Part I. Modernity and Its Frustrations

Chapter 1. Opening of Korea and Reform Movements

King Cheoljong (r. 1849–1863) died at a time of increasing social instability marked by the continuing stranglehold on politics exercised by in-laws such as Andong Kim clan and ever-increasing sense of crisis occasioned by the unrelenting infiltration of the West in China through the rapid spread of Catholicism. King Gojong (r. 1863–1907) ascended the throne in 1863, some five years before the emergence of the Meiji Restoration in neighboring Japan.

As Gojong was only 12 years old, real power came to rest in the hands of his father Yi Haeung. With the support of the classes of people who had suffered the most under sedo politics, such as merchants, well-to-do commoners, and craftsmen, Yi haeung embarked upon ambitious and sweeping reforms. This was the first real effort to reform since the death of King Jeongjo.

First, he tried to exclude the powerful clans such as that of the Andong Kim from power. To do so, the Daewongun hired members of the Namin and Bugin factions as well as military officers, to correct the problems caused by the civilian official-centered governance structure.

Second, the Daewongun inherited anti-Yangban ideology of the Yeongjo and Jeongjo eras and put in place a policy of reforming the seowon that served as the power base of the yangban class. At that time, the seowon enjoyed tax and corvée free status.

In 1868, the Daewongun undertook the reconstruction of Gyeongbok Palace that had been burnt down during the Hideyoshi Invasions. The rebuilding of this palace entailed the reconstruction of the original structure of the heart of the city itself, as the government buildings that lined the avenues in front of the palace were also rebuilt.

From the mid-19th century onwards, an ever-increasing number of vessels from Great Britain, France, and the United States began to appear off Joseon's coasts, ostensibly for navigation as well as surveillance.
purposes. Concerned by the emergence of these ships which it referred to as iyangseon, Joseon increased its vigilance and further intensified its shoring up of its coastal defenses, a process that had begun in the 18th century.

In July 1866, an American merchant ship called the General Sherman sailed up the Daedong River, looting and killing inhabitants of Pyeongyang along the way. Outraged, the people of Pyeongyang and local military burned the ship and killed all on board. This first armed confrontation with the West represented a clear sign that the government of Joseon had adopted a hard line policy towards all foreign intrusions. Believing that Catholics were the vanguard of the Western imperial overtures to Joseon, the government killed 9 French priests and some 8,000 Korean Catholics over a 7 year period that began in 1866.

In September 1866, a flotilla of 7 ships and some 1,000 soldiers under the command of Admiral Roze dispatched by the French government raided and occupied Ganghwa Island. The invading forces demanded the punishment of those who had killed the French priests and that Joseon sign a trade treaty with France. The Daewongun not only refused to yield to these French demands, but responded by setting up the Sunmuyeong under the command of Yi Gyeongha.

In 1876, the Joseon government dispatched Pak Gyusu and Sin Heon to negotiate a treaty with the Japanese. The ensuing agreement came to be known as the Korea–Japan Treaty of Amity or Treaty of Ganghwa.

The government’s open door policy of granting privileges to foreigners and allowing foreign goods to flood the Joseon market greatly alarmed the conservative Confucian literati. As far as they were concerned, there was no reason to change the traditional international order of East Asia, or the Confucian civilization that they had built. Rather, they considered the military and industry-based civilization of the West and Japan to be barbaric as well as immoral, and believed that continued interaction with these powers would eventually lead to the economic and cultural downfall of Joseon.

As such, they considered it a matter of principle to resist unto death any dealings with Japan or the West, and refused any attempt to foster the introduction of their goods and culture. Their approach came to be known as that of Wijeong cheoks (defending orthodoxy and rejecting heterodoxy). In reality the Confucian literati’s opposition to the opening policies of the
government was all but preordained.

The Wijeong cheoksa movement was a patriotic endeavor which correctly perceived the Western powers and Japanese as being rapacious and immoral. However, its clout was also clearly limited by the fact that it could not present viable alternative measures that could resolve the problems which Joseon was facing at the time.

The suppression of the Wijeong cheoksa movement during the period that followed Joseon's opening of its doors to the outside world was accompanied by the Joseon government's active implementation of an opening policy that was based on the notion of Dongdo seogi (Eastern way and Western technology). In 1880, a new government office called Tongni gimu amun (Office for Extraordinary State Affairs) was established and bestowed responsibility for 12 tasks (sa) related to the strengthening of the state. The individuals responsible for the running of this new office included Gojong's most trusted advisors Min Gyeomho, Min Yeongik, Min Chisang, Yi Jaemyeon, and Kim Bohyeon. These individuals also reformed the military, changing the traditional Five Garrison system to one with Two Garrisons (Muwiyeong, or Palace Guards Garrison and Jangeoyeong, or Capital Guards Garrison) and established a new modern military unit called Gyoryeon byeongdae (also called the Byeolgigun, or Special Skills Force) which was trained and led by Japanese military officers that had been invited by government.

Gojong also began to dispatch missions to foreign countries so as to better learn from them. First in 1876, he accepted the Japanese government's invitation to send a delegation to see the reforms underway in Japan. The Joseon government also dispatched a mission to Qing in 1881. Headed by Kim Yunsik, this 38 member delegation remained in China one full year. Meanwhile, in 1883, Min Yeongik, Hong Yeongsik and Seo Gwangbeom were dispatched to the United States as part of the first ever mission to a western country.

In June 1882, an incident occurred in which the officials in charge of distributing rice to the traditional army units in lieu of payment decided to pocket the rice for themselves, thereby triggering a revolt amongst these forces that has come to be known as the Military Uprising of 1882 (Imo gunbyeon).

Chapter 2. Donghak Peasant Uprising and Gabo Reforms of 1894

In the immediate aftermath of the opening of Joseon in 1876, it was
Japan who became the dominant economic power on the peninsula. Joseon exported through its treaty ports items such as rice, beans, and cow-hide while importing British textile goods from Japan. At that time, Japan's level of industrialization was still low, and as such it could not produce high quality industrial goods. However, the expansion of Qing's influence in the aftermath of the Military Uprising of 1882 and the Gapsin Coup of 1884 resulted in Joseon's trade with Qing surpassing that with Japan. While Joseon exported such items as insam and seafood to Qing, it imported textiles from latter. However, as Joseon's trade volume with its neighbors increased, its own agriculture began to suffer.

The trade structure constructed through the unequal treaties signed with these neighboring countries and other foreign powers proved to be one which greatly exploited Joseon's peasants, fishermen, merchants, and labors. In particular, the exportation of grain and the importation of textiles began to devastate the rural economy. Denied of the right to impose any tariffs on imported goods, the government found itself unable to make any profit from this increased trade.

A growing schism emerged between the more dovish faction of the Donghak in Chungcheong Province and the hardliners in Jeolla Province. In the aftermath of the operating of the treaty ports, Jeolla Province, an area which had long served as the rice basket of Jeoseon, increasingly became a target of exploitation by the government and local magistrates who were always looking for revenues to finance various modernization policies and projects. The province also experienced more than its share of exploitation at the hands of Japanese hands. While a variety of taxes such as a water tax, gyunjeon (equal field) tax were imposed, various corrupt means were devised to squeeze the farmers of Jeolla Province. This can be regarded as the main reason why the peasantry of Jeolla Province was more fiercely anti-government and anti-Japanese than the people of other parts of the country.

The spark that lit the proverbial fuse which ignited the anger of Jeolla's peasants was the wanton corruption of the magistrate of Gobu County Jo Byeonhgap. Jo became infamous for having collected taxes on the water used for irrigation, as well as for having pocketed one thousand-nyang (monetary unit at this time) for the construction of his father's tombstone. Led by Donghak leader Jeon Bongjun (1855–1895), the angry peasants of Gobu repeatedly went before the magistrate seeking redress. However, their
demands were not met.

In February of 1894, Jeon Bongjun led 1,000 peasants in an attack on the Gobu magistrate. They executed petty officials, took grain and redistributed it to its original owners, and also took weapons from government installations. The angry peasant soldiers then issued a proclamation with 13 demands that included the punishment of Jo Byeonggap and the foreign penetration of the domestic market being brought to an end.

Desiring to avoid foreign interference in what they perceived as a domestic matter, the government and the rebel army tried to reach a negotiated settlement. As a result, they were able to conclude the so-called the Jeonju agreement on June 11th, 1894, in which the government accepted 12 demands made by the rebels, significantly less than the 30 originally made by the peasant army.

The majority of these reform measures were related to issues pertaining to the agrarian society such as taxes, social status, Japanese penetration, and land. They did not address issues crucial to the building of modern nation state such as national defense, state finances, commerce, and industry, or science and technology. These were, however, issues that needed to be dealt with in order to bring stability to the lives of the peasants and small merchants of Joseon.

Japan used the temporary lull occasioned by the Jeonju agreement between the government and Donghak peasant army reached shortly before the outbreak of war with China to establish a pro-Japanese cabinet in the Joseon royal court, a move which was designed to put in place a government which would be conductive to their planned invasion. On July 23rd, 1894, Japanese ambassador Otori Keisuke and a Japanese battalion occupied Seoul. Soon thereafter, they entered Gyeongbok Palace and took Gojong prisoner. They forced the king to promulgate a series of radical reforms that came to be known as the Gabo Reforms.

The central organ of the Gabo Reforms was a temporary office called the Gunguk gimucheo (Deliberative Council) which was set up on July 27th, 1894. Japan expelled the anti-Japanese Queen Min and her supporters from power and brought back the Daewongun as the regent. It then set up a cabinet made up of 17 members that included such notables as Kim Hongjip, Pak Jeongyang, Kim Yunsik, Kim Gajin, An Gyeongsu, and Yu Giljun. By December of that year, the new government had promulgated
210 reform measures as part of what has since come to be known as the first round of Gabo reforms.

The main focus of the first round of Gabo reforms was the reorganization of the government and the economy. To this end, the power of the king was reduced, while that of Uljeongbu (State Council) and the 8 ministries under it was increased. Moreover, the 3 censorate offices (samsa) were abolished. A powerful police force called the Gyeongmucheong (Metropolitan Police Board) was created within the Naemu amun (Ministry of Home Affairs). While the king who retained the power directly appoint officials of Rank One and Two called Chikimgwan, mid-level officials were to be appointed on the recommendation of the senior members of the cabinet. Meanwhile, those holding lower ranking posts were directly appointed by the officials responsible for them.

The numerous offices within the royal palace were all unified under the Gungnaebu (Department of the Royal Household), whose own functions were drastically reduced, thereby, weakening the royal power. The venerable civil service examination was abolished, and replaced by regular and special examinations through which officials were to be hired. Also, in order to sever Jeoseon's long-standing ties with Qing, the tradition of using Qing emperor's reign title (yeonho) was abolished, and a new national calendar was adopted. The number of provinces was also increased from 8 to 13.

Notable economic reforms included the placing of state finances under the authority of the Takji amun (Ministry of Finance), the introduction of a silver-based monetary system, and the implementation of a currency-based taxation system. In addition, the Banggongnyeong (Grain Export Prohibition Order) was revoked, and the circulation of Japanese currency was permitted.

In terms of social reforms, while widows were granted permission to remarry, the hereditary bond servant system, the yangban-sangin class structure, and the practice of holding family members responsible for someone else's crime were all abolished.

There were many positive aspects of the first round of Gabo reforms. However, it also had the effect of weakening the power of the king, while making it easier for Japan to control and interfere in the domestic affairs of Joseon.

Chapter 3. Modern Nation State:
The Reforms and Breakdown of the Daehan Empire (1897-1910)
In order to stop the ebbing of Russian influence in Joseon, Japan resorted to force once again. First, they tried to eliminate Queen Min, whom they perceived as the leader of the pro-Russian policy. Japan replaced Inoue Kaoru with a former army general named Miura Koro who, on October 8, 1895, led a band of Japanese soldiers, police, and newspaper reporters on an attack on Gyeongbok Palace designed to kill the queen.

While the palace guards led by Hong Gyehun tried to resist the invaders, the 45 year old queen was murdered and her body was set on fire by the Japanese. This incident angered not only the people of Joseon, but also brought on international condemnation. Japan recalled the perpetrators and jailed them in Hiroshima Prison. However, all were soon relocated due to a purported lack of evidence. This incident is referred to by Koreans as the *Eulmi sabyeon* (Assassination of Queen Min in 1895).

Desiring to punish Japan and the pro-Japanese government officials, the people soon rose up in protest against the killing of the queen and the promulgation of the *Danballyeong*. This revolt was led by the Confucian literati in various parts of the country. As they rose up under the banner of loyalty and justice and the defeat of the traitors, they came to be known as Righteous Armies (*uibyeong*), or Eulmi Righteous Armies, a name which was given because these uprisings occurred during the year of *Eulmi* (1895). These righteous armies received behind the scenes aid and support from Gojong and the family of the assassinated queen.

The anger at the Japanese atrocities and the radical reforms undertaken at their behest since the Gabo Reforms created a strong sense of resistance amongst the people. Anti-Japanese sentiment spread and righteous armies rose up in resistance. Public opinion called for the prestige and power of the king. Aided by such public opinion, Gojong turned back many of the reforms undertaken by pro-Japanese cabinet.

Having adopted Gyeongun Palace (later Deoksu Palace) as the main palace, the Daehan Empire erected within its midst Junghwajeon Hall in 1902. This new structure was built on a scale comparable to that of Geunjeongjeon Hall in Gyeongbok Palace and Injeongjeon Hall in Changdeok Palace.

Desiring to bring about a truly independent nation state, the Daehan Empire also concentrated on the building up of national defense, the nation's financial base, and commerce and industry. As part of efforts to assume full command over the military, the government established the *Wonsobu* (Supreme Military Council) in July 1899. In addition, the number of
Siwidae (Palace Guard Regiment) and local military units called Jinwidae (defense garrisons) was increased. A military police unit was also formed within the Supreme Military Council.

The efforts at building up a science and technology base, as well as commerce and industry, undertaken in the name of the policy known as Siksan heungeop (promotion of new industry and commerce), also began to bear fruit. Modern schools such as technological and arts, medical, commerce and industry, and foreign language schools were also established.

The government also made great efforts to improve transportation and communications. For instance, the Northwest Railroad Office (Seobuk cheoldoguk) was created to oversee the building of a railway between Seoul and Uiju so as to improve economic and cultural ties with China. In 1899, the Daehan Empire joined the international Postal Union as part of its efforts to engage in exchanges with the international community. It also participated in the Paris International Exhibition of 1900, and in the 1903 Osaka International Exhibition.

Japan strengthened its militaristic grip over Korea by subsequently dispatching the Japanese Forces (March 1904) and instituting a military Police system (July 1904). Furthermore, Japan also forced through the so-called Hanil hyeopjeongseo (first Korea–Japan Agreement) in August 1904, under which it secured the right to appoint foreign advisors in Korea.

Contrary to the expectations of the outside world, Japan emerged victorious from the Russo–Japanese War, a denouement which owed much to the Japanese Navy’s destruction of the Russian Baltic Fleet in the Korea Strait on May 7th, 1905, and the First Russian Revolution that followed in June of the same year. Having defeated Qing ten years earlier, Japan was now fully in control of the situation on the Korean peninsula.

Japan's suzerainty over Korea had already been recognized by Great Britain. Meanwhile, in the Taft–Katsura Memorandum of July 1905, the United States also recognized Japan's interests in Korea in exchange for the latter's acknowledgement of U.S. interests in the Philippines.

Having received the above-mentioned acknowledgements from Britain, the United States, and Russia, Japan sought to institute an direct colonial rule over Korea by implementing a Residency-General (Tonggambu) system that also involved maintaining the exterior trappings of the Daehan Empire.

Along with the Japanese Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary Hayasi Gonsuke, Ito Hirobumi led a contingent Japanese
forces into Gyeongun Palace, where they began to attempt to strong-arm the emperor and his officials into signing the protectorate treaty. However, as the emperor and prime minister refused to sign such an agreement, they took the seal from Foreign Minister Pak Jesun and signed the treaty with it (November 1905).

In this regard, the emperor remained adamant in his refusal to sign this agreement to the very end. His refusal was based in large part on the fact that under the constitution of Daehan Empire, the emperor had the sole authority to sign treaties with foreign countries, thus meaning that a treaty without his authorization was null and void. However, Japan insisted that it was legal and valid. This illegal treaty is called the Eulsa Treaty of 1905.

In July 1907, Japan forced Gojong to abdicate the throne. He was replaced by the Crown Prince, who assumed the throne as Sunjong. The first Resident-General (Chonggam) Ito Hirobumi forced Korea to sign the so-called Jeongmi chiljoyak in July 1907 under which Japan was also granted the right to conduct Korea's internal affairs as well.

Having already deprived the Daehan Empire of the right to conduct diplomacy and to control domestic and military affairs, Japan set out to take the last step towards its annexation of Korea: forcing Emperor Sunjong to abdicate as the symbol of the nation. In May 1910, Japan dispatched Terauchi Masatake as the new Resident-General. Terauchi was accompanied by some 2,000 military police sent to clamp down on all anti-Japanese activities in Korea. On August 29th of 1910, Terauchi forced Emperor Sunjong to sign a proclamation announcing his own abdication and the merging of the Daehan Empire into the Japanese Empire. As Sunjong had carried out all imperial tasks in Changdeok Palace since his accession to the throne, the Korea–Japan Annexation Treaty of 1910 was concluded in Changdeok Palace's Injeongjeon Hall.

Although Japan's annexation of the Daehan Empire was welcomed by pro-Japanese organizations such as Iljinhoe and individuals such as Yi Wanyong, the great majority of the Korean public strongly opposed this move. The rage and anger of 20 million Koreans split over as a 36-year struggle for independence and liberty commenced.

Chapter 4. Anti-Japanese Wars and Patriotic Culture Movement

Having been forced into signing the Eulsa Treaty, the Korean people
roes up as one against the Japanese invaders. In Seoul, the newspapers kept the people abreast of what was unfolding; meanwhile, massive rallies were staged and merchants declared a nationwide strike. Many government officials committed suicide. While Min Yeonghwan (1842–1905) committed suicide after having left addressed to the Korean people, other notables such as Jo Byeongse, Hong Mansik, Song Byeongseon, and Yi Sangcheol drank poison.

This was also a period in which many Righteous Armies (uibyeong) were formed throughout the country. To this end, these forces soon began to attack Japanese troops and military installations, as well as pro-Japanese officials.

The most shocking event of the pro-independence armed struggle waged in Northeastern China was the assassination of Ito Hirobumi by the lieutenant general staff of Daehan uibyeong (Righteous Army of Daehan), An Junggeun (1879–1910). Born in Haeju, Hwanghae Province, An Junggeun, who had received a classic Confucian education, carried out the assassination of Ito Hirobumi, the first Governor-General of Korea and person responsible for the Protectorate Treaty of on 1905, on October 26th, 1909 at the Harbin Train Station. He was immediately arrested and was executed by the Japanese on March 6th 1910. in a prison in Port Arthur. An intellectual and author of <Dongyang pyeonghwa (Peace in East Asia)>, An Junggeun was also a superb calligrapher whose extant work is still beloved by Koreans today.

While the Confucian literati of the provinces were putting up a fierce resistance against the imposition of the Protectorate Treaty of 1905, many businessmen, intellectuals, bureaucrats, and reformist literati started to devote themselves to cultural and economic activities aimed at educating the masses and encouraging economic activity. Many of these individuals subscribed to the Herbert Spencer’s notion of Social Darwinism that was then sweeping East Asia. In this respect, they perceived the international arena as one that was ruled by the fittest. They thus identified the building of a strong nation-state as the foremost task for the Korean people.

Newspapers and schools represented an indispensable element of the efforts to enlighten the people and instill in them a sense of patriotism and nationalist consciousness. In this regard, the most well-known newspapers to emerge from this era were the <Hwangseong Sinmun>, <Daehan Maeil sinbo>, <Jeguk sinmun (imperial post)>, and <Mansebo (Independence News)>.
In order to continue the efforts of the Patriotic Cultural Movement while evading Japanese censors, Yang Gitak invited the Englishman Ernst Bethell to serve as the publisher of the *Daehan Maeil sinbo* in 1904. Because Britain and Japan were allies at the time, the Japanese authorities were not able to exercise censorship over a paper run by a British citizen. Taking advantage of this, the newspaper published articles detailing the Japanese treachery against Korea, Koreans who collaborated with the Japanese, and the anti-Japanese struggle.

In the immediate aftermath of the opening of the country to the outside world, a keenness for modern education swept the country and numerous private schools were established. Thereafter, as a result of an edict on education passed as part of the Gabo Reforms of 1894, public schools for modern western-style education were also set up. Based on the motto, ‘learning is power,’ many wealthy men and intellectuals began founding schools. As a result, within a mere 3 to 4 years, some 3,000 private schools had been founded across the country. Although, most of these schools were concentrated in Seoul, many were also set up in Pyeongyang Province’s Pyeongyang, Jeongju, and Seoncheon, a denouement which was closely related to the fact that these areas featured a high ratio of those who belonged to the monied class and Christians.

The modern curriculums of these private schools established during this period included western knowledge and thought as well as Korean history and geography. That is, they tried to combine nationalist education with Western learning based on the principle of *Dongdo seogi* (Eastern way and Western technology).

The Patriotic Cultural Movement also fostered a national learning (*Gukhak*) movement which was aimed at promoting the study of national history and of the national language and alphabet. The movement was not only reflected in school curriculum, but also in newspapers and magazines which began to carry articles on national learning.

For the first time ever, a research center for Korean language and literature was founded in 1907. Involving the participation of many renowned linguists such as Ju Sigyeong, Ji Seokyeong, this center was the direct precursor of the *Joseoneo Hakhoe* (Korean Language Society).

**Chapter 5. Japanese Rule and Korean’s Independence Movement of the 1910s**
Upon turning Korea into its colony, Japan replaced the Residency-General ( tonggambu ) with the newly established Government General of Joseon ( Joseon chongdokbu ). The post of Governor General ( chongdok ) of Joseon was granted to the highest ranking military officers in Japan. The rank of Governor General of Joseon was regarded as being equivalent to that of Japanese prime minister. The Governor General exercised complete legislative, legal, administrative, and military control over Korea.

The first Governor General was Terauchi Masatake. Having first arrived in Korea as Resident-General on May 3rd, 1910, Terauchi was well aware of the fierce resistance put up by Koreans against Japanese rule. To rectify this situation, he immediately set about instituting the so-called gendarmerie system through which the military police were to be responsible for overseeing all police work conducted in Korea.

The Government General of Joseon expended all his efforts on eradicating Korea’s resistance to Japanese rule, arresting and jailing innumerable nationalist figures. After the annexation of Joseon, the Government General of Joseon dissolved all political organizations and closed down all national newspapers. To this end, only pro-Japanese newspapers and magazines were allowed to continue operations.

The Japanese began to expropriate land from the Koreans in earnest after their annexation of Korea. By 1930, the Government General of Joseon owned some 40% of all the land and forest in Korea.

While a handful of landlords were able to gain property rights, most of the independent farmers and other small scale farmers lost their lands, either becoming tenant farmers, agricultural laborers, or slash and burn farmers, with many others forced to migrate to the Manchuria of China.

The Japanese also began to appropriate mines, fisheries, and forests. By 1920, the Japanese owned more than 80% of all mines in Korea; meanwhile, Koreans only 0.3%.

Most of the fisheries owned by the royal household of Joseon and other Koreans were turned over to Japanese ownership as a result of the Joseon Fisheries Act of 1911.

Some 50% of all forests in Korea became the property of the Governor General of Joseon and private Japanese citizens.

Japan’s brutal suppression activities severely constrained independence movements within Korea. Secret societies which aimed to build a republic included the Daehan Gwangbokdan ( Korea Liberation Corps ) founded in 1913 by
Pak Sangjin and Kim Jwajin.

While the nationalist movements of the 1910s were for the most part led by the middle class in urban areas, teachers, students, and Confucian literati, these groups also formed strong links with Christian, Buddhist, Daejonggyo, and Cheondogyo organizations. Private and Confucian schools emerged as important centers of education and cultural activities aimed at teaching the spirit of independence. In this regard, the March 1st Movement of 1919 was a result of these activities that provided the basis for an explosion of nationalism and yearning for independence on the part of Koreans.

While Koreans had already been galvanized by the Japanese imposed Protectorate Treaty of 1905, the harshness of the first ten years of the colonial rule that began after 1910 only served to further fuel the anger of the Korean people and unite the people as one. On March 1st, 1919, this anger boiled over.

Peaceful marches and demonstrations calling for Korean independence took place simultaneously in Pyeongyang, Jinnampo, Anju, Uiju, Seoncheon, Wonsan, and other northern cities along with Seoul. Then the movement spread rapidly south, reaching rural towns and villages by March 10. The movement, which lasted until May of that year, spread to some 218 districts. All in all, in excess of two million people participated in more than 1,500 marches and demonstrations. While leadership was proved by intellectuals, students, youths, and religious leaders, business people, workers, and peasants all joined in, making it a truly national and nationwide movement.

The March 1st Movement started out as a non-violent movement; however, as it spread more aggressive actions such as labor strikes, runs on banks, destruction of street cars and mines, and attacks on local government buildings including police stations, also began to take place.

The March 1st Movement failed to bring about its stated goal, namely that of national independence. However, it had the effect of changing the nature of the Korean independence movement forever. It also forced the Japanese to abandon their hard-line rule in favor of what would come to be known as the cultural policy.

Chapter 6. Self-Strengthening and National Cooperation Movements of the 1920s
Completely caught off guard by the powerful outburst of Koreans' desire for independence in the form of the March 1st Movement, the Japanese colonial authorities drastically altered their policy towards colonial Korea, adopting the so-called 'Cultural Policy.' However, that policy was little more than an ingenious ploy to undercut Korean national unity.

The rapid development of the capitalist economy after 1910 resulted in Japan beginning to force severe food shortages as peasants converged on cities looking for work. This prompted the formulation of the Plan to Increase Rice Production in Korea. This Plan included land enhancement measures and those related to the improvement of farming techniques (fertilizer, furrow-seeding methods). These moves were designed to both improve Korean farmers' economic circumstances and increase rice production so as to make it possible to ship more rice over to Japan.

In the aftermath of March 1st Movement, many independence fighters began to feel that modern government, even though provisional, has to be established to better accommodate the desire for independence of the Korean people. This was, of course, to prepare for eventual independence and to more effectively organize and coordinate pro-independence activities. From March to April of 1919, five different provisional governments were established in and outside Korea.

1. In Vladivoskok, a provisional government called the Daehan gungmin uhoe was established on February 25th, with Son Byeonghui installed as President and Rhee Syngman as the Prime Minister. 2. On April 9th, a provisional government called the Joseon minkuk imsi jeonhbu which also featured Son Byeonghui as President and Rhee Syngman as Vice-President was created in Seoul. 3. Meanwhile, in Shanghai, the Daehanminguk imsi jeongbu was created on April 11th, this time with Yi Dongyeong serving as the Chairman of the Assembly and Rhee Syngman as the Prime Minister. 4. In the northern areas of Korea known as Cheolsan and Uiju the Sinhan minkuk jeongbu was established on April 17th. In this case, Yi Donghwi was appointed as Consul and Rhee Syngman as the Minister of Defense. 5. Finally, in Seoul, the Hanseong jeongbu was established on April 23rd, with Rhee Syngman appointed as President and Yi Donghwi as Prime Minister.

The Provisional Government was a democratic republic that featured all three branches of government. Many leaders abandoned the Provisional Government amidst a seemingly endless factional struggle and an ever-changing constitution. As a result, the Provisional Government...
remained ineffective for a long time. However, its influence was received somewhat in the 1930s after it adopted Jo Soang’s *Samgyun juui* (principle of three equalities) under which an attempt was made to reach a compromise between the Left and Right. This notion also greatly influenced the process of the establishment of the Republic of Korea after the liberation in 1945.

While the *Singanhoe* movement was the most prominent united front to emerge within Korea during the late 1920s, efforts at collaboration between the left and right were also being carried out abroad. Such efforts were characterized by the agreement between independence fighters in Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, and Wuhan to organize a united party that transcended ideology.

In Manchuria, 18 nationalist independence organizations gathered to discuss the creation of a united party. While the Righteous Government (*Jeonguibu*), General Staff Headquarters (*Chamuibu*) and New People’s Government (*Sinminbu*) were dissolved and reformed into the national People’s Government (*Gungminbu*) in 1929, the Pan-Korean Ethnic Association (*Hanjok chongyeonhaphoe*) was launched under the leadership of Kim Jwajin in 1930. In this regard, while the Pan-Korean Ethnic Association evolved into the Hong Jin and Yi Cheongcheon–led Korean Independence Party (*Hanguk dongnipdang*) which actively carried out armed resistance in northeastern Manchuria, the National People’s Government (*Gungminbu*) evolved into the Korean Revolution Party (*Joseon hyeongmyeongdang*) that engaged in armed resistance in southern Manchuria.

The *Uiyeoldan* was established in Jilin, Manchuria in November 1919 by Kim Wonbong (1898–?). As clearly enunciated in the *Declaration of Korean Revolution* written by Sin Chaeho in 1923, their aim was to topple the Japanese through direct violent revolution and to create a Korea where the power in the people.

Despite these constant efforts abroad to create a unified front to carry out the anti-Japanese struggle during the 1920s, the movement to establish the united party ultimately failed. This failure was the result of several factors including the great geographical distance that existed between the various Korean independence leaders operating in China and the inability to bridge the regional ideological differences that divided them.

**Chapter 7. National Front Movement of the 1930s–early 1940s**

During the 1930s, Korea underwent a rapid industrialization phase.
However, 70–80% of textile, metal, chemical, and ceramic factories were controlled by the Japanese. Forced to concentrate solely on light manufacturing, Koreans found themselves unable to compete against the major Japanese conglomerates and began to go bankrupt. In 1942, more Korean businesses were forced to go out of business as a result of the Enterprise Readjustment Ordinance put in place by the Government General. Amidst such a harsh environment, light industries such as rice milling and distillery sectors became the only areas in which one could find a significant Korean presence. Other areas included rubber, cotton, weaving, knitted goods, silk, and printing.

From 1938 onwards, the use of the Korean language was banned in schools and government offices. Japanese was the only language allowed. In 1938, the Japanese went further, forcing Koreans to change their names to Japanese sounding ones. Those who refused to change their names were not allowed to enroll in school, had official papers withheld, and were prohibited from receiving food rations and other supplies. Even postal service was denied to them. The majority of the Koreans had no choice but to change their names to Japanese ones. Towards the end of the Japanese rule, only 14% of the Korean population still maintained their Korean names.

The Japanese propagated the idea that the Koreans and the Japanese all descended from the same ancestors (*Ilseon dongjoron*). Although this assertion had first surfaced during the 1880s, Japan altered this theory somewhat after its invasion of Korea as part of its efforts to promote a sense of national homogeneity between the two nations, with the emphasis now being on the notions of 'Japan and Korea are One (*Naeseon iche*)' and 'Japan and Korea sharing the same ancestors and roots (*Dongjo Donggeun*).' 

In addition to focusing on eradicating the spirit of the Korean nation, Japan also forced to take part in the war on the front lines. At the outset, a voluntary army system was instituted in 1938 in order to supplement the military. However, in 1943, a conscription system was adopted. Some 200,000 Koreans had been conscripted into the Japanese army by the time Japan surrendered. Some 4,500 students were also forcibly dispatched to the front lines in 1943 as part of the so-called Student Volunteer Corps.

The Japanese also started to conscript laborers. These individuals were forced to slave away in mines, airports, munitions factories, and railways. Many of them were executed after their work was completed so as
to project military secrets. In this regard, some 7,000 of the laborers who worked on the construction of Mirim Airport in Pyeongyang or who were sent to Sakhalin and Okinawa were killed in such a manner.

In the name of the mobilization of labor, the Japanese also conscripted young school children to work on military facilities; meanwhile women were also conscripted to work on construction sites in their capacity as members of the Enlightenment Laborers Corps (Geullo bogukdae). Japan also organized the Enlightenment Women's Club (Aeguk buinhoe), a pro-Japanese group which sought to force Koreans to pledge allegiance to Japan.

In September 1944, Japan enacted the Woman Laborers Volunteer Corps Ordinance (Yeoja jeongsindae geulloryeong). Under this ordinance, it proceeded to conscript some 200,000 unmarried women between the ages of 12–40. While some of them worked at munitions factories in Japan and Korea but many of them became sex slaves for the Japanese soldiers in China and Southeast Asia as 'comfort women.' Those who survived the horrors of this comfort women system suffered such a high degree of mental and physical anguish that they were unable to maintain a normal lifestyle even after the liberation in 1945.

Against this onslaught of Japanese efforts to eradicate Korean Culture and national identity during the 1930s–40s, there emerged several patriotic movements which sought to protect the nation and culture and to organize them in an academic manner.

National historians started the Korean Studies movement. This movement, which was started in 1934 to commemorate the 99th anniversary of the death of Jeong Yagyong, was led by historians such as An Jaehong, Jeong Inbo, and Mun Ilpyeong. It proved to be highly critical of the overly nationalistic and romanticized historiography of the nationalist school, and tried to strike a balance between the nation and the people while trying to articulate the particularity, and university of Korean traditional culture. To this end, they not only concentrated on ancient history, but also that of the Joseon dynasty, and especially that of the Silhak (Practical Learning) School active during late Joseon. The anti-Japanese movement was also intense amongst writers and poets such as Yi Yuksa, Yun Dongju (1917–1945) who died in prison at the age of 29.

Part II. National Division and Prosperity in Agony

Chapter 1. Liberation and National Division (1945–1950)
On August 15th, 1945, Korea was finally liberated from 36 years of Japanese rule. At once, the pulse of the nation began to beat once again, and latent power of the Korean nation accumulated over several thousand years erupted onto the surface.

The preparations for the construction of an independent democratic state began in earnest the moment Korea's national sovereignty was taken away. A provisional government was established in exile, and an outline of the principles and plans for the eventual reconstruction of the nation after liberation were prepared as part of the independence movement. Although organizations calling for independence were initially dispersed across regions and ideological conflicts emerged between the left and right, there arose at the end of the colonial era a trend towards the forging of truly national alliances which presaged the establishment of a unified national state.

The year 1948 was a tragic one for Korea, as a nation that had boasted a unified polity for some 1,000 years was suddenly divided into two parts. More to the point, while the Republic of Korea was established south of the 38th parallel on August 15th, the People’s Republic of Korea was established in the north on September 9th.

After the establishment of the Republic of Korea, the Rhee Syngman regime continued to hire former bureaucrats who worked for the Japanese colonial government. This decision was led by and large rendered necessary by the lack of well-educated, skilled, and experienced people needed to staff the new government bureaucracy. Moreover, having spent long years in exile, Rhee Syngman had a weak domestic power base. To this end, this can be regarded as another factor in explaining why Rhee found himself having to compromise with Japanese collaborators in order to maintain his regime.

The Rhee government, which adopted an education policy that was similar to that of USAMGIK (United States Army Military Government in Korea), rapidly proceeded to strengthen nationalist and anti-communist education. Education at the elementary level was made compulsory, thereby drastically decreasing illiteracy and increasing the number of educated people.

Chapter 2. The Korean War and Reconstruction(1950—1959)

The Rhee Syngman government, which came to power despite steady
opposition from leftist groups and even coalition of the left and right, failed to instill much confidence amongst the general population as economic difficulties emerged to further compound the ideological conflicts. Furthermore, the government even faced a military mutiny in the aftermath of the Jeju Uprising of 1948. The country was virtually at civil war with continued leftist guerrilla resistance in the mountainous areas of the Jiri, Odae, and Taebaek Mountains lasting until the spring of 1950.

Having completed preparations for war and secured promises of support from the Soviet Union and China, North Korea launched a massive invasion across the 38th parallel in the early morning of June 25th, 1950. With overwhelming firepower, the North Korean army occupied Seoul within 3 days and reached the Nakdong River a mere 2 months later.

The U.S. forces, which constituted the crux of the UN deployment, succeeded in turning the tide of the war when they made a surprise landing in Incheon on September 15th, 1950. While Seoul was recaptured on September 28th, the UN forces crossed the 38th parallel on October 1st, and thereafter continued to press northwards until they reached the facto border between North Korea and China in the form of the Amnok (Yalu) River.

In the early summer of 1951, the UN forces, which had been pushed as far back as Pyeongtaek and Osan by China’s human wave tactics launched a new counteroffensive that resulted in pushing the front line back to where today’s demilitarized zone stands. It was at this time that the Soviet Union accepted the unofficial offer of the United States and proposed a meeting discuss a ceasefire through the United Nations. Despite the vehement protest of the Rhee government, the ceasefire was signed on July 27th, 1953. This agreement served the interests of both the U.S. and the Soviet Union, which did not want the war to drag on any longer. As a result the war, seeds of intense mutual hatred and distrust were sown between the two Koreans, thereby delaying the opportunity for reunification.

Despite all the political turmoil and wartime devastation, the South Korean economy began to show signs of economic growth from the late 1950s onwards.

Chapter 3. The April 19th Revolution and Changes in South and North Korea(1960–1970s)

Massive protests against electoral fraud began to take place in major
cities such as Daegu, Busan, Seoul, and Masan. On April 19th, 1960, most universities and even high school students joined in a massive rally.

With the launch of the Jang Myeon government on August 23rd, 1960, Korea began to enjoy an American-style democracy with full freedom of the press and liberalization of all sectors of society. However, contrary to the high expectations of the public, the new government failed to undertake the necessary reforms.

The Korean military was the fastest growing and best organized institution in Korea. The military carefully observed the political scene in the aftermath of the April 19th Revolution. Major General Park Chunghee (1917–1979) led a group of young colonels and 3,600 soldiers in a coup which resulted in the occupation of Seoul and the institution of martial law on May 16th, 1961.

Desiring to secure an iron grip on every aspect of life, ranging from the political to the economic, social, and cultural spheres, the junta proceeded to place a heavy emphasis on economic stability and to strengthen the anti-communist line.

Chapter 4. The Chun Doohwan and Roh Taewoo Governments and Changes in North Korea

The New Military Group (Singunbu) restricted political activities.


Kim Youngsam’s government marked the first civilian administration since the May 16th Coup of 1961.


The Kim Daejung government set out to overcome the foreign currency crisis.


Roh Moohyun became the first Korean leader born after liberation.

Chapter 8. Start of the Lee Myungbak Government (February 2008—)

Lee Myungbak government adopted pragmatism and economic recovery as its leading administrative principles.

Chapter 9. Recent Trends in North Korea

Kim Jeongeun is a young leader.