Loyalty to the King and Love for Country: Confucian Traditions, Western-Style Learning, and the Evolution of Early Modern Korean Education, 1895–1910*

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ABSTRACT
The encounter between Confucianism and western learning is often portrayed as a confrontation between Confucianism, associated with passivity and hierarchy, and the western philosophical tradition, connected with independence and rationality. This bifurcating tendency is pronounced in the historiography of nineteenth-century Korean history, when Koreans established western-style schools and published modern textbooks. This article is neither a defense of Confucianism nor an endorsement of the western model, but a proposal to reexamine this dichotomization that is predominant in current scholarship and the assumption that the two were irreconcilable. A comparison of Korean readers demonstrates that the process of the incorporation of western ideas was less one of linear progress based on the displacement of Confucianism than an amalgamation of different ideas and values. Thus, from a more broadly defined Confucian framework emerged a new sense of civil duties that allowed intellectuals and government bureaucrats to discuss nationalism, citizenship, and the public sphere.

Keywords: Korean history, early modern education, modern textbooks, moral education

Introduction
The encounter between Confucianism and western learning is often portrayed as fraught with conflicts and confrontations. Confucianism is frequently associated with interdependence, passivity, and hierarchy. The western philosophical tradition, in contrast, is said to emphasize independence, rationality, and equality. This binary scheme has been a prevalent heuristic device for historians, educators, and politicians to attempt to describe, classify, and understand the differences between Asian and Western education, politics, and ideologies. This tendency is pronounced in the historiography of nineteenth-century Korean history, when western-style learning made deep inroads and Koreans initiated a series of changes in the educational system, resulting in the establishment of western-style schools and the publication of modern textbooks. Following the forced “opening” of the Choson dynasty (1392–1910) in 1876 and the first signing of treaties with western countries in the 1880s, an unprecedented amount of new information, knowledge, and influences infiltrated the Korean episteme and triggered widespread change, particularly in the field of education. Existing scholarship has privileged the

This article is neither a defense of Confucianism nor an endorsement of the western model, but a proposal to reexamine this bifurcation that is predominant in current scholarship, along with the assumption that the two were irreconcilable in the late nineteenth century. For many Korean historians, due to the ostensible incompatibility of the two modes of thought, once western-style learning entered Korea the tension between the two culminated in a “collision between these new (western) ideas and the Korean tradition.” Thus, modernization of the educational system in the late nineteenth century signifies the replacement of traditional Confucian education with western-style education, and the “destruction of the traditional social order,” since the two are incapable of harmoniously coexisting or fusing into a stable combination. The old Confucian institutions and ideas signify fetters to be freed from and were necessarily supplanted by western-style systems needed to move forward and prosper.

Scholars often contrast the initial backlash from conservative Confucian scholar-officials, the wijŏng chŏksa (衛正斥邪, “defend [Confucian] orthodoxy and

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2 Throughout this paper, the term “Confucianism” refers to the various schools of Neo-Confucian thought that were available to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Koreans, including Cheng-Zhu Learning orthodoxy, Nature and Principle Learning (sŏnghihak 性理學), Wang Yangming Learning, “Practical Learning” (sirhak 實學) and other Neo-Confucian reformist learning. See Duncan 2006, 108–110.

3 The first modern schools established in Korea were in fact the mission schools: Henry Appenzeller opened the Pai Chai (Paejae) School in 1885, Mary Scranton opened the Ewha (Ihwa) School in 1886, and Horace Grant Underwood opened the Kyung Shin (Kyonsgin) School the same year. However, I do not deal with the mission schools here since I am less interested in the content of what American missionaries taught, and instead focus on the discourse created in the new Korean textbooks in order to examine specifically how Koreans digested new concepts and ideas, their interplay with pre-existing concepts, and how they were refracted through Confucian norms, eventually changing the norms themselves.

4 Michael Robinson explains: “as change eroded the effectiveness of old ideas and institutions,” turn-of-the-century intellectuals became increasingly “iconoclastic” (1986, 35–38).

5 Yoonmi Lee 2000, 1. In addition Lee says, “The introduction of Western-style mass education in Korea also meant a break with the old system of education” (3).

6 Pak Sŏngbae states that late nineteenth-century educational reformers believed “the most important knowledge that schools must teach was the knowledge that could be used to reform or reconstruct society. To the reformers, the knowledge and school system that was introduced from western countries were a means to free the Nation from the age-old Chinese cultural influence, to catch up to Japan’s recent achievements, and to build a solid foundation to reach the level of western civilization” (Pak Sŏngbæ 2011, 22).
Loyalty to the King and Love for Country

reject heterodoxy”), which rejected western learning and technology in its entirety, with the Patriotic Enlightenment Party or Progressive Party, the aeguk hyemong undong (愛國啓蒙運動), which wholeheartedly embraced western-style reform and renounced Confucianism to illustrate the contrariety and incompatibility of the Confucian and western traditions. The Enlightenment Party thought of themselves as the antithesis to dogmatic Confucians and excoriated Confucian beliefs for their uselessness, inadequacy, and ineffectuality. So˘ Chaep’il disavowed himself of the Confucian tradition, despite having received a classical Confucian education (Chang 2004, 22). Historians investigating early modern Korea often depict the “solution” to the Confucian “problem” as western enlightenment and education. Thus, a “profound epistemic break” was not only necessary but unavoidable if Korea was to follow a linear model of progress from “traditional” to “modern” thought.

These distinctions have had a continued influence on Korean historiography and how scholars understand the interplay between the two modes of thought. For example, in a description of the wijo˘ng ch'o˘ksa group in an introductory text to Korean history, Kyung Moon Hwang explains that the appellation itself “starkly delineated the moral differences, and reiterated the urgency of acting on those differences, between the Confucian and Western civilizations” (Hwang 2010, 126). Due to their fundamental dissimilarities and lack of resemblance, tolerance was not an option. Instead, the Confucian response was a complete condemnation and active exorcism of western culture. “The idea of Reject Heterodoxy, Protect Orthodoxy was a result of a consciousness of strict judgment on shared values among the Neo-Confucian schools who were proud of their orthodox tradition from Zhu Xi, and developed under the circumstances where East Asian values centered on Confucianism collided with Western values” (Pak Kyŏngwhwan 2004, 9). Eventually, the intellectual and ideological battle bled into the political realm, culminating in the 1884 coup d'état where the Enlightenment Party attempted to oust the recalcitrant conservatives, only to end in failure when Chinese military forces arrived at the behest of the unseated officials and king, and suppressed the rebellion.

This study problematizes such a definitive dichotomization between Confucianism and western Enlightenment, and thereby the narrative of linear progress from Confucian/traditional to western/modern forms of education. A comparison of Korean textbook readers from the period 1895 and 1905—when the first modern textbooks were published and before the Japanese Resident-General began to assert control over textbook publication—and 1906 to 1910 demonstrates a definitive shift from a king-centered narrative of loyalty to the monarch and a focus on the cultivation of “men of talent” to an emphasis on love of country and civic duties for the preservation of national independence. This shift is essential to understanding the changing relationship among the king, his subjects, and the state, and how subjects of the king gradually transformed into subjects of

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7 In this case, Em describes the shift from Confucian historiography to modern nationalist historiography (2013, 82).
the state, which more closely resembles modern notions of citizenship. I argue that this discursive permutation was possible because of pre-existing concepts—namely, “loyalty to the king and love of country” —and that from a more broadly defined Confucian framework emerged a new sense of civic duties that allowed intellectuals and government bureaucrats to engage with concepts such as nationalism, citizenship, the public sphere, and other issues thought to be germane to a modern nation-state.

A close examination of the textbooks incorporating western ideas and values in the new government-built academies will show that the processes of incorporation of “western ideas and values” was an amalgamation of notions rather than a linear progress based on the displacement of Confucianism. What has shifted, therefore, was less a worldview than an axis of orientation, which suggests that “modernity” as a simple acquisition of or surrender to western ideas and values cannot adequately capture the complex historical reality of these processes. Existing studies tend to highlight the modern features of these early texts to substantiate early nineteenth-century reform attempts to modernize (Pak and Kim 2013, 483; Hø 1993, 119; Yun 2002, 192) and are critical of the lingering Confucian elements in the textbooks (Kang 2013, 24–28). What these studies overlook is the interplay of various ideas and concepts, how these were initially refracted through Confucian norms (such as “loyalty to the king and love of country” and filial piety), and then how the norms themselves evolved over time. A comparison of textbooks from the initial period of publication (1895–1905) and the latter period (1906–1910) reveals a shift from a narrative emphasizing loyalty to the king and the relationship between the king and his officials, to one focused on civic obligations of all subjects of the state. The format as well as inscriptive style of the new textbooks undergoes a significant change along with a remarkable level of incorporation of modern subject matter. However, while the form and even content might be dramatically different, these new concepts are mediated by established norms. At the same time, such changes gradually transfigure the meanings of the received norms. This study will illustrate how the Confucian discursive system simultaneously functioned as a bulwark against new “Western” ideas and values by underscoring the long and illustrious history of Korean Confucian education and the training of officials while also serving as a tool to help the Korean elite

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8 This term “loyalty to one’s king” usually appears as a composite with “love of country” (忠君愛國) and can be found in the official records of Chosŏn as early as the 1400s during the reign of Taegong (r. 1400–1418). The original reference of loyalty (ch’ung 忠) in the Confucian Analects refers to the faithful service of government officials to their Lord or prince (kun 君). “The duke Ding asked how a prince should employ his ministers, and how ministers should serve their prince. Confucius replied, ‘A prince should employ his minister according to the rules of propriety; ministers should serve their prince with faithfulness.’” This translation is taken from that of James Legge, as found in The Analects of Confucius (Adelaide: The University of Adelaide Library, 2014). This work can be found at https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/confucius/c748a/index.html (accessed July 25, 2019).

9 Although I am making the argument that concepts such as nationalism were mediated through Confucian norms and that the norms themselves gradually changed, I am not asserting in this paper that by the end of the period we see fully formed nationalism, citizenship, and the public sphere in the modern sense.
absorb these ideas and values through an exploration of these patterns of exclusion, adoption, and integration in the realm of education. By 1906, what we see emerging from a more popularly defined Confucian framework was a form of civic duties based on moral obligations that allowed Koreans to then engage with ideas of nationalism, citizenship, and the public sphere. Discussions on allegiance to the country increasingly replace lessons on loyalty to the king, and the interests of the state—namely, the preservation of sovereignty—take priority. This subtle yet significant change demonstrates a declining importance of the person of the king and a new developing concept of the state and the relationship between the people and the state.

Confucian Learning, Enlightenment Intellectuals, and Educational Reform

During the Chosón dynasty, bureaucratic appointment and career advancement were dependent on passing the civil service examinations (kwago科擧), which were based on the Confucian classics. Therefore, the uncontested supremacy of Confucian learning in Chosón Korea held sway for nearly four hundred years. Following the “opening” of Korea in 1876 and the signing of treaties with western countries in the 1880s, Korean bureaucrats and intellectuals were forced to confront new ideas about western military technology, international law, trade, and world markets. The responses were multifarious and polarizing, but by the early 1880s, the Korean king Kojong (r. 1863–1907) and his supporters had determined there was enough value in western technology to warrant educational reform and the hiring of American instructors in the new official schools. “Since their (western) technology and machines are superior, if it is possible, then naturally we must implement their agricultural, medical, military, and transportation technology.”

The government implemented sporadic reforms in a haphazard manner throughout the 1880s and early 1890s until embarking on a comprehensive reform program from 1894 to 1896, known as the Kabo Reforms (July 1894 to February 1896). The Kabo Reforms coincided with the largest peasant uprising in Korean history, the Tonghak Uprising, which served as the catalyst for the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895). The stunning victory of a newly militarized and modernized Japan over Qing China at the conclusion of the war sent shockwaves throughout the international community and verified the superiority of western military technology while exposing Korea’s own vulnerability. Faced with this harsh reality, the Korean government initiated educational reforms that included the abolition of the civil service examinations, the establishment of new schools, and the publication of modern textbooks introducing western subjects. This signified a momentous change and a groundbreaking accommodation of western learning.

An Office for Educational Affairs (Hangmu Amun學務衙門, later renamed the Ministry of Education), four primary schools, and a normal school for training teachers were established. The four primary schools were to be installed in predominantly aristocratic yangban neighborhoods—Changdong (near Changgi Palace), Chǒngdong (next to Tǒksu Palace), Kyedong (next to Ch’angdok Palace),

10 Kojong sillok [Annals of King Kojong] (1882): 19/8/5
and Myodong (near Chongmyo, the Royal Ancestral Shrine)—and thus it is most likely that the student body of these initial schools was of yangban extraction. It is difficult to determine the precise ages of students in the new schools due to a lack of sources, but from 1899, elementary education involved six years of study with students ranging from six to sixteen years of age; and middle level education involved seven years of study, starting from age seventeen to age twenty-five (Han and Cho 2017, 164–165).

In the midst of the Kabo Reforms and these educational changes, the Korean queen’s resistance to the reform program resulted in her removal by assassination in October 1895 and Kojong’s flight to the Russian legation for fear of his own safety in February 1896. One year later, the king left the legation and took up residence at Tōksu Palace, changing his reign name to Kwangmu (광무) and proclaiming in October 1897 the establishment of the Great Han Empire. However, following Japan’s victory over Russia in the 1904–1905 Russo-Japanese War, Japan forced Korea to sign the Úlsa Treaty, which established Korea as a protectorate of Japan and stripped Korea of its authority over foreign relations. The creation of a Japanese Residency-General in Seoul marked the beginning of the erosion of Korean sovereignty. In 1907, Japan further increased its stranglehold on Korea by forcing Kojong to abdicate the throne and disbanding the Korean army, and then in 1910 formally annexing Korea. The subsequent sections of this article will compare the new textbooks issued from 1895 to 1905—when the first textbooks were published for use in the new schools—and the textbooks issued from 1906 to 1910 when Korean independence became critically jeopardized.

Modern Textbooks in the Early Period, 1895–1905
In 1895, when Kojong promulgated the “Ordinance on Primary Schools” (Sohalkkyoryōng 小學校令) in Royal Decree Number 145, which declared the pre-openings of the first new primary schools, there were three areas for development—the mind, the body, and morals—and “Only those primary school textbooks compiled by the Ministry of Education and authorized by the Education Minister will be used” (Song Myöngjin 2009, 36). Thus began modern textbook publication in 1895, ending in 1910 when Japan formally annexed Korea and assumed full control of the educational system. During the early period between 1895 and 1905, a total of 106 textbooks were published, and in the later period between 1906 and 1910, 454 textbooks were published (Yi Chongguk 1991, 166–167).

Unlike classical Confucian texts that were exclusively derived from the Confucian canon, the new modern textbooks covered vastly different subjects,
such as physics, chemistry, arithmetic, law, and foreign languages. Even familiar topics, such as Literary Sinitic (hannun 漢文) and morals training (susin 修身), assumed an alternate form. While some lessons borrowed directly from Confucian texts, most covered totally different content: how to tell time with a mechanical clock, the purpose of a modern school, stories adapted from Aesop’s fables, and so forth. What is significant is the fact that even this dramatically new content is presented within a Confucian framework. There is a distinct focus on morality and emphasis on one’s obligations to the state, rather than discussions of western liberal ideas. While these texts from the period 1895 to 1906 introduce modern scientific knowledge and “practical” subjects, they do not engage with such western concepts as democracy, civil liberties, and egalitarianism. Instead, they stress one's duties to the king, moral cultivation as appropriate for “men of talent” and future bureaucrats, and, most importantly, devotion to one's sovereign. For example, there are many lessons that prioritize the importance of being loyal to the king and loving the country (ch’unggun aeguk 忠君愛國) and that equate support for the king with devotion to the country. In this sense, the emphasis on the relationship between the king and his subjects (e.g., his ministers) establishes faithful service to the king as one of the primary responsibilities of officials and further solidifies one’s identity as a subject of the monarch.14 Let us examine samples from the People’s Elementary Reader (Kungmin sohak tokpon 國民小學讀本, hereafter PER, 1895), Primary Learning Reader (Sohak tokpon 小學讀本, hereafter PLR, 1895), the New Primary Learning (Sinjong simsang sohak 新訂尋常小學, hereafter NPL, 1896),15 and The History of Eastern States (Po’ong kyogwa tongguk yōksa 普通敎科東國歷史, hereafter HES, 1899).16 I have chosen to focus largely on morals textbooks since the new school system emphasized moral self-cultivation or susin as an important part of the curriculum from 1895 to the end of the period in 1910.17

The King and His Subjects
Similar to classical Confucian texts that provide historical examples of sages and men of exceptional character, the early textbooks highlight illustrious kings and officials from Korea’s past. While Confucian examples are largely figures from Chinese dynasties, there is a significant shift in focus to notable Koreans in the

14 Current scholarship on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century perceptions of the Choson “state” argue that the discourse on the state is centered on the king and that there is no discussion on the state itself since the king was the state. Song Yangsop 2015, 25–26; Chong 2018, 184.
15 The PER, PLR, and NPL were the first modern textbooks published by the newly formed Ministry of Education. Although the titles of these texts include “sohak” or “primary/elementary learning,” this should not be confused with the modern-day term “sohakkyo” or “elementary school.” The Sohak was the Korean version of the Confucian text Xiaoxue 小學 compiled by Zhu Xi’s disciple Liu Zicheng. It was a required subject in the official examinations (Young-jin Koh 2003, 67) and a prerequisite morals text to be followed by study of the Daxue or “Greater Learning” (Taehak 大學), one of the Four Books in Confucianism.
16 The HES was also published by the Ministry of Education and was a history textbook for the middle level curriculum.
17 See Leighanne Yuh (2015) for the importance of the role of moral education in nineteenth-century education in Korea, the United States, and Japan.
early modern texts. In fact, a discernable amount of content in the NPL is centered on Korean kings. For example, chapter ten of volume three discusses King Yŏngjo (r. 1724–1776) and his prioritization of the people. He is described as always putting the people first and admonishing his ministers to faithfully fulfill their duties and not to err against the royal ancestors and the people. Chapter Five (“King Sejong the Great”) of the PER explains, “Our Great Sovereign has descended from the royal line of the Great Sages with the morality of the Great Sages, and since we are the people of the Great Sages we must love our country and study hard.”

The PLR also supplies abundant examples of meritorious officials. These individuals in their official role as government bureaucrats underscore the gravity of official service, which includes attending to the king and working for the interests of the people. The moral rectitude of government officials is directly related to the prosperity of the state; therefore, the proper training, recruitment, and sustainment of upright officials are necessary for the country to flourish. Indeed, it is faithful service and loyalty to the king that affirms one's ability to act as “a pillar to serve the king.” The most fundamental duties of government officials were to serve one's king, care for the people, and secure the dynasty. As the educated elite, such officials alone understood what the people needed and how best to care for them. This was a top-down approach that rarely considered input from commoners. Popular participation existed in the form of obligations and duties to king and country, namely, military service and paying taxes, and the textbooks consistently provide reminders.

Furthermore, the PLR specifically links service to the king—ch'ung 忠—to serving one's parents—hyo 孝. One lesson explains that government officials must strive to learn and devote themselves to self-cultivation to serve the king, the government, and the people. By doing this, one can understand the importance of loyalty as well as filial piety, which will then bring peace and prosperity. This lesson uses the then current King Kojong to illustrate this, thereby demonstrating his loftiness and wisdom, and thus justifying why officials should pledge their loyalty and support to him, as seen in the following excerpt:

The will of man should be like this: to support his king and his superiors to save the people . . .
We must emulate and admire the will of His Majesty, and put our efforts into learning, making Loyalty and Filial Piety our business to wish everlasting peace be with us and our country.

Emphasis on moral principles as the prerequisite for “educated officials” was of

18 NPL, 116–117.
19 PER, chapter 5. Sejong r. 1418–1450.
20 PLR, volume 1, chapter 2.
21 PL, volume 5, chapter 13.
22 PLR, volume 5, chapter 7.
23 PLR, volume 1, chapter 4.
Loyalty to the King and Love for Country

course predicated on loyalty to the king as a primary Confucian virtue, and loyalty to the king was equivalent to love for one's country. These lessons exhort their readers to devote themselves to study for the sake of king and country, indicating that education is indispensable to becoming a civil servant. The notion that the monarch is identical with the state is neither questioned nor analyzed in the textbooks; thus, allegiance to the ruler is equivalent to devotion to the country. For this reason, it was the personal ties of allegiance between the king and his subjects that were emphasized and deemed paramount in determining subjecthood and one's duties in service to the country.

Accordingly, the texts are filled with historical examples of ministers and military figures who went to extreme lengths to protect their king and defend against foreign invaders, often sacrificing their own lives. For example, the *HES* begins with the story of Pak Chesang, a minister of Silla who sacrificed himself for a Sillan prince, and another lesson describes a minister who lost his life during battle and had previously told his wife, “a man must die for the sake of the king. He achieved his will, and the king shed a tear for this.” What motivates these exemplary officials is love and devotion for their king.

Perhaps to serve as inspiration for military officials and to endorse the recent abolition of distinctions between civil and military officials through the Kabo Reforms, there are several lessons in the early modern textbooks that highlight military bravery and loyalty. For example, the *PER* chapter introducing the seventh-century military leader Úlchi Mundók includes the following lesson:

> He was a great warrior—brave and intelligent, moral and loyal . . . [Koguryő] was very strong during this period, but we [Chosŏn] have been weakened by China. Today we do not love our country like people in older times. Therefore, we need to study and to work hard.

The *HES* also includes numerous examples of valiant men who defended their country and sacrificed their lives. Volume 5 of the *HES* includes lessons that describe T’aejo defeating a Mongol general in 1362, Ch’oe Yong (1316–1388) defeating the Japanese at Hongsan in 1375, and the death of Chŏng Mongju (1337–1392), who was “magnanimous, loyal, filial, and faithful,” and ultimately gave his life for his country. These lessons show men of high rank (a king and high officials) setting a moral example for the rest of the population. Another lesson explains the important role of soldiers: “When war arrives, a soldier is a man who fights enemies without sparing his own life, and a man who devotes his loyalty to the country and the king. This is brilliant work for the country.” The most loyal act is the ultimate sacrifice—giving up one's life to defend king and country—

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24 *HES*, volume 1. Of note, this story also appears in the *Samgang haengsilto* (Illustrated exemplars of the three bonds) published in 1434, over 400 years earlier.

25 *HES*, volume 2.

26 *PER*, chapter 22.

27 *HES*, volume 5.

28 *NPL*, volume 3, chapter 34.
and the textbooks extol the role of the military. Unlike traditional Confucian
texts that focus on exemplary emperors, kings, and scholars, the prominence
given to military figures and military accomplishments is a new and significant
development. Through this emphasis on fighting on the frontlines as a preeminent
demonstration of loyalty and love of country, the ties of allegiance are extended to
other countrymen (not just civil officials) but remain centered nonetheless on the
relationship between the king and his subjects. Chapter 12 in the PER on foreign
treaties explains, “What is important is the country’s civilization, and the people’s
respect for their rulers and their love of their country. If the people do this and
work hard with their whole heart, then it will not be difficult to struggle to become
like other countries.” What emerges from this discourse is a nascent sentiment of
nationalism in the (almost) modern sense that is different from “loyalty to the king
and love of country” (which primarily refers to an official’s duties and behavior
towards the state) and has an expanded applicability to the general population.
Nonetheless, there remains a conflation of king and country where the king
symbolizes the country, and service to one’s king is one and the same as service to
one’s country.

To sum up, textbook readers from the 1895–1905 period foreground the
king and his relationship with his subjects. Loyalty to the king figures prominently
through numerous examples of faithful officials sacrificing their lives to protect
their sovereign. This signifies an important change from classical Confucian texts
describing individuals from Chinese dynasties to a focus on notable Koreans in the
new textbooks, but there remains a disproportionate stress on illustrious kings and
faithful ministers. Through the notion of “loyalty to the king and love of country”
the textbooks emphasize Confucian qualities such as allegiance to the monarch,
filial piety, and love for country. To rouse feelings of loyalty to the king and love for
country, the texts explain that the fate and prosperity of a country is dependent on
these twin sentiments. Numerous lessons depict the Confucian ideal of the morally
upright official who prioritizes his allegiance to his ruler, and there is a conflation
of king and country, where the king symbolizes the state and service to the king is
equivalent to service to the state. This emphasis on the duties and responsibilities
of the king’s officials is extended in the texts to include the military officials (and
soldiers), with the texts providing deliberate examples of military heroism and
devotion to king and country in order to illustrate the necessity of being willing to
sacrifice one’s life to protect the country. The valorization of military figures is a
remarkable departure from traditional Confucian texts that focus on eminent kings
and scholars, although the notions of love for country and military strength are
diffused through key Confucian concepts of loyalty and love for country. Notably,
what develops out of the discussion of loyalty to one’s king is a nascent sense of
nationalism that is different from official service to the state and is expanded to
potentially include the general population. Thus, the people play an important

29 The PER was published for use in the new modern official schools during the midst of the Kabo
Reforms, which also eliminated distinctions between the civil and military officials.
30 PER, chapter 12.
role, but they are not afforded the rights and privileges that the bureaucratic elite enjoy. In later texts, there is a shift to a heavier emphasis on love of country and performing one’s obligations to the state, and less discussion of loyalty to one’s king.

**Modern Textbooks in the Later Period, 1906–1910**

Following the forced signing of the 1905 Ōlša Treaty, Korea became a protectorate of Japan, which gave Japan authority over Korean foreign relations. Itō Hirobumi (1841–1909) was installed as the Resident-General of Korea and reported directly to the Japanese Emperor, imbuing him with great powers. Two years later in 1907, Kojong was forced to yield the throne to his son Sunjong (r. 1907–1910) and the Korean army was disbanded. As Korean sovereignty became precarious and undermined, private Korean interest groups coordinated their efforts to preserve independence on an unprecedented scale. This included the formation of academic societies (hakhoe 學會) throughout the country that were active in promoting education, instilling a spirit of self-strengthening and self-sufficiency, and publishing textbooks as a means to restore Korean sovereignty. Consequently, there was an explosion in the establishment of private schools, numbering almost 3,000 by 1910, 2,250 of which were officially approved (Eckert 1990, 247–253), and a surge in textbook publication. Between 1906 and 1910, 454 textbooks were published, approximately four times the number in the previous period. Many of these were textbooks for use in the private schools, with a dramatic increase in the publication of textbooks dedicated to modern subjects such as arithmetic, foreign languages, physics, chemistry, biology, law, and political science. Strikingly, there is also a rise in the number of morals/ethics textbooks (susin 修身). Whereas in the earlier period, just 3 out of 106 textbooks (or 2.8 percent) were morals texts, in the later period this increased to 24 out of 454 (or 4.5%). This is counterintuitive to existing scholarship on the period that depicts a move away from Confucian traditional education and towards western-style learning; however, moral education was an essential component of nineteenth-century education in the United States and Japan, and thus it is inaccurate to conclude that an emphasis on moral cultivation denotes an obstinate and continued adherence to traditional education (Yuh 2015, 333–335). The following section will examine how new concepts such as citizenship and nationalism were mediated through Confucian norms and how the established norms themselves changed, resulting in a discursive shift that created and defined Koreans as subjects of the state rather than simply as subjects of the king. The textbooks portray the Korean subject (kungmin 國民, innin 人民, or just in 人) as a homogeneous member of the larger society who upholds
public interests (i.e., the interests of the state) by fulfilling his civil obligations. Subjecthood is clearly expanded to include all members of society and is contingent upon one's ties to the state with the preservation of Korean sovereignty superseding all other concerns. The texts continue to exhort their readers to be loyal to their king and love their country, but there is also a definable separation of the two concepts, with the emphasis shifting to love of country. In the textbooks of this later period, there is a conflation of terms that refer to the country (kuk 國, kukka 國家, or the Great Han Empire 大韓帝國) and the number of lessons describing the functions and importance of the country far outweigh lessons centered on the king. Examples have been taken from the following textbooks: Common School Morals Textbook for Students (Pot'ong Hakkyo Haktuyong Susinsô 普通學校學徒用修身書, hereafter CSMTS, 1907), Primary Ethics Textbook (Ch'odung Yulli Kyogwasô 初等倫理學教科書, hereafter PET, 1907/revised in 1910), Upper Elementary Morals Textbook (Kodûng Sohak Susinsô 高等小學修身書, hereafter UEMT, 1907), Primary Elementary Morals Textbook (Ch'odung Sohak Susinsô 初等小學修身書, hereafter PEMT, 1908), and Primary Morals Textbook (Ch'odung Susinsô 初等修身書, hereafter PMT, 1909). These were texts for both private and public school use, covering basic to more advanced topics, and were published just before the Japanese Residency-General began to heavily censor textbook content.

Defining the National Subject
In the later textbooks, there is a definitive shift from a discussion of subjects of the king to subjects of the state, or national subjects, indicating a transformation from a traditional understanding of monarchical authority to an evolving and abstract apprehension of political authority. Some texts explain that a national subject (kungmin 國民) is “a man of the country” or “someone who has been born in the country.”

Society is a group of people . . . A society is established by the power of cooperation, and society is maintained through the power of cooperation... For this reason, a man must perform his duty to complete the power of cooperation for society.37

32 The Common School Morals Textbook for Students was a text that was published in 1907 by the Ministry of Education. According to the 1906 Ordinance on Common Schools, the age of entrance to the common schools was from age eight to fourteen (later reduced to twelve). Han and Cho 2017, 163.
33 The Upper Elementary Morals Textbooks was published in 1907 by the Department of Publishing at Hwimun School for upper level students.
34 Upper Elementary Morals Textbook was published in 1908 for use at Hwimun School and written by Yu Kûn (柳瑾, 1861–1921), a journalist who was a chief editor of the Hwangsong Sinmun (Capital Gazette) in 1910.
35 Primary Morals Textbook was a textbook written by Pak Chôngdong (?–1919), a writer and middle school teacher who authored not only ethics and history textbooks, but also works on natural science” (Nam 2012, 136–142).
36 PET, chapter 1.
37 PMT, volume 2, chapter 4.
According to the above text, societies are made of individuals who work together, and because they cooperate with each other they are able to prosper. Other textbooks reproduce similar sentiments, explaining that national strength is dependent on the unity of the people and cooperation, and that all subjects must strive to contribute to the greater good. The following is a representative example.

Community is a common united group. The scale can be big or small, and it is nowadays called “society” (sahoe 社會). Promoting public interest and prioritizing public affairs to make the community beneficial is how to serve the ancestors and to comfort descendants. Filth, laziness, indolence, arrogance, and greediness harm the community, damage public property, impair the public interest, and obstruct the freedom of the community. This is the worst.

This text states that society is not only an extension of the family, but an extension of the individual and that all individuals are part of a community. If the community flourishes, so does the individual, and vice versa. But if an individual causes harm to the community, the entire society suffers and state sovereignty is jeopardized. The lesson also subtly adds a filial dimension by explaining that promoting public interests brings comfort to one’s ancestors as well as to one’s posterity. Thus, the concept of the “public” transcends not only space (oneself or one’s immediate community) but also time (generations).

Other chapters then give examples of public interest as the welfare of the general public and in which the entire society has a stake. In short, it is something that benefits the whole public and that warrants protection and recognition. Lessons like the one illustrated here warn against selfishly picking flowers (thereby denying others the joy of enjoying them), and explain how public services benefit society, so everyone must contribute. Students are encouraged to think of how their actions affect others, or the public interest, and since society is made up of individuals, it is impossible for society to prosper unless every individual contributes to and defends public interests. Thus, the welfare of society and the independence of the country are the responsibility of every

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38 UEMT, chapter 115, PET chapters 4 and 6, CSMTS volume 4, chapter 4.
39 PET, chapter 5.
40 This concept is reminiscent of Benedict Anderson’s definition of a nation as an “imagined community” where despite “actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (1983, 7). In the Korean case, the new textbooks depict this “comradeship” as extending beyond social class, occupational status, and even generation.
41 PEMT, chapter 37, UEMT, chapter 39.
individual. One lesson looks to the world of nature and describes how ants will group together to protect each other against enemies.42

There are also chapters that describe public morality shared by the society and contributing to social consciousness and cohesion. This means more than simply not causing harm to others and instead extending oneself and helping other members of the community, as seen in the following example.

One summer day, a student stepped on a watermelon rind and slipped and fell. Then he stood up and threw the rind away, over the roof, saying, ‘I’ve already slipped, but I’m going to make sure the next person coming this way does not slip on this.’ This student must be praised as a man of public morality.43

Another lesson invokes the wisdom of Confucius and Mencius themselves, explaining that noble men will even sacrifice their lives to help others.44 While these concepts of helping others and contributing to the greater good also exist in the Confucian tradition, there is a much broader applicability that is emphasized to extend to all members of society. Rather than greater responsibility given exclusively to the learned and upright Confucian gentleman, every national subject can and should understand his or her civic obligations and develop public morality. Most importantly, regardless of one’s occupation or social standing, everyone can help to strengthen the country and must do so to preserve Korean sovereignty. Accordingly, a new sense of equality emerges that honors all occupations and distributes duties to all national subjects, as in the following lesson.

There are varieties of occupations. A man must choose his occupation following what he likes and what he is good at. There is no distinction or discrimination in occupation. There are people in the world who disdain working in occupations such as commerce or industry, but this is a harmful custom. Whatever one’s occupation is, if a man tries hard and generates profit for the society and the state, then this is a respectable man.45

This lesson points out that regardless of one’s occupation, everyone has the potential to be a productive member of society and that there is dignity in all kinds of work since every job makes its own contribution. In contrast to the traditional contempt for merchants and commerce during the Chosön dynasty, the text urges its readers to treat all jobs with respect, for anyone (not just scholars and government officials) can be held in esteem if they do their best, as seen in the following excerpt:

An occupation is indispensable for one’s living. Among Literati, Farmers, Artisans, and Merchants (sanong kongsang 士農工商), whatever you want to be, once you decide your

42 PEMT, chapter 60.
43 PEMT, chapter 38.
44 CSMTS, chapter 4.
45 CSMTS, volume 4, chapter 2.
course, you must not change it frivolously... [only then can] you contribute to the public interests of society.46

The image for this lesson depicts a traditional peddler standing in front of a modern bookstore, a traditional farmer with an ox and plough, and a craftsman making a sign from wood. This distinct depiction of the old and new illustrates the harmonious coexistence and intermingling of the two. Conflict and confrontation are absent, and the text treats all occupations equally, suggesting that everyone can contribute to the common good. The UEMT extends the discussion of egalitarianism by explaining that everyone has freedom of action and thought and should not infringe on the freedom of others, and that these freedoms preserve prosperity and order in society.47 Therefore, not only is everyone free to select their means of livelihood, but it is necessary to respect others regardless of their occupation and even if their thought and behavior are different from one's own.

The textbooks published after 1906 exhibit a discursive shift from subjects of the king to subjects of the state or national subjects. As a result of this shift, there occurs a transformation away from a diverse group of subjects of the king (civil and military officials, farmers, artisans, merchants) toward a homogeneous national subject who prioritizes the interests of the state. Thus, obligations and duties are shared equally by all national subjects, and the prosperity of the nation depends on unanimous cooperation. This expanded and standardized identity creates and underscores direct ties to the state by linking individual action to the welfare of society and national sovereignty, forming a coherent and unified concept of “Korea” and its subjects. What also emerges from this discussion is an extensive treatment of the interests of the state (independence and sovereignty) and how its subjects can preserve and protect those interests through fulfillment of their duties and obligations.

Duties and Obligations of National Subjects
One of the most frequently recurring themes in all the textbooks is the obligations of the people to the state. While textbooks in the earlier period emphasize loyalty to the king and love for one's country, the texts in the later period shift the object of loyalty from the king to the country or state, eventually dropping loyalty to the king altogether and focusing on love of country. All Korean subjects have duties to their

47 UEMT, chapter 40.
country: obeying the law, paying taxes, and military service. This trilogy appears in all the textbooks, but given the perilous circumstances of Korean sovereignty at the time, there is a strong emphasis on fighting for one's country and the esteem associated with serving in the army. There are several chapters in the PETM that state, "students have duties to be soldiers," or that the spirit of "a strong warrior is praiseworthy," and proclaim, "How brave the boys, making an army to fight!" The young male students carry accoutrements associated with a modern-style military (e.g., swords, guns, the Korean flag, a trumpet) and are praised for their gallantry and determination in their training to protect the country.

While celebrating the brave and valiant soldier, a chapter in the PMT rebukes military and political leaders who abandoned their duties and fled for their own safety in late sixteenth-century Chosŏn.

During the Imjin War, when Ch’ungikkong Kwak Chaeu heard that all the provinces had fallen and the Captains of many Posts, Governors, and Magistrates took refuge deep in the mountains, he was indignant and said, "... in one morning of crisis, they all planned to save themselves, not caring about the turmoil of the country... A thousand years of shame it is!" Then he raised an army and made a great contribution.

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48 PET, chapters 6 and 7; UEMT, chapters 109 and 114; CSMTS chapter 2; PET chapters 6 and 7.

49 PETM, chapter 21.

50 PETM, chapter 52.

51 PETM, chapter 14.

52 郭再祐, 1552–1617.

53 PMT, volume 3, chapter 8. 初聞諸城連陷。列鎮主將及方伯守宰皆遊深山。莫敢交鋒。乃奮罵曰。聖朝休養臣庶二百餘年。一朝有急。皆為自全之計。不顧君父之難。今若以草野不起。則舉一國三百州無一男
Here too selfless service, defense of the country, and the interests of the country are showcased, rather than one's loyalty to the king. Especial priority is given to military service—the eagerness to train, the willingness to take up arms and fight against the enemies of the country, and the display of bravery. Reflective of the expanded student audience, education involves general instruction on how to behave like a good national subject and inculcates a sense of duty and obligation to the country through an understanding of one's role in the larger community. In contrast to earlier textbooks that highlighted loyalty to the king, there is a decrease in discussions of the monarch in the later texts, which stress one's duties to the state and love for country.

Crucial to a proper apprehension and fulfillment of one's civil duties is the development of a sense of love of country. All the textbooks include lessons that explain the importance of loving one's country and that this is a fundamental responsibility towards one's country as a national subject. For example, a chapter entitled “Love your country, and Love your race” ( tongjong 同種) states, “Bees built a hive and had a meeting to decide to sting anyone who tears down hives or harms bees. A man with a country is like a bee with a hive. You students must love your country and love your race.”

The key idea, as echoed in other textbooks, is that if one truly loves his country and countrymen, he will be eager to defend his country and attack any adversaries. Thus, students are encouraged to develop this sense of devotion from an early age, even when at play:

A student made a small boat carrying toy soldiers. As he played, he shouted that enemies were approaching and shot a mud bullet with a bamboo pipe. The enemy's boat flipped over, and the student declared victory, saying that our country will be steadfast.

Other lessons specify that the reason fighting for one's country is a vital aspect of loving one's country is for the defense of Korea's sovereignty and independence. With the signing of the 1905 Protectorate Treaty and the gradual dissolution of Korean sovereignty, it is not surprising that the Korean textbooks would emphasize the need to incite feelings of loyalty to fight for Korea's independence. This was a rallying cry for all Koreans to devote themselves to their study, to work hard regardless of their occupation, and to develop a

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54 PEMT, chapter 50.
55 UEMT, chapters 109, 111, 114; CSMTS, chapter 3.
56 PEMT, chapter 22.
The importance of preserving Korea’s independence is repeated throughout the textbooks, and the loss of sovereignty is portrayed as analogous to the loss of one’s humanity:

When a cow or horse pulling a cart without rest holds back, the master whips without mercy. This is submission to harsh labor and acquiescence to suffering and hardship. When they lose their right to freedom, humans become like this cow or horse.\footnote{PEMT, chapter 25.}

The following image features Chosŏn dynasty farmers with traditional agricultural implements and techniques. In contrast to images of modern young male students praised for their bravery and warrior spirit, this image situates traditional farmers in a negative context, plodding through the fields with their animals enslaved to hard labor. The implicit message is that loss of Korean independence would be tantamount to enslavement. Moreover, the textbooks no longer conflate the king and the state but instead the state clearly denotes the country; sovereignty falls under the jurisdiction of the state rather than the king, transferring the locus of power from the throne to the state.

Despite the shift in stress from loyalty to the king to love of country, a connection between the two concepts does persist with the king remaining as a symbol of the nation. The opening four chapters of the UEMT describe the heroic and glorious accomplishments of the founder of the Chosŏn dynasty, “High Emperor T’aеjo” (太祖高皇帝, r. 1392–1398), and Chosŏn’s fourth and most admired king, Sejong. These lessons not only explain why they are worthy of esteem, but also serve as moral examples and sources of national pride. For example, the lessons on T’aеjo describe his military heroism and martial accomplishments while leading his armies himself, which led to numerous victories on the battlefield.\footnote{UEMT, chapters 1 and 2.} The lessons on Sejong outline his devotion to governance of the country and the welfare of the people through his steadfast observance of rituals and his creation of the Korean vernacular alphabet.\footnote{UEMT, chapters 3 and 4.} Highlighting both literary and military achievements, the king transforms into a symbol of the state and is no longer a mere object of loyalty. Rather, the dynastic house as an institution becomes an essential aspect of Korea’s heritage and history, and thus must be preserved.

\footnote{UEMT, chapters 111, 112, 116, 117.}
In general, the lessons exhort students to devote every endeavor to the preservation of Korean independence through the development of a love for their country. Regardless of one’s occupation or social standing, it is necessary to cultivate this feeling to properly understand one’s civil responsibilities and duties. In this sense, all subjects of Korea were equal in that everyone plays a role and is accountable for the prosperity of the country. This is a significant difference from earlier texts that placed most of the responsibilities on the king and his officials and their public role in influencing Korea’s destiny. The later texts explain that these duties are to be delegated to all national subjects, who are assigned a new public role about which they learn about through the new education. Nonetheless, the concept of love of country is refracted through the Confucian concept of loyalty to one’s king, and these evolve over time. Although “loyalty to king and love for country” during the Chosón dynasty was intended for a yangban audience and meant to encourage loyal service to one’s king and putting public interests first in administrative affairs, by the early twentieth century this concept had developed into a principle with universal application. The emphasis shifted from a focus on subjects of the king and loyalty to one’s sovereign, to subjects of the state, love for the country, and the attendant obligations of all national subjects to fulfill their civic duties, especially fighting for Korean sovereignty (through military service).

In sum, by 1906, there is a clear departure in the textbooks from a narrative that emphasizes loyalty to the king, the role of government officials, and the relationship between the ruler and his ministers to one that stresses love for one’s country, duties of all national subjects, and contributing to the public good. These later texts define the national subject as a homogeneous member of the larger society who prioritizes the interests of the state. Therefore, all national subjects must cooperate and work together for the benefit of society and the protection of state sovereignty by fulfilling their civic obligations—obeying the law, paying taxes, performing military service, and cultivating a spirit of love for their country. If one loves his country, he will devote himself to choosing an appropriate occupation and working hard, respecting his fellow countrymen, and above all being willing to fight to protect Korean independence as a national subject.

Conclusion

At the end of the nineteenth century, western-style learning, ideas, and concepts infiltrated the late Chosón dynasty, triggering a series of reforms to establish new schools and publish modern textbooks. The prevalent depiction of this encounter between the Confucian and the western tradition in the historiography of nineteenth-century Korea is that of a stark division where the two are incompatible and the former must inevitably be replaced by the latter. Through an examination of modern textbooks, this article problematizes this binary scheme and instead argues that there was considerable interplay of ideas and concepts—initially through a refraction of Confucian norms (such as loyalty to the king, love of country), and later through an evolution of the norms themselves.

The modern textbooks from the initial period of publication between 1895 and 1905 introduce significantly different content from classical Confucian
However, even these new texts operate within the bounds of a Confucian framework, emphasizing a king-centered narrative and focusing on the relationship between the king and his subjects. Although these textbooks introduce modern scientific knowledge and other practical subjects, they do not explore concepts of civil liberties, political rights, or egalitarianism. Instead, the texts encourage students to serve their king in faithfulness and loyalty. A significant change is the celebration of military figures, their bravery, and willingness to sacrifice their lives to protect the monarch, although this too is infused with Confucian concepts of loyalty to one’s king and love of country where the king symbolized the state.

Textbooks from the later period of publication between 1906 and 1910 reveal a distinct shift from discussions of the king’s subjects to national subjects. The texts depict national subjects or subjects of the state as homogeneous members of society prioritizing the interests of the state, namely, the preservation of national sovereignty through a delegation of roles and responsibilities to all members. Each individual, regardless of occupation or social status, plays a vital role and can add to or subtract from the overall prosperity of the country by developing and displaying a love of country and public mindedness. This emphasis on civil responsibilities has an equalizing effect, but there remains a strong moral tone and stress on obligation. Nonetheless, through the evolution of concepts such as loyalty to king and love for country, duties of national subjects, and public interest (kongik 公益), a more broadly defined sense of civic duties and obligations in the textbooks engages with ideas of nationalism, citizenship, and the public sphere. This subtle yet significant change from loyalty to one’s sovereign as the king’s subjects to love of country as national subjects reveals a declining importance of the person of the king and a newly developing concept of the state and the relationship between the people and the state. Although a more dramatic change would occur after the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910 when colonial-era textbooks defined and created the Korean colonial subject, the creation of ties between the Korean state and its national subjects were already in the process of formation and reflected in the textbooks between 1906 and 1910.

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