war, which were written in Japanese. Thus the Japanese documents and studies as well as Yi-Government documents and the bibles of Tonghak are only possible for me to use as materials for this study in the case that they are translated into Korean or English. Many Japanese and Korean-Japanese scholars studied the Gab-O peasants war, but I could only use the studies which were translated into Korean. These problems limited the spheres of research available to me in this study.

The studies of Korean scholars and the Korean documents and Korean version of foreign studies concerning this topic are gathered as extensively as I could. I read them and tried to use them as much as possible. In the case of quotations, this research primarily uses the English written documents and studies and, if possible, I refrained from directly quoting the Korean or Japanese studies because of the translation problems. Supporting data is almost quoted or reformulated from the Japanese and American materials.

## 5. THEORY OF HISTORY

I discuss here briefly a theoretical perspective of history which I want to follow. It is needless to say that the perspective taken in developing a theory of history in

the study of a historical event, is important.

A central contention of Marx's theory of history is that the different socioeconomic organizations of production which have characterized human history arise or fall as they enable or impede the expansion of society's productive capacity. The growth of the productive forces thus explains the general course of human history (Cohen, 1978). Thus historical materialism involves a commitment. The nature of a society's production relations is explained by the level of development of its production forces (Shaw, 1986).

Marx's general views on the transition from capitalism to socialism, reconstructs his occasional remarks on the transformation of primitive communism into slavery and slavery into feudalism. Marx offers his theory of history not simply as a research tool, but as a political weapon which masses of people might take up to change the world through revolutions such as the Bourgeois Democratic Revolution and the Proletariat Revolution. Marx's theory of history can be summarized like this: feudalism - bourgeoisie democratic revolution - capitalism - proletariat revolution - workers state (transition society) - lower stage of communism (socialism) - higher stage of communism (full communism).

Historical materialism (Marx's view of history) can be understood as a unique union of scientific and revolutionary aspirations. And this could suggest the future directions

of class struggles in specific historical settings. Historical materialism stands for the pattern of determination brought into being by the capitalist organization of the forces and relations of production and their necessary internal contradictions.

In Marx's early writings, history becomes the forward march of the productive forces, punctuated by inevitable collisions and ruptures in which new revolutionary classes destroy the fetters which periodically shackle the forces of production. At the same time superstructural forms and apparatuses are understood to correspond invariably to the structure of the relations of production, being more or less rapidly transformed by each new mode of production. The superstructure is an expression or reflection of the economic infrastructure or base.

The example of Marx's particular historical explanations and the decisive role of politics in Marx's theory has offered a more complex analysis and strategy. Marx emphasized the possibility of a socialist regime based on a working class-peasant alliance. Thus, in 1848, he sought to forge a worker-peasant alliance in the German democratic revolution as a basis for an immediately following proletarian revolution, the First Communist International (Shaw, 1978). In Class Struggles in France (1850) and The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (1852), Marx further evaluated the potential for a radical



worker-peasant alliance. Unlike class struggles where Marx had stressed the economic and political conditions which radicalized the French peasants, Marx, in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (1852), offered a striking account of the role of Bonapartist beliefs and traditions in defeating the rural socialist current and capturing the second Napoleon to power. Here, Marx emphasized that economic contradictions alone would drive neither workers nor peasants to socialism. The Eighteenth Brumaire underlined the importance of specific revolutionary political activity by which the proletarian revolution will obtain peasant chorus.

Among Marxists (Western Marxism), the legacy of disaffection with the Russia and China Revolution, the continuing failure of revolutions to occur in the advanced capitalist countries, and the rise of spontaneous socialist movements in Third World countries called forth a renaissance of interest in the classics.

Then, in what stage does the Gab-O Peasant Revolution fall? This question will be answered through the historical analysis of the Gab-O peasants war.

## 6. RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY

As in the above statement, this research tries to understand the mass movement of Korean peasantry in the late nineteenth century. I hope that this study will contribute

to further studies on several points.

First, this research will be a contribution to studies of the structural class conflicts in the past and present Korean social system.

Secondly, this study will offer an answer and direction to the solution of present problems in the context of mass movement in Korean society.

Thirdly, this study will suggest the reasonable logic and methodological perspectives behind the highest value of the Korean people (North and South): reunification of North and South Korea.

Fourthly, this study will give the development of the methodology in terms of the socio-economic perspectives in order to study the class structure of Korean society. It will especially stir up further studies in the fields of history, political science, anthropology, philosophy, and sociology.

This study will be a preparation for the academic study of the formation of the Korean working class through the development of social consciousness. This work will also give a concrete form of further explanations of series of mass movements in Korean history: the 4.19 (April 19th, 1961) Student Revolution, Pusan & Masan Civil Movement (September 1979), the Kwangju Mass Movement (May, 1980), and other countless labor and peasants movements in modern Korea.

## II. THE HISTORICAL REINTERPRETATION OF THE GAB-O PEASANT REVOLUTION

" Can king, general or statesmen be raised from seed? "  
" Can an ox, simply it is strong, become a king? "  
(Korean proverb7)

The defining of the thesis problem must start from the definition of the Korean society in terms of historical materialism. A kind of theory-building method on peasants study is to use the key terms in ambiguous ways, and permitting unstated assumptions and implicit theories to creep unnoticed into the analysis (Blaut & et. al., 1977). Actually, the various Marxist schools of thought will at times subscribe to differing theories about matters on the analysis of peasantry, such as nature of modes of production, one/two stage revolution theory, etc.

Basically, I am going to try to explain the Korean society in view of Marx's social formation theory. Although Marx's terminological concepts are used ambiguously (McMurtry, 1978: 5-17), his emphasis on economic organization and technology can be useful in explaining the situation of the Korean society in the 19th century. In addition, the analysis of the Korean society, I think, has to be conceived through the study of the feudalistic non-economic forces, the dualistic possession structure in the land system, semi-colonial foreign exploitation, and dependency perspectives. Non-economic forces include the

arguments of social ideas, culture, traditions, and religion, etc.

This chapter discusses basic concepts of class, productive force, production relation including mode of production, and class conflict, as applied to the Yi-Dynasty Korea in the nineteenth century.

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND KOREAN PEASANTRY

This section is focused on the understanding of the Yi-Dynasty peasantry. This problem can not be explained by just a one-sided ruling relationship, that is, of ruling class to the ruled class. Historical changes in the forces of the production, the dominant mode of production, and the type of landownership, were concerned with the social relations of peasantry. Feudalism in Korea had been dismantled since the late 14th century, as appeared in Kang's arguments (Kang, 1973), and the private landlordism had appeared at the breakage of the Kwajon land system (Shin, Yong-ha, 1970) in the middle of the 15th century. The development of agricultural productive forces and vast concentration of land possession had continued into the nineteenth century. Thus the accumulated agricultural surplus had brought the development of wholesale commerce and domestic industry since the late seventeenth century. Furthermore, the Japanese capital, after the opening treaty

of 1876, also did the role of bourgeoisie in the development of productive forces in the late nineteenth century. But, Japanese exploited the surplus value of Korean peasantry and brought the dependent relation under the unequal exchange. In addition, these problems were connected with the class-consciousness as a mass-peasant class. The social being of the Peasantry was continuously changed by the conflict between the peasants' internal dynamic energy and the pressures from outside forces. All the peasants' relations to production, that is, the transition of modes of production and the changes of the relation of land possession as an expression of the legal system, brought into existence a new type of social relation. The gradual development of the market economy and money economy brought the economic crisis of poor peasantry and tenant peasants. Therefore, landlordism was an object which had to break down for the depressed landless peasantry. Most rural population deteriorated into the poor peasants and they could not be transformed into urban industrial workers because of the lack of commercial or industrial capital accumulation. Modern industry did not occur in Korea. Rather the surplus was channeled into the imperial Japan.

The development of production forces and the feudalistic mode of production showed the contradictions. This caused the anti-landlordism, anti-feudal state, anti-imperial struggles among peasantry in the late nineteenth

century.

Prior to the main argument, I am going to explain the traditional peasantry of Yi-Dynasty Korea.

Historically, the most common unit of agricultural production in Korea was the family. The extended family jointly provided labor as at least a portion of the means of production. The extended family was a basic production and consumption unit and, also, this extended family unit of production was strongly related to the village units of production in terms of kinship ties.<sup>8</sup> In many cases, the village units were wholly organized as just one or several kinship relation. That is, the same last name members together were the basic economic unit. For example, the village economic units generated lots of volunteer economic-cooperative systems, such as Duerea,<sup>9</sup> Pumatshilø, and Kyell. Intellectual traditions of neo-Confucianism were strictly emphasized in the kinship relationships. This blood-related set of social relationships predominated the entire society of Korea, manifesting itself in the form of small group factionism and small regionalism (Marx's term Nachbarschaft Gemeinde?). Nevertheless, this never means the communal possession of property including land, that is, the private ownership was concretely being kept.

The social status of peasants in Korea, spiritually and ideally, was greatly enhanced in this period. It was said that "peasants are the great foundation of the state and

human morality"<sup>12</sup>. But in the real sense of economic and political power, peasants were not the high status of Korean society. Intellectually, peasants had been taught in neo-confucianism. Kinship relationships, loyalty, and patriotism were emphasized and were the center of their world view. Peasants wanted to be educated, and executed "farm by day and study by night"<sup>13</sup>. They desired to pass the state examination for the glory of themselves and in order to make a contribution to their kinships and villages. Each kinship and village had their own educational institution which they called "Seodang"<sup>14</sup>. Peasants, through education, had the opportunity to change status itself and had the superiority to the craftsman and merchants.<sup>15</sup> Although peasants were not the lowest status and had more social prestige than the craftsman and merchants, they were much poorer. They mainly employed human and animal power, but in the late nineteenth century, they started to use a little scientific energies.<sup>16</sup> In addition, property gradually became the dominant power which decided status and prestige. Yi-Dynasty peasantry were just rural cultivators whose surpluses were transferred to the dominant ruling class<sup>17</sup>. Peasants occupied about 90%<sup>18</sup> of the total population. Therefore, historically, the mobilization of the peasants had largely affected the change of the Dynasties in Korea: Silla-Dynasty, Koryo-Dynasty, Yi-Dynasty.

Peasantry mobilization showed a tendency toward violence and radicalism, not only against internal contradiction, but also against the foreign invaders, such as the Japanese invasion (1592), the Manchus invasion (1627, 1636), and the Japanese and Ching and Western powers invasion (1894). Even though the movement was in reaction to the internal contradiction, the peasant mobilization characteristically fought for radical and complete change of the social system. Their goals were not defined as the reform of a taxation problem and land system, but, rather, included the complete change of political structure, status structure, economic structure, and social structure.

## 2. CLASS

" The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. "  
(The Communist Manifesto)

The basic definition of class in Marx's discourse is that the ownership and non-ownership of the means of production provides the sole axis for the identification of classes and that the form of property constitutes the defining element of the relations of production embedded in any historical mode of production. For Marx the concept of class has historic, economic, and philosophical aspects. Thus Marx used the 'class' not as a static, descriptive category, but as an analytical one that expressed a dynamic



relationship between those at different places in the social hierarchy. Class can be understood as part of a class system, and exists as a function of others. Those class conflicts and struggles are expressed in the contexts of the contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production.

Weber distinguished the three dimensions of society, the economic order (class), the social order (status), and the political order (party). Each dimension has its own stratification. In this multi-frame, class based on economic order would be no more than one aspect of the social structure. For Weber, a class is any group of persons occupying the same class status. He distinguished three types of class categories; property class, acquisition (income) class, and social class (Weber, 1978: 57). Weber explains that classes and status groups reciprocally influence each other and influence the legal order and are in turn influenced by it. Parties may represent interests determined by class situation or status situation in the sphere of power (Weber, 1978: 55).

Marx's class theory, specially in his early writings, can be identified by two powerful tendencies; polarization and simplification, as operative within the capitalist mode of production and the predictions which are judged against the structural development of capitalist societies. Polarization means the processes which classes and nonclass

groups progressively disappear through intermediating to the bourgeoisie and proletariat. Simplification refers to the tendency of the two major classes within capitalism to become internally more homogeneous. The process of deskilling the working class is a good example (Braverman, 1974). These two tendencies, that is, the notion of polarization; the disappearance of the small producers and petty bourgeoisie, and internal homogenization of each class, show Marx's belief that middle class would continue to decline in both numbers and significance. To Marxists the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are the only pure classes in modern society.

According to Marx, the lower middle class is associated with democracy rather than counterrevolution. The 'democratic petty bourgeois' is the characteristic and representative member of this class in Marx's writings. The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (1852) contains the most concise analysis of the politics of the lower middle class and its origins in their experience of production. Marx criticizes petty bourgeois's position for its failure to see the class nature of political conflict, but he explains it as the consequence of the unique class position of the petty bourgeois, a "transition class in which the interests of two classes are simultaneously mutually blunted" (Marx, 1963: 28 & 54). For Marx the counterrevolution force consisted of the big bourgeois

allied with the lumpenproletariat; the petty bourgeois was on the other side of the barricades, allied with the proletariat.

It is construed in Capital that Marx's analysis of capitalism has also shown the centrality of market. The form of market-oriented account on Marx's conception of class is supported by the two separate elements; market-situation and work-situation. But late Marx theory of capital is more centralized on the relations of production than the market. Marx regarded the market as an illusory representation of a more fundamental process which harbours the real secret of the capital-labor relation: the system of extracting surplus value from labor power in the process of production.

Weber regarded the creation of classes as approximately contemporaneous with the spread of market society, so that, historically, both class formation and class conceptualization issue from capitalist relations. Marx regarded classes and class struggles as endemic in recorded history, but capitalist relations have clarified the problem into the simple dichotomy.

The behavioral and normative superiority of Marxian class analysis rests on its capacity to recognize both objective and subjective interests and its awareness that the explanation and evaluation of human behavior requires a systematic examination of their interrelationship. I believe

Weber's theory of class structure is inadequate for the following reasons. It gives a functional emphasis on capital development and economic growth. It mistakenly emphasizes individual status as the central unit of stratification analysis. And it ideologically legitimates capitalist evolution.

Social classes in Yi-Korea were defined by their relationships to the land. The large Yangban-owned land (private land) and state-owned land are cultivated by tenant peasants. The ubiquity of tenancy was evident in the last major land survey undertaken by the Yi-administration (1898-1904), where one study of the results suggested that perhaps 75 % of Korean peasants rented all or part of their land (Shin, Susan S, 1975). Distinctions between peasants who owned land and worked their land, and subsistence tenants within the peasantry are important in the class analysis of Yi-Dynasty. Landownership, working land in someone else's interests or being a tenant placed one above those who had no land to work or who labored with their hands at some other occupation. Whenever the dynasties were changed, the extremely polarized land ownership was an essential factor leading to the peasant's mobilization. The disordered land system accelerated the collapse of the Dynasty. Land reform was always the initial issue when a Dynasty was changed. The agricultural economy, that is, the peasant economy, was the

national economy. The national product, then, was earned mainly in agriculture.

The developments of rice market and export mechanism have affected the agrarian class structure. Enterprising peasants, who are often closer to new marketing cities and ports, may rise into rich peasants or landlord class. Smallholding peasants and small tenant peasants are more devastated. They are forced into debt, into watching their holding contract, or into outright dissolution. Thus results the large number of peasants forcibly torn from their means of subsistence, and hurled as free and unattached proletarians on the rural area in the form of an Ilgo (Daily-wage worker), Seasonal worker, or migratory worker. Under the partially limited germination of capitalism, and the immature relationship of capital and labor, the peasants stayed in the rural area as mainly dependent on the selling of their labor force. Those poor peasantry and non-property class could be a semi-proletariat class.

In contrast, the Yangban landowning class, a few large land holding class (managerial peasants), and a few entrepreneur tenant class occupied the role of the petty-commodity production and showed the characteristics of the semi-bourgeoisie class. What so called Buho, Bumin, Daemin, and Yoho (see footnote 62) are included in this class. This semi-bourgeoisie class included the Yi bureaucrats class and was connected to the feudal power and landowning class. This

class exercised political and economic control over the semi-proletariat class. Thus, the semi-bourgeoisie class in Yi-state was the combination of landed class and enterprising class. The commercialization and export of rice in the nineteenth century was conducted by these classes.

The class conflicts between the classes appeared as the class struggles between the semi-bourgeoisie class and the semi-proletariat class during the peasants war.

### 3. DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVE FORCES

According to Marx,

"In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness."

(Tucker, 1978: 4)

Although this explanation is not exactly applicable to the Yi-Dynasty Korean society in the late 19th century, it can explain much about the peasants' social relations in the context of a peasant economy at that time. The development of agricultural productive forces through the use of new technology such as methods of rice transplantation, land reclamation, hydroponics, etc. had become the fundamental

force which transformed the peasants' social relations. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society came in conflict with the existing relations of production or - what is but a legal expression for the same thing - with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto (Tucker, 1978: 4-5). One day, because of the development of the productive forces, existing production relations turned peasantry into deep fetters.

Agricultural technology made it possible to enlarged social farming and also resulted in the polarization of the rural population.

In the fifteenth century, the peasantry used a variety of fertilizers in order to improve the fertility of the land. Although the direct sowing method was predominant, the transplanting method was introduced. Many reservoirs were constructed. Also, good seed which was better adapted to Korean climate and soil was developed. The science of astronomy and meteorology was advanced and applied to agriculture, such as the gauge to measure rainfall, the device to measure the wind conditions, the astronomical clocks, sundials, and waterclocks, and the calenderical science. Nevertheless, because of the Japanese (1592) and Manchus (1627 & 1636) invasions, farmland had been laid waste and the arable land had decreased. After the Japanese invasion, the taxable land was reduced from 1,700,000 Kyol

to no more than 540,000 in the early seventeenth century (King Kwanghaegun era).

From the early seventeenth century, agricultural technology has advanced considerably. First of all, the technique of transplanting rice seedlings was developed. That is, rice was first planted in a small seedbed and then, when it had reached a suitable stage of growth, it was transplanted to the paddy field, enabling the same plot of land to be used meanwhile for the ripening winter barley crop. The benefits of such a double-cropping system depended on the certain availability of water. As opposed to the method of direct sowing, the technique of transplanting rice seedlings reduced the amount of labor required. According to Song (1975: 96), the transplanting method increased the farming land capacity of a peasant of about five times over that of the direct sowing method, and decreased the required labor of a unit farmland by about 80%. Therefore, the area of land one farmer could cultivate increased severalfold. Secondly, many new ponds and dams were constructed to create reservoirs for irrigation.<sup>19</sup> Thirdly, the ridge furrow-seeding method of cultivating dry-fields also greatly reduced the labor requirement. In consequence, the practice called "enlarged scale farming" (Kwang Jak), the phenomenon of a peasant working a good-sized area land by himself, soon became common. Generally it was the richer peasant who first succeeded in farming



this way, and they have now become agricultural entrepreneurs, producing for the market as well as for their own consumption. This rich peasant also used not only the labor resources of their families but also hired laborers as wage laborers.

In the eighteenth century, new farming knowledges such as cultivation of fruit trees, raising livestock, horticulture, sericulture, food processing, storage, irrigation, and weather, were more progressed than the seventeenth century.

In the nineteenth century, after opening the ports, new American livestock and cultivated seeds, German sericultural technique, and new modern farming management methods were newly introduced. The development of transportation and communication systems, such as ships, four-wheeled carts, hand-operated cranes, telegrams contributed to the increase of agricultural productivity. Finally, the development of new rice-cleaning method<sup>20</sup>, such as fanning mills and steam rice mills, instead of the native method of cleaning by pounding in stone or wooden mortars and separating the chaff by winnowing, increased the quality of rice and its price, too.

The problem of the measuring the development of the productive forces is still unsolved. The degree of the development of productive forces in each of the above stages has been vaguely described in statements like these: "these

improvement in agricultural technology inevitably resulted in increased yields", or "... the result of the intensive use of (technologies)... was a marked increase in agricultural production" (Lee, Ki-baik, 1984: 184 & 227).

Enlarged scale farming was practiced not only by absentee landowners and the independent landholding peasant, but by tenant peasants as well. By selling their labor to other landowners, these tenant peasants in effect were engaged in enlarged scale farming, and their economic situation also gradually improved.

Up to the 17th century, share-cost farming had been the rule, whereby the tenant paid the landowner the fixed rate of half of the harvest. In this system the landowner shared equally with his tenant both the production costs and the risk of a bad harvest, but this inevitably meant that the landowner took part in making decisions as to how his land would be farmed. This often made it impossible for the tenant to manage the farming operation as he wished, since the social status of the landowner normally was higher than his. Now, however, with the advent of simple-fee farming, the tenant paid a fixed amount for his use of the land, agreeing to bear the costs of production and the risks by himself. He was thus free of the landowner's supervision and, for the first time, could farm as he thought best. Moreover, in this land tenure relationship, there was essentially no room for any social distinction between

landowner and tenant to intrude. Finally, the gradual change from share-cost farming to a simple-fee system laid the foundation for the development of the practice of payment in cash instead of payment in kind.

This system was possible because of the development of wholesale commerce in the late seventeenth century. The government purchasing agents or government licensed merchants, the so called Kongin, made purchases of the required goods and delivered them to the government by using the tax payments from the peasantry. The government licensed merchants consisted of Six Licensed Stores in Seoul, Kaekchu (inland market), and Yogak (costal trade broker). In opposition to the licensed merchants, private merchants such as River merchants of Seoul, Kaesong merchants, Uiju merchants, Suwon merchants and Tongnae merchants developed the conflicts with the licensed merchants. More importantly, the itinerant pack and back peddlers who were the regional lower members of the Kaekchu and Yogak organized a group of army and fought against the Gab-O peasantry army, allied with government soldiers and Japanese army. Thus we can see the anti-peasantry characteristics of the licensed merchants. The private merchants, under the pressures of the licensed merchants, developed and dominated a large portion of wholesale commerce and trade. This commercial capital has been directly invested in the handicraft industry since the late

eighteenth century (1791: Sinhae Tongkong)<sup>21</sup>. Thus handicraft industry was controlled by the merchants, as the financiers. Paper manufactory, pottery, and ironware were dependent on the merchants who financed them, and craftsmen were just wage laborers. But still, government controlled the weapons and chinaware handicraft industry. Some private producers such as fur clothing craftsman and knife makers also existed.

A new class of commoner<sup>22</sup> landlords emerged, composed of peasant farmers who accumulated wealth through the increased production that resulted from advances in agricultural technology through improvement in methods of farm management, and through the growth of farm production for the commercial market.

According to Kim, Yong-sop (1960: 205), about 15.5% of the total farm households, of the middle peasant class, could possibly accumulate their surplus products. And about 55% of the Yangban and 72.5% of the Commoner and Chonmin were the poor subsistence class in the middle of the nineteenth century. The Yi-Dynasty Korea, in the 19th century, had a large internal structural contradiction in that that kind of evolution was totally decided by the degree of development of production forces.

In short, the new technology produced a polarization in rural society between the rich peasant class and those who had been unable to hold on to their small plots of land.

With their farming background most of the landless labor force in the villages became the hired hands of their wealthier neighbors, but others took up a life of vagrant begging or joined robber band or miner workers (Kim, Yongsop, 1960)23.

#### 4. PRODUCTION RELATION

##### a. Pre-capitalist Mode of Production of Yi-Dynasty Korea

The best way to define a mode of production is to investigate the relations among such elements as "labors, means of production, and non-laborers as appropriators of surplus value" (Althusser, & et. al., 1979). The arable land was the most important means of production in Yi-Dynasty Korea. There is an argument that the traditional societies of Asia had one typical form of landownership: state ownership and village possession of land (Marx, 1981: 791). This, so-called, Asiatic Mode of Production is inadequate when applied to the landownership in the Yi-state, because the landownership and the transfer of revenue in the Yi society showed quite different features. Private landownership in Yi-Dynasty Korea must have been already established and developed since the 15th24 century.

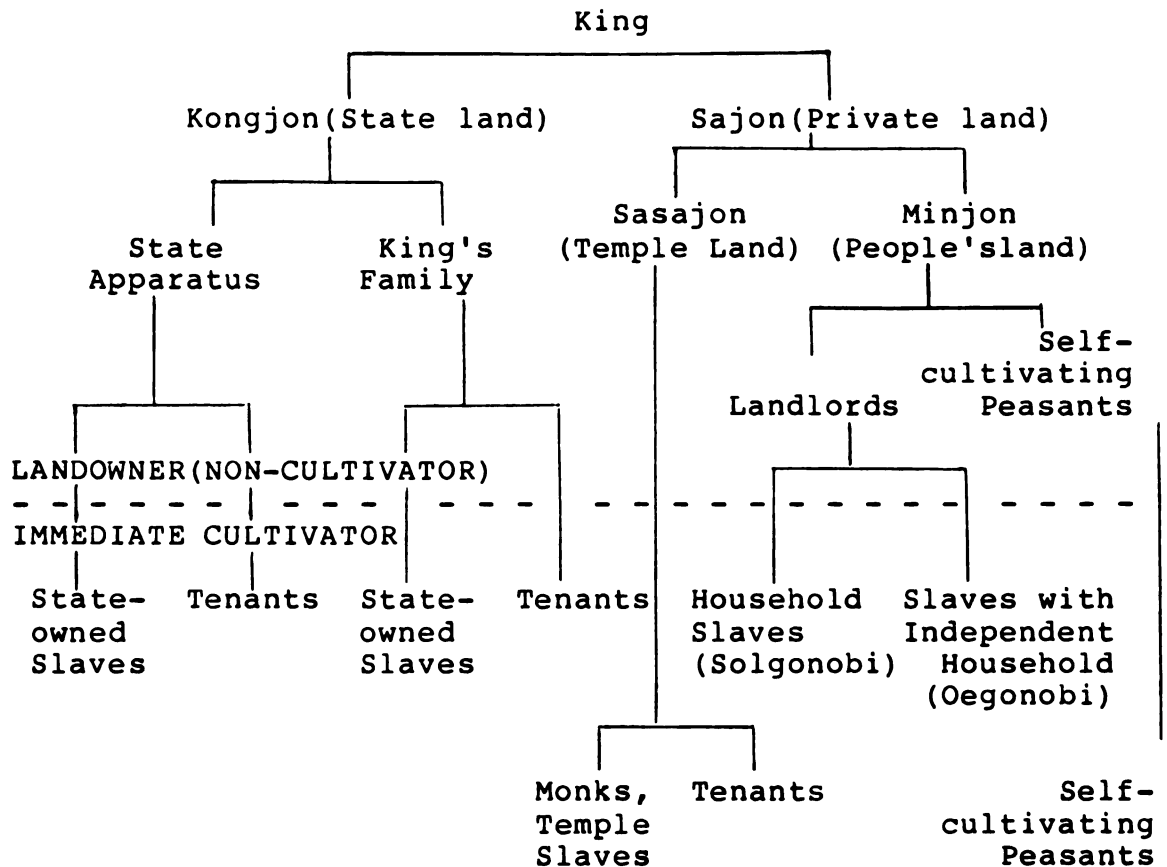
Some argued that the land system of Yi-Dynasty Korea was basically founded on the concept of King's land, in which the state would hold the title to the land and allocate a fixed amount to each farmer, autocrats, and

public offices. This means peasants and farmers have nothing to do with the land in the real sense. The concept of King's land was only the expression of a political concept. In addition, to make sure of their tax resources, the Yi-Dynasty assured the ownerships to the landowners through making land registers (Kim, Yong-sop, 1971: 227). Therefore, land can be traded frequently as a commodity simply by transferring the land registers. The result was that the landowner and tenant relationship was relatively established. The landowner had the whole right to their lands and tenants can only cultivate the land after purchasing the cultivating rights from the landowner.

"Thus the doctrine of King's land existed as a concept underlying private ownership, and, when it was explicitly used, it took the form of the concept of territorial sovereignty or of a concept limiting ownership in cases of violation of the law or state policy." (Park, Byung-ho, 1975: 9)

Practically speaking, tenants did not have any status restrictions, so everybody who had the ability to buy the land and could, perhaps, become a big landowner. Based on this system, the feudalistic landowner-tenant relationship gradually developed to the dominant production relation. Extremely polarized landownership styles, large landowners or petty-landed self-subsistence farmer and the large number of no-landed tenant peasants or the pauperized peasants, had coexisted. Figure 1 explicitly explains the relations of landownership and cultivators, and the formation of social class.

Figure 1. Diversity of Landownership in the Yi-Dynasty



Source; cited in Choe, Jae-Hyon., "Asiatic" or "Feudal",  
Korean Social Science Journal, Vol. XII, 1985, p.28.

The total arable land of the Yi-state was about one and a half million Kyol<sup>25</sup>, the King and the state owned at most one-tenth of the arable land. The other nine-tenths was owned by private landowners such as Yangban (the member of ruling estate), Commoners (self-cultivating Yangin), Buddhist temples, Hyanggyo (local schools), and clan communities. But, the Yangban, similar to the Chinese gentry, owned the largest part of the arable land, although they seldom cultivated it themselves.

Private land could be bought, sold, donated, and mortgaged. A fifteenth century code contains the following regulations regarding the purchase of land:

"Arable land and houses may not be refunded after 15 days of purchase. They must be registered in 100 days at the state offices. The same rule applies to selling slaves. Cows and horses may not be refunded after five days of purchase."<sup>26</sup>

The king's chamber or other state apparatus could not at will remove land from private landowners. If a person cultivated virgin land he could own the land (Yi, Kyung-sik, 1965). Thus the rich and powerful of the dynasty could increase their land through cultivating virgin land by engaging a labor force under their control. The mobilization of population at the end of the nineteenth century towards the north province can be understood in this context. Sometimes the king tried to annex the private land of self-cultivating peasants under the pretense that the whole territory was his own personal property, but peasants resisted such endeavors. As an exemplary incident,<sup>27</sup> in the annals of King Hyonjong in the year of 1662 it showed, if the king needed the arable land, he had to pay for it. The private landownership was approved by law no later than the fifteenth century. The purchase, sale, giving away, heritability, and right to mortgage land were untouched rights of private owners. Thus, the rich and powerful tried to increase their land through such means.

The sources of state revenue consisted of land tax,



ground-rent of state-owned land, tribute in kind, corvee or forced labor, and military service and defense tax from all Yangin adults. The tribute in kind, corvee, and defense tax and military service were gathered in rice, cotton, or coins since the seventeenth century. As shown in Table 2, land tax was the main income source of the Yi-state. The land tax was collected at about 10% and other various tributes including labor tributes collected 7% of the harvest. Only minority self-cultivating peasants enjoyed this relatively light burden, while majority peasant tenants paid approximately an additional 50% of the harvest as rent to their landowners. In the case of the cultivators of private land, they paid about 50% of the harvest as ground-rent to the landlord and an additional 10% as land tax to the state.

Table 2. The Proportion of Land Tax(LT) to the Total Revenue(TR) of Yi-state

year	1896*	1898**	1901***	1904****
LT	\$1,447,681	Yen2,227,758	\$8,296,473	\$9,703,591
TR	\$6,190,079	Yen4,527,426	\$9,079,456	\$14,214,573
LT/TR	23.87%	49.21%	91.38%	68.27%

Sources: \* The Korea Repository, Vol. 3, 1896, Editorial Department, "General Budget for 1896, p. 33. The total revenue of 1896 includes the considerable amount of apparent estimated budget deficiency; \$1,380,669. This is likely due to the small amount of land tax.  
 \*\* The Korea Repository, Vol. 5, 1898, Feb. 1898, Editorial Department, "The Budget for 1898", pp. 70-74.  
 \*\*\* The Korea Review, 1901, Vol. 2, "News Calendar", pp. 122-124.  
 \*\*\*\* The Korea Review, 1904, Vol. 4, "News Calendar'", pp. 261-271.

Using those financial resources, the central government could support its government apparatus and control the provinces. The governors of eight provinces, who ruled in the name of king with full responsibility of taxation, jurisprudence, and partial military activities, served only for a fixed term of office since the central government adopted the principle of rotation. The government officials recruited through literary examinations were organized by the state and they mainly came from the Yangban. Lower-ranking civilian and military officials were also recruited through state exams of various categories for which usually the people from the Chungin (intermediate status) were candidates. The state power was highly centralized and centripetal. The dynasty must be an absolute monarchy, but, it could be a better understanding that the monarchy was a power configuration in and around the king's court, where several powerful Yangban clans were conflicting, competing, and cooperating with one another<sup>28</sup>, in order to strengthen their political influences, as well as their economic and ideological power. "Because the institution of kingship was weak in Korea's aristocratic society, the king was often manipulated to suit the ideas and interests of the powerful Yangban families."<sup>29</sup> This is clear in that the state suffered a reduction in the land tax revenue because of the powerful Yangban clan's ability to manipulate their arable land from the category of tax obligation to the category of

exemption.<sup>30</sup> Table 3 shows that the tax-obliged land is continuously decreasing. This resulted in a financial crisis and the weakness of the Yi-state power in the nineteenth century.

Table 3. Changes of Tax-obliged vs. Tax-free land  
(unit=Kyol31)

Year	Total Land (T)	Tax-obliged land (A)	A/T (%)	Tax-free land (B)	B/T (%)
1804	1,454,356	816,502	56%	637,854	44%
1824	1,454,167	787,933	54%	667,234	46%
1844	1,458,942	786,976	54%	671,966	46%
1864	1,445,491	776,708	54%	668,783	46%
1883	1,483,633	757,018	51%	726,615	49%
1893*	1,455,227	758,807	52%	696,420	48%

Sources: Abbreviated table based on Pak Si-hyong, 1961, Chosontoji Chedosa (A History of Landownership in Korea) 2, Pyongyang, p.303.

Choe Jae-Hyeon., " 'Asiatic' or 'Feudal' - How to define the Precapitalist Mode of Production in Korea", Korean Social Science Journal, Vol. XII, 1985, pp. 26-45.

\* from Masangmugu, Chosonjaejunsa.

The precapitalist mode of production of Yi-Dynasty Korea is similar to the characteristics of the Asiatic Mode of production<sup>32</sup> in the perspectives of the centralized political domination and despotism, payment of tribute by the producers to the state. Several characteristics of the feudal mode of production<sup>33</sup> are applicable to the precapitalist mode of production of Yi-Korea such as private ownership of land, share-cropping according to tenancy, differentiated system of inequality/status system, and extra-economic force by the ruling class.<sup>34</sup>

As Kajimura Hideki (1968, 1977) argued, if the mode of production in the late Yi-Dynasty Korea was the petty-commodity mode of production, as a transitory form and seldom dominated other mode of production, we could have the problems of unmatured money-commodity relation in the everyday life of the population and the separation of handicraft and agriculture. The form of slave-owning mode of production<sup>35</sup> can be argued in that the Yi-state owned the slaves as direct producers in the form of state owned slaves or household slaves or slaves with an independent household. But Yi-state had neither slave markets nor slaves for commodity production. Finally, the tribute paying mode of production is not clear in its definitions and the usage is different between Amin (1976) and Wallerstein (1980). The former is the replacement of Asiatic mode, the latter the reformulation of Feudal mode.

The important characteristics of Yi-Dynasty society are the status system, share-cropping, and the centralized state. Thus, comparatively speaking, the form of the precapitalist mode of production in Yi-Dynasty Korea is a mixed one of Asiatic and Feudal mode of production. That could be called an "Asiatic-Feudal mode of production", with emphasis on the feudal characteristics. Shin, Yong-ha (1978), used the term 'semi-feudalistic landlordism'<sup>36</sup> in order to explain the late Yi-Dynasty landlordism because it was neither pure feudal nor capitalistic.

The landownership of the 19th century came to be dominated more thoroughly by an economic relationship that replaced the former noneconomic relationship based on status. This may indicate that the landlordism of the period represented a time when the feudal system was disintegrating. The disintegration of feudalism was in progress in parallel with the spreading circulation of currency and merchandise as well as the growth of commercial agriculture in the neighborhood of cities.

The establishment of private landownership, first of all, introduced to the feudalistic relationship as a dominant productive relations between the landowners and tenants. But from forms of development of the feudalistic mode of production developed the various modes of production, such as peasantry mode of production, simple commodity mode of production, and mixed mode of production, etc. Commercial development on a large scale, domestic industry, and commercialization of farm production, that is, commercial agriculture, were partially developed. Therefore, the feudalistic mode of production has revealed the significant internal contradiction which resulted in severe class differentiation among peasantry.

b. The Collapse of SINBUNJE or Status System of Yi-Dynasty Korea

The Korea Review (1901)37, in the section of Questions and Answer, answers the question of the relations between

different grades and the matter of dress like this:

"This supposes the previous question as to what the Korean grades of society are. We have (1) the official class, (2) the Yangban or gentleman class, (3) the Chungin or middle class, (4) the common class, (5) the slave class, (6) the Chilban or pariah class. The official class is supposed to be drawn exclusively from the Yangban class, though there are not a few exceptions. ... The Yangban class and the common class were formerly distinguished by the use of the long sleeved coat by the former and not the latter, but this is abolished. ... The Chungin or 'half and half class,' midway between the two (Yangban and Common) just mentioned, are generally the results of mixed marriages or of concubinage and they are not specially distinguished from the upper class, although theoretically ineligible to official position. The slave class comes next below the common class but they can wear the Korean hat and headband and leather shoes which are denied to the lowest or Chilban class. These latter include, convicts, gymnasts, exorcists, sorcerers, fortune tellers and dancing-girls (and corpse-bearers). ..."

This quote explains the social formation of the Yi-Dynasty, which represents a system of inequality called Sinbunje (the status system). The above strata can be reformulated (a) Yangban [literati, (1) + (2)], (b) Chungin [intermediate, (3)], (c) Yangin [commoners, (4)], (d) Sangmin or Chonmin [slaves, Nobi (5) + (6)], based on being more faithful to the traditional terms and the social functions. The term "class" in the above quote seems to mean the "grade", that is, status or estates in feudalistic contexts. The Yangban class is defined (Hahn, Young-woo, 1976: 131) as designating the descendants of high ranking officials, scholars, men of true Confucian virtue and those others with the kind of family background needed to rise to high civil or military

office in a lineage dominated ambience. The only Yangban were listed among the local gentry and constituted a ruling stratum guiding the affairs of the areas in which they lived.

This quote also represents the dismantling of the rigid status system in "though there are not a few exceptions", or "this is now abolished", or "they (slave class) can wear the Korean hat and headband and leather shoes...", these changes in the late nineteenth century mainly came from the development of the forces of production: agricultural production, the changes of the land possession, money commodity, and market economy. So, the lower status who became rich could buy or falsify a good pedigree, doing so, they could become a Yangban and buy an officialdom.

In some cases, by contributing fixed amount of grain, wealthier peasantry even purchased blank official appointment forms and by inscribing their own names thereon, acquired the right to use a rank title normally reserved to Yangban<sup>38</sup>. At the same time there were Yangban who were efficiently excluded from office building, who sank to the status of tenant farmers. Thus, the relationship between Yangban and commoners, granted that the distinction itself did not appear, was undergoing a significant change in character in the direction of a class structure based on economic wealth. To be sure, there were many peasants who fell into still more impoverished circumstances as tenant

farmers, and there were others who became wage laborers or landless vagrants. But all these phenomena demonstrate plainly that changes were taking place in the status system of Yi-Dynasty society.

The gradual collapse of status system is well exemplified by the following tables (Table 4 & 5). The state owned slaves were liberated in 1801 when the rosters of government slaves were ordered to be burned. Although the institution of private slavery had not been abolished, the status system that had upheld the distinction between master and slave was crumbling. In addition, the portion of the decrease of commoner largely ascended to the Yangban status through buying the Yangban statusship. The increase of Yangban status brought competence for the limited officialdom. Thus the state exam was corrupted.<sup>39</sup>

Table 4. Household Analysis by Status Class (1690-1858)

year class	1690	1729- 1732	1783- 1789	1858
Yangban	290 (9.2%)	579 (18.7%)	1,055 (37.5%)	2,099 (70.3%)
Commoner	1,694 (53.7%)	1,689 (54.6%)	1,616 (57.5%)	842 (28.2%)
Slave	1,172 (37.1%)	824 (26.6%)	140 (5%)	44 (1.5%)
Total	3,156 (100%)	3,092 (100%)	2,810 (100%)	2,985 (100%)

Source: Shiho, Hiroshi., "An Observation of Status Class System of Yi-Dynasty Population: A Case Study of Taegu county", in *The Study of Yi-Dynasty Economy*, March, 1938, pp. 387-389.



Table 5. Household Analysis by Status Class (1729-1868)

year class	1729	1765	1804	1868
Yangban	168 (26.29%)	225 (40.98%)	347 (53.47%)	349 (65.48%)
Commoner	382 (59.78%)	313 (57.01%)	296 (45.61%)	181 (33.96%)
Slave	89 (13.93%)	11 (2.00%)	6 (0.92%)	3 (0.56%)
Total	639 (100%)	549 (100%)	649 (100%)	533 (100%)

Source: Chung, Sok-Jong, "A Study on the Destruction of the Status System of the Yi-Dynasty: A Case Study of Uhl-san County Family Registers", M.A. thesis in Seoul National University, 1968, pp. 33-34.

Table 4 and Table 5, which are for different purposes, clearly show the collapse of the status system of Yi-Dynasty Korea in the late 19th century. Those tables are the best summation of our arguments despite several methodological problems: missing the middle status categories (Chungin) and using the family registers, which have a lot of missing households, as data sources. The collapse of the status system was accelerated by the contradictions between the development of forces of production and the feudalistic mode of production. The feudalistic status system collapsed, and economic relations emerged as an important factor in the class structure.

A Korean proverb, "The poor old gentleman (Yangban) can despise no one but the slave,"<sup>40</sup> which gives us an inside glimpse at Korean life, for the aged gentleman without money

is the most pitiable object in Korea. He is too good to work, too proud to beg, too poor to live.

c. Agricultural Production Relations and Class Conflicts

In the late 19th century, the relations of landowner and tenants were the economic production relations which were not affected much by non-economic forces. Land itself was a commodity and it was sold and bought freely. The continuous reproduction of large land ownership, the feudalistic landowner and rich peasants who accumulated their own land through the development of productive forces, resulted in producing a large number of peasants who were thrown off from the land. They were mainly of the small land owning farmer and pure tenant peasant classes. Kim, Yong-sop (1960) argued that tenant land occupied about 60% of the total arable land, and tenant peasants about 50% of the peasantry, and pure tenant peasants was about 20-25% of the total peasantry. The so called rural crisis, which is the advent of alienation of the majority of the peasants from the land, was the result of the collapse of the small landowning peasants and pure tenant peasant class. This economic class differentiation resulted in the small-scale peasant and large number of wage laborers. Most peasants evolved into the wage-labor peasants or urban laborer or mine wage laborer or wandering people (Lee, Ki-baik, 1984:

251). Thus class differentiation was already beyond the feudalistic status system, which brought the class struggle among the social classes. Those kinds of class struggles were between landless or small land-owning tenant peasants and landowners, between small managerial peasants and large managerial peasants, between wage-laborer peasants and employers. Small tenant peasants had to pay the landowner a half of the total product, pay a third of the seeding fees and usuries of the total product and the remnants were theirs, one sixth of the total product.

The struggle of the peasants in the late 19th century, first of all, was given to the abolition of the feudalistic productive relations between land owners and tenants. In addition, this primary contradictory relation of the agricultural society of Yi-Dynasty Korea was aggravated by the exploitation of the feudalistic state. As stated above, land tax was charged to a tenth of the total product. Thus compared with the landowner who exploited a half of the total product, land tax seems to be smaller than that of landowner but the exploitation and fraud of the low-level officers (Ajon)<sup>41</sup> deteriorated the economic conditions of the peasants. Actually local officers collected three times the reported amount of land tax due to the central government. Status tax (military tax) was based on the status system, which either physical military services were rendered or tributary payment was made. The state usuries

system was initially a kind of social welfare system for the poor, but it turned out to be a kind of exploitation of the poor peasantry because of the imposition of a high rate of interest on their refunding rice. The severe economic exploitation also brought the class conflict between the pure tenant peasants and small land owning tenant peasants.

The Gab-O peasant war during these times can be understood in terms of both the disruption of the peasant economy and the formation of class consciousness. The uprising of peasantry was not simply an anti-taxation system movement or an anti-land system movement, but a class struggle against the inequality of the accumulation of the surplus value between the feudalistic upperclass and the self-support new capitalist class.<sup>42</sup>

#### d. The Exploitation of Imperial Powers

While the feudalistic social system was being internally demolished by the contradictions of production forces and the relations of production, Korea now faced a critical international situation in the late nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the Korean government lacked any coherent policy. The king family oligarchs and ruling class could only think to maintain themselves in power by seeking the backing of foreign states, not by winning the support of the Korean people.

Meanwhile the nation's chronic financial crisis had further worsened. On the one hand, special tax exemptions, abandoned fields, and tax evasion had diminished the government's receipts, while on the other hand, subsequent developments to the opening of Korean ports - the exchange of diplomatic missions, the payment of indemnities to Japan, and the introduction of modern facilities - required new and heavy expenditures. These needs in part were met from customs receipts and from foreign loans, but government activities still had to be financed preponderantly by the farming villages, as a form of land tax. The burdens on peasantry thus doubled or tripled, as every pretext was used to impose fresh levies and the petty functionaries who collected them resorted to ever more harsh methods of extortion. Under these circumstances the grievances harbored by the peasants toward the feudal state and Yangban rulers gave every indication of erupting into violence. Indeed popular uprisings were breaking out in many areas, while armed bandits were raiding periodic markets and other centers of goods distribution with alarming frequency.

Japanese economic penetration was further eroding the Korean village economy. Although Japan had been the first to take an aggressive advantage of Korea, Japan's position in the peninsula inevitably deteriorated because of its involvement in the unsuccessful 1884 Kapsin coup. Nevertheless, as shown in Table 6, by the early 1890s

Japanese economic activity had reached astonishing proportions that no other nation could rival.

Table 6. Comparative Table of Korean Trade with Japan and China.

IMPORT (sum of Pusan, Wonsan, and Inchon port)  
(Unit: Mexico \$43)

year	from China (A)	from Japan (B)	total (T=A+B)	Japan/total (B/T)
1885	313,342	1,377,392	1,690,734	81%
1886	455,015	2,064,353	2,519,368	83%
1887	742,661	2,080,787	2,823,448	74%
1888	860,328	2,196,115	3,056,443	72%
1889	1,101,585	2,299,118	3,400,703	68%
1890	1,660,075	3,086,897	4,746,972	68%
1891	2,148,274	3,326,468	5,474,742	60%
1892	2,055,555	2,555,675	4,611,230	55%

#### EXPORT

year	to China (A)	to Japan (B)	total (T=A+B)	Japan/total (B/T)
1885	5,479	377,775	383,254	97%
1886	15,977	488,041	503,018	97%
1887	18,873	783,752	802,625	98%
1888	71,943	785,238	857,181	91%
1889	109,798	1,122,278	1,232,076	91%
1890	70,922	3,475,098	3,546,020	98%
1891	134,464	3,219,887	3,354,351	96%
1892	149,861	2,271,918	2,421,779	94%

Source: Choson Tongsa (The Whole History of Korea), Choson Minjujuui InminKonghwaguk (North Korea), Kwahakwon, Yoksa Yonguso, Pyongyang, North Korea, 1961, p.69-70.  
Aikawa, Ichitaro., Choson Tsusho Jijyo, 1895, p.64 (export), & pp.57-61 (import).  
Kitagawa, Osamu., "Sino-Japanese War and Korea-Japan trade", History and Science, 1962, Vol. 1, No.1.  
Kang, Jae-Eon., "Gab-O peasants war of the breakage of Feudalism", 1954.

The establishment of Japanese merchants were to be found on a large scale in each of the open ports, Inchon, Pusan, and Wonsan, and statistics for 1896 show 210 of 258 such business were Japanese (Aikawa, 1962). Japan also enjoyed a heavy preponderance with respect to numbers of merchant vessels entering Korean ports. Among 1,322 merchant ships with a gross tonnage of 387,507 entering Korea's ports in 1893, 956 ships weighing 304,224 tons were Japanese; in percentage terms 72% of the vessels and over 78% of the gross tonnage came in under the Japanese flag (Kitagawa, 1962). As shown in Table 6, Japan's proportion of the total volume of Korea's foreign trade loomed relatively large: over 90% of exports went to Japan and more than 50% of imports came from Japan (Lee, Ki-baik, 1984: 282).

Table 7. The Character of Japanese Export to Korea  
(unit=Yen)

year	total (T)	Japanese products (A)	% (A/T)	Foreign products (B)	% (B/T)
1885	457,064	229,600	50%	226,410	50%
1887	552,901	360,611	65%	192,295	35%
1889	1,892,966	807,099	74%	205,796	26%
1892	1,410,899	1,228,820	87%	180,878	13%

Sources: Kitagawa, Osamu., "Sino-Japanese War and Korea-Japan Trade", History and Science, 1962, Vol. 1, No. 1.

The principal import item, cotton cloth, came in both from China and Japan, but whereas Chinese merchants simply

were re-exporting English cotton goods, Japanese traders increasingly brought in cloth manufactured in their own country. The Japanese, as shown in Table 7, continuously increased the amount of their own products from 50% in 1885 to 87% in 1892. Korean exports, such as, rice, soybeans, gold, and cowhides, went almost entirely to Japan. The cheap rices were exported to the Japanese industrial areas, specially to the Osaka and Kobe areas<sup>44</sup>. This means that the loss of Korean peasantry turned to the power of newly rising Japanese industrial capitalism. It must be noted, too, that Japanese traders were mostly from the lawless or depressed elements of Japanese society. They showed no scruples in their eagerness to make their fortunes at the expense of the Korean peasant, shrewdly taking advantage of the fact that the village people could buy only Japanese cotton goods, kettles, pots and pans, farming tools, kerosene, dyestuffs, salt, and other things by selling their rice and beans (Table 8)<sup>45</sup>.

Japanese traders would loan their victims the money with which to make purchases and then at harvest time claim a part or even all of the peasant's crop. Living as they were in such strained circumstances, the Korean peasant could not resist the glitter of the Japanese goods, only to find themselves made destitute by the exorbitant interest extorted by the profit-hungry Japanese.

There were conflicts between Korean Peasantry and



Japanese merchants. Peasants petitioned the Korean Government and protested against both the government and foreign merchants. One way the government found to resist Japan's economic penetration was to prohibit the export of rice from certain provinces.<sup>46</sup> Such bans were put into effect for the Hamgyo'ng province in 1889 and for Hwanghae in 1890, but Japanese protests rendered them ineffective. Due to a combination of factors, the peasant villages continued to sink into destitution, while the peasantry harbored a mounting hostility toward its exploiters, Korean and foreign alike.

Table 8. Export of Rice and Beans from Korea (chiefly to Japan)

(unit: Piculs<sup>47</sup>)

year	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890
rice	9,832	8,454	67,589	16,065	34,527	874,665
beans	28,013	46,967	304,295	443,546	447,342	659,562

year	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895
rice	928,010	487,601	170,077	376,239	305,196
beans					

Sources: Geo. Herber Jones., "Korea- A Plea and a Growl", The Korean Repository, May 1892, pp.135-136.  
H. N. Allen., "Exportation of Rice Prohibited By Korea", The Consular Report, Seoul, December 7, 1893, pp.422-424.  
H. N. Allen., Acting Consul-General, "Rice Crop of Korea", The Consular Report, Seoul, November 4, 1896, pp. 388-390.

## 5. CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS: PEASANTRY AND REVOLUTION

### a. Peasantry as a Class

Class also, according to Marx, concerns the class consciousness and the form of its connection with the structural and organizational forces making the overthrow of the capitalist system. Class consciousness is regarded as agent of social conflict and social change. Marx expected an advancement in which the concentration of the working class in urban centres and large industrial enterprises would transform the wage workers, from a class in-itself to a class for-itself. Class in-itself represents an observer's judgement that one class exists in a structural relationship with other classes and that each has an objective class interest. The objective interest of a disadvantaged class, according to Marx, is to overthrow advantaged classes. But activity toward that end does not occur until a class recognizes its interest and becomes a class for-itself. Thus the conversion of objective interests into subjective ones is a definition of the development of political consciousness.

Ralph Dahrendorf formalizes Marx's distinction between a class in-itself and a class for-itself by distinguishing between latent and manifest interests and between quasi-groups and interest groups (Dahrendorf, 1959).

Marx asserts that all individual activity is both

socially determined and has social consequences which led him inexorably to the view that the nature of social organization determines the life-chances of the individual whether he is aware of this social determination or not. Thus he wrote,

"As in private life we distinguish between what a man thinks of himself and what he really is or does, so in historical struggles we must distinguish even more carefully the catchwords and fantasies of parties from their real interests, their conception from their reality."<sup>48</sup>

Consequently, individuals whose life-chances are similarly affected by similar objective social conditions are said to have a common interest whether they perceive any such interest or not. What Marx called a class in-itself, a class in the sense of an aggregate of individuals similarly situated in the division of labor and whose life-chances are thus similarly affected by similar objective conditions, must be transformed into a class for-itself, a community of individuals who are aware of their common interest in opposition to another such class. The transformation of objective interests to subjective interests is thus the necessary and sufficient condition for the emergence of class conflict (Balbus, 1971).

Marx, in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (1852), appears to add a subjective element to his definition when he argues that to the extent that the small-holding French peasantry did not develop a consciousness of

its common interests and failed to organize an appropriate political apparatus to press for them, it could not properly be said to form a class.

Marx thought that the proletariat could become a class for itself under the conditions of modern factory production, where workers were brought together and, through ease of communications, could become conscious of their collective interests. Peasants, however, are apart from each other. Therefore, their objective grievances could not become collective ones. In Marx's famous image, the image of such a mass group of the French peasantry was "formed by simple addition of homologous magnitudes, much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes."<sup>49</sup>

But Marx took with respect to peasants, namely that they could be a class in the sense of sharing common economic conditions and interests (objective), but their ability to act as a class was impeded by their diversity and individualism.

Marx underlines the importance he assigned to social relationships as a major intervening variable between objective and subjective class. The objective class is not sufficient in itself to bring about accurate subjective class identification. It is the sharing of a common experience with others of the same class that leads a class in-itself to become a class for-itself.

Growing struggles with capitalist workers over wages,

periodic economic crises, visibility of common conditions of existence, and ease of communication, allied with the interrelated processes of polarization, simplification and pauperization, would lead the working class to a rapid awareness of its common needs and interests, an unshakable conviction that these could be effectively realized only in a socialist society, and impel it to centralize and coordinate its struggle in a revolutionary political party which would be the leading actor in the capture of state power and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie.

Only Marxists, who are historical materialists or structural historians, have studied the problem of consciousness within the context of the whole of social structure. Differently, Weberian isolate the problem of consciousness as an artifact or lifestyle or culture.

Weber, acknowledging the primacy of capitalist relations, could only endorse Marx's equation of material relations, interest, and ideology, though is attenuated to some degree to the conscious causality of that relationship.

Weber and Marx posit a distinction between class formation and the development of class consciousness. This theoretical distinction parallels the temporal distinction or time lag between the creation of classes and the gradual conceptualization of class. In Weber and Marx, class consciousness is described as developing almost generically, as a class hones its material interest through constant,

competitive interaction with other classes (Zukin, 1977). Through this refinement, common interest becomes common cause and then common identity. The generalization of the class's economic power transcends structural limitations and entails an effort to dominate all spheres of society.

b. The Class Consciousness of the Gab-O Peasantry

Then, what did make the Gab-O peasantry uprising?

The Korean peasantry could become a class in the sense of sharing common economic conditions and objective interests. Most Korean peasants were subsistent tenants, who believed that all that is good in life is perennially in short supply. That the next year may well be worse than the present year, so resources must be husbanded; and that one never gets something for nothing, but only gets something at some else's expense.

"... (Peasants) who are living on one square meal once in two days, satisfying hunger the rest of the time with stewed greens which are picked wild on the mountain side. Yet they are doing this patiently waiting for the rice returns of the coming autumn which promise a good crop."50

The conditions of the tenant peasants' life were penurious, often in the extreme, with stiff rents paid in kind and a general insecurity of tenure.

"Most of the tenants ran out of food before barley or rice was harvested. They used to gather and eat premature grains or live on edible herbs and grasses. To pull through the perennial spring famine tenant

farmers were forced to borrow money from Kye (community mutual fund) and usurers at high interest, gradually running deep into debt." (Shin, Yong-ha, 1978: 25)

One of the greatest Tonghak leaders, Choi Si-Hyung (1829 - 1898), confessed his past situation like this:

"Having long led a wandering life, I have no settled home. When young, I had a disease, but was too poor to receive medical attention."<sup>51</sup>

To make better worse, diseases were prevalent throughout the country. Perhaps the most common disease in Yi-Korea was malaria, which was in all parts of the country, but seemed to be especially prevalent in sections where there were numerous rice fields. Also, smallpox broke out in epidemic proportions and leprosy was prevalent in the southern provinces (Avison, 1897).

Therefore, peasant rebellions occurred frequently. The uprisings tended to happen when the peasants were pushed below their typical subsistence level by things like additional taxes or usury. The Yangban landowners fused aristocratic privilege with private landownership in a most potent mix. Thus nineteenth century Korean bureaucrats acknowledged that landed wealth wielded great power in Korea.

Then, how could they act as a class? How could they enforce their class interest in their own name? According to Marx, peasants can't represent themselves. They must be represented. Then who did represent the peasantry?

Possibly the "hidden middle class"<sup>52</sup>, such as Chungin, ruined Yangban class, unprivileged managerial or entrepreneur peasants, talented sons of concubines, and alienated intellectuals who largely engaged in agriculture as the peasantry class led the peasantry uprising. Various changes in Yi-Dynasty Korea of the late 19th century evolved into the basic conflicts among the feudalistic landowners, aristocratic bureaucrats, and peasants in the context of the relations of production. At this stage of economic structure, the forces of production in Yi-Dynasty Korea came in to contradict the existing relations of production, as well as, their property relations within which they showed the conflict with the newly emerging economic structure. In the process of the aggravating paltry and pauperization, petty-peasants demanded their existence rights and raised peasant wars.

Main social thoughts of the Gab-O peasantry, Tonghak and prophecy ideas, had their own developmental stages of history and these gave dreams to peasantry. Peasantry desired changes to the next step for the better world. That is, peasantry was imagining some kind of new world in their minds; Hawongap of Tonghak, Namchosun of Tzungsan, and Chung Dynasty of Chungkamrok. I think this is similar to McMurtry's explanation of Marx's view of human nature. When McMurtry discusses the conception of Marx's view of human nature, he used the term 'projective consciousness'



(McMurtry, 1978: 23). This means man's unique ability and need to raise a structure in his/her imagination before erecting it in reality. Thus McMurtry regards this conception of human nature as the underlying dynamic of Marx's system, the generating power behind all man's technical, economic, legal, political, and ideological activities.

Furthermore, several reformistic incentives also have affected the development of self-consciousness of the Korean peasantry. First, the changes of economic exploiting methods from share-cost farming to simple-fee farming generated the social power of the tenant peasantry. Because share-cost farming was basically based on the restriction of the feudalistic status but simple-fee farming was based on the only economic contract relationship. Secondly, the advent of managerial peasants and entrepreneur peasants gave an impetus to upward mobility of the poor tenant peasantry. Thirdly, the peasants' victory of reduction of ground-rent against the state land brought the change of the rent rates; from a half of the total product to a third of the total product. This movement also affected the large private land.

The developed resistant propensity of the Korean mass was probably well represented in a proverb, "Even an earth worm will resent being trodden upon" (Landis, 1896: 316), which means oppression of the lowest man will be resented.

### III. THE GAB-O PEASANT REVOLUTION OF YI-DYNASTY KOREA

" Farm land shall be equitably redistributed. "  
" All debts, private or public, incurred in the past  
shall be cancelled. "

(from Twelve Point Code of Gab-O Peasantry  
Reform)

" Where there is land let us till it together, where  
there is rice let us eat it together; where there is  
clothing let us wear it together; where there is  
money let us spend it together ... No place without  
equality, none cold or hungry. "

(from Taiping Creed)

This part is aimed at the role of peasantry in struggling for fundamental changes of Korean society through the Gab-O peasants war. This argument starts with the historical description of the revolutionary uprising of the peasant army, and analyzing it in the contexts of the main struggle form, mobilization, organization, and its ideologies. I also tried to look for the aftermath of this peasant war (1894-1895) and the reasons for the failure of this peasant war.

#### 1. THE REVOLUTIONARY UPRISING OF THE 1894 PEASANT ARMY

In 1894, the anger of the peasantry erupted into a revolutionary peasant struggle employing military operations on a large scale. The whole process of the peasant war can be divided into four periods based on the characteristics of each stage. Most previous studies focused on the

characteristics of the anti-feudal and the anti-imperial struggles. But I am emphasizing the class struggle between the semi-proletariat, poor peasantry class and the rich people, semi-bourgeoisie class. The struggle against the rich was the prevalent characteristic during the whole war.

a. The First Stage: The Kobu Peasantry Uprising (Feb. 15, 1894)

" Let us march into the Capital and annihilate the privileged and noble classes "  
(one of Four-Point Principles, March 1894)

The magistrate of Kobu county, Cho Pyo'ng-gap, was known for his tyrannical cruelty. Since assuming his post, he had taken every opportunity to inflict torment on the hard-pressed people he governed. He illegally extorted large amounts from the peasantry, for example, collecting over 1,000 Yang (1,500 US \$) to erect a covering structure over his father's tombstone. What most evoked their bitter protests was the tax he enforced on irrigation water from the Manso'kpo reservoir. He had mobilized the peasants to labor on a new reservoir constructed on a site just below the old site, and yet he now extorted more than 700 Sok53 of rice in water use charges from the very peasants whose sweat and toil had built the reservoir. The outraged peasantry of Kobu had repeatedly petitioned for redress of their grievances, but the magistrate of Kobu ignored their petitions. Early in 1894, Chun Bong-Joon led the local

people in protesting their outrages. Under the leadership of Chun, the peasantry occupied the county office, seized weapons, distributed the illegally collected tax to the poor, and then destroyed the Manso'kpo reservoir.

The important aspects of the Kobu uprising are the advance preparation and revolutionary radicalism. As shown in Sabaltongmun<sup>54</sup>, this uprising was already planned in Nov. 1893, and had the revolutionary action principles. The peasantry swore on the attack of the Chonju castle and the march to the Capital, Seoul. This meant that the Kobu uprising was different from the previous prevalent peasantry revolts which requested just the exemption of taxes or the removal of old abuses or the punishment of the local officials.

Chun, Bong-joon (1854-1895) was born in Kobu county in a prominent family whose members had traditionally been local bureaucrats. They were members neither of the high official class nor of the socially unaccepted lower classes. His father had chafed under the unjust and venal administrations of local officials, and had been executed for complicity in a protest against a corrupt county chief magistrate (Kunsu). Chun was partially, therefore, motivated by a desire to inflict vengeance upon the government. But the uprising was not limited in its sphere to local or personal incentives. Although he possessed about 600 Pyong<sup>55</sup> (0.2 hectare) land, he was in poverty. He

had access to the Confucian Classics, however, and managed to acquire a good classical education. His enthusiasm for learning was demonstrated by his interest in teaching his fellows and also by his efforts to expand his knowledge through traditional military tactics and through seeking historical information from the village elders.

The Kobu uprising ended in the promises of government to punish the magistrate of Kobu and remove of the old abuses. In spite of their revolutionary planning, because the leaders realized the lacks of organizational mobilization, more faithful participants, and more resortable mottoes<sup>56</sup> to the people, they had to cease the struggles.

The characteristics of the Kobu uprising are not initially religious. It is clear in the confession of a Tonghak chief, Choi, Si-Hyeng.

"The revolt in the magistracy of Ko-Bu began as a popular insurrection without being at first connected with Tonghaks. But, Chun Bong-Joon, a leader of the sect, availing himself of the movement made the rising both political and religious."<sup>57</sup>

The main characteristic of the Kobu uprising was the struggle between peasantry and local feudal power. The struggle against the rich people was a secondary characteristic. The first written appeal of the peasantry army included the struggle against the Buho (rich people). They fought for the relief of "the tortured mass under the oppression of Yangban and Buho (rich people)".<sup>58</sup>

b. The Second Stage of the Peasantry Uprising (Apr. 26 - June 10)

" ... Taxes find their way into the private warehouses of government officials, instead of into the National Treasury, with the result that national debts are on the increase. .... How can we fight for the national security and the people's welfare even at the cost of our lives. We have hoisted the flag of justice and made a vow to die under it. All the people unite under this flag and fight for peace and justice. "  
(Proclamation of Justice<sup>59</sup>, April 1894)

Feudal government did not keep their promises. In addition, the delegate of central government treated the people more severely than before. Chun, the leader of the Kobu uprising, who had waited for a ripe opportunity, uprising again connected with peasant leaders everywhere. Tonghak organizations were involved in the peasantry army at this point. This looked like Chun's highest strategic performance. Tonghak had already spread to the Southern area and it was very popular to the mass peasantry. Basically, Tonghak system was organized hierarchically by upper level supervision organization and lower level peasants organization. Thus, some lower level organizations, such as P'o (parishes) were involved the peasants war. A few members of the supervision system at the higher level supported the war, but not the whole system of Tonghak.

Tonghak started from the teachings of Choi, Che-u (1824-64). He was a son of a concubine of fallen Yangban, who had been distressed by the disturbed conditions in

Korea, the decline in national strength, the misery of the people, and the flourishing of Christianity. He proposed to unify Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism and add the idea of heavenly father, borrowed from Christianity and embraced features of popular shamanistic beliefs. His ideas, thus eclectically shaped, are expressed in his writings such as Tonggyong Taejon (Bible of Tonghak Doctrine) and Yongdam Yusa (Hymns from Dragon Pool). He believed the religion would be the salvation of the country. The words Tonghak, "Eastern Learning", were meant to contrast with Sohak, "Western Learning". The term Tong which means 'East' commonly denotes Korea, and the term Hak means 'Learning'. Therefore, Tonghak means "Eastern Learning", that is, Korean Learning. This term represents an independent spirit against China and Western ideas and has a somewhat nationalistic meaning. His ideas rapidly attracted many followers from the dissatisfied fallen Yangban and from the peasantry who were discontented with their harsh living conditions and found hope in the new doctrine. The members of the Tonghak were strongly critical of the current situations in Korea. The government consequently considered them heretics and made every effort to suppress the doctrine. Adherents were severely punished, and Choi, Che-u was beheaded in 1864. Tonghak, later called Chondokyo (The Religion of the Heavenly Way), was expressed in the formula of faith Innaechon (Man is heaven).

Chun's forces moved to expand the base of its operations. They conquered over 50 counties. In each of these engagements, Chun's forces acquired government arms and food supplies. Thus, in a period of a few days, the untrained and crudely armed peasants army, by means of quick and bold strokes against half-hearted resistance by government forces, had acquired substantial bases for future operations, as well as a considerable supply of arms and equipment for conducting such operations. For about two months, Chun and his subordinates consolidated their control over the captured area in the Cholla province and prepared for future battles against government.

The second stage of the war was limited mainly to the Cholla province. It was a peasantry struggle against the internal feudal power in Korean society. More importantly, the peasants army fought against the Yangban landowner class and the Buho (rich people), including the managerial peasants, tenant entrepreneurs. For instance, the deprivation of Eun Dae-Jung<sup>60</sup> family's property in Kochang county and the rice exaction from Yoho (affluent family)<sup>61</sup> in Hampyeong county showed the struggle against the rich people.

The words Buho, Yoho, Daemin, and Bumin<sup>62</sup> mean the rich people who were connected with the political and economic power. Thus the meanings of those words are broader than those of the 'managerial rich peasants' or 'tenants



entrepreneurs' (Kim, Yong-sop, 1971) in that the former also have political controls.

The northward movement of the peasantry army was resumed in May, 1894, and Chun's forces conquered Chonju, the capital of the Cholla province and settled in the northern part of the province, about 150 miles south of Seoul. The government asked China for the assistance of military forces, which later brought the Sino-Japanese war. At the same time, government promised corrections of the abuses to the peasants army, on the condition that Chun evacuated Chonju and disbanded his forces. Because Chun worried about the international circumstances and needed to watch the development of the matter, he wanted to avoid the transformation of his country into imperialist battlefield. In addition, a farming season had began and it could be regarded as a temporary victory for the peasantry army. At this point, peasant soldiers withdrew from Chonju and returned to their homes, while a separate peasantry army that had arisen in Chungcheong province also dispersed.

Peasantry army, in the second stage, was better organized by combining regional peasant groups as well as Tonghak leaders and organization. Thus their struggle was stronger than before.

c. The Chipkangso Period (June 10 - Oct. 1894): The Great Success Period of Peasants Power

" Sternly punish men of wealth who owe their fortunes to highhanded extortionates practices. "  
(One of 12 Reform Principles)

After the withdrawal of the peasant army from Chonju, the leader of the peasantry army, Chun Bong-joon, announced the aim of establishing congregations in every village. The peasants army extended their organized network into all areas based on the Tonghak system. The supervision system of Tonghak was organized by Chopju (leader or commander), Chopsa (vice commander), Gyojang (guider), Gyosu (instructor or trainer), Chipkang, Dochip (financier), Daejung (impartial judge), and Jungjeong (plain speaker). (Moon, 1986) Chipkang did the role of discrimination between right and wrong, and enforcement of official discipline. In 53 counties of the Cholla province in particular, so called Chipkangso (Local Directorates) were established and set about reforming local government abuses. These popular organizations, headed by a director and staffed by clerks, existed in parallel with the formal county administration. A Taedoso (Headquarters Directorate), in the provincial capital at Chonju, was established with Chun Bong-joon at its helm. This period could be called a temporary victory of the peasantry army and did reform policies. Chipkangso, the peasant self-governing organization, extended their networks into the whole Cholla province at this stage. This

was the greatest historical victory of the mass power in Korea. The peasants self-government was established, different from the local government, and executed its functions actively. In general, the positions in the Local Directorates went to those with knowledge of administrative matters, the fallen Yangban and the county level petty functionaries (hyangni). The essentials of the reform program were proposed to carry out the following requests of peasantry.<sup>63</sup>

1. Eliminate the chronic mistrust between Tonghak believers and the government and cooperate in dealing with problems of administration.
2. Investigate the crimes of venal and corrupt officials and punish the guilty severely.
3. Sternly punish men of wealth who owe their fortunes to high-handed extortionate practices.
4. Discipline those Yangban in or out of office whose conduct is improper.
5. Burn all documents pertaining to slaves.
6. Rectify the treatment of those engaged in the "seven despised occupations" (lackeys attached to government offices and laborers assigned to perform certain arduous services for the state) and free the Paekcho'ng (butcher) outcasts once and for all from the wearing of their distinctive "P'yongyang hat."
7. Permit the remarriage of young widows.
8. Ban collection of all arbitrary and irregular taxes.
9. In employing officials, break the pattern of regional and class discrimination and appoint men of talent.
10. Severely punish those who collaborate with the Japanese.
11. Cancel all outstanding usuries, whether owed to government agencies or to private individuals.
12. Distribute land equally for cultivation by owner-peasants.

Their requests can be summarized into 4 categories; the oppressive treatment of the peasantry (including the Tonghak believer) by the government and the Yangban (ruling class)

must be stopped (1, 2, 4, 9), excessive economic exploitation of the peasantry must be put to an end (3, 8, 11), discriminatory treatment based on social class status must be abolished (5, 6, 7), and those guilty of collusion with the Japanese in their aggressive designs must be punished (10). The peasantry especially showed a strong desire for land possession in that they required the equal distribution of land (12). In short, their requests are anti-feudalistic, anti-imperialistic, democratic, nationalistic, and supportive of the human equality (woman's right) movement.

The main function of the Chipkangso was the struggle against the rich people. Thus, this period can be characterized by the primary struggle between the semi-proletariat, poor peasantry and the rich people. This struggle was organizationally and systematically done by the peasants leaders: Chun, Bong-Joon, Kim, Kae-Nam, Son, Hwa-Jung. Chun made tours to every county in order to instruct the Chipkangso and successfully manipulate the struggles against the rich people.<sup>64</sup> Kim also collected rice from rich people without any harm to the mass people.<sup>65</sup>

Another important struggle was the destruction of usury. One of the above peasants' requests (item 11), "cancel all outstanding usuries, whether owed to government agencies or to individuals" was based on the requests of the poor peasantry and semi-proletariats.

d. The Fourth Stage of the Peasantry Uprising (Oct. 1894-Jan. 1895)

" ... thinking it over, eventhough Koreans can each have different teachings, anti-Japan and anti-China is a general value to all our people. ... If you are aware of the right way, let's fight together against Japan and China, to erect an independent nation and realize our good will. " (Notification, Nov. 11, 1894)

China dispatched a force of 3,000 men following the request of the Korean government. After that, under the pretext of protecting its citizens in Korea, Japan also landed a large force of 10,000 troops at Inchon, backed by seven warships. The Sino-Japanese war started in July and the Japanese army occupied the King palace. So anti-imperialism was the prevalent mentality among the peasantry groups.

Until the fall of 1894, the peasant movement was clearly split between the orthodox Bukchop (Northern Assembly of Tonghak) and the rebel organization Namchop (Southern Assembly of Peasantry). (Kim, Sang-Ki, 1947) The distinction of Bukchop and Namchop was originated with two leaders of Tonghak. The dwelling place of the founder of Tonghak, Choi, Che-u, (Namchop) was farther south than that of the second great leader of Tonghak, Choi, Si-hyong (Bukchop).<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, after the second stage of the peasants war, Namchop meant the Cholla & Kyongsang provinces (southern area of the Korean peninsula) and Bukchop meant the northward area of the Chungcheong

provinces (middle, northern area of the Korean peninsula). Under these circumstances, the Bukchop and Namchop came to an agreement and Chun Bong-joon, leader of peasant army, made final plans for marching on Seoul, capital of Korea, in command of official total peasant forces. The peasant army marched northward and tried to capture Kongju, the provincial capital, about 100 miles south of Seoul. But the peasant army was decisively defeated on Dec. 1894 by a composite force of Korean Government soldiers and highly trained and equipped Japanese troops. Chun Bong-joon and his subordinate rebel leaders were captured and executed in 1895. During this last stage, the peasantry fought against Japan, China and Western countries. China, the Middle Kingdom, had been the center of the world to the Korean people, but the prestige of China was fast declining in Korea in the late nineteenth century because of the inability of China to keep the Western powers out. Thus, the China centered world view was replaced with a new view in which Asia was regarded as part of a larger world. The governmental official and ruling class sought to preserve the China centered world view, but the peasantry had the nationalistic perspective (Lee, Chong-sik, 1963). The anti-China discipline,<sup>67</sup> especially, shows the complete independence idea of the peasantry.

The Korea Repository writes about the powerful display of the peasants army:

"During the fall (1894), the depredation and lawlessness of the Tonghaks became very general throughout the southern provinces and extending as far north as the Whang Hai and Kang Won provinces. Magistracies were attacked, burned, and looted. For a while it seemed as though the Tonghaks would sweep everything before them".<sup>68</sup>

Even if we recognize this magazine's missionary purpose, we can surmise the powerful forces of the peasants, army during this period. The words of "depredation" and "lawlessness", are definitely based on their existing feudal values and they represent the peasants' activities through the confiscation of magistrates' as well as rich people's lands, stored rice, and money, etc. In addition, those activities were executed systematically under the supervision of Chipkangso. During the war, a division of forces which was led by Kim, Kae-Nam stayed in the Southern area and continued the struggle against the rich people.<sup>69</sup>

The bases of Namchop, which were led by Chun, Kim, and Son, were largely the poor peasantry and disadvantaged class. Thus, they executed not only the anti-imperialist war, but also the struggles against the rich people. Therefore, the basic struggle during this stage was the struggle against the foreign imperialist powers, but the struggles against the internal feudal power and the rich were continued simultaneously.

On the contrary, Bukchop, which was lead by Choi, Si-Hyung, Son, Pyung-Hee, was stuck to the orthodox religious decree. Thus, their struggle was conciliatory and

surrealistic<sup>70</sup>. Their interests accorded with those of the rich class rather than those of the poor.<sup>71</sup> We can imagine the dualistic character of the rich peasants class: conflicting with the feudal power and also conflicting with the semi-proletariat and poor peasantry.

Thus there existed significant conflicts between the two groups: Bukchop which consisted of a religious body and Namchop which consisted of rebellious peasantry. The Bukchop's struggle could be said to be a religious movement based on the rich people. Therefore, their struggles were not very influential in the peasants war. Furthermore, this was another reason the revolution failed.

## 2. AFTERMATH OF THE 1894 PEASANTRY WAR

The failure of the peasant revolution brought difficulty that would be encountered later by the nationalist leaders, particularly the reformers of the Kaewha faction. The reactionary upper classes of the old society were staunchly opposed to any change while the masses were incompetent and complacent. An accelerated program of modern education would have been necessary. Education requires time if it is to bring a profound change of outlook.

Therefore, it looks as if the immediate efforts of the revolution were deleterious. The country was torn by



warfare, and great numbers of persons were killed on both sides. Normal farm activities were interrupted, not only because large areas became battlefields, but also many peasants participated in the war. Government administration of Korea was further disturbed. In the international sphere, Japanese government put its troops into Korea. It was the first step toward continental expansion. Nevertheless, the war provided a kind of political, nationalistic consciousness as well as class consciousness for Korean masses. They came to be aware of their own potential. From mere desperation under an oppressive ruling system, Korean came to have hope in the future, as had not been so in earlier uprisings, none of which spread so far or had comparable success.

Then, why did the Gab-O Peasant Revolution fail?

First, the ruling class and king family oligarchs resorted to outer forces to suppress the mass movement of the internal conflict resulting from the feudalistic and semi-colonialistic contradiction. The outer forces were willing to accept and defend the privileged interests for their own interests.

Secondly, the gap between the elite innovators and the masses whose support were required to implement the reforms were never bridged. The intellectuals, who had the upper-class background and admitted the change of the social

structure, insisted on top-down reform (Kapsin Coup) just like the Japanese Meiji restoration (1868). Therefore, they could not connect with the Gab-O peasantry who requested bottom up complete revolutionary changes. The Kaewha reformers sided with the foreigners against the Korean peasantry. They regarded the Gab-O struggle as a substantive threat to themselves, their interests and prerogatives. The peasantry class also showed limitations in organizing and institutionalizing their revolutionary capacities.

Thirdly, the leader group of the peasantry organization split into Bukchop (orthodox Northern area) and Namchop (Southern areas peasant group). The former group stuck to the Orthodox Tonghak discipline and the latter group was the assembly of peasantry. The conflict among leaders brought the failure of an efficient peasant mobilization.

Fourthly, although the peasant war overcame the regional factions, the organization of the peasantry army did not have a united front, because each geographic area had its distinctive interests and grievances. This interrupted the making of a fundamental peasant power.

Fifthly, there was a tactical miscalculation. The peasant army did not recover from the disadvantage of the fixed military point, especially in the Kongju battle. They had to take on guerrilla tactics, such as Mao's case in the

Chinese Revolution and Ho Chi-min's case in Vietnam (Wolf, 1969).

Sixthly, there was a lack of reproduction of members through the continuous process of education.

While Dye (1897) talked about the dangers to an agricultural people, about which values, freedom, independence and prosperity in the nineteenth century, he warned that the lion (imperialist powers) and the lamb (agricultural undeveloped countries) have not yet learned to lie down together. He, also, advised Korea to develop in other directions if Korea was to have a full measure of prosperity, and especially in the military line if political independence is to be preserved. Conciliatory professions of rapacious nations are no more to be relied upon than the "wolf in sheep's clothing". And, he argued, in order to survive in the face of international competition, and "For full development and protection, Korea needs manufacturing and commercial enterprise, improvements in her method of agriculture, and a military awakening of her people."

#### IV. OTHER CHANGE POTENTIALITIES AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

##### 1. PEASANTRY ORGANIZATION, MOBILIZATION, AND SOCIAL THOUGHT IN THE GAB-O WAR

###### a. Peasantry Organization

###### Kinship and Village

Kinship and village were the basic units of the peasantry economy organization at that time. Their peasant mode of production had the tight relationship among relatives and villages based on the Confucianism tradition. The organization of kinship was very strong and the center of their social relation and that, in many cases, the village units were wholly organized as just one or several kinship relations.

###### Quasi-Interest Group Organization<sup>72</sup>

Traditional communal mutual-aid organizations, such as Kye, Durea, Hyangyak, Pumatshi, and Ulryok, are the voluntary regional organizations, but they have a very strong membership relation within groups. Seniority had the power of decision making of those organizations. These organizations were organized by the units of village, kinship, occupation, ages, sex, and the relation of division of labor, etc. These groups acted for their own common interests and sometimes showed violent reactions to the legal powers and institutions. After Chung, Yeo-rip's revolt which was based on Kye organizations, the Yi-state prohibited the organization of Kye.

### Tonghak (as a Religion) Organization

Networks of Tonghak were successfully established, organizing members into "parishes" (P'o) and creating a hierarchy of church leadership. This movement to bring new converts under Tonghak discipline owed its success to the peasantry's deep hostility toward the Yangban class and its resistance to the inroads of foreign powers. But this peasant war was executed just in the religious guise, not a religious war. Peasantry Army fought under the religious flags and the leaders of peasantry used the organizational method of the Tonghak. This peasant war is similar to the Thomas Munzer's rebellion (1525) in Germany<sup>73</sup> in that both of them have a guised religious relation.

The Gab-O peasantry was easily influenced by the religions, prophecy ideas, and shamanism. Tonghak, especially, was one of very popular beliefs among peasantry (see p. 74-75).

### b. Peasantry Mobilization

The peasantry movement has appeared in various ways, such as petition, signs of antforeign, protests, mass meeting. Nevertheless, the ruling class and foreign imperialists never pay attention to peasant's requests. Therefore, the last choice of peasantry was their rebellion and war against the existing system.

Most peasant movements started from some type of

petitioning. Gab-O peasantry, before the Kobu uprising, petitioned their economic grievances several times. But this petition only requested limited reforms and asked for the charity of the government. Therefore, if it were admitted by the government, it could be a temporary resolution not a permanent change.

The mass people showed their anger through the wall poster. This wall poster has the effect of a public announcement, making their requests widespread. This method was most frequently used as a means of public communication during the peasants war. There are several wall posters, such as the Tonghak placard of March 31, 1893 (Shin, 1985: 414), and Placard of April 4, 1893 (Shin, 1985: 416), which are found on the Western foreign village in Seoul. And the Tonghak placard of March 2, 1893 is the placard on the Japanese street in Seoul.<sup>74</sup>

Frequently, small scale of peasantry protest meetings were executed in front of government offices or the palace gate<sup>75</sup>. This could be a direct threat to the power holder.

The mass peasantry had experienced collective power through the large mass meetings. In 1892, several thousand Tonghak members gathered at Samnye in the Cholla province and made demands on the governors of Cholla and Chungcheong that Choi, Che-u be posthumously exonerated and that suppression of the Tonghak be ended. Then they carried this problem to the Seoul palace as a mass petitioning, but this

protest also met rejection. In 1893, at Po'un in Chungcheong province, more than 20,000 heeded the summons, where they proceeded to erect defensive barricades, hoist banners, and call for a "crusade to expel the Japanese and Westerners" (Oh, Chi-young, 1940). Just after the Po'un, at Wonpyong (Kemgu) in Cholla province, tens of thousands mass gathered and criticized the compromise of the Po'un leaders and insisted thorough struggle against the feudal government. The success of these kinds of mass meetings gave the possibility of mass movement and confidence of the mass mobilization to the revolutionary leaders. More importantly, the mass peasantry of Yi-Korea realized and were convinced of their collectivized forces. They had gradually grown up to the subjects of resistance.

### c. Social Thoughts

The basic ideology of this peasant war appeared on their banners. It was that Chun Bong-joon assumed command and on his banner in large letters inscribed its exhortation to "sustain the nation and provide for the people" (poguk anmin).

Another ideology was the anti-Japanese, anti-Chinese, and anti-Westerners. This ideology could be explained in terms of Nationalism. But this nationalism was based on equality, justice, freedom, and democracy.

Their idea of social reformation was based on thorough

social revolutionary change. This kind of revolutionary idea had originated from their continuous study of several kinds of civil ideologies as well as their familiarity with revolutionary development stages such as "Gaebyuk idea",<sup>76</sup> "Muwuirhewha idea"<sup>77</sup> from the Tonghak (Shin, Susan S, 1979). In addition several "prophecy ideas"<sup>78</sup> which were widespread among the masses were largely based on the dialectical thinking method. These traditional ideas were not well studied, developed, and transcended, because of prohibitions by the ruling class. Eventhough they lack scientificity, logical structure, and theory format,<sup>79</sup> I think they look very much like Marx's theory in that both include the idea of social formation. The most important ideology of this peasant war was the prophecy idea which emphasized the changes of the world. For example, Changing Idea of Wonbulgyo, Forgiving idea of Tzungsangyo, Revolution idea of Chunggamrok<sup>80</sup> and Kyukamyoorok. Strictly speaking, Tonghak did not yet have any types of formal religion at the time of the peasant war, but rather it was a kind of prophecy idea, I think. Because I could not find any records concerning religious ceremony or religious requests or religious tokens during the war. We see, instead, the superstitious characteristics such as talisman, magic method of contracting space, etc. The founder of Tonghak, Choi, Che-U, preached that only an individual, gradualist spiritual transformation was the proper way to change the existing



social order for the better. Although there is not an agreement to the issue whether Chun Bong-joon, leader of peasant army, was a believer of Tonghak or not<sup>81</sup>, it is clear more non-Tonghak Peasants took part in the peasant war than Tonghak peasant. A total of over 3 million<sup>82</sup> peasantry army (total population<sup>83</sup> about 12-16 million) were directly or indirectly related to the peasant war (Shin, Bok-ryong, 1985), but there are not exact records of the number of Tonghak believers<sup>84</sup> at that time. According to Shin, Sook (1963: 27), the number of Tonghak believers was almost 1 million at 1903. The number of Tonghak (Chondokyo; the Religion of Heavenly Way) believers was only 52,530 in 1983.<sup>85</sup>

There appeared streams which regarded Tonghak as one of four main social thoughts<sup>86</sup> that evolved in order to promote the nation's independence and development in response to the challenges in the mid-nineteenth century. Tonghak thought was defined like this: "motivated by a desire to tide over the national crisis by achieving an equalitarian society based on a peasant-centered democracy." Tonghak thought showed antagonism toward Catholicism and the lack of Western science and technology. Nevertheless, Tonghak thought rapidly spread among the peasantry on "the strength of its equalitarian stand... opposition to the Yangban system, the aristocrats and bureaucrats...."

The fundamental problem of those social thoughts,

except Tonghak, was seeking a cathartic renovation, not an institutional revolution. Tonghak thought was a basic revolutionary idea of Gab-O Peasantry. Nevertheless, today, the Tonghak thought lost their intrinsic nature through the colonial ages.

## 2. PEASANT REVOLUTION AND THEORETICAL ARGUMENTS

### a. Sociological Arguments and the Gab-O Peasant Revolution

Moore (1966) argues three principal routes from the pre-industrial to the industrial modern world: the bourgeoisie revolution, the conservative revolution, and the peasant revolution. As a result, three different political forms of industrial societies did come up: capitalist democracy, fascism, and communism. This paradigm is based on the degree to which capitalism penetrated rural life.

For the capitalist democratic revolution, the power of the landed upper classes over peasants must be broken through a coalition of developing capitalist interests with an independent property-owning peasantry, or by the rural upper class becoming thoroughly capitalist and driving peasants off the land, removing the problem of controlling peasants from the worries of rural landowners.

The fascist variant involves a coalition between the capitalists and rural land-owners, both oriented toward the maintenance of their authority and privileges against their respective lower classes. An authoritarian landlord

bureaucracy impoverishes democratic political life, preparing the ground for fascist totalitarianism when the technical means are provided by growing industrial capacity.

The peasant revolution arises when an agrarian bureaucratic state, having maintained a dependent bourgeoisie and having tried to manage modernization with corrupt and inefficient traditional officials, gives up the ghost. The agrarian bureaucracy declines when it can not control the peasants, who are set in motion by commercialization and the decay of the old order, and usually also by defeat in war. The peasant revolution in those areas in which the middle and urban classes were too weak to constitute even a junior partner in the process of modernization and in which a huge and alienated peasantry provided the main destructive revolutionary force that overthrew the old order which made the peasantry its primary victims. Therefore, unlike Marx, Moore is obliged to accommodate the transfer of revolution from urban centers to the countryside.

The Yi-state was superficially strong at the center, but with weak and tenuous links to the periphery. The powerful lineages managed the Yi-state by their own principles. They were divided into four main factions: Northerner, Southerner, Old Doctrine, and Young Doctrine factions, and competed each other for the state power. What they argued was the superiority of their ideological

principles and they needed state power in order to display their ideas and dominate the Korean mass peasantry.

The traditional Korean state was the opposite of the new Meiji Japan state. Yi-Dynasty Korea assumed responsibilities in the economy primarily to raise revenue, but always to levels of adequacy rather than surplus, and never with the intention of using surpluses for economic growth. Yi-Dynasty Korea was more similar to the traditional Chinese state, and to other bureaucratic regimes whose major task was short-term maintenance and adaptation.<sup>87</sup> Yi-Dynasty Korea was adaptable, even supple, in the context of marginal changes necessary to maintain an equilibrium of conflicting forces over time and the minor adjustments necessary to maintain a steady-state, autarkic economy (Palais, 1975).

Contrary to some studies, Yi-Dynasty was not highly centralized or strong in relation to society. Yi-Dynasty Korea has been weak, dominated by society in the manifestation of a landed aristocracy. Aristocracy and state in Yi-Dynasty Korea competed for available surplus resources, with the latter often losing out. The bureaucratic structure was adapted to aristocratic needs and therefore lacked the autonomy and the extractive capacity usually associated with strong states. What tradition had instead was a strong class structure; a "fusion of aristocratic status with private landownership" that almost

resembled "a bona fide feudal nobility" in its capacity to resist the encroachments of central government. The Yi-state was inured to fighting losing battles with the aristocracy over a relatively static pool of wealth. How then could it conceive of the modern distinction between public and private realms or understand that the public realm might intervene to stimulate the accumulation of wealth in the interest of overall growth? Instead, there was a kind of political involution, analogous to agricultural involution, whereby the state found new ways to get, or redoubled its efforts to get, more out of existing resources.

The landed class used the state to perpetuate itself and to dominate a peasant mass. But the domination was incomplete, the connections could be snapped, and therefore peasant rebellions were a recurrent phenomenon (Moore, 1966: 213). At the end of the nineteenth century, Yi-state proved utterly incapable of responding to the encroachments of newly risen industrial powers. What might be emphasized, instead, is that the very success of the landed aristocracy in utilizing the state to perpetuate its dominance fatally weakened the Korean nation itself in its capacity to resist outside pressure.

Moore's portrayal of the agrarian bureaucratic route to modernity closely related to the class structure of late nineteenth century Yi-state. The landed Yangban class did

not turn to commercialized agriculture, instead a leisured class (non-cultivator class) relied on a central bureaucratic apparatus to sap agricultural surpluses. In addition commercial class did not develop well and not strong enough to make an alliance with the landed class. Thus independent peasants did not prosper, instead most turned to tenants peasants. The result should have been a peasant revolution. Furthermore, Moore describes three kinds of rural societies: segmented, centralised and feudal. The centralised, such as China and Korea, are said to be most vulnerable to peasant revolution. The large agricultural villages respond most rapidly to democratic and revolutionary currents, while dispersed settlements or small hamlets permit landlord domination or influence of small town commercial classes.

In Yi-Dynasty Korea, the landed upper class had not turned to production for the market in a way that enables commercial influence to permeate rural life. Instead, they were totally absorbed into the imperial mechanism of the Japanese. The landed upper class resisted commercialization, allowing market forces to penetrate only to a limited extent and using its alliance with the government and imperial power simply to take by force a larger share of the peasant's produce. Thus, modernization will be brought about by alienated elites riding the peasant revolution. The Gab-O reform, after the peasants war, was

brought about by the Kaewha elites who allied themselves with the Japanese power. This characteristic of elites resulted in the Japanese seizure of Yi-Korea.

The mobilization of the Gab-O peasantry as a class can be explained more clearly by Shanin's "classness" of peasantry. Shanin shared with Marx in the analysis of peasantry as a class. He explains the apparent general lack of consciousness of peasants in the following terms:

"The vertical segmentation of peasants into local communities, class, and groups and the differentiation of interests within these communities themselves has made for difficulties in crystallizing nationwide aims and symbols and the developing national leadership and organization which, in turn, has made for what we have called low 'classness'." (Shanin, 1971: 253)88

In addition, Shanin points out that peasant interests are not always latency: "the peasantry would appear as a social entity of comparatively low classness, which rises in crisis situations." The classness appears in situations that create among peasants homogeneity, solidarity, collectivity, and identification of narrow individual interests with the common good, and a horizontal rather than vertical direction of those interests. The Gab-O peasants army regarded the situation of the Yi-state as the most difficult era in Korean history just after following the Japanese Invasion (1592) and the Manchus Invasion (1627 & 1636), and the peasantry army felt horrible crisis sentiments against the Japanese imperialism.

Paige's argument of the possibility of upward mobility

also affected the situation (Paige, 1975). If a tenant peasant or smallholder is even slightly successful, his interests will be directed vertically. He will identify his interests with those above him. Subsistence peasants will often make any sacrifice to gain on fellow peasants. A rapid fall in social and economic condition would presumably place an emphasis on collective rather than individual mobility.

Landlords were to seek to hold on to the land and to rule through political, coercive means rather than through economic means (which provide incentives for peasants to return to cultivation), a volatile, rebellious situation would likely develop.

Wolf (1966: 87-89, 1969) understands the peasantry as a part society with a part culture. Wolf's theory of the militancy of middle peasants offered the insights and impressions of the peasant social movements. He noted the destabilizing effect of commercialization on rural class relations.

Peasants could be understood as a surplus producing sub-society under the domain of another class or of the state. Peasant communities were related to the outside world. Peasants themselves did the role of change agents who establish the relations. Peasants are related to the larger society; by patronage or brokerage or the patron-client system.



The pressures of the international environment and the responses of the elites prolonged Korea's becoming a nation-state in the course of the 16th to the 19th centuries. The transformation of Yangban nobility into a class of courtier or commoners or demolished intellectuals cannot be explained without reference to the location and experience of Korea in its international environments.

In sum, the agrarian bureaucratic Yi state (Moore's term) lost her domination of the peasantry internally and couldn't adapt the international changes externally. The class structure, semi-bourgeoisie and semi-proletariat, that is, cultivator and non-cultivator of Paige's term (Paige, 1975, also, Figure 1 [p.44] showed the dichotomous class structure of Yi-state) showed severe polarized phenomenon. The class differentiation of cultivator and non-cultivator seems to include an important perspective of cultural differences between two classes in the class analysis of agrarian society. Cultural differences are also affected to the development of peasantry consciousness.

This peasantry class (semi-proletariat or cultivator) could form a class and acted as a class through conscious of their interests. This argument could be supported by the classness (Shanin's) and upward mobility (Paige's). And more importantly, I added the importance of social thoughts, prophecy ideas, Tonghak, and traditional organizations as another driving forces of the Gab-O Peasant Revolution.

## V. CONCLUSION

### 1. THE PROBLEMS

The problem with the argument of Yi-Dynasty Korea lies in the Marx and Engels distinction between 'asiatic' societies from 'feudal' Europe. Their conclusion was asiatic society was stagnant or stationary, emphasizing the absence of a property-owning class in Asia that might have furnished an impetus to economic transformation. No bourgeoisie existed to develop the productive forces on a higher level.

But Wittfogel extended the concept of the asiatic mode of production by adding the widespread existence of private property in land, commerce, and industry in Asian countries. He further argued that it was kept weak by the powerful despotic or bureaucratic state. That is, the state prevented private property owners from building enough private wealth and from organizing politically on a national level in such a way as to seriously challenge state power.

Nevertheless, in Yi-Korea, the state was superficially strong at the center in that the conflicts among kinship factions just competed for the state power (Palais, 1976). Those kinship factions were landowners, bureaucrats, and managing commercial powers. They easily made contact with the foreign powers, and allied with them for their own benefits, not for the state advantages. In Yi-Korea, there

existed private property ownership and considerably developed productive forces especially in the agricultural sector and domestic manufactures of textiles, leather, paper, and pottery.

Another problem is understanding the international circumstances and the characteristics of Japanese imperialism, which surrounded Yi-Korea. Unfortunately, in an historical sense, the Yi-state did not have any so-called "breathing space"<sup>89</sup> of Japan after the opening policy in 1876. That was a misfortune for the Yi-State to encounter Japanese imperialism in seeking their basic materials such as rice, beans, and an increasingly needed commodity market for exports such as textile products and daily necessities. The indirect export of English textile products through Chinese merchants also competed with Japanese products, and this deteriorated the situation of Korea's infant industries. Thus the export of rice, beans and import of manufacturing items devastated the agricultural sector as well as the domestic manufacturing sector in Yi-Korea in the nineteenth century. This made impossible the development of productive forces in the Yi-State. The weak resistance against Japanese power was due to the weakness of the Yi-state and the competitive conflicts among higher upper classes and kinship factions.

Another problem was the capacity of the so called managerial peasants and entrepreneur peasants, and the

proportion of those in the Korean peasantry. This problem could be a critical point in the argument of the development of productive forces in the Korean society and especially in comparison with other countries; Japanese or European countries. But within the specific situation of Korea, the development of those classes must be a significant factor in the historical perspective.

In studying of a society, I think, many overemphasized the theoretical or comparative differences of the society. They sometimes did not see the many similarities to theory or other societies.

## 2. CONCLUSION

The Gab-O peasant war was more a precursor of the peasant revolution to come than the last of the old-style peasant wars. On the whole, the Gab-O peasant uprising was a revolutionary peasants movement<sup>90</sup> which can be understood in light of the historical inter-relations among the prevalent peasantry revolts in the 19th century, the advent of radical social thoughts in the 1860s, and the development of productive forces.

The Gab-O peasants war was analyzed by following Marx's social formation theory. This interpretation of the Gab-O war, despite the above problems, emphasized the class

struggle as well as structural contradictions. The Gab-O Peasants Revolution was newly defined and analyzed in the view of the history from the bottom up (Kaye, 1984).

The Gab-O war was fundamentally an agrarian revolution of peasantry against the haves, landlords, aristocrats, feudal officials, feudal state, and imperial powers aimed at wide-ranging reform including: collectivism in property, radical land reform, human equality, etc. It was a revolution which requested abrupt and complete changes of the social system.

The Gab-O peasant war also has its important characteristics as a revolutionary class struggle among differentiated classes, as well as struggle against feudal and imperial powers. The establishment of peasantry local functionaries, Chipkangso, has important meaning in the history of mass movements in Korean history. Due to the lack of records and the reluctance to study this Chipkangso period, there still remain a lot of questions in defining the Gab-O peasant revolution. The main activities of peasantry during the Chipkangso period were the strong class struggles.

Some 74% of landlords and some 90% of the bureaucrats were Yangbans at the nineteenth century. Therefore, there existed lots of conflicts and competition among those Yangban factions. Nevertheless, they easily got to the common interests against the peasantry struggles. Small or

middle scale managerial or entrepreneur peasants, possibly the petty-bourgeoisie class, felt the conflicts against the large scale managerial and entrepreneur class, the so called Buho, Daemin, Yoho, and Bumin. Those large scale managerial and entrepreneur peasant classes were connected with the powerful Yangban class. Also, government licensed merchants and government controlled handicrafts industries brought conflicts against the private merchants and privately managed handicrafts. But the numbers of the large entrepreneur and managerial peasants are smaller than that of small or middle peasants. Also, the private merchants and private handicrafts have occupied a large portion of the commerce and industries since the late eighteenth century. Thus, the Gab-O peasantry army was in support of those classes. In addition, foreign imperial trade and agricultural exploitation contributed to the large amount of damages to the small peasantry, private merchants, and private handicrafts. The main form of class struggle during the Gab-O peasant war was the struggle between landlords.State bureaucrats.the rich with the backing of foreign imperial power and the peasantry with the backing of small or middle peasantry.private merchants.private handicrafts.

Some (Jacobs, 1985) argue that the Gab-O revolt was not concerted socially, in Marxist terms 'class', a conscious group of revolutionaries committed to a bitter-end struggle,

but rather congeries of individuals seeking patrimonial amelioration of their every day grievances and hence were ready to desert the cause. They exemplified peasants' readiness to desert the battlefields at the agricultural season for the survival of their families. This view looks faithful to classic Marxism, but that is due to the incomplete understanding of the social relations of peasantry in Yi-Dynasty Korea in the late nineteenth century. Also, the weak class-consciousness among peasantry could be coped with by the usage of violence. F. Fanon talked about the psychological role of violence in the case of Algeria: "The practice of violence binds them together as a whole, since each individual forms a violent link in the great chain, a part of the great organism of violence which has surged upward in reaction to the settler's violence in the beginning." Thus, in the Gab-O peasant revolution the social role of violence also possibly emphasized the need to understand peasantry mobility in the context of kinship system and village system.

The Gab-O Peasant War was a Peasant Revolution in Moore's term as the best road which an agrarian bureaucratic state could choose. This explicitly appeared at the transformation of the peasantry army into a righteous army under the Japanese seizure and then into socialists or communists. The preponderance of socialism or communism in Korea in the middle of the twentieth century can be

understood in this context.

In the view of Marx's theory of history, the Gab-O Peasant Revolution is possibly rated somewhere between feudalism and capitalism.



## FOOTNOTE

1. This Periodization is just for the review of the Gab-O Peasant War studies in the context of sociopolitical perspective.

Hulbert (1906), in "The Religion of the Heavenly Way", explains the development process of the Tonghak as a religion in the periodization: 1860-1863; the founder Choi Che-U period, 1863-1894; the second great leader Choi Si-Hyung period, 1894-1906; peasants war and underground period, 1906-now; Chondokyo (the Religion of Heavenly Way), the third leader Son Pyung-Hee.

Weems(1964), in Reform, Rebellion, and the Heavenly Way, also uses almost similar periodization method.

2. Junkin (1895a), "The Tong Hak," in The Korean Repository, Vol. 2 (Jan.-Dec.), states:

"Had the Tonghak remained a religious body with principles in harmony with good government, it would have had a right to exist.... But the political element soon dominated the religious and they became a body of revolutionists." (p. 59)

Junkin (1895b), "Seven Months Among The Tong Haks", in The Korean Repository, Vol. 2, states:

"The people are getting some ideas of liberty by contact with the foreigner and his religion and they purpose no longer to submit to the misrule of rapacious officials and their hirelings. They were desirous too of helping providence in the fulfillment of the old prophecy that the present Dynasty was to exist for only 500 years, already completed." (p. 207)

3. Bishop (1897), in Korea and Her Neighbours, states:

"... reasonable objects that at first I was inclined to call its leaders 'armed reformers' rather than 'rebels'." (pp. 179-180)

"There were no expressions of hostility to foreigners, and the manifesto did not appear to take any account of them." (p.180)

4. Hulbert (1906), "The Religion of the Heavenly Way" in The Korea Review, states:

"There arose a man in the town of Ko-Bu, South Cholla Province, who changed the aspect of affairs. He was not a Tonghak; and his name was Chun, Pong-Jun. ... He determined to raise an insurrection. He gathered about him a band of men almost equally exasperated and came into the camp of Tonghak. He succeeded in arousing a strong sentiment against the government, and throughout

the South all was in turmoil. But this movement was not seconded by all the Tonghak people." (p. 422)

5. Ladd (1908), in In Korea With Marquis Ito, states:  
"The Tong Haks were religious fanatics, the chief article of whose creed was said to be the massacre of all foreigners." (pp. 213-214)
6. Conroy (1960), in The Japanese Seizure of Korea: 1868-1910, states:  
"It (Tonghak Rebellion) was a rising against the government for reactionary rather than progressive reasons. In Toynbee terminology it was zealotism, a desperate, though unrealistic, effort to reassert tradition in the face of change." (p. 229)  
"Tonghak rebels were the ideological counterparts of Japanese reactionaries. ... It is not surprising that Genyosha Circles made contact with the Tonghaks, and in the spring of 1894 Uchida Ryohei ... crossed to Korea, sought out the Tonghak leaders, and offered his services and those of fellow adventurers he ... "  
(p. 231)
7. For more Korean Proverbs see:  
The Korean Repository, Vol. 3, 1896, pp. 312-6 & 396-403.  
Vol. 4, 1897, pp. 369-373 & 452-5.  
The Korea Review, Vol. 1, 1901, pp. 50-53 & pp. 392-396.
8. According to Wolf (1966), peasant coalition may be based on kinship grouping or on patron-client dyadic relations; these two principles are not exclusive, but in certain cases one type prevails over the other. Wolf (1966), Peasants, pp. 87-89 & 110-113.
9. Choi, Jai-Seuk (1975), Studies On Korean Rural Community, Chs. 4, pp. 314-325. A peasantry's Cooperative most general labor organization group as well as most important role of agricultural labor.
10. A kind of exchange of works; working in turn for one another.
11. A mutual-aid, credit, financing association, for the important events such as marriage, funeral ceremony, etc. among poor peasantry.
12. This phrase has always been appeared on the flags which used in agricultural ceremony such as harvest festival, holiday ceremony and entertainment, etc.
13. A phrase of Confucianism textbook; Non Ur.

14. Private educational institution which most run by village or kinship units and served by low educational fees.

15. This only means that there were not any restrictions in legal system for peasantry to take exams or to have officialdom. But in reality it was very difficult for peasantry to pass the state exam because of the economic situation and the lack of systematic education and study time.

16. This was a transitional situation, which so-called Wolf's term from paleotechnic ecotype to neotechnic ecotype.

17. Wolf (1966), in Peasants, the definition of peasantry in relation to other social forms, defined:

"... it is only when a cultivator is integrated into a society with a state - that is, when the cultivator becomes subject to the demands and sanctions of power-holders outside his social stratum - that we can appropriately speak of peasantry." (p. 11)

18. "Fully nine-tenths of the Korean nation are engaged in agriculture." Editorial Department, "He Is a Farmer", in The Korea Repository, Vol. 5, June 1898, p. 229.

19. According to Lee (1984), about 6,000 reservoirs were existed by the end of the eighteenth century. (p. 227)

Lee, Ki-baik (1984), The New History of Korea, (Hanguksa Silron).

20. "Korean Trade in 1891-'92", in Consular Report, from Augustine Heard (1893), at April 25, 1893 reports like this:

"... the introduction into Chemulpo of the Engelburg huller by an American firm is likely to work a revolution in the trade."

Also, "Rice Crop of Korea", in Consular Report, from H. N. Allen (1897), at Nov. 4, 1896 reports like this:

"The American firm of Townsend & Co., at Chemulpo conduct an extensive rice-cleaning business." (p. 389)

21. See the Kang, Man-gil (1973), The Development of Commercial Capital in the Late Yi-Dynasty. Contrary to the Kang's arguments, different views suggested; for example, Cumings (1981), The Origins of the Korean War, wrote like this:

"After Korea was opened in 1876, the Kaesong and Suwon merchants were nowhere in evidence; they thus become interesting primarily as exceptions that prove the rule. The Yi did not view commerce as a source of government revenue. ... Korea in the second half of the nineteenth century had neither a market nor a money economy; its limited domestic trade was conducted under

state supervision." (p. 17)

22. Commoner was the middle and lower class of status system in Yi-Dynasty Korea. Agricultural production gave them chances to move up to Yangban.

23. Kim, Yong-Sop (1960), "A Study of Land Registers", p. 182. About 60% of the peasants were in that kind of danger.

24. This argument is not settled yet. See, Shin, Yong-Ha (1970), "Kwajon Land Reform and the Establishment of Private Landlordism in Early Yi Dynasty Korea, 1391-1470", Seoul National University Economic Review, Vol. 4, No. 1, see also, Shin, Yong-Ha (1978), "Landlordism in the Late Yi-Dynasty(I)", Korea Journal, p. 25.

25. Unit of land measurement which produces 100 Jim or 10,000 Pa crops. This crops are about 600 Sok (400 - 800 Sok) at the late nineteenth century.

26. Kyongguk Taejon (National Code from the Fifteenth Century): Hojon, 1972, Seoul, p. 200. see also, Chon, Kwan-U (1965), "Hanguk Toji Chedosa" (A History of Landownership in Korea), Hanguk Munhwasa Taegye, 2, Seoul, p. 1433.

27. The King Hyonjong annexed cultivated land owned by private persons and wanted to distribute this land among his family members. The highranking officials were unanimously against such attempt like this:

" The poor, landless peasants have cultivated the wilderness with their own labor and tilled it since many years. They inherited it from father to son, or they sold it to other persons. Now, the king's family tries suddenly to usurp the cultivators of their own arable land. What a lamentable endeavour it is!" (cited in An, Pyong-Tae, 1965, p. 61)

An, Pyong-Tae (1965), "The Structure and Development of KungBang Jeon in 17th and 18th Centuries in Korea", Keizai Ranso, 96, No. 2.

28. Elite theorist, Kim, Yong-Mo(1977), argued the political conflicts among the upper ruling classes was not from the social relations of production, rather from the solid power communities which were formed through marriage relations.(pp. 2-4)

29. Liu, Kwang-Ching., foreword to Kim, Key-hiuk (1980), The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order.

30. "Korean Land Taxes", in excerpt from Seoul Independent (newspaper), Consular Report from H. N. Allen, Consul-General, Seoul, Feb. 8, 1898.

"... Hundreds of poor people pay taxes on land which has been washed away, and many influential Yangbans pay scarcely anything for the use of their lands. ..."  
(p. 190)

31. The land grading system employed a flexible unit of area measurement, standardization being sought in terms of estimated yield rather than the size of a parcel of a land. The real area of a Kyol, if a Kyol converts into Pyong, 1st grade= 3,117 Pyong, 2nd grade= 3,677 Pyong, 3rd grade= 4,453 Pyong, 4th grade= 5,676 Pyong, 5th grade= 7,793, 6th grade= 12,468. (Pak, 1961, appendix1)

Pyong: a unit of land measurement of six square Chuck. (1 Chuck = about 30 cm)

32. see: Marx, Karl., Grudrisse der Kritik der Politischen Okonomie; Capital, Vol. 3; "The British Rule in India", "Revolution in China and in Europe", "The Future Results of British Rule in India", in Marx and Engels (1968); Wittfogel (1959); Sofri (1972); Tokei (1969); Sawyer (1977); Skalinik, et. al. (1966); Anderson (1974); Hobsbawm (1978); Dunn (1982) etc. Specially for the critique in the writing of Karl Marx; Keyder (1975), for the cumulated debates on the concepts; Bailey & Llobera(1981).

33. see: Bloch, Marc (1961); Cahen, Claude (1977); Amin, Samir (1976); Hall, John (1962-1963); Anderson (1978) etc.

34. Moulder (1977) summarized five characteristics that distinguished "Asiatic" societies from "feudal" Europe:

1. Agriculture was based on large-scale irrigation and flood-control works that were managed by the state.
2. Property was undeveloped in Asia.
3. The division of labor was little developed in Asia.
4. Highly despotic form of government; Asiatic or oriental despotism.
5. Thus, Asiatic society was stagnant or stationary. (p. 15)

35. see: Hindess & Hirst (1975), Tokei (1977).

36. Shin, Yong-Ha (1978), "Landlordism in Late Yi-Dynasty (II)" p. 26. Semi-feudalistic landlordism means "a transitional landlordism spanning feudal landlordism and modern landlordism. It was an outcome of the decline of the caste system that accompanied the disintegration of feudalism."

37. The Korea Review, "Questions and Answer", Vol. 1, 1901, p. 211.

38. Yangban was the ruling class of the feudalistic status structure but later their status was threatened by the forces of agricultural production.

39. Kim, Yong-Mo (1977), in Choson Chibaecheng Yongu (The Study of Yi-Dynasty Ruling Class), explained "about 90% of the political ruling class in late Yi-Dynasty was the descendants of the privileged ruling class." (p. 120) Also, he argued the replacements of bureaucratic elites were fulfilled through mainly state exam (75.8%), and meritorious family & special recommendation, etc. (24.2%). This means the privileged ruling class was mainly occupied the offices and the middle class had to pass the exam or they had to pay for an officialdom.

40. The Korea Review, "Korean Proverbs", Vol. 1, p. 53.

41. Local civil functionaries.

42. Hong, Kyong-nae peasant miner revolt is another good example. Hong, Kyong-Nae revolt broke out in Pyonggan province in 1811. (Lee, Ki-Baik, 1984, p. 254). Hong, Kyong-Nae revolt broke out by the prosperous Yangban-turned-farmers of local civil and military service background and a number of rich merchants.

43. 1 Mexico \$ = pure silver 24.44 g. (1 Yen = pure silver 24.26 g).

b44. Yoshino, Makoto (1983), "The Export of Grain from Korea" in The Modern Change and Nationalist Movement in Gab-O and Kapsin Era, ed., 1983, by Cheong-Ah Editorial Dept., 1983, Seoul, Cheong-Ah Press.

45. The trade between Korea and Japan was very unequal and dependent, because rice and beans are staple items to Japan. "Korean Trade in 1891-'92", in Consular Report from Augustine Heard (1893).

"More than 90% of Korean export goes to Japan; the prices of rice and beans, the two great staples of Korea, are controlled by the crops of that country."  
(p.310)

46. "Exportation of Rice Prohibited by Korea", in Consular Report, from Allen, H. N (1893), at Dec. 7, 1893 reports like this:

"Korean rice is of excellent quality. ... I am told that when rice is plentiful in Japan, Japanese import

Korean rice for their use and export their own. There is great aversions in Korea to the export of rice. The people\* have not yet learned the law of supply and command, ... " (pp. 423-424)

\* Korean people (\* is mine)

47. 1 picul= about 133 pounds or 133 and 1/3 pounds.

48. Marx (1963), The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, quoted in Balbus, Issac D (1971), "The Concept of Interest in Pluralist and Marxian Analysis", p. 167, Politics and Society.

49. Marx (1963), The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, explains more clearly like this:

"... In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond and no political organization among them, they do not form a class. They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interest in their own name, whether through a parliament or through a convention. They can not represent themselves, they must be represented... " (p. 124)

50. Editorial Department, "He Is a Farmer", in The Korean Repository, Vol. 5, June 1898, p. 231.

51. Editorial Department, "Confession of a Tonghak Chief", in The Korean Repository, Vol. 5, June 1898, p. 235.

52. I use this term, "hidden middle class", which means the actually had existed in that society as a class but did not revealed themselves. For example, in the Kapsin Coup (1884), such people as Yu, Tae-Chi (Hong-Ki), Oh, Kyung-Sok, Park, Kyu-Soo, who came from Chungin class, introduced firstly enlightenment thinking and instigated an action to the acting leaders of that Coup. They were very knowledgeable and worked as interpreters or writers or teachers. I think this class did the very important role in the class struggle of the late nineteenth century in Korea. I believe this class also concerned with the Gab-O peasants revolution.

53. A unit of volume, 1 Sok = 5.12 U.S. Bushels or 47.6 U.S. Gallons.

54. see SaBalTongMun (A Bowl-shaped Written Resolution), Jan. 7, 1970, Dong-A Ilbo (daily newspaper) and Nara Sarang, Vol 15, A Special Edition of General Noktu; Chun Bong-Joon, 1974, p. 134.

SabalTongmun includes the attack plans of Gobu, Chonju castles, and then directly marched into the Capital, Seoul. Also, explains the public sentiments at that times through a popular words among people:

"Broke out! Broke out! A revolt broke out! Aeh, it's well be done. If it goes like this without any change, even a man could not survive under this condition."  
(translation is mine)

55. Pyong; a unit of land measurement of six square chuck.  
(1 Chuck = about 30 cm).

56. The Korean peasantry was still caught in the neo-Confucianism. And they emphasized the clarification of their moral obligations. Therefore, the leaders of the peasantry need to use the persuasive mottoes, such as Pogukanmin, Chockawe (anti-Japan), Chockhwa (anti-China). But the limitation of their mottoes did not attack the kingship itself rather ended in the attack of the subjects.  
(see appendix 1)

57. Editorial Department, "Confession of a Tonghak Chief", in The Korean Repository, quoted in The Independent (Newspaper, May 30th), Vol. 5, June 1898, p. 235.

58. The Manifesto (Kyeokmun), Jan. 1894, quoted in Shin (1985), Tonghak Thought and Gab-O Peasant Revolution, pp. 432-433.

59. see Appendix 1, The Proclamation of Justice.

60. YangHoChoToDamRok, "The Records of Tonghak Revolt", p. 166, cited from Cho, Kyunf-Dal (1983).

61. YangHoChoToDamRok, p. 170, cited from Cho, Kyung-Dal (1983).

62. Bumin (rich people), Daemin (big rich people), Yoho (affluent family), Buho (rich family) are frequently appeared in the historical documents: Chun, Bong-Joon Gongcho; Bumin, Reform 12 principles; Buho, Kyeokmun; Buho.

63. This is first appear by Oh, Chi-Young (1940), in Tonghaksa (The History of Tonghak), pp. 201-204. This is so-called Twelve Point Code of Gab-O Peasantry Reform. I quoted this from Lee, Ki-Baik's (1984) English edition. (p. 287)



64. Umiuhra, "The Observation Diary of Tonghak Tang", HaePoPyeon, in ChoJeYooGo, 1925, pp. 92-93, cited from Cho, Kyung-Dal (1983), and also in Japanese, Vol. 18, Feb. 1895.

65. Hankuk Tonghaktang Bongi, Ilkeon, Foreign Affairs Historical Documents, Secret No. 75, Gab Ho, cited from Cho, Kyung-Dal (1983).

66. The word 'Buk' means the north and the word 'Nam' means the south.

67. GoSi (An Announcement), Nov. 1, 1894, see Shin, Bok-Ryong (1895), Tonghak Thoughts and Gab-O Peasants revolution, p. 451.

"... anti-Japan and anti-China is the same thing to all Koreans, even though the beliefs are different," this resorts to the Korean Government army to join struggle against Japan as well as China. This includes the independence spirit of escaping from the China-Centered world view.

68. Editorial Department, "A Retrospect, - 1894", in The Korean Repository, Vol. 2, 1895, pp. 29-35.

69. SoonMuSeonBongJinDamRok (The Record Book of Tonghak Rebellion), Vol. 1, p. 499 cited from Kang, Jae-Eon (1980).

70. Lee, Li-hwa (1988), historically reevaluated Choi, Si-Hyung, not as a historical man (human being) but as a religious man (god). Choi was critically evaluated in the historical sense. Choi was also criticized in that sending two humiliating letters which blamed the Namchop peasantry army to the Japanese army during the war.

71. The evidences of this argument are the failure of Po'un Assembly, Notice of Choi {1894, by Choi, Si-Hyung, in Shin (1895), p. 437}, TongYuMun {Aug. 1894, by Choi, Si-Hyung, in Shin (1895), p. 446}.

72. I use this term those organizations are not formal organization in that they do not have any legal power, formal sanction, formal reproduction of members but are informal organization which have only moral sanctions. Some organization memberships were ascribed ones rather than achieved ones.

73. Simirin, M. M., Die Volks Reformation des Thomas Munzer und der Grosse Bauernkreig (Ubers. von Hans Nichtweiss) Dietz, 1952, pp. 663-669., trans. by Han, Bong-Hum, 1974, Seoul, Korea University Press.

74. U.S. Government Publication, U.S. Department of State., Foreign Relations of the U.S.A., 1894, App. I; 1895.

75. KwangHwaMun BokHapSangSoMun, Jan. 9, 1893, in Shin(1985), p. 410.

76. Shin, Bok-Ryong (1895), Tonghak Idea and Nationalism, Basic revolutionary idea of Gab-O peasants revolution.

77. A basic idea of Tonghak; it represents the evolutionary change of social structure. See Shin, Bok-Ryong (1985a, 1985b) and Shin, Susan S. (1979).

78. ChungKamRok, KyukAmYooRok, TzungSanKyo, WonBulKyo are the examples which foretell the collapse of the Dynasty, mass mobilization, advent of new society, etc. include dialectical ideas. (see Footnote 2, Junkin's [1895b] experience) Most of them handed down orally. Later, TzungSan and WonBul developed to the formal types of religion.

79. They did not show exact concept of factors such as masses' mind, heaven's will, new society, etc. and had used too much multivocal words.

80. Chung predicted that the Yi-Dynasty would fall after five hundred years and be replaced by the Chung-Dynasty (see Junkin 1895b and Footnote 2). The Tonghak talisman could be traced in Chungkamrok. [see Shin, Susan S. (1979)]

81. see Hulbert's argument in Footnote 4.

82. see Kim, In-Soon., "Choson ae isseoseui Gukjekwankye Yongu", (The study of International Relation of Yi-Dynasty), Dongdae Gukjekwankyeron Yongu, 3, 1968, in (eds.) Cheong-Ah press Co. p. 247. Over 3 million peasants army occupied the almost whole country at the end of 1894.

See also, Murayama, Tomoyori(1935), p. 935, He explained over 3 million peasant army took part in over 85 battles during the Gab-O war.

83. There is not an exact record of Korean population. According to government documents, Kojong Silrok, Dec. 29, 1867, the population of Korea was 6,816,399. But this number seems to include only the taxable population.

84. According to Inquiry Record of Chun Bong-Joon, in Tokyo Choil Newspaper, March 6, 1895, in Kang, Chang-Il (1988). Chun answered the question of the number of the Tonghak member like this: the total number of Tonghak member was about 600,000 and only 4,000 of them vowed firmly share their fates. This means majority of peasant army was non-Tonghak peasantry and Tonghak members are only minority.

85. Hankuk Ilbo (Korean Daily Newspaper), Dec. 20, 1984, Seoul, Korea.

86. Shin, Yong-Ha (1976), "The Opening of Korea and Changes in Social Thought", Korea Journal, pp. 4-9.

Four main social thoughts, according to Shin, Yong-ha(1976), are Tonghak, The Kae-Hwa Doctrine, The Wijongch'oksa Doctrine, and the Doctrine of Tongdosogi.

1) Tonghak; Eastern Learning, 2) The Kae-hwa Doctrine; Modernization or Enlightenment, 3) The Wijonch'oksa Doctrine; Confucian scholars in late Yi-Dynasty asserted that the monarchy should follow the principles of neo-Confucianism in ruling the country while rejecting the influence of Western culture which was, they believed evil, 4) The Doctrine of Tongdosogi; Eastern will in Western technology.

87. see Eckstein (1975), China's Economic Development, pp. 63 & 102-103, see also Wallerstein (1980), Modern World System, pp. 45-47.

88. "The Peasantry as a Political Factor", in Shanin (1971), ed., Peasants and Peasants Societies, p. 253.

89. E. H. Norman (1975), Origins of the Modern Japanese State, edited by John Dower, New York, Pantheon Books, 1975. This term means the Japan's opportunity in the decades after Meiji. World System theorists generally accept this term. [see Moulder (1977)]

90. Yang (1976) discussed about the revolutionary characteristics of the Gab-O peasantry war. He searched the revolutionary characteristics through the studies of political requests, their mottoes, and written announcements, etc. This was the most valuable Thesis in the that year of Yonsei University.

Yang, Byung-Ki., Tonghak Nongmin undong ui Hyeok Myung Seong Yongu, (The study of Revolutionary Characteristics of Tonghak Peasantry Movement), M.A. Thesis, Yonsei University, Department of History, 1976.

## **APPENDIX**

## APPENDIX

### I. PROCLAMATION OF JUSTICE

Morality calls for respect for all men. The king-subject relationship and the father-son relationship are the basic principles of morality. A country develops and prospers when the king is generous and kind to his subjects who are in turn loyal to him, and when the father loves his sons who are in turn faithful to him. Where there is a wise king, there are wise subjects, and when the wise subjects support his king their country can prosper and enjoy peace. However, subjects in this country, especially those in the government, neglect service to the country, while receiving government stipends and positions, and thus becloud national wisdom. They call a man of good advice a liar and an honest man a thief. In the government there is no meritorious official, to the people; there are only cruel and greedy officials. The people are increasingly restless, having few means to earn bread and few ways to protect themselves. Maladministration is ever mounting, and the equilibrium between king and subject, between father and son, and between the senior and junior has broken. Those in power are not concerned about the national crisis. Instead they seek private interests only, making the civil service examination system their instrument for money-making and the place of examinations their market for money-making. Taxes find their way into the private warehouses of government officials, instead of into the National Treasury, with the result that national debts are on the increase. They indulge in luxury and all kinds of evils in spite of the fact that the whole country is left waste and the people are reduced to the greatest misery. The people are the root of the nation, and if the root is weak the nation will collapse. Is it the right way for government officials to receive stipends without rendering service but in pursuit of private interests, without taking though being outside the government, sit as indifferent spectators of the national crisis because we are also subjects of this country? We have risen to measures to promote the security and welfare of the people? How can we, fight for the national security and the people's welfare even at the cost of our lives. We have hoisted the flag of justice and made a vow to die under it. All the people, unite under this flag and fight for peace and justice.

Jan. Year of Gab-O (1894)  
Ho-Nam Justice Headquarter  
Chun, Bong-Joon  
Son, Hwa-Joong  
Kim, Kae-Nam

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