

Translation and the Birth of New Women in Korea, 1876-1910

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the role of translation in the importation and development of modern concepts during *gaehwagi*¹⁾(개화기; 開化期) that gave birth to the concept of new women, "*sinyeoseong*"(신여성; 新女性) in Korea. *Gaehwagi* is a general term referring the Enlightenment period(1876-1910) of Korea. It was the very first time western (literary) texts were rendered into Korean which challenged the traditional world order and subverted the pre-modern ideas and concepts. The demarcation of *gaehwagi* begins with the Treaty of Ganghwa of 1876, leads to the Gabo Reform of 1894 and ends with the Treaty of Annexation in 1910. The social reform measures of 1894 brought about the "elimination of the class

1) In this paper, Korean words are transliterated via the New Romanization System.

distinction, complete abolition of slavery, remarriage of widows, and freedom of the lower class people from their traditional hereditary status" (Koo, ed. 76-77). It was a period of constant power struggle, turbulence and transition; the result was a dynamic cultural transition and transformation. Thus, this study begins with questioning the process by which new words, concepts, and modes of representation arise, circulate, and acquire legitimacy.

Taking a translational perspective on the subject, translation is proposed as an agent of linguistic, cultural and ideological change; *gaehwagi* is studied as a setting of power struggles where cultures and world views were defied or negotiated, compromised or resisted, submitted or appropriated. The power struggle also becomes the very site of new language, new culture and new identity. Since language, culture, and identity are inextricably related to one another, any change in language facilitated by translations inevitably affects its surrounding culture and people. The difference it makes should always be reflected in the new representations of concepts and neologisms²⁾ of the day such as "*munmyeong gaehwa*"(문명개화; 文明開化), and "*aeguk buin*"(애국부인; 愛國婦人). These reflect the linguistic, socio-political, cultural and epistemological changes made in the *gaehwagi* context of modernization and is focus of this study. The role of translation is explored by investigating the linguistic lineage of a new word or concept within a socio-cultural context. It traces the ideological lineage and epistemological disposition of a word or concept and investigates the context where the expansion or relocation occurs. Thus, the epoch is examined through the eyes of translations to capture the changing images of the time which were resulted in transforming the spirit of the time.

2) The term refers to new words/expressions or loanwords from direct or indirect translation activities. The term also refers to a new meaning acquired by an existing word or expression.

2. Literature Review

In the field of translation studies, still a fledgling discipline in Korea, it is not too surprising to find out a lack of relative research. Since the role of translation in cultural transfer and transformation has been undervalued or even ignored until recently, this academic path is yet untrodden. However, studies focusing on the process of Korea's modernization during *gaehwagi* and the colonial period have expanded in the field of Korean Literature and Language, Korean History, and East Asian Studies throughout the last quarter of the 20th century³⁾. Recently, a number of significant studies focusing on the modern concepts are conducted by Boderae Kwon. Kwon conducted an inquiry into the formation of nation and the process of reconceptualization of the concept, *minjok*(민족; 民族) and *gungmin*(국민; 國民) in her analysis of *Daehan maeil sinbo*(대한매일신보), published in the years between 1904-1910. She also looked into the process of reconceptualization of *dongpo*(동포; 同胞) portrayed in *Dongnip sinmun*(독립신문) and *Hwangseong sinmun*(황성신문). These studies approached the epoch of modernization as a conceptual process in a way that is very applicable to this study, yet the relationship between the translated texts and the conceptual formation(expansion or relocation) leading to cultural transformation is unexamined. In this context, this study investigates the translated texts of the time and their implications to Korean language and culture.

3. Scope and Methodology of the Study

For this study, translated texts and newspapers published between 1876-1910,

3) Songhee Lee studied the social Darwinism and its influence in Korea during its modernization in the 1900s. In *The First Experience of Modernity*(2006), Bonghee Kim categorized the translated texts during the time and saw the interlingual translation activities as a passage to facilitate and internalize modernization. Teresa Hyun published *Writing in Korea: Translation and Feminism in the Colonial Period*(2004).

which were also widely circulated, are selected. Below are the texts analyzed as the primary sources to investigate the *gaehwagi*'s linguistic and cultural transformations. They are listed in order of publication:

Translated Texts:

Seoyu gyeonmun(서유견문; Observations on a journey to the West)(1895)

Beophak tongnon(법학통론; Introduction to law)(1905)

Changsegi(창세기; Genesis)(1906)

Aeguk buinjeon(애국부인전; Tales of patriotic women)(1907)

Chulyaegupgi(출애굽기; Exodus)(1907)

Jungdeung saengnihak(중등생리학; 中等生理學; Intermediate physiology)
(1907)

Nyeoja dokbon(녀자독본; Girl's reading book)(1908)

Newspapers:

Dongnip sinmun(독립신문)(1896.4-1899.12)

Hwangseong sinmun(황성신문)(1898. 9-1910.9)

Daehan maeil sinbo(대한매일신보)(1904.8-1910.8)

For the study's analysis, translation is approached from a perspective of descriptive translation studies. Descriptive Translation Studies(DTS) is first defined by James S. Holmes as one of the two subdivisions of Pure Translation Studies (Holmes 177)⁴. According to Holmes, the aim of this approach is "to describe the phenomena of translating and translation(s) as they manifest themselves in the world of our experience"(71). In DTS, equivalence is functional-historical and related to the continuum of acceptability and adequacy (Munday 108). By function-oriented DTS, Holmes means the description of the "function (of translations) in the recipient sociocultural situation: it is a study of contexts"(177). Issues that may be researched include which books were translated when and where, and what influences they

4) He divided Pure Translation Studies into theoretical and descriptive. Descriptive is then subdivided into product-oriented, process-oriented and function-oriented branches (Toury 10).

exerted. It is a study of socio-cultural translation (Munday 11).

Thus, the most important of the considerations of DTS is the "function" of the translation, for translations are essentially facts of the target culture. In other words, the function of the translation in the target culture is the primary interest because the purpose of a translation will determine its characteristics as a concrete target language product, which in turn will influence the procedures that the translator follows in its creation(Munday 13-14). It is an investigation with a discovery of a linguistic phenomenon of one basic type in its recurring use as a translational replacement in one particular tradition and its progression toward generalizations of a higher and higher order. Translations are therefore seen as agents of change (Hong, ed. ix). It expands the epistemological horizon and allows for the continuity of ideological framework and evokes cultural change as an outcome. The focus shifts from the translated text to the complex relationship between the translation and the cultural context that generated them and which is in turn affected by them.

4. Analysis

4.1 *Munmyeong gaehwa*, Translation of Enlightenment: the Decline of Sino-Centric World View and Social Darwinism

The focus of this section is to investigate the changing images of "*gaehwa*"(개화; 開化) and a new word, *munmyeong gaehwa* in the course of the time. The pre-modern concept of *gaehwa* was challenged, changed and expanded through the dynamic process of epistemological dislocation and relocation in the given context. The word literally meant "open and change," however, in the pre-modern sense, it was related to having a friendly tie with the West and gained a negative, connotative meaning. According to the traditional(Sino-centric) world view, "*hwaisasang*"(화이사상; 華夷思想; Chinese notion of civilized versus barbaric), countries or peoples other than China or

the Chinese were considered as ‘夷(야만)’, a 'barbarian' while China, on the other hand, was civilized. It was the traditional notion of civilized versus barbaric inscribed in the hearts of pre-modern Korean people. Here are the words written on *Cheok hwabi*(척화비; 斥和碑), the monument erected nationwide in 1871, revealing the country's harsh feelings toward westerners:

If not fight against (those) invading Barbarians from the West;
It is like having a friendly tie with them;
Insisting the friendly tie is betraying one's own country.
(English rendering is done by the researcher of this paper)

(洋夷侵犯 非戰則和 主和賣國)⁵⁾

In this framework, Koreans had been averse to foreign commerce and maintained the most absolute isolation in regard to all foreigners; "gaehwa" was forbidden and considered as a betrayal to one's own country. However, during the Enlightenment period, the pre-modern concept of *gaehwa* was challenged; the imported knowledge of social Darwinism subverted the pre-modern understanding of civilization.

Due to the importation of social Darwinism in Kil-jun Yoo's *Seoyu gyeonmun*(1895), a new dichotomy of civilized and barbaric world had developed in Korea. The book is a translation of Hukujawa Yukichi(1835-1901)'s *Seoyang sajeong*(서양사정; 西洋事情), who took a line with Edward Morse's western concept of civilization. The imported concept of civilization challenged the traditional representation of barbarism. The word "civilization" was rendered as *munmyeong*(문명; 文明) and the stratification of civilization (civilized, semi-civilized, and barbarian) was introduced (*Dongnip sinmun* 1899. 9. 11). In *Dongnip sinmun*, to do *gaehwa* meant breaking and detaching from the Korean tradition. It asserts that the shackles of traditional society thwart progressive

5) <<http://ko.wikipedia.org>>.

social and political reform. Thus, traditional culture of marriage of a minor, was severely criticized:

In fact, in the countries where the development of civilization and hygienics are thoroughly studied, their men get married at the age of 25 to 35 and their women exchange their vows at the age of 20 to 26 or 27 . . . However, in Korea, the situation is quite different. Parents rush their children's marriage even at the age of 10. . .

(English rendering is done by the researcher of this paper)

그런고로 문명의 발달과 위생의 연구를 주밀케 하는 나라의 인민들은 대개 남자는 25세부터 35세, 여자는 20세부터 26-27세에 이르러서 혼인들을 행하나 . . . 대한서는 . . . 혼인할 기한을 재촉하여 남녀간에 겨우 10세 내외가 되거드면 . . .

(*Dongnip sinmun* 1899. 10. 7)

In comparison to western culture, which was viewed as civilized, the Korean tradition of marriage of minors was denounced. Traditions such as filial piety up to three generations(1897. 4. 27), widowhood(1897. 6. 27), particularly early widowhood(1898. 10. 17), and shamanism(1897.1.3), were also slated. In the paper, the Korean culture was harshly degraded while the western culture was introduced as advanced and enlightened. The word, "*munmyeong gaehwa*" was coined in this context; the pre-modern connotative meaning of *gaehwa* subverted and it was now defined as civilization and enlightenment.

The traditional meaning of health was also challenged during the Enlightenment period. With the introduction of western physiology and pathology, the pre-modern concept of health structured around the Confucian ideology was refuted. According to the traditional understanding of *yangsaengnon*(양생론; 養生論), spirit(heart) controls body; the health of the body is thus controlled by the circulation of energy that originates from the heart(Lee 2008, 52-53). In other words, *yangsang* defines heart as the center whereas *wisaeng*(위생; 衛生), a translated word for hygiene, defines brain as

the center. Health was now an issue of philosophy(pre-modern) against science(modern). *Wisaeng* was a new term appeared frequently in the *gaehwagi* newspapers.

In *Dongnip sinmun*, *wisaeng* was defined as *gaehwa*(1897.9.2). The paper condemned the traditional custom, such as wearing one's hair up into topknot or wearing a *gat*,⁶⁾ that thwarted people from sanitizing their body(1897.9.2). Moreover, traditional *yangsaeng* was disregarded; acupuncture was degraded as "unscientific" (1896.6.4). *Gaehwa* was interpreted as a severance or discontinuation from the past. However, in *Hwangseong sinmun* founded by patriotic reformists, *gaehwa* was interpreted differently. According to the paper, it was not a severance from the past; but reshaping of the past on the present soil. It argues that enlightenment is a development process of civilizations, which implicates *gaehwa* is found not only in the west, but in the east as well. It is an ongoing process of both civilizations(1898.9.23). Thus, the western civilization doesn't hold the authority over the East(1899. 7.1); The epistemological disposition behind *Hwangseong sinmun* was "*dongdo seogiron*"(동도서기론; 東道西紀論): "keeping the eastern ideology and receiving the western technology." Enlightenment was not the practice of discontinuation from the tradition which results in the mere imitation of the West.

In fact, it didn't disregard *yangsang* as in *Dongnip sinmun*, but tried to advocate it(1899.10.9). It described the working systems of *yangsaeng* along with its limits and introduced *wisaeng* as an alternative to overcome the limits of the former. It didn't abandon the former, but took a negotiating stance between the two; nevertheless, the cholera epidemic of 1902 elevated the power of *wisaeng* in the minds of Koreans; the modern concept of *wisaeng* subverted the meaning of health. Health was now the issue of *wisaeng* in *Daehan maeil sinbo* in 1905-1910. The pathological metaphors became the center of enlightenment discourses(Ko 236-38). A number of books about

6) A traditional Korean men's top hat made of horsehair.

physiology and pathology were translated for public education. In this context, *Jungdeung saengnihak*(1907) was translated.

It is a translated text of the theory of physiology, hygiene and pathology for students. It facilitated the epistemological expansion of the Korean people in the understanding of health and introduced the importance of physical education. Thus, in the Enlightenment period, *gaehwa* was related to *wisaeng*, and the meaning of health expanded to the wellness of the physical body. Thus, *gaehwa* was defined as civilization, enlightenment and *wisaeng*; its pre-modern concept was subverted and a positive connotative meaning was gained instead. *Gaehwa* was no longer interpreted as a betrayal to one's own country, but was encouraged as a way to civilize and develop one's own country.

4.2 *Dongpo*, Translation of Nation: From Familial Ties to Mono-ethnic Nation-State

The focus of this section is to investigate the changing images of "*dongpo*"(동포; 同胞;) in the course of the time. It focuses the conceptual dynamics of the word and its linguistic lineage to nation, *minjok*(민족; 民族), and nationalism. In the traditional frame of patrilineal kinship ideology, *dongpo* is a blood related, filial system(Kwon 51). The word literally meant "blood related siblings;" in other words, "of same mother(womb)." However, during the Enlightenment period, through the process of translations, the meaning of *dongpo* expanded and was understood as a socio-cultural system which varies enormously across space and time. Thus, the pre-modern concept of *dongpo* was challenged and expanded through the dynamic process of epistemological dislocation and relocation facilitated by translations in the given context. The modern concept of *dongpo* as a group of people with same language and culture(and religion) was imported and developed through the Korean rendition of the Bible.

During the Enlightenment period, through the process of translations of the

Bible, the biblical concept of nation was introduced and understood as a socio-cultural system which varies enormously across space and time. The central concept of *Changsegi*(1906) and *Chulyaegupgi*(1907) is that Hebrew nation preserved its unique culture and identity despite of the severe oppression of dominant cultures around them. In *Chulyaegupgi*, a translated version of the book of *Exodus*, Moses is portrayed as a heroic figure who had freed his brothers(or people), *dongpo*, from the hands of mighty Egyptians. In the text, brothers of same mother grew into the concept of nation, the sons of Israel(*Chulyaegupgi* 2: 25). The Bible translation plays a significant role in the proliferation of the concept of nation for it was one of the translated texts that were most widely circulated. It was read not only in church settings, but also school settings. The Korean version of the Bible was used as a textbook for Korean class while the English version was used as a textbook for English class at Baejae hakdang(배재학당; 培材學堂) founded in 1885, and at Ehwa hakdang(이화학당; 梨花學堂), a girls' school founded in 1886 (Her 63-66). In this context, the meaning of *dongpo* expanded as a group of people with the same culture and language and the word was used interchangeably with *minjok* (Kwon 72-74).

In the attempt to destabilize the ethnocentric perspective of China as the source of cultural authority, the enlightenment reformists led the Korean alphabet movement and established the authority of the Korean nation and subverted the conventional cultural legitimacy. Reformists sought to solve the socio-political predicaments of the time with cultural methods and used the Korean alphabet as a vehicle for change. The Korean alphabet system was created in 1446 by a royal commission of linguists and philologists during the reign of King Sejong(1418-1450). Nevertheless, the alphabet had long been regarded as *eonmun*(언문; 諺文), a literary tool for lower classes and women while the classic Chinese was considered as the major literary tool.

However, in 1882, the Bible (*Luke*) was translated into the Korean Alphabet, and in 1887, the New Testament of the Bible was rendered into

Korean alphabet, *Yesu seongkyo jeonseo*(예수성경전서), and the status of Korean alphabet soon changed: it became the language of the Korean nation, the national writing system, *kukmun*(국문; 國文), in 1894. Newspapers were written in *kukmun* or a mixture of *kukmun* and the classic Chinese and foreign texts were rendered into it. In *Dongnip sinmun* and also its English edition, *Independence*, the purpose is given:

The time seems to have come for the publication of a periodical in the interests of the Korean people. By the Korean people we do not mean merely the residents in Seoul and we included the whole people of every class and grade. To this end three things are necessary: first, that it shall be written in a character intelligible to the largest possible number; second, that it shall be put on the market at such a price that it shall be with the reach of the largest possible number; third, that shall contain matter as shall be for the best interests of the largest possible number. To meet the first of these requirements it has been put in the native character called the *n-mun*, for the time is shortly coming, if it is not already here, when Koreans will cease to be ashamed of their native character, which for simplicity of construction and phonetic power compares favorably with the best alphabets in the world. . .

(*Independence* 1896.7. 4)

(우리가 독립신문을 오늘 처음으로 출판하는데, 조선 속에 있는 내 외국 인민에게 우리 주의를 미리 말씀하여 아시게 하노라. 우리는 첫째 편벽 되지 아니한 고로 무슨 당에도 상관의 없고 상하귀천을 달리 대접 아니하고, 모두 조선 사람으로만 알고, 조선만 위하며, 공평하게 인민을 말할 터인데; 우리가 서울백성만 위할 게 아니라 조선 전국 인민을 위하여 무슨 일이든지 대언하여 주려함. 정부에서 하시는 일을 백성에게 전할 터이오, 백성의 정세를 정부에 전할 터이니; 만일 백성이 정부 일을 자세히 알고 정부에서 백성의 일을 자세히 아시면 피차에 유익한 일만 있을 터이며, 불평한 마음과 의심하는 생각이 없어질 터임. 우리가 이 신문을 출판하기는 취리 하려는 것이 아닌 고로 값을 헐하도록 하였고, 모두 언문으로 쓰기는 남녀 상하귀천이 모두 보게 함이요, 이 글이 배우기가 쉬운 좋은 글이요, 조선 글이니 조선인민들이 알아서 백사를 한문대신 국문으로 써야 상하귀천이

모두 보고 알아보기가 쉬울 터이라. 각국에서는 사람들이 남녀 물론하고
본국 국문을 먼저 배워 능통한 후에야 외국 글을 배우는 법인데, 조선에서
는 조선 국문은 아니 배우더라도 한문만 공부하는 까닭에 국문을 잘 아는
사람이 드무니라.) (1896.4.7)

The Korean writing movement eventually facilitated the education of women and played a significant role changing the traditional role and virtue of women, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

During the Enlightenment period, one of the most read books was translations of world history, especially the history of the West(Kim 15). Interests about history, *yeoksa*(역사; 歷史), pervaded throughout the period for the purpose of enlightenment; however, the awareness of history of a nation was yet to be internalized. Not surprisingly, it was this time that Koreans gain the modern concept of history. The importation and development of modern understanding of history of nations are manifested in the newspapers as well as in the selection of translation texts. It was during this time, Sin, Chae-ho and Pak, Eunsik wrote Korean historiography with a modern historical awareness, refuting the pre-modern education of history which was the education of Chinese historiography.

In *Dongnip sinmun*, modern historical awareness was yet to be discovered. Still, as a way of enlightenment, education of world history was promoted. In fact, in the 1896 July 7th edition, Independence Day of the United States of America was scribed(1896. 7. 7). The paper included a number of articles introducing American historiography (1897. 10.16). Education of world history was supported as a means of *gaehwa*. Meanwhile, after the Japanese victory over Russia in the war that ended in 1905, Japanese forced the Korean government to accept Japan's protectorate. With the establishment of the supervisory agency of Japan called the Residency-General of Korea in 1906, the Japanese took over not only jurisdiction of matters related to foreign relations of Korea, but also took away the sovereign rights of the Korean

emperor and his government. In this context, Korean historical awareness was germinated in the minds of patriotic Koreans such as Sin, Chae-ho. He wrote Korean (ancient) historiography to create historical awareness of the nation. He also encouraged Koreans to read their own history:

"If any one wishes to love his/her own country, read history and if any one who wishes to make others to love their country, let them read history as well."

(English rendering is done by the researcher of this paper)

"자신의 나라를 사랑하려거든 역사를 읽을 것이며 다른 사람들에게 나라를 사랑하게 하려거든 역사를 읽게 할 것이다."

(from *Yeoksawa Aeguksimui Gwangye*(역사와 애국심의 관계; The relationship between history and patriotism))⁷⁾

Moreover, patriotics translated the history of foreign countries in order to alert the threat of Imperialism. For example, among the numerous translations of the world history, *Wollam mangguksa*(월남망국사; the history of Vietnam's ruin)(1907) and *Segye sikminsä*(세계식민사; 世界植民史; the world history of colonialism)(1908) are just a few to name here. Thus, history was no longer a series of written record of history; history was reality. The shift turned from the past-oriented view to the future-oriented view. History was no longer a series of old stories, but is the present. Historical awareness restructures one's position in a historical line with one's own nation. Koreans translated history and wrote Korean historiography for the purpose of the present and future. It is this awareness that led the development of nation-state and cultural nationalism.

Koreans fighting for national integrity and cultural identity intensified after the signing of the Protectorate Treaty in 1905. With the establishment of the

7) <<http://www.ihs21.org/bang/songcs/html2/ga4-4-1.htm>>.

supervisory agency of Japan called the Residency-General of Korea in 1906, patriotic Koreans launched national salvation movement and created the origin and supremacy of its people and culture to be independent from China and Confucianism and from the threat of imperialism. Furthermore, they translated the history of foreign countries who fought for national independence. In this context, historic tales of Bismarck and Washington were translated(Kim 71) and the formation of heroism appeared in *Daehan maeil sinbo* (1908. 9.15). Korea's eagerness for national integrity and independence led the formation of nationalism in the Enlightenment period and the epistemological consciousness about nationalism was internalized and exercised; an awareness against cultural dependence toward the western ideology was sternly warned:

Since the wind from the West blows stronger and stronger, no one wishes to return to the old stage of ideological slavery, except for a few with rotten minds. . . It is, however, easy to shift a great adoration toward the West, once paid to China. Our concern is this and everyone should be aware of it. (English rendering is done by the researcher of this paper)

서국에서 온 풍기가 점점 생하매 저 몇 개 뜻이 썩은 학자 외에는 옛 적 성현의 노예 되기를 달게 여기는 자가 없거니와. . . 지나를 숭배하던 마음을 가지고 서양을 숭배하기가 쉬우니 이것이 가히 두렵고 경계할 바이로다. (*Daehan maeil sinbo* 1909.8.4)

In the paper, mere defiance or imitation of the modern concepts was condemned. On the other hand, any cultural reformation based on rearrangement of the past for the purpose of creating a new identity and a new beginning was acclaimed. For patriotic reformists, *gaehwa* meant becoming the subject, not the object, of change.

The purpose of learning a new thing is to mend the things of the past. Simply imitating new things is meaningless. It is nothing but merely relocating our past adoration for China to some other countries. Unconditionally imitating a new civilization is another name for betraying one's own country.

(English rendering is done by the researcher of this paper)

새 것을 배우는 이유는 옛 것을 고치기 위해서이다. 새것을 그대로 실시하기만 하는 것은 아무런 의미가 없다. 그것은 과거 중국에 대한 숭배를 옮겨 다른 외국을 숭배하는데 불과하다. 무조건적인 신문명의 모방도 매국이나 마찬가지다.

(*Daehan maeil sinbo* 1910. 7. 12)

Gaehwa was not a process of complete segregation from the past nor an imitation of the cultures of the west; rather, it started from the internal reshaping of its own tradition which contributes for the present and for the development of nation. The modern concept of *gaehwa* developed into nationalism and brought forth the birth of new woman, which will be discussed in the next section.

4.3 *Aeguk buin*, Translation of Women's Virtue: From Filial Piety to Nationalism

The concept of nation and nationalism led to the birth of new women, *sinyeoseong*, and the modern concept of "*aekuk buin*." The new woman is the woman equipped with knowledge and virtue for her own people. Korean nation(including women) were encouraged to gain the knowledge of the West and to be free from the shackles of the old traditions(*Dongnip sinmun* 1896. 6. 16). In order to have a new beginning, renunciation of the recent past and reinterpretation of the historical origin were encouraged. Thus, translations into the language of nation, *gukmun*, led the process of domestication of the western concepts, texts, and histories highly accessible, making them intelligible

and even familiar with the given context aspiring for a new social order and identity.

In the Enlightenment period, modern concept of law was introduced through the translated texts. For example, *Beophak tongnon*(1905) by Yu, Seong-jun(유성준) is an example to name here. As a result of these translations, there were a number of legal words coined, such as *beop*(법; 法), *beopnyul*(법률; 法律), and *yulbeop*(율법; 律法) related to nation-building. The concept of law existed even before this period, but the meaning changed to Korea's sovereignty and independence; thus, the modern concept of law challenged the consciousness of Korean people who were under the influence of Confucian ideology. Confucianism in the late *Joseon*(조선) period was a set of ideas which prescribed ideal social behavior and human values and was employed by the ruling classes to legitimate, rationalize, and perpetuate their status and power. In other words, in the pre-modern socio-historical context, Confucianism was both a prescription for an ideal social life and a cultural system used to perpetuate relations of inequality. The pre-modern concept of *beop* was a set of principles defining relationships. According to *samgang oryun*(삼강오륜; 三綱五倫), there are three bonds(unchangeable relationships) and five cardinal relationships.

The three bonds are:

1. Sovereign to subject(군위신강; 君爲臣綱),
2. Parent to child(부위자강; 父爲子綱),
3. Husband to wife(부위부강; 夫爲婦綱)

Samgang oryun was morality and virtue that structured the cultural system. Thus, change is equivalent to disloyalty in this framework. However, after the Gabo Reform of 1895, a modern cabinet system was installed and the Metropolitan Police was established. The implementation of social reform measures included the elimination of the class distinction between the aristocracies and the commoners, complete abolition of slavery, remarriage of

widows, and freedom of the lower class people from their traditional hereditary status(Koo, ed. 76-77).

Thus, *beop* no longer fits to the traditional morality and virtue; rather, it is a new set of codes to protect the rights of individuals under the new system. *Dongnip sinmun* explains the purpose of new orders called *beopnyul* as a measure to protect the life and property of free individuals (1899. 3. 3). The word identified with the modern concept of nation. The importation and development of *beop* institutionalized the minds and behaviors of Korean people to fit into a newly form society, which is detached from the old conventions of Confucianism. *Dongnip sinmun* further explicated the specifics of freedom of individuals under the law(1899. 8.12). However, the ideological distinction between *baekseong*(백성; 百姓; subjects) and *gukmin*(국민; 國民; citizens) were yet to be formulated. During the earlier years of the Enlightenment period, these two words were still used interchangeably in the paper.

The concept of nation, however, gained an unprecedented significance after the Russo-Japanese war of 1904. The Japanese victory over Russia in the war brought tragic consequences to Korea; Japan's protectorate was set in Korea in 1905. By 1906, the sovereign rights of the Korean emperor and his government were taken away (Koo ed. 77). The modern concept of nation was budded in this context. It was in *Daehan maeil sinbo*, the right of *gaein*(개인; 個人; an individual) is paralleled with nation(1909. 7. 29) and the gap between *baekseong*(linked to the feudal system) and *gukmin*(linked to the nation-state system) emerged. In *Daehan maeil sinbo*, the rights of nation is emphasized(1909. 10. 26) and the awareness of nation's independence from other nations, especially from Japan, was developed in order to protect the rights of its individuals. In this context, the concept of legal nation vs. nation of virtue and morality collided. In *Dongnip sinmun*, the rights of women were advocated while the traditions and the women practicing the traditions were heavily criticized as barbaric(1896.6.16). The modern concept of law no longer fitted to the traditional morality or virtue; it was a new set of codes to protect the

rights of individuals under the new system.

Meanwhile, the definition of women's virtue shifted from "*yeolloe*"(열녀;烈女) to "*aeguk buin*":

Translation of Women's Virtue

Pre-Modern	Modern
Virtue: <i>yeolloe</i>	Virtue: <i>aeguk buin</i>
<i>Chunhyang jeon</i> (춘향전)	<i>Aeguk buinjeon</i> (애국부인전)(1907)
<i>Simcheong jeon</i> (심청전)	<i>Nyeoja dokbon</i> (녀자독본)(1908)

Pre-modern Korean girls' virtue was realized in the oral text and written text of *Chunhyang jeon*, a tale of faithful wife Chunhyang, and *Simcheong jeon*, a tale of filial daughter Simcheong. Traditionally, monuments of filial daughters, faithful wives and widows were erected; especially, those women who sacrificed for a husband or parent-in-law were highly praised. There were many stories of heroic women who went to extreme measures to find medicine for an ailing husband or father-in-law(Koo ed. 143).

However, the traditional concept of virtue was challenged in the Enlightenment period. The social reform measures of the Gabo Reform of 1895 allowed widows to remarry, and it inevitably contradicted the pre-modern understanding of virtue. In this context, Jang, Ji-yeon(장지연)'s *Aeguk buinjeon*(1907) and *Nyeoja dokbon* (1908) were published and the representation of virtue expanded from filial faithfulness to faithfulness to nation. In order to arouse patriotism in the hearts of Korean nation, a translated version of the tale of *Joan of arc*, *Aeguk buinjeon*, was released. The last sentence of the book indicates the translator's patriotic intention behind his work:

"How sad! Does our nation have heroic men and patriotic women like Joan of Arc?"(English rendering is done by the researcher of this paper)

“슬프다. 우리나라도 약한 같은 영웅호걸과 애국충의의 여자가 혹 있는가”(52)

Needless to say, the book influenced young Korean girls including Yu, Gwan-sun(유관순; 1902-1920), who was at the time a student at Ewha hakdang, later organizing what would come to be known as the March First Movement of 1919. Gwan-sun received the book from a lady in her church as a graduation gift and sent her a letter of thanks describing her impression on the book, saying she was deeply moved and challenged by it (Park 37).

As historic tales of foreign men and women such as Washington, Napoleon, and Joan of Arc were translated into Korean, historic figures from Korean history were also searched and scribed as heroic figures in a way that is different from the past(Kim 72-74). The heroic figures translated in the Enlightenment period were patriotic men and women. In the girls' school reading book, *Nyeoja dokbon*, wise mothers and good wives are introduced as patriotic women of Korean history. In the Introduction of *Nyeoja dokbon*, the purpose of the book is written as follows:

"Women will become a mother of our people(nation). Women's education should be advanced in order to raise good children. Therefore, the education of women will improve the quality of home education, serving as a good model to enhance the knowledge of the nation."

(English rendering is done by the research of this paper)

"녀자는 나라 백성 된 자의 어머니 될 사람이라 여자의 교육이 발달된 후에 그 자녀로 하여금 착한 사람을 일울지라 그런고로 여자를 가르침이 곳 가정교육을 발달하여 국민의 지식을 인도하는 모범이 되느니라"

(*Nyeoja dokbon* 389)

Women's education was encouraged for the purpose of building an enlightened nation. In this context, the concept of "*hyeonmo yangcheo*"(현모양처; 賢母良妻; a wise mother and good wife)(Her 46), the woman equipped with

knowledge and virtue for her own people, emerged. The concept of nation and nationalism led the birth of new women whose virtue was now related to nationalism.

5. Conclusion

Based on the investigation of this study, the importation and development of modern concepts were facilitated by translations; neologisms of the day such as "*munmyeong gaehwa*," and "*sinyeoseong*" reflected the changing images of the time and resulted in transforming the spirit of the time. The concept of "*aeguk buin*" and "*hyeonmo yangcheo*" was related to the modern concept of nation and nationalism and eventually changed the traditional role of women; the women's virtue expanded from filial faithfulness to faithfulness to nation. The study of linguistic lineage of a new word or concept within a socio-cultural context explains the role of translation, not as mere imitation or as blind reception, but expansion, relocation, and transformation during the Enlightenment period.

Translation is thus an ongoing process of recontextualization and reconceptualization. As matter of fact, the Enlightenment period was a very site of linguistic and cultural transaction and transformation where different systems and ideas were met and brought forth a new meaning, new culture, and new identity. In other words, translation was an agent that deterritorialized the consciousness of its people to expand their ideological horizon to meet, challenge, share and spread new concepts or ideas. As a result, translation activities expanded the ideological horizon and relocated the epistemological disposition of meaning and concepts of civilization, health, history, and women's virtue in the minds of *gaehwagi* people.

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[Abstract]

Translation and the Birth of New Women in Korea, 1876-1910

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This paper investigates the role of translation in the importation and development of modern concepts during the Enlightenment period that gave birth to the concept of new women in Korea. The Enlightenment period was the very first time western texts were rendered into Korean which challenged the traditional world view and subverted the pre-modern socio-cultural order. During the time, the establishment of national integrity and cultural identity was crucial. In order to create the origin and supremacy of Korean people and culture to be independent from China and Confucianism and from the threat of Imperialism, Korean people were encouraged to gain the knowledge of the West and to be free from the shackles of the old traditions. To start a new beginning, renunciation of the recent past and reinterpretation of the historical origin were gradually legitimized. Neologisms of the day such as "*munmyeong gaehwa*", "*aeguk buin*", and "*hyeonmo yangcheo*" reflected the changing images of the time and resulted in transforming the spirit of the time. In other words, the importation and development of modern concepts such as civilization, health, history and nation facilitated by translation activities, contributed to create a new social order and cultural identity, nationalism. Nationalism was a transformation of Korean culture continuing its virtual lineage with the past. In this context, the modern concept of new women emerged.

▶ Key Words: *gaehwa*, enlightenment, nation, nationalism, new women, *aeguk buin*

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