Political Changes and Historical Interpretation in Modern Korea*

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1. Introduction

History proceeds on two levels of temporality: on the level of the actual occurrence of events or actions, and on the level of the explanation and interpretation of those events or actions. If the former is history as fact, then the latter is history as interpretation. History that exists in the form of consciousness therefore inevitably comprehends both levels. In this respect, history may be likened to an endless dialogue between the past and the present.

Ever since the rise of the modern state, much political emphasis

* This essay is an English translation, with a number of revisions, of Park Myoung-Kyu. "Yŏksa-jŏk Kyŏnghŏn-ŭ Chaeheæsŏk-kwa Sangunghwa Tonghak Nongmın Chŏngaeng-e taehan Kuyŏm Haeng'wi-rul Chungsim-ŭro" 歷史的再解釋과象徵化 朝鮮農民戰爭에對應 集體回憶和中心化 (The Reinterpretation and Symbolization of Historical Experience With a Focus on Acts of Commemoration of the Tonghak Peasants War), ed by Han'guk Sahoesa Hakhoe 韓國社會史學會 (Korean Association for Social History). Sahoe-wo Yŏksa 社會의 歷史 (Society and History), Vol 51 (1997)

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has been placed on history. This emphasis rose from the fact that historical consciousness was indispensable to the instillation of a sense of national identity in members of a nation-state. Values including faith in a commonly shared and identical past and the worship of common heroes became the most important factors in uniting disparate individuals as a nation and in securing their loyalty to the state. In order to achieve this, tradition was revived, modified, or even fabricated at times, and historiography, along with modern social sciences, came to be a form of knowledge crucial to the justification of the modern state system (I. Wallerstein). The increasingly frequent commemoration of specific incidents and individuals since the dawn of the modern era likewise was born of the collective effort actively to reconstruct past experiences in the present (B. Schwartz 1982: 374).

The aim of the present study lies in inquiring into the shifts in Koreans’ view of their past during their transition to modernity since the last years of the 19th century, through the analysis of monuments dedicated to one particular historical event. The Tonghak Peasants War has given rise to continued discussion for over a century, since its occurrence to the present, and is an uncommon example of a historical incident whose interpretation and method of commemoration have shifted considerably. As such, the analysis of monuments will help us to demonstrate changes in both the collective interpretation of the Tonghak Peasants War and the historical consciousness regarding the past.
2. Monuments as Objects of Analysis

1) The Symbolism of Monuments

Monuments are visible, material embodiments of past events or attendant semantic systems (A. Lerner 1994: 178). In this respect, they serve as cultural media that re-present and re-create a past history that cannot otherwise be experienced in the present, and graft specific interpretative systems to the ordinary, quotidian memory of the general public through concrete visibility (J. Gillis 1994: 6). As such, monuments dating from a specific period reflect historical consciousness in a particular time and place. This is why monuments can be selected as data and materials for the confirmation of cognitive frameworks and collective sentiments that cannot otherwise be confirmed through written records (B. Schwartz 1996).

Because they formalize memories into outwardly visible forms, monuments are effective for re-presenting and reenacting past experiences in the present. In addition, monuments have an effect of mystifying and sanctifying the objects they commemorate. Triumphal monuments not only give rise to a consciousness of the value of warfare for the state and victory in wars itself as a significant value, but also establish the state itself as a consecrated object. Statues of national heroes likewise stress and engrave on the national consciousness the eternal strength and pride of the nation in a mystified form (A. Lerner). Monuments commemorating revolutions emphasize the significance of the revolutions and give rise to a respect for those who incited the revolutions. Those dedicated to national independence become symbols of pride in the right to
self-determination as an independent nation.

In particular, monuments played a significant role in the formation of modern national identity. Benedict Anderson has stated that there is nothing more impressive as a symbol of modern nationalistic culture than tombs or memorials of obscure soldiers (B. Anderson 1991: 25-28) In other words, what is important is the symbolic meaning attached to the memorials themselves, those that commemorate brave soldiers who died for Britain or France, regardless of whose remains they actually house or of the soldiers’ individual identities. According to Anderson, monuments are imbued with the power of turning private and individual events into something collective, inevitable, and meaningful. Such cultural power of uniting common members of a society rather than individual heroes or specific members of the ruling class in a consecrated category is the very essence of the modern nation and this national identity can be confirmed through monuments dedicated to obscure, unnamed war dead.

Indeed, all areas that saw the full-fledged formation of the modern state also witnessed the construction of massive monuments, and held massive acts of commemorating past historical events on the level of the entire society. In Europe, various forms of monuments symbolizing the state and the nation have been constructed and erected in place of religious symbols of medieval Christianity since the 18th century. Such monuments, which constitute what Eric Hobsbawm has called the “invention of tradition,” were based on various flags and standards, music, rituals, and symbols that symbolized a nation and consecrated acts of self-sacrifice for the nation (E. Hobsbawm). Among these, monuments particularly take on considerable strength
by virtue of their perpetuity, visibility, and sheer scale. Following the French Revolution, France constructed various statues throughout the nation, which played a significant role in the formation of French national identity: those of Napoleon as a hero, of brave French soldiers, and of the masses' revolutionary uprisings (A Lerner: 181-91). These monuments symbolized the value and importance of the collective, which perpetually exists beyond individual lives and deaths. Likewise, the United States constructed numerous monuments immediately following the War of Independence and the Civil War. The symbolization of Lincoln, in particular, was the most important cultural phenomenon that also revealed the nature of the polity of the United States (B Schwartz 1996). Through the construction of memorials related to the Holocaust, post-World War II Germany proclaimed its historical discontinuity with the Nazi system both to itself and to the world (R. Kosher). When the tension of the Cold War escalated throughout the world due to ideological conflicts, the political effect of monuments dedicated to various heroes, wars, and revolutions was made use of in a most thorough way (J. Gillis: 12-13).

2) The Tonghak Peasants War and Monuments

The Tonghak Peasants War, the object of inquiry here, is a massive peasant struggle in which peasants in the Honam region uprose in 1894 to demand the establishment of a new political order. This incident was a sweeping revolutionary movement led by various forces including especially the peasantry, the ruled, against the Chosŏn Dynasty, which then was faced with a serious crisis in its entire establishment. Although it even went on to actualize peasants'
participation in politics in some areas at one time, the uprising was eventually crushed by the combined forces of government troops and Japanese troops. In addition, this incident later on caused fundamental changes in the East Asian order by providing Japan with a pretext of interfering with Chosón's internal affairs and inciting the Sino-Japanese War.

Although it was short-lived, the incident had a tremendous impact on the culture and society of the Chosón Dynasty. There were upheavals in the class structure such as low-born individuals' pretensions to the yangban class, and the rise of revolutionary ideas such as the denial of the continuing validity of Confucianism as a knowledge system that can explain society and its workings. This stems from the fact that although Tonghak ("Eastern Learning"), as an avowed opponent against "Western Learning," did not profess anti-Confucianism per se, its criticism of traditional Neo-Confucian order nevertheless was extremely strong. While such populist and innovative aspects of Tonghak did at times collude with the pro-Japanese theory of opening up during the colonial era, they were in fact symbols that had been used repeatedly amid political shifts in modern Korea.

Prior to the establishment of modern academic disciplines in Korea, peasants' rebellions were not studied and analyzed as they are now. The Tonghak Peasants War, however, was judged by society at large as a highly significant event immediately after its occurrence, and a cultural war regarding the interpretation of this incident ensured. This quarrel was intensified through various monuments rather than through discourses conducted in black and white. From 1992, I, together with a special coverage team at the Jeonbuk Ilbo, spent
approximately two years visiting and investigating monuments and sites associated with the Tonghak Peasants War throughout South Korea. As of date, there are 61 such monuments and sites Table 1 below shows the types and construction years of the various monuments.

Table 1. Types of Monuments Related to the Tonghak Peasants War per Historical Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stone Steleae</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altars (Shrines)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monuments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial Halls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Sites</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>61</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the table above, monuments associated with the Tonghak Peasants War were erected in the greatest number immediately following the incident, only to decline from the colonial era to the 1960's. After the 1960's, monuments in various forms were again constructed, to witness yet another boom in the 1990's. Likewise, the specific form of the monuments thus erected differs according to each period. Those constructed before 1910 take the form of altars or shrines, where memorial rites for the dead can be held, or of stone steleae, which record particular individuals' deeds and actions. Following the Liberation, however, forms such as altars and shrines
disappeared altogether. In the 1960's, modern monuments such as monuments and statues began to emerge as the significant forms. On the other hand, massive spaces of commemoration such as memorial halls and Historic Sites have appeared since the latter half of the 1980's.

Among monuments erected immediately after the Tonghak Peasants War, the most noteworthy ones were altars and shrines. As spaces where collective memorial rites for the dead can be held, such monuments function as symbols that provide an opportunity for the endless reinterpretation of specific historical events through the performance of repetitive ritualistic actions, memorial rites in particular.¹ The altar, in particular, throughout the Chosŏn Dynasty was an official monument whose type and location were predetermined in relation to state rites. During the Chosŏn Dynasty, it was customary and traditional for the royal court to construct altars or commemorative gates for those who had died while performing acts of Confucian loyalty or filial piety. However, the construction and functions of such altars weakened considerably during the latter half of the Chosŏn Dynasty, particularly so after the opening up of Korea. This very form may have been stressed once again immediately following the Peasants War because the Chosŏn Dynasty felt a desperate need to strengthen and reassert its self-identity ("Study of Confucian Rites," 10: 831, in Compilation of Reference Documents on Korea, Enlarged with Supplements, vol. 1).

With the considerable weakening of the official and public

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¹ On the contrary, the stone stela, despite its antiquity and traditionality in South Korean society, is relatively weak in its function of symbolization due to its lower visibility as a monument.
significance attached to memorial rites following the Liberation, the symbolism of the altar and the shrine likewise weakened considerably. In place, statues, monuments, and memorial halls came to be the major forms of monuments, which may be seen as a further popularization of monuments. Statues may be viewed as monuments that best embody and reveal the dynamic characteristics and reality of specific incidents or personages, and accordingly, those of Chŏn Pong-jun, Son Pyŏng-hŭi, and Ch’oe Si-hyŏng were erected. Monuments, which are larger and hold greater significance as plastic forms in comparison with stone stelae, tend to be erected openly by the government and public offices. In addition, monuments are characterized by their tendency to select incidents rather than specific individuals as their objects of commemoration. Noteworthy here is the form of the memorial hall, which is constructed as a public arena where historical lessons are socially promoted and inculcated.

3. The Symbolic Structure of Monuments

Commemorating the Tonghak Peasants War

1) The Confucian Theory of Loyalty and Monarchical Hegemony:

Monuments Constructed Before 1910

Because the Tonghak Peasants War of 1894 was a historical event that sought to bring about revolutionary changes in traditional mores and order, and because there was intense conflict between the classes during its development, social evaluation of this incident was naturally varied and often mutually exclusive. Such conflicts did not immediately materialize on a social level, however, because forces
against the peasant troops completely regained not only political power but also the initiative over the interpretation of this event. Table 2 below shows the various types of monuments that were erected immediately after the Tonghak Peasants War.

Table 2. Monuments Related to the Tonghak Peasants War: 1895-1910

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monuments</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year Constructed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altars Changch'ung-dan [獎忠壇]</td>
<td>Changch'ung-dong, S��ngdong-gu, Seoul</td>
<td>1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y��nghoe-dan (Y��nghoe-dang)</td>
<td>Yeyang-ri, Changh��ng-ri, South Cholla province</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H��ngnyong-dan</td>
<td>Pusan-my��n, Changh��ng-gun, South Cholla province</td>
<td>1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moch'ung-dan</td>
<td>Unbong-my��n, Namwon-gun, North Cholla province</td>
<td>1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone Stelae Stela Dedicated to the Upright Virtue of Lord Yi S��ng-u, Commander of Punitive Troops</td>
<td>Togo-my��n, Asan-gun, South Ch'ungch��ng province</td>
<td>1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to the Benevolence and Good Governance of Lord Pak Che-sun, Provincial Governor</td>
<td>Kalsan-my��n, Hongs��ng-gun, South Ch'ungch��ng province</td>
<td>1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to the Eternal Memory of Lord Yi S��ng-u, County Magistrate-cum-Commander of Punitive Troops</td>
<td>Kwangch'��n-my��n, Hongs��ng-gun, South Ch'ungch��ng province</td>
<td>1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to Lord Yi, Commander of Punitive Troops</td>
<td>Kobung-my��n, S��san-gun, South Ch'ungch��ng province</td>
<td>1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to the Suppression of Rebellion and Restoration of Peace in K��ms��ng</td>
<td>Kwawon-dong, Naju, South Ch��lla province</td>
<td>1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to Virtuous Scholar Pak Sun-sik, Head of the Local Elite's Meeting</td>
<td>Kobung-my��n, S��san-gun, South Ch'ungch��ng province</td>
<td>1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to the Remaining Meritorious Deeds of Lord Kim Pyŏng-chon, Military Councilor</td>
<td>Kwangch’ŏn-ŭp, Hongsŏng-gun, South Ch’ungch’ŏng province</td>
<td>1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to the Loyal Death of Lord Kim Pyŏng-chon, Military Councilor, in Battle</td>
<td>Haemi-myŏn, Sŏsan-gun, South Ch’ungch’ŏng province</td>
<td>1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to the Memory of the Righteous Patriot Han Kang-kyŏng</td>
<td>Hongsŏng-ŭp, Hongsŏng-gun, South Ch’ungch’ŏng province</td>
<td>1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to the Righteous Death of Lord Yi Hak-sŭng, Second Royal Secretary</td>
<td>Sino-ri, Changsŏng-gun, South Chŏlla province</td>
<td>1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to the Righteous Deaths of Officers and Soldiers During the Tonghak Rebellion of 1894</td>
<td>Naeyang-ni, Changhŭng-ŭp, South Chŏlla province</td>
<td>1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to the Memory of Lord Pyŏksa Kim Ir-won, Chief Overseer of Pyŏksa</td>
<td>Ch’ung’ŏl-li, Changub-ŭp, South Chŏlla province</td>
<td>1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Inscription on the Stela Dedicated to the Righteous Death of Chŏng Suk-ch’ŏ, Councilor of the Board of Public Works”</td>
<td>Haeng-ni, Kŭmsan-ŭp, South Ch’ungch’ŏng province</td>
<td>1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Inscription on the Stela Dedicated to the Righteous Death of Military Officer Chŏng Chi-hwan”</td>
<td></td>
<td>1902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to Pak Pong-yang</td>
<td>Unbong-myŏn, Namwon-gun, North Chŏlla province</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to the Officers and Soldiers Killed During the [Tonghak Peasants] War of 1894 and its Pavilion</td>
<td>Tungsan, Ch’ŏngju, North Ch’ungch’ŏng province</td>
<td>1905</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows that a considerable number of monuments related to the Peasants War were erected almost as soon as the incident itself was concluded. Noteworthy among them are altars, of
which representative examples are Changch’ung-dan in Seoul, Moch’ung-dan in Ch’ongju, and Yonghoe-dan in Changhŭng. Erected by the royal court following the Murder of Queen Myŏngsŏng [née Min] in order to commemorate officers and soldiers killed in battle throughout the country, Changch’ung-dan was the first case of an altar officially and directly constructed by the Chosŏn Dynasty for those who had died on its behalf ever since the construction of Chŏngch’ung-dan [旌忠壇], whose purpose had been to appease the souls of those who had perished during the Japanese Invasion of 1592. This in turn is an indicator of the importance that the Chosŏn Dynasty placed on the Peasants War and the ensuing Murder of Queen Myŏngsŏng as incidents directly linked to the maintenance of the dynastic system and of its strong will to reassert the position of the royal court vis-à-vis society at large. Originally, Changch’ung-dan had been erected to hold memorial rites for five officers as well as “soldiers killed in battle.” While Yŏm To-hŭi, Yi Chong-gu, and Yi Hak-sŭng were officers killed during the Peasants War, Hong Kye-hun was killed amid the Murder of Queen Myŏngsŏng. The latter, however, was a representative figure in the government troops during the Tonghak Peasants War as well. All in all, the altar demonstrates that the royal court sought to commemorate officers and soldiers killed during both the Peasants War and the Murder of Queen Myŏngsŏng, which took place a year later, as symbols of loyalty.

Yŏnghoe-dan is an altar erected by the government in order to commemorate Prefect Pak Hŏn-yang and the officers and soldiers who were killed by the peasant troops on December 5, 1894 (by the lunar calendar) while defending Changhŭng-bu. Constructed to
commemorate the self-sacrificing deaths of all 96 officers and soldiers attached to Changhŭng-bu during the peasant troops' final attack, this altar served as the space for the memorial rites held in their remembrance by their descendants and the local magistrate. The expenses for these memorial rites were appropriated from government subsidies and donations from the surrounding towns.² That the government officially held memorial rites at Yönghoe-dan, albeit through the local magistrate, was an indicator of the Chosŏn Dynasty's commitment to remember and commemorate all officers and soldiers who laid their lives for their country.

Moch'ŭng-sa, a shrine that commemorates the 73 officers and soldiers of the Ch'ŏngju Army Command who had been killed en masse by the peasant troops during the Peasants War, was independently erected at the same time as Changch'ŭng-dan. When the 73 officers and soldiers including Yŏm To-hŭi perished in a battle with the Tonghak troops in October 1894, Im T'aek-ho, the then County Magistrate of Ch'ŏngju, held memorial rites for their souls in November of that year under royal order. In the spring of 1895, while the government was preparing to hold memorial rites at Changch'ŭng-dan, Seoul, for officers and soldiers killed throughout the country on the basis of special allowance from the royal court, the Ch'ungsŏng Army Command insisted on October 3 by lunar calendar, the day of the officers' and soldiers' actual death, as the day for memorial rites. This regional army command then obtained lands for the procurement of expenses for the memorial rites,

² Yi Sŭng-uk, "Ôsa Yi Sŭng-uk Yönghoe-dang Sisŏ [Censor Yi Sŭng-uk's Preface to Yönghoe-dang]," Yönghoe-dang Sajip [Collected History of Yönghoe-dang]
received official ranks, title of the altar, and stela dedicated to memorial rites from the military, and erected a memorial altar of its own. Even after the closure of the Ch’ungch’ŏng Army Command due to the disbandment of the Imperial Korean Army in 1907, officers and soldiers formerly stationed here gathered again the following year and, together with the descendants of the war dead, organized Moch’ung-gye and continued the memorial rites. By thus erecting altars dedicated to the officers and soldiers killed during the Peasants War on an official level, as in the case of Yŏnghoe-dan and Moch’ung-sa, the Korean government sought symbolically to demonstrate the historical legitimacy and justification of suppressing the peasant troops.

On the other hand, stone stelae, which constituted most of the monuments, were all dedicated to the activities of the government troops and anti-peasant troops. During the Peasants War, there arose in each area a type of civilian militia, led mainly by Confucian scholars and petty county clerks and functionaries, whose avowed cause was the suppression of the peasant troops. Not surprisingly, many stone stelae were constructed in order to commemorate them, of which some examples are the stelae dedicated to Pak Pong-yang, who had led the anti-peasant troops in Unbong, and to Ch’ŏng Suk-cho and Ch’ŏng Chi-hwan, both of whom had led the anti-peasant troops in Kŭmsan. Hŭngnyong-dan was established in 1901 by the disciples of Kim Han-sŏp, a Confucian scholar from Changhŭng who had criticized the peasant troops and had died.

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during a confrontation with them.

All monuments erected during this period interpret history on the basis of the traditional Confucian worldview and a viewpoint stemming from the theory of "guarding the orthodoxy and refuting the heterodoxy." None of them addresses the peasant troops' revolutionary nature or the significance of their patriotic anti-Japanese struggles at all. Likewise, stone inscriptions penned by Confucian scholars, for whom the selflessness of military officers and Confucian scholars during the Japanese Invasion of 1592 was the paragon and standard of loyalty, only praise the loyalty of the anti-peasant troops for their suppression of the peasant troops in combination with the Japanese troops; nowhere to be found is any evaluation of the peasant troops' self-sacrifice and loyalty in their barehanded opposition to the Japanese troops' firepower. The reason for this silence can be found primarily in the fact that the peasant troops, completely defeated, possessed no power or resource whatsoever to erect monuments that could bring to the fore the significance of their actions. On the other hand, such neglect of the peasant forces may also have been caused by the dominant knowledge system and the nature of the historical consciousness prevalent during this period. The final years of the 19th century was a period in which an independent, nationalistic cognitive system that could supplant traditional Confucian theory of obligations had yet to be formed. Consequently, not only the theory of "guarding the orthodoxy and refuting the heterodoxy" but even the enlightenment-oriented historical consciousness, which was being introduced into Korea through historical texts in various forms, were incapable of serving as knowledge systems that could do full justice to the significance of the
Peasants War (Cho Tong-gŏl 1989). In other words, without intellectual resources that could reinterpret historical events and socially construct their meaning, any acts commemorating that meaning could not possibly be performed.

2) The Growth of an Awareness of National History and the Absence of Commemoration: 1910-1945

To ensure effective colonial rule, the Japanese authorities eradicated and destroyed all commemorative ceremonies and monuments that reenforced the Koreans' national identity. The memorial rites of Changch’ung-dan, which commemorated officers and soldiers who had sacrificed their lives to the cause of the royal court, were discontinued in 1908, immediately following the disbandment of the Imperial Korean Army. Later on, a monument dedicated to Itō Hirobumi, that kingpin of Japanese colonization of Korea, was erected on the site of Changch’ung-dan. Likewise, the memorial rites held at Moch’ung-dan came to lose all official association whatsoever following the disbandment of the Imperial Korean Army. Various memorial rites and commemorative events that the royal court had managed as symbols of selfless loyalty to the nation thus went out of existence.

Under the colonial rule, however, an interpretation of history based on nationalistic consciousness grew as well. Sin Ch’ae-ho’s nationalistic historiography, which claimed that "History is the struggle between the ‘I’ and the ‘Not-I’," was the fruit of an intellectual endeavor to reinterpret modern Korean history from an independent viewpoint. The March 1 Independence Movement had a decisive
impact on the growth of such knowledge systems by providing Koreans with an opportunity to experience firsthand the presentness of the modern nation and by lending an impetus to the rise of various nationalistic movements and thoughts. Amid such changes, the Tonghak Peasants War too began to be interpreted in a new light. In his *The Lamentable History of Korea*, published in 1915, Pak Ŭn-sik pointed out that the Tonghak Rebellion was imbued with a revolutionary spirit that sought to reform politics and provide for the people’s livelihood, and went on to evaluate the historical event as a “revolution by Korean commoners” in his *The Bloody History of Korean Independence Movements* (Sin Yong-ha 1982: 290), which was published right after the March 1 Independence Movement Calling the Tonghak Peasants War “the reformist movement of the year 1894,” Hwang Ŭi-don in 1922 defined it as an “innovation” or a “revolutionary” movement brought about by the wish of the majority of the masses, suffering under the yoke of a rigid class system, for democracy and freedom (Sim Sŏng-gyu: 134). In the course of writing a serialized feature titled “Tonghak and the Tonghak Rebellion” for the *Dong-A Ilbo*, Kim Sang-gi in 1931 defined the Peasants War as a revolutionary movement. Based on primary sources related to the Tonghak Peasants War and on firsthand reminiscences of participants, this work is noteworthy for its innovative viewpoint. Kim saw the incident as the impetus to the March 1 Independence Movement (Yi Sŏng-gyu: 271-72). Chang Pong-sŏn’s “Veritable Records on Chŏn Pong-jun,” published in 1936, and O Chi-yŏng’s *A History of Tonghak*, published in 1941, were works that combined positive reinterpretations of the Tonghak Peasants War with the authors’ respective experiences and various anecdotes they had collected.
Public education under Japanese rule, however, was occupied by academic disciplines and curricula endorsing the official, colonial viewpoint, and it was impossible for a nationalistic awareness of history to take roots as a leading knowledge system on a social level. Even new interpretations offered by a handful of intellectuals were completely barred from developing into a collective level that could awaken public sentiments. As such, the seeds of a new consciousness of the Tonghak Peasants War, while clearly in existence, could not materialize as actual acts of commemoration on a social level. Indeed, monuments constructed in commemoration of this incident throughout the colonial era only amounted to three.

The Stela Dedicated to the Righteous Death of Han Hong-gyu, constructed in 1912, and the Stela Commemorating the Seven Righteous Confucian Scholars, constructed in 1935, were all planned and erected by Confucian scholars in order to commemorate their forefathers who had been killed during the Tonghak Peasants War. Inscription on both stone stelae were penned by Ki U-man, a scholar of the “guarding the orthodoxy and refuting the heterodoxy” school who had also participated in the righteous army movement in the final years of the Chosŏn Dynasty. Here, Ki alluded to the self-sacrificing righteous patriots’ loyalty during the Japanese invasion of 1592 to eulogize the righteous deaths of Confucian scholars who had been killed by the peasant troops. In other words, these two monuments strongly exude the continuing mentality of Confucian intellectuals of the “guarding the orthodoxy and refuting the heterodoxy” school well into the Japanese colonial era.

Moch’ung-sa is a shrine established in 1914 mainly by descendants of the war dead and former members of the disbanded Imperial
Korean Army on the site of Moch'ung-dan, which had been constructed in the last years of the Chosŏn Dynasty. This shrine was erected as a private space where the descendants of former members of the Imperial Korean Army and of officers and soldiers killed during the Tonghak Peasants War could hold memorial rites for their forefathers. Thinking that even this could have a negative effect on their colonial rule, however, the Japanese authorities confiscated and demolished Moch'ung-dan and constructed a Japanese Shinto shrine on its site in 1923. In other words, Moch'ung-dan, which had symbolized loyalty to the Chosŏn royal court, was now a Shinto shrine symbolizing Japanese colonial rule, the very reflection of historical changes during this era. Indeed, the entire colonial era is characterized by the absence of acts commemorating the Tonghak Peasants War. The fact that monuments in any form could not be erected save the two stelae which espoused the Confucian theory of loyalty and were therefore absolutely devoid of nationalistic meaning, and shrines constructed by descendants, in itself reflects the limitations of the Koreans’ historical consciousness under the colonial rule.

3) The Formation of the National Division System and Ideological Coercion: 1945-1960

Although, with the Liberation, Korea was once again a free nation, the task of building an independent nation-state proved to be difficult. With discord among forces with differing political orientations and interests unresolved as to how the framework of the new nation-state was to be established following the Liberation, conflict
between the right and left wings intensified. Such political conflicts in turn led to more confrontation in interpretations of pre-colonial Korean history.

Given their symbolism in terms of the political independence of the Korean people, the March 1 Independence Movement and independence movements overseas were historical heritages that no political faction could possibly deny, and as such, were cultural factors that could unite all political factions. Indeed, events commemorating the March 1 Independence Day were organized and held very lavishly by all regardless of the participants' political leanings, and so were those for patriots who had taken part in independence movements abroad. Due to further division of political factions into right/left and north/south and ensuing conflicts, however, confrontation regarding the interpretation of these historical events intensified. The right-left confrontation regarding the events commemorating the March 1 Independence Day and the two camps' eventual decision to hold separate events on the same occasion were but a reflection of various political forces' scramble for intellectual and political hegemony through their respective interpretations of modern Korean history.

It was the socialist camp that stressed the Tonghak Peasants War immediately following the Liberation Around Independence Day, 1946, Chŏn Sŏk-tam presented two theses on the "Tonghak Rebellion of 1894," which criticized traditional interpretations of the event and defined it as an instance of peasant rebellions that erupt in the last years of feudalism. Likewise, Pak Hŏn-yŏng cited three events as cases of the Korean people's struggles worthy of pride, enumerating the Tonghak Peasants Rebellion as the first one. Adding the March 1 Independence Movement and the "October People's Struggle" to
complete his triad, he published a booklet titled "The Tonghak Peasants Rebellion and Its Lessons" (Sim Chi-yŏn: 46) In the post-Liberation political situation, ideological and political confrontation over the issue of forming a new nation-state was destined to raise the question of which aspects of modern Korean history to emphasize and how to go about doing it, thus bringing about confrontation over historical interpretation as well.

To the right wing, however, the Tonghak Peasants War was an unlikely object of commemoration and remembrance. With the subsequent downfall of the socialist camp and the intensification of the national division system in South Korea, the Tonghak Peasants War became an increasingly forgotten chapter in history. That the Tonghak Peasants War as yet could not be commemorated openly despite the existence of a few personages actually involved in the incident and the possibility for a historical reinterpretation may have been due to ideological coercion. The only example of monuments erected during this period that I have been able to discover is the small stone stela that stands in Choso village, Ch'ŏng'up-gun. The identity of the builder of this stone stela, which bears the inscription "Altar Dedicated to Lord Chŏn Pong-jun of Ch'ŏn'an, Democratic Leader of the Uprising of the Year 1894," is unclear because it was not constructed openly and amid public attention. That the stela bears the words "Democratic Leader" together with a ta'ı jı motif may be read as the existence, at least in some quarters, of a force that sought to reinterpret the Peasants War in the post-Liberation process of establishing a democratic Korean nation.

Had the new Korean nation had a "retrogressive" and tradition-bound tendency, like the Chosŏn Dynasty, to stress Confucian loyalty,
the monuments erected by the royal court in the last years of the
dynasty may very well have come to be seen in a new light. In the
post-Liberation situation, however, such royalist theory of loyalty
could no longer serve as valid political ideology. Moreover, as they
could no longer be used as media for unifying the Korean people,
monuments that had symbolized Confucian loyalty stopped receiving
attention after the Liberation. Lamenting their fall to oblivion, a
descendant of a member of government troops killed during the
Peasants War commented to me, "With the Liberation, Moch’ung-sa
should have been consecrated so that it could be remembered and
revered by the whole nation... But we did not hurry and lost time,
then were swept by the waves of democratization... Now, it’s too
late." According to him, Moch’ung-sa was "the same as Hyönch’
ung-sa," the shrine dedicated to Yi Sun-sin, in that both monuments
commemorated those who had given their lives to their nation.
Nevertheless, that both Changch’ung-dan and Moch’ung-sa have been
largely forgotten belies the fundamental difference between the
"loyalty" of the last years of the Chosôn Dynasty and the post-
Liberation concept of "patriotism."

Although it refrained from adopting wholesale the interpretative
system that had been dominant in the last years of the Chosôn
Dynasty regarding the Peasants War, nor did post-Liberation historical
interpretation examine the Tonghak Peasants War in a new light and
elevate it to the status of a symbolic resource of popular political
consciousness. Only with the National History Compilation Commit-
tee’s publication of available historical materials and primary sources
as Records on the Tonghak Peasants War for the establishment of a
new historiography of Korea at the end of the 1950’s, and university
professors' full-fledged studies of the Peasants War, were the
foundations laid for future development of the tradition of new
historical consciousness that had emerged under Japanese colonial
rule.

4) The Political Use of Revolutionary Symbolism and the Theory
of Modernization: 1961-1979

Table 3. Monuments Related to the Tonghak Peasants War: 1961-1979

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monument</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year Constructed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1894 Tonghak Revolution Monument</td>
<td>Tōkch'ŏn, Chŏng'up, North Ch'ŏlla province</td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statue of Ŭiam Son Pyŏng-hŭi</td>
<td>Pagoda Park, Seoul</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monument Dedicated to the Planning of the Tonghak Revolution</td>
<td>Sinjung, Kŏbu, North Ch'ŏlla province</td>
<td>1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to the Site of Mansŏk Reservoir</td>
<td>Ip'ŭng, Chŏng'up, North Ch'ŏlla province</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial to the Souls of the Tonghak Revolutionary Troops</td>
<td>Kŭmak, Kongju, South Ch'ungch'ŏng province</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial to the Tonghak Revolutionary Troops of 1894</td>
<td>T'ae'an-ŭp, South Ch'ungch'ŏng province</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial to the Souls of the Tonghak Revolutionary Troops</td>
<td>Sŏsŏng-myŏn, Hongch'ŏn, Kang'won province</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statue of Haewol Ch'oe Si-hyŏng</td>
<td>Hwangsong Park, Kyŏngju, South Kyŏngsang province</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Park Chung Hee, who usurped power through the May 16 Military Coup d’Etat, termed his act a “military revolution” for the good of the entire nation, and sought to find symbolic resources that could justify it in Korean history. With phrases such as “a tiresome history of 5,000 years” and “our history, the storehouse of all evil,” with which he stressed the supposed backwardness of Korean history, he stressed the need for a civil and national revolution that would completely overthrow such ancien régimes (Park Chung Hee 1963 249). While citing the French Revolution, Sun Yat-sen’s Chinese Revolution, Meiji Restoration in Japan, Kemal Atatürk’s revolution in Turkey, and Gamal Abdel Nasser’s revolution in Egypt as examples of historically important revolutions, Park stressed that, here in Korea, the April 19 Student Revolution and the “Tonghak Revolution” had already taken place.

As a result, the last historical event came to be commemorated as the “1894 Tonghak Revolution” in 1963. At a glance, it is difficult to see why an event whose historical significance had gone unnoticed for over 70 years save by some intellectuals should now have come to be called a “revolution” for the first time, that by none but the government itself, and even have a monument constructed in its honor. Although some descendants of the members of government troops killed during the Peasants War did protest that at the time, after the May 16 Military Coup d’Etat, rebel forces came to be wrongly embellished as democratic revolutionary troops, and such objection fell on deaf ears Accordingly, the government actively organized committees and various organs for the commemoration of the Tonghak Revolution and for the construction of related monuments. The “Committee for the Promotion of the Construction of the
Tonghak Revolution Monument,” the result of such a flurry of activities, did in fact erect a revolutionary monument in Hwang’o-hyŏn, the site of the peasant troops’ very first victory, in 1963. Indeed, this was the first monument ever to call the Tonghak Peasants War a “revolution.”

The construction of this monument may be seen as the first impetus to the reinterpretation and transmission of a past incident called the Tonghak Peasants War in the historical consciousness of the general public. The military regime, however, was incapable of truly going beyond a symbolic use of the revolutionary character of the Tonghak Revolution. It would be difficult indeed to deny that the government then used history to turn the military coup d’état into the false symbol of a “military revolution” by equating the corrupt Chosŏn court with the Second Republic government and the peasant troops with the military junta.

In the early 1970’s, Park once again made political use of the Tonghak Peasants War while preparing for a wholesale reconfiguration of the establishment in order to prolong his rule. Now styling himself as a pioneer of modernization and armed with the important slogan of “modernization of the motherland,” he in 1971 alluded to the Coup d’Etat of 1884 and the Tonghak Revolution as two examples of epoch-making historical events (Park 1971). Park thus commented on the Tonghak Revolution, “The Tonghak Revolution was the people’s voluntary resistance movement, a rarity and a surprise in our history. If the Progressives were oriented toward Western modernization, the Tonghak Revolution was oriented toward anti-Western modernization... There are two things that Tonghak stressed... one was the spirit of national independence... and the
other was the spirit of democratic liberalism, whereby the peasants were to receive the gospel of the equality of man.” Even as it smacks of the junta’s use of the Peasants War as self-justification, such evaluation nevertheless emphasized the masses’ spirit of resistance and revolution. All in all, however, this was a far cry from any effort literally to promote popular liberalism; it was merely used as a tool to strengthen the Park regime’s legitimacy and to mobilize the public.

Following the wholesale reconfiguration of the establishment that would bolster and guarantee Park’s prolonged rule, 1973 saw the erection of the Memorial to the Souls of the Tonghak Revolutionary Troops, whose aim was to commemorate members of the peasant troops who had been utterly defeated and killed in the Battle of Ugūn-ch’i. This was the first instance of a monument that was dedicated not to specific individuals or incidents, but to obscure, unknown peasant troops. While thus similar in character to the memorial rites for the war dead held at Changch’ung-dan in 1895, this monument nevertheless diverged completely from its predecessor in its object of commemoration. Inscribed on the monument are the following prefatory remarks.

It is eighty years since you [i.e., the souls of unknown members of the Tonghak peasant troops] departed. As our motherland, born again since the May 16 Military Revolution, has now come to celebrate the first anniversary of the Revitalizing Reforms of October, which renew the selfless patriotic spirit of the Tonghak revolutionary troops and shine in glory today, we hereby erect this memorial in order to appease the souls of those who now lie asleep in our blood-drenched hills. Therefore, O ye descendants to
come hundreds of thousands of generations later! All ye who pass this monument, receive and vigorously promulgate this great revolutionary spirit for eternity with constancy.

This is a good example of how a past incident can be used as a tool for justifying the Military Coup d'Etat and the Revitalizing Reforms of October through the rhetoric of revolution.

At any rate, such positive evaluation from state power did pave the way for civilian interpretations of the Tonghak Peasants War Ch'ŏndo-gyo, which had been closely tied to the event from the beginning, actively responded to such government measures and accordingly proceeded to construct monuments related to the Tonghak Revolution. The first fruit of such endeavor was the construction of a statue of Son Pyŏng-hŭi within Pagoda Park in 1966. Of course, Son was highlighted more as a national representative who had taken part in the March 1 Independence Movement, but his role in the Tonghak Revolution too was stressed. Moreover, civilian organizations dedicated to remembering the "1894 Tonghak Revolution" were established in 1967, and from the following year and onwards, a cultural festival commemorating Tonghak Revolution began to be held, with Chŏng'up as the central locale. With such shifts in interpretation and subsequent transformation of the event into "Tonghak Revolution," movements that newly sought to underscore the populist and resistant aspects of the peasant troops gradually began to emerge as well. On the whole, however, no civilian organization could transcend the government's interpretation of the Peasants War. A monument erected in T'ae'an, Sŏsan, in 1978 thus states: "In renewing the selfless patriotic spirit of the Tonghak
Revolution ever since the May 16 Military Revolution, the Third Republic has…” This may be seen as an example of the government's use of the incident as a symbol that stressed loyalty the new nation by linking the “Tonghak Revolution” to the “May 16 Military Revolution,” and by redefining the peasant troops’ resistance as selfless patriotism.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monument</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year Constructed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Former Residence of General Chŏn Pong-jun</td>
<td>Iŭnyŏng, Chŏng’ŭp, North Ch’ŏlla province (Historic Site no. 293)</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hwangt'o-hyŏn Battleground</td>
<td>Iŭnyŏng, Chŏng’ŭp, North Ch’ŏlla province (Historic Site no. 295)</td>
<td>1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paeksan Consecrated Grounds</td>
<td>Kobe, Chŏng’ŭp, North Ch’ŏlla province</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hwangt'o-hyŏn Memorial Hall</td>
<td>Iŭnyŏng, Chŏng’ŭp, North Ch’ŏlla province</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Commemorating the Three Movements of 1894, 1919, and 1938</td>
<td>Insub, North Ch’ŏlla province</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Commemorating the Remanung Site Related to Ch’ŏnun Pak In-ho</td>
<td>Sapk’yo, Yesan, South Ch’ungh’ŏng province</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Recording the Words of Uiam Son Pyŏng-hun</td>
<td>Independence Hall (Ch’ŏng’won, North Ch’ungh’ŏng province)</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statue of General Chŏn Pong-jun</td>
<td>Iŭnyŏng, Chŏng’ŭp, North Ch’ŏlla province</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrine to General Chŏn Pong-jun</td>
<td>Iŭnyŏng, Chŏng’ŭp, North Ch’ŏlla province</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When, with the sudden death of President Park, the authoritarian system came to an end, waves of democratization demanding political changes swept the nation. It was amid such currents that a populist historical interpretation of the Tonghak Peasants War with political implications emerged for the very first time. In early 1980, the 1894 Tonghak Revolution Memorial Foundation of Chŏng'ūp, North Chŏlla province, held the Tonghak Festival. Founded in 1967, this civilian organization had organized the Tonghak-related cultural festival since the following year. Because it was being held at a moment in which the fervor for democratization had reached its peak, the Tonghak Festival became an arena for open expression of long-suppressed grievances and demand for democratization on the part of the citizenry. Indeed, the participation and speechification of none other than Kim Dae Jung, the opposition politician recently released from legal bans, unwittingly turned the Tonghak Festival into a political assembly that dealt with extremely sensitive issues of the day. Kim had been invited for the reason that he "understood the Tonghak spirit well" (Kim Ŭn-jŏng, et al. 560), which undoubtedly signified protest and resistance against political oppression and regional discrimination. It was a moment in which the revolutionary symbolism of Tonghak combined with the political consciousness of resistance.

Such manifestations, however, were soon crushed and annulled by Chun Doo Hwan’s and his junta’s brutal accession to power. The assembly resulted in the dismissal of the then governor of North Chŏlla province as well as the chief of the local police station, and the arrest of the chairman of the memorial foundation. Moreover, the memorial foundation itself was advised to dissolve itself for having
organized the Tonghak Festival, which did in fact take place (Kim, et al. 560). Of course, that a small assembly held in the provinces should take on so much political significance was caused more by the political resistance associated with Kim Dae Jung the politician rather than by the name of Tonghak itself. Nevertheless, in a situation where free criticism of political reality and autonomous civil movements were oppressed, a civilian assembly held to commemorate the spirit of the Tonghak Peasants War was very likely to serve as an arena for political resistance demanding democracy. Indeed, stressing the fact that the Tonghak Peasants War itself had been a voluntary popular uprising against corrupt government and officials was none too palatable to the military regime.

While thus suppressing the Tonghak Festival on one hand, the Chun regime proceeded with the task of beautifying and reorganizing the Hwang’tö-hyŏn Battleground in order to underscore the Tonghak Peasants Revolution. Accordingly, the government actively led the organization of commemorative cultural festivals and the construction of statues, shrine, memorial halls, and lecture halls, all of which had hitherto been sponsored by local civilian organizations. Consequently, the entire Hwang’tö-hyŏn area was designated as a Historic Site in 1981 and Chŏn Pong-jun’s former residence likewise was designated as a Historic Site. The Hwang’tö-hyŏn Memorial Hall was constructed in 1983, not shortly after Chun’s inauguration, by his order. In 1984, the Hwang’tö-hyŏn complex was massively expanded once again by the President’s order that the entire area be consecrated “like Hyŏnch’'ung-sa.” The government thus came to consecrate the Hwang’tö-hyŏn Battleground and to erect a statue of Chŏn as well as a memorial hall out of the wish that such acts commemorative of the
Tonghak Peasants War would be understood as symbols of patriotism on an abstract level, spirit of self-sacrifice, and Ch'ŏn's greatness as an individual without being used as symbolic resources for the activation of civil society and critique of the authoritarian regime. In this respect, the process through which monuments related to the Peasants War were erected in the 1980's well exemplifies the tension and conflict between a "top-down" interpretation and a "bottom-up" interpretation of a single historical event.

This period also saw the emergence of a civilian historical interpretation of the Tonghak Revolution independent of the state's official interpretation. In 1983, descendants of the peasant troops and members of Ch'ŏndo-gyo in Imsil erected in the same location three stone stelae that commemorated three movements—the "Tonghak Revolution of 1894," "March 1 Movement of 1919," and "Anti-Japanese Movement of 1938." In the course, they stressed that all three movements had been led by the same figures and in the same spirit. These stone stelae are interesting especially because Ch'oe Sŭng-u, Kim Yŏng-won, and Han Yŏng-jae, all Tonghak leaders in Imsil, had participated in all three movements Ch'oe and Kim, who had participated in the Tonghak Peasants War respectively as Chief Assembly Leader and Assembly Leader of Imsil, had also actively taken part in the March 1 Independence Movement. While Ch'oe had distributed copies of the "Declaration of Independence" in Imsil and Namwon, Kim had been arrested, only to die in prison from the aftereffects of brutal torture, and Han likewise had committed suicide during torture. The Anti-Japanese Movement of 1938, in which a variety of individuals led by Ch'ŏndo-gyo had supplicated for Japan's downfall, too had witnessed the active participation of members of
Ch'ondo-gyo and descendants of the peasant troops in Imsil. Despite its regional significance, this stone stela is therefore a rare instance of the visualization of the Tonghak Peasants War and the March 1 Independence Movement as historically linked movements. That all of the leaders—Ch'oe, Kim, and Han—had participated actively in both movements lends a clear concreteness to such links. The stela, notwithstanding its regional dimensions, then may be seen as an example showing that, on personal and regional levels, modern Korean history indeed is connected in the way described above.

6) The Expansion of Populist Consciousness and Regional Consciousness and the Popularization of History: 1987-1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monuments</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year Constructed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stela Commemorating the Tonghak Uprising in Paeksan</td>
<td>Kobu, Chŏng'ŭp, North Chŏlla province</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to the Memory of General Yonggye Kim Tŏkm'yŏng</td>
<td>Wŏnp'yŏng, North Chŏlla province</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to the Memory of Heavenly Master Haewol</td>
<td>Hojŏ-myŏn, Wonju, Kang'won province</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Commemorating the Centennial of the Declaration of the Tonghak &quot;Guidance for Women's Self-Cultivation&quot; in the &quot;Rules for Women&quot;</td>
<td>Kujŏng-myŏn, Kŭm-nŭng, North Kyŏngsang province</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Commemorating the Tonghak Peasant Troops' [Victorious] Entry into Chŏnju</td>
<td>Chŏnju, North Chŏlla province</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monument</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonghak Peasants Revolution Monument</td>
<td>Ch'ung'yŏl-li, Changhŭng-up, South Chŏlla province</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to the Memory of General Kim Kae-nam</td>
<td>Chŏnju, North Chŏlla province</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Dedicated to Heavenly Master Haewol’s Meritorious Deeds</td>
<td>Kohan, Chŏngsŏn, Kang’won province</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designation of Ugŭm-ch’i as a Historic Site</td>
<td>Kongju, South Ch’ungch’ŏng province</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kŏsong-dang Stela</td>
<td>Chinju, South Kyŏngsang province</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Commemorating the Declaration of Mujang Uprising</td>
<td>Kong’um-myŏn, Koch’ang, North Chŏlla province</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial to the Souls of the Unknown Tonghak Peasants</td>
<td>Sinjung-ni, Kobu, Chŏng’up, North Chŏlla province</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consecration of Holy Master Uiam’s House of Birth and the Construction of His Statue</td>
<td>Pugi-myŏn, Ch’ŏng’won, North Ch’ungch’ŏng province</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hwangnyong-ch’ŏn Monument</td>
<td>Changsŏng, South Chŏlla province</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Commemorating the Site of Ch’oe Si-hyŏng’s Arrest</td>
<td>Wonju, Kang’won province</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stela Commemorating Po’n Assembly</td>
<td>Po’n, South Ch’ungch’ŏng province</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonghak Revolution Centennial Memorial Hall</td>
<td>P’ungnap-tong, Chŏnju, North Chŏlla province</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the mid-1980’s and onwards, the Tonghak Peasants War began to be examined in a new light, which was caused largely by two phenomena. One was the considerable expansion of the autonomy of civil society that had come about with democratization. The other was the emergence of a new knowledge system that championed a populist and nationalistic viewpoint in academic
research. With progress in democratization, various subcategories in society each began to find a voice and a self-identity of its own. Now prevalent among intellectuals was a viewpoint which sought to understand "bottom-up" movements for social change that saw history in terms of the ruled masses as the dynamics behind progress in history. The political consciousness and activities of the peasantry therefore came to be stressed as the historical entity and presence of the masses, which may very well be called the basic concept of South Korean social sciences in the 1970's and 1980's. Combined with the intellectuals' wish to emphasize the power of the people and to compensate for the absence of any proper revolution in Korean history, the Tonghak Peasants War became a much-discussed example of the path to independent and autonomous modernization. With the opportune coincidence of the centennial, numerous monuments were erected also.

Monuments erected after 1987 share several characteristics. First, they reveal a populist interpretation of history more clearly than the monuments constructed earlier. It was during this period that the "Tonghak Revolution" began to be called the "Tonghak Peasants Revolution." The memorial foundation in Chŏng'up proceeded to erect a memorial to the souls of the unknown Tonghak peasant troops who had perished in 1894, and to hold memorial rites for them. As a result, the Memorial to the Souls of the Unknown Tonghak Troops was constructed in Chusan village, Sinjung-ni, Kobu-myŏn, where the Tonghak newsletter had been discovered. Besides the fact that it was erected through the sheer efforts of local civilians, this memorial is noteworthy for its strongly populist interpretation, which is obvious from its emphasis on "unknown Tonghak peasant troops." The
movement to construct a stone stela in Kim Kae-nam’s honor likewise espoused a populist interpretation. Erected through the efforts of local intellectuals and artists, this monument also criticized the tendency to interpret the Tonghak Peasants War solely in terms of Chŏn Pong-jun and reflected its builders’ choice of Kim as a “more populist leader.”

Another characteristic of these monuments is that of stronger regional associations. Although it is related to the production in recent years of fuller and more regionally oriented research on the Peasants War, such emphasis on local ties is in fact more a reflection of the practical need to establish local self-identity ever since the implementation of local government. In other words, the Tonghak Peasants War began to be interpreted as a symbol of each region’s pride as the locality that led the revolution in order to “sustain the state and provide for the livelihood of the people,” and that boasts a history of patriotic anti-Japanese struggles. As the centennial of the incident, the year 1994 in particular witnessed a veritable flood of various commemorative events nationwide. Accordingly, local governments in areas including Chŏnju, Chŏng’up, Koch’ang, Changhŭng, Imsil, and Chunju sought to strengthen their local self-identities by independently symbolizing local incidents associated with the Peasants War. As a result, an emphasis on “our hometown” rather than on the state has become quite pronounced.

Typical example is that of the Tonghak Peasants Revolution Monument, which was constructed in Changhŭng in 1992. Erected in order to commemorate the Tonghak troops’ selflessness and their revolutionary spirit, this monument stands prominently at the entrance to Changhŭng-ŭp. After defining the Tonghak Peasants Revolution as “a revolution where peasants uprose in order to right
the corrupt political situation of the day and to save their motherland from the threat of utter ruin by ousting all encroaching foreign powers," the inscription on the monument describes the Changhŭng peasant troops’ uprising and self-sacrifice and goes on to state that the monument has been erected "so that we, the descendants of these peasant troops worthy of pride, may remember and emulate our forefathers’ great spirit for a very long time." As we have already seen, however, Changhŭng is the home also of Yŏnghoe-dang, which had already been constructed in 1895 in order to commemorate the righteous deaths of the Prefect of Changhŭng and 95 others during the Peasants War. For a long time, their descendants and influential locals had held memorial rites in remembrance of the deaths of officers and soldiers as symbols of loyalty to the nation at Yŏnghoe-dang. But, now, Changhŭng was the home also of a monument that commemorated the revolutionary significance of the peasant troops. A highly disconcerted descendant of Yŏnghoe-gye whom I met before the unveiling of the new monument protested that no one would lay down his life for the country if the Tonghak peasant troops, which had been rebel forces during the actual incident, were now to be embellished as revolutionary forces and if the government troops, which then had been a group of self-sacrificing and loyal subjects, were now to be criticized. In other words, the Tonghak Peasants Revolution Monument and Yŏnghoe-dang, both located in Changhŭng, are symbolic indicators of the dramatic changes that have taken place in the evaluation of the Peasants War over the last century.

As the originating point of the Tonghak Peasants War itself, North Chŏlla province has forged especially strong links between the historical event and local self-identity. The memorial foundation in
Ch’ŏng’ıp, which was active from very early on but was forcibly dissolved by the government in 1980, stressed the Kobu Uprising and the Battle of Hwangt’o-hyon, and endeavored to link the Tonghak Peasants War with Ch’ŏng’ıp’s local self-identity. Stressing the fact that the “prelude to the Tonghak Peasants Revolution began in Ch’ŏng’ıp, our home, in order to right a corrupt society and bravely to counter foreign encroachments,” they elevated Ch’ŏng’ıp to the status of the origin of the revolution. They erected the Memorial to the Souls of the Tonghak Peasant Troops in Sinju-ni, Kobu-myön, and are busily proceeding with related community activities. Likewise, in Koch’ang, the Tonghak Peasants War has been underscored as a symbol of local self-identity. Koch’ang’s emphasis, however, is based on studies that point to the Mujang Uprising and not the Kobu Uprising as the origin of the Tonghak Peasants War, and on the fact that the house of Chŏn Pong-jun’s birth is located in Tangch’on, Koch’ang. Indeed, at the unveiling ceremony of the Stela Recording the Declaration of the Mujang Uprising, the Koch’ang Tonghak Memorial Foundation thus claimed: “As the Tonghak Peasants Revolution was planned here... and as the First Uprising took place in Tangsan-kol and its leader is confirmed to have been a native of Tangch’on... Koch’ang, our home, is now a veritable ‘holy land’ of the peasant uprisings imbued with historical significance, and we all must continue the tradition of Koch’ang as the ‘home of the righteous’. This is a clear example of the combination of the Tonghak Peasants War and local pride.

Yet another recent trend is that of strengthening collective festivals and commemorative events in addition to and instead of simply erecting monuments. Kobu, for instance, has started to hold a
walkathon commemorating the Kobu Uprising, Chŏnju has held a
festival reenacting the peasant troops' victorious entry into Chŏnju
Mujang too has held a walkathon titled the "Mujang Declaration
Reenactment Walkathon." Of course, all such events are organized
mainly by the regional memorial foundations established in the
1990's, but local governments have provided support and the
participation of politicians is quite noticeable. With the memorial halls
at the center, a series of lectures on the history and significance of
the Tonghak Peasants War has been held, which in turn are linked to
open discussions on a variety of topics and to activities aimed at
promoting and activating civil society. Arts fairs as well as many
other cultural events have been held by the Association of Tonghak
Revolution Centennial Memorial Foundations, which is a coalition of
Tonghak-related memorial foundations nationwide. In addition,
various local events commemorating the Inception of the Uprising in
Mujang, Kobu Uprising, and Victorious Entry into Chŏnju have been
held. In other words, recent years have witnessed the reinterpretation
and re-acceptance of the Tonghak Peasants War as an invaluable
historical event that is worth continuing and remembering. Such a
trend has been led mainly by locales that were directly involved in
the incident itself, where the Peasants War is underscored as a
cultural resource symbolizing local self-identity.

4. The Objects of the Monuments and the Contents of
Symbolization

By further analyzing the history of monuments related to the
Tonghak Peasants War erected over the last century and examined above, we will now inquire into the cultural shifts that have taken place in South Korean society.

What then are the objects and fundamental semantic systems that these monuments seek to commemorate? Because the monuments' objects of commemoration are no simple material objects but events or activities that existed historically, their full meaning is difficult to discern, comprehensive, and complex. The monuments themselves, however, can in no way reveal such complexity but seek instead to reconfirm the significance of the Tonghak Peasants War by underscoring its specific aspects. Let us then first look at the objects commemorated by these monuments.

Table 6. Objects Commemorated by Monuments Related to the Tonghak Peasants War

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government troops</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary self-defense local troops</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders of peasant troops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obscure peasant troops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidents (uprisings, battles, revolutions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the table above, the objects of commemoration can largely be divided into events and personages. In the early years, most of the monuments commemorated specific individuals. This may have been due to the elitist cognitive system that tended to interpret historical incidents through their main actors. In addition, it may be a reflection of the collective conscious, which assumes that a specific incident or era can be understood through the actions and activities of its leaders.

Even monuments commemorating specific individuals, however, diverged sharply in the nature of their objects, with 1945 as the dividing line. In other words, pre-Liberation monuments commemorated the meritorious deeds or loyalty of figures from the voluntary anti-peasant or government troops; none of them commemorated figures from the peasant troops. With the Liberation, however, the situation changed overnight: now, monuments related to the Peasants War all commemorated figures from the peasant troops, none from the government or voluntary anti-peasant troops. What is noteworthy here is the emergence after the 1980's of monuments that specifically commemorate unknown peasant troops. Such commemoration of obscure groups of individuals instead of specific personages not only clarifies the meaning of the historical incident itself but also serves to remind us that, in the end, the majority of the masses are the
subjects and makers of history. On the whole, more monuments commemorating the Peasants War itself rather than specific personages have been erected after the 1970's. Most of these aim at stressing the significance of the revolution and the patriotic loyalty of "sustaining the state and providing for the livelihood of the people" in a modern form.

Let us now examine what these monuments symbolize, what they want the public collectively to remember. Their "messages," however, vary considerably depending on the builders’ historical consciousness, collective interests, and degree of relatedness to the Peasants War itself. They can be categorized into monarchical power, Confucian loyalty, revolutionary character of the masses, patriotism of "sustaining the state and providing for the livelihood of the people," and greatness of Tonghak thought, as in the table below.

Table 7. Semantic Systems Symbolized by Monuments Related to the Tonghak Peasants War

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monarchical power</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confucian loyalty</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revolutionary character of the masses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriotism of &quot;sustaining the state and providing for the livelihood of the people&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greatness of Tonghak thought</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>61</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Immediately after the Tonghak Peasants War, monarchical power and Confucian loyalty were greatly emphasized. All monuments erected then symbolize the power and authority of the punitive government troops and their commanders, and commemorate the Confucian scholars, traveling peddlers, and petty county clerks and functionaries who had contributed to the suppression of the peasant troops, thereby underscoring Confucian loyalty as the most valuable semantic system. In his “Censor Yi Sung-uk’s Preface to Yonghoe-dang,” Censor Yi Sung-uk discusses Yonghoe-dang as a monument on a par with Ch’ungnyŏl-sa. In other words, Ch’ungnyŏl-sa commemorated those who, outraged by the barbarians’ [i.e., the Manchus’] “indiscrimination between Koreans and barbarians” during the Manchu [Qing] Invasion of 1636, had demonstrated their loyalty through death. In exactly the same way, Yonghoe-dang commemorated those who, outraged by the “indiscrimination between man and beast [i.e., the Confucian literati vs the commoners and lower classes]” committed during the Tonghak Rebellion of 1894, had demonstrated their loyalty through death. Nor is the inscription on the memorial stela in Kŭmsan, penned by Yi To-jae, very different. Comparing Chŏng Suk-cho’s death to those of Cho Hŏn and Ko Kyŏng-myŏng during the Japanese Invasion of 1592, Yi records that the these two righteous patriots’ spirits now dwell in Kŭmsan.

After 1945, no monument espousing Confucian loyalty as its key symbolism was erected Yonghoe-dang, which Censor Yi Sung-uk had compared to Ch’ungnyŏl-sa, likewise was reduced to the descendants’ private space. Any monument dedicated to the government troops that received no attention from the descendants or Ch’ŏndo-gyo therefore went to ruin. This of course is an indicator of the near
extinction of medieval royalism and the Confucian theory of loyalty both during and after the Japanese colonial era, and the establishment of the modern state consciousness and national identity in Korean society ever since.

During the Third Republic, the Tonghak revolutionary troops’ patriotism centering on “sustaining the state and providing for the livelihood of the people” was greatly emphasized. The “Tonghak Rebellion” was now the “Tonghak Revolution” and the Tonghak peasant troops’ idea of “sustaining the state and providing for the livelihood of the people,” instead of the government troops’ loyalty, now became the chief object of commemoration. Indeed, carved on the 1894 Tonghak Revolution Monument, which was erected in Hwangt’o-hyŏn in 1963, are both phrases “sustain the state and provide for the livelihood of the people” and “practice benevolence and saving all the people.” What then could have been the meaning attached to “sustaining the state and providing for the livelihood of the people” in the 1960’s? In all likelihood, the semantic system of the phrase “sustaining the state and providing for the livelihood of the people” involved the image of a society that was considered ideal by the regime: one where the entire nation, under the ruler’s control, could be mobilized immediately and automatically, one where the autonomy of civil society could easily be overlooked by a state-oriented logic. Indeed, the Tonghak Peasants War came to be used increasingly as a symbol of statism after the Revitalizing Reforms. Such a semantic system was highlighted also during the government’s massive reorganization and consecration of the Hwangt’o-hyŏn area in the first half of the 1980’s.

The period beginning from the latter half of the 1980’s saw the
emergence of monuments that stressed the Tonghak peasant troops’ revolutionary and populist character instead of the vague patriotism of “sustaining the state and providing for the livelihood of the people.” The biggest factor behind such changes in the monuments’ semantic system was the existence of intellectuals and the activation of civil society. Accordingly, the “Tonghak Peasants Revolution” came to replace the “Tonghak Revolution” as the designation for the incident, and a greater emphasis came to be placed on unknown peasant troops as the objects of commemoration. At the same time, the Peasants War began to be used as a symbol that could strengthen the collective self-identity of each region. Regions directly associated with the incident itself, in particular, have since continued to put efforts into strengthening their self-identities as the “proud cradle of the revolution” through a positive interpretation and symbolization of the Peasants War. Of course, stressed at the same time but in a more implicit manner is the civic consciousness that seeks to criticize and expose a corrupt reality.

Nevertheless, it would be difficult to say that even monuments dating from the 1990’s were erected as collective symbols for society at large. In fact, the Tonghak Peasants War as yet has no commemorative holiday of its own that is observed by the entire Korean society. In other words, there is no memorial day in official social time that would allow us to continue to remember and reexamine the significance of the incident. Days related to the Peasants War including the days of the Mujang Uprising, the Paeksan Uprising, and the Fall of Ch'ŏnju are commemorated in some quarters, but such acts and days of commemoration are local and extremely limited, hardly accepted by society at large. Spatially, too,
this event is commemorated only and mainly in parts of Chŏlla and Ch'ungch'ŏng provinces. Of course, this stems from the fact that the incident itself started in these regions, but another reason lies in the emphasis placed since the latter half of the 1980's on historical incidents with regional origins as cultural resources that can help to establish regional self-identity. Consequently, the self-identity of specific regions and the act of commemorating the Tonghak Peasants War have combined very well. On the national level, however, the possibility that the Tonghak Peasants War may be used as a symbol of national identity has actually weakened somewhat.

Let us then examine the parties or subjects behind the construction of monuments related to the Peasants War over the last hundred years, which are listed and classified in the table below.

**Table 8** Parties Behind the Construction of Monuments Related to the Tonghak Peasants War

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Government</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government (Official Organs)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch'ŏndo-gyo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clans, Descendants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Residents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Organizations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confucian Scholars</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveling Peddlers</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) + (3)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
According to the table above, the subjects or parties who constructed monuments related to the Tonghak Peasants War can largely be divided into five categories: the state (government), Confucian scholars, Ch’ŏndo-gyo, civilian organizations, and descendants. We can also see that the subjects or parties behind the construction of such monuments have changed over time.

Immediately after the Peasants War, the royal court erected monuments commemorating officers and soldiers who had performed meritorious deeds in suppressing the peasant troops. Later, the Third Republic, which came to power through the May 16 Military Coup d’Etat, and the Fifth Republic, which usurped political power with the sword, all constructed monuments dedicated to the Tonghak Peasants Revolution. As for monuments erected by Confucian scholars, they clearly show their makers’ hostile relationship with the peasant troops: most of them commemorate Confucian scholars who were killed by the peasant troops or were active as members of the anti-peasant troops, and all of them share the same viewpoint with the royal court. Ch’ŏndo-gyo, on the other hand, is the most noteworthy party for its efforts positively to interpret and to elevate the status of the Tonghak Peasants War. As a social force with
considerably reduced power in post-Liberation South Korean society, Ch’ōndo-gyo found the Tonghak Peasants War to be the best resource for underscoring its self-identity vis-à-vis society at large. Indeed, not a few of the monuments erected and commemorative events held in the provinces have been made possible through the active efforts of Ch’ōndo-gyo. Nor can we ignore the role played by the descendants of those killed during the Tonghak Peasants War, who have been active in arousing social interest and maintaining already constructed monuments despite their lack of initiative in the historical interpretation of the incident itself. All of the well-tended graves and tombstones of peasant troop leaders such as Kim Tōk-myōng, Yi Pang-ōn, and Yi Sa-gyōng have been thus preserved through the efforts of these leaders’ descendants. The same goes for monuments dedicated to anti-peasant troops as well: Yōnghoe-dang, in Changhŭng, and Moch’ung-sa, in Ch’ungju, are all maintained by descendants of government troops killed in the Tonghak Peasants War. As for civilian organizations, there are few examples because many of them receive government subsidies or patronage from Ch’ōndo-gyo. The most representative civilian organizations include the 1894 Tonghak Revolution Memorial Foundation of Chŏng’up, which has been active since the late 1960’s, and the Tonghak Peasants Revolution Memorial Foundation of Chŏnju, which was established in 1992.

Before 1945, it was the royal court, regional governor’s offices, or Confucian scholars who led the construction of monuments and memorials related to the Tonghak Peasants War; there is no case of civilian participation whatsoever during this period. After the 1960’s, however, Ch’ōndo-gyo, locals, and descendants, now backed by the
government's positive evaluation of the historical incident, began actively to take part in the erection of monuments. From the mid-1980's and onwards, civilian organizations commemorating the Tonghak Peasants War in terms of their own locale started to emerge in the provinces, and the subjects or parties responsible for the erection of the monuments diversified even more. Such changes in the subjects or parties behind the construction of monuments dedicated to the Tonghak Peasants War can be read as a sign that South Korean society has begun to witness the emergence within itself of various social forces that can openly and publicly express their respective interpretations of past history. These shifts reflect too a reality where greater emphasis is placed on local self-identity with the implementation of local government.

4. Conclusion

An examination of monuments erected in commemoration of or in relation to the Tonghak Peasants War over a century reveals the degree to which the interpretation and commemoration of specific historical incidents can differ according to each period. Those constructed immediately after the Tonghak Peasants War, which commemorated the loyalty of government troops and Confucian intellectuals' self-sacrificing deaths, later gave way to those commemorating the revolutionary nature of peasant troops, and the patriotism of "sustaining the state and providing for the livelihood of the people" with changes in the social climate.

Behind such changes lies the transformation of South Korean society itself during the last hundred years. Changes in the
monuments built before and after 1945 clearly confirm the fact that a medieval monarchical system based on the Confucian theory of loyalty crumbled completely to give way to the establishment of a modern nation-state system. As such, the difference between shrines commemorating the deaths of officers and soldiers who died while defending towns and villages from the peasant troops, and revolutionary monuments commemorating the "sustaining the state and providing for the livelihood of the people" ideology of the peasant troops is none but a reflection of the gulf between Confucian monarchy and the modern state. The peasant troops, who actively resisted the corrupt royal court and foreign encroachments, can now be interpreted as embodiments of an august spirit of revolution because of modern South Korean society's desire that its entire establishment be understood and interpreted as being founded in that very same spirit. Indeed, monuments constructed in the 1960's and 1970's and those erected during the latter half of the 1980's reflect the tension between the state and civil society during their respective eras. This tension is exemplified by the difference between the Tonghak Revolution Monument erected to eulogize the May 16 Military Coup d'État and the Revitalizing Reforms of October, and the Memorial to the Souls of the Unknown Peasant Troops of 1894 constructed purely by civilian organizations.

That the subjects or parties involved in the construction of the monuments have changed can also be read as a reflection of shifts in the ruling class of Korea over the last century. In other words, changes in the monuments reflect the process of historical change from a period ruled by Confucian intellectuals to one in which even intellectuals of the enlightenment school were unable to completely
overcome their received view of the masses as inherently ignorant, then to one in which state power, armed with one-sided power, suppressed the growth of civil society, finally to one in which democratic ruling forces are being formed through the activation of civil society.

What must be read from the changes in the monuments above all, however, may be the process through which the dominant knowledge system and social consciousness have changed. In the last years of the Chosön Dynasty, social consciousness was still strongly influenced by the Confucian theory of loyalty and even some knowledge systems of the enlightenment school were unprepared as to the configuration of relationships between individual and society, nation and state, and sovereignty and foreign powers. Such limitations are borne out by the conservative symbolism of the many monuments that were erected immediately following the Tonghak Peasants War. Moreover, under the Japanese rule, this historical incident was forcibly obliterated and allowed to remain only on the level of personal reminiscence or memory, instead of being elevated to the status of a symbol of collective self-identity on the national level. Consequently, the entire colonial era only yielded monuments of poor quality and the absence of symbols. Likewise, during the process through which the national division system came to be established following the Liberation, any social consciousness capable of bringing the significance of the Peasants War to the fore could hardly take roots for a long time. The symbolization of the meaning of this incident as a revolution by an authoritarian regime in the 1960's reflects the contemporary situation, which was dominated by the state-led theory of modernization. As such, the semantic structures of
some of the monuments that interpreted the Tonghak Peasants War on the same level as the May 16 Military Coup d'Etat and the Revitalizing Reforms of October belie an oppressive, "top-down" ideology of patriotism. On the other hand, the construction of numerous monuments by a variety of subjects and parties with varied meanings after the latter half of the 1980's attests to the influence of the new culture and knowledge systems that reflected democratization and the growth of civil society in South Korea.

What most tellingly reveals the current significance of monuments dedicated to the Tonghak Peasants War is the concept of "sustaining the state and providing for the livelihood of the people." In the semantic system of "sustaining the state and providing for the livelihood of the people," which is espoused by almost all monuments extant, there coexist two viewpoints on this historical incident: one, the "bottom-up" interpretation, which stresses the significance of the event as a popular movement, and another, the "top-down" interpretation, which emphasizes the individual's dedication and self-sacrifice for the security and development of his motherland. An emphasis on the citizen's rights and autonomy and an emphasis on the unity and stability of the state, though closely related, are by nature quite different from each other. While monuments erected by the government or affiliated public offices have often been used as symbols espousing the latter viewpoint, others reveal tension between these two viewpoints, as in the example of Ch'ŏng'ap. This latter case may be seen as a combination of the two possible but conflicting interpretative accounts of the Peasants War—the populist and the nationalist—which signifies the relationship between civil society and national identity.
With progress in democratization and localization, monuments dedicated to the Peasants War show an increasing tendency to be associated with local self-identity. Likewise, their religious identity emphasizing the religious ethics of "man is heaven" continues to be stressed. Together with globalization and increasing cultural exchange, however, the likelihood of this historical incident being underscored as a collective symbol for society at large is gradually decreasing. As such, the symbolic meaning of this event is likely to become even more localized with increasing awareness of the limitations of populism, and of the fact that resistant nationalism cannot serve as our alternative in the future. Only in the process of socially integrating the two Koreas, which is expected to take place some time in the future, may the Tonghak Peasants War again be emphasized as an object of pan-national commemoration, should the need for a common historical symbol newly arise.
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Glossary

altar  祭壇
(voluntary, self-defensive) anti-
Tonghak local troops
民堡軍; 守城軍
April 19 Student Revolution;
April 19 Student Movement
[1960] 四一九 學生 革命;
四一九 學生 運動
Assembly 接
Assembly Leader 接主
Battle of Hwang-t’o-hyŏn [1894]
黃土壺 戰鬪
-bi; -pi [(stone) stela] -碑
Board of Public Works; Board
of Construction and Engi-
eering 工曹; 工部
-bu; -pu [(urban) prefecture] -府
Censor 御史
Ch’ang Pong-sŏn 張奉善
Changch’ung-dan 獎忠壇
Changhŭng(-gun); Changhŭng
(-tŏp); Changhŭng(-bu)
長興(郡); 長興(邑); 長興(府)
Chief Assembly Leader 都接主
Chief Overseer 都揔訪
Cho Hŏn [style: Chungbong]

趙憲 [號: 重峯]
Cho Tong-gŏl 趙東杰
Ch’ŏe Si-hyŏng [style: Haewol]
崔時亨 [號: 海月]
Ch’ŏe Sŏng-u 崔承雨
Chŏlla province; Honam (region)
全羅(道); 潮南 (地方)
-ch’ŏn [village] -村
Chŏn Pong-jun; “General Mung-
bean” 全琫準; ‘綠豆 將軍’
Chŏn Sŏk-tam 全錫淡
Ch’ŏndo-gyo, Chundoism 天道教
Chŏngch’ung-dan 旌忠壇
Ch’ŏngju Army Command
済州 兵営
Chŏnju(-si) 全州(市)
Choso (village) 鳥巢 (마을)
(President) Chun Do Hwan
全斗煥 (大統領)
Ch’ungnyŏl-sa 忠烈祠
Chusan (village) 舟山 (마을)
Collected History of Yŏnhoe-dang
[Yŏnhoe-dang Sajip]
『永懷堂 史輯』
commander of punitive (government) troops 招討使
Compilation of Reference Documents on Korea, Enlarged with Supplements [Ch’ung-bo Munhön Pigo] 增補文獻備考
Confucian literati 儒林兩班 (Confucian) (theory of) loyalty [to the state and the dynasty] 忠節(論); 節義(論)
“Copy of the Report Submitted by Yi Tu-hwang, Third Commander of the Vanguard” [“Usŏnbong Yi Tuhwang Changgye Tungbon”] 右先锋 李斗璜 状啓 膺本
Coup d’Etat of 1884 甲申政变 -dan; -tan [altar] -壇
dang; -tang [shrine; hall] -堂 (punitive, anti-Tonghak) government troops 官軍 (provincial) governor; (provincial) magistrate 觀察使; 監司, 道伯
-gye, -kye [mutual assistance association] -契
Haemi(-myŏn) 海美(面)
head of local (Confucian) elite’s meeting 儒會長
Heavenly Master 神師
Hong Kye-hun 洪啓淳
Hongŏng(-gun); Hongsŏng(-’up) 洪城(郡); 洪城(邑)
Hwang Ui-don 黃義埈
Hwangnyong(-ch’ŏn) 黃龍(村)
Hwangt’o-hyŏn; Hwangt’o-jae 黃土岘; 黃土垈
Hyŏnch’ung-sa 顯忠祠
Imsil 任實
inception (of an uprising) 起布
Independence Day [March 1] 三一節
Independence Hall [Tongnip Kinyŏngwan] 獨立 紀念館
“indiscrimination between Koreans and barbarians” 華夷無分
“indiscrimination between man and beast” 人獸無別
Ip’yŏng 梨坪 -jae; -chae [pass] -재
Japanese Invasion of 1592 千辰 倭亂
Jeonbuk Ilbo 『全北日報』
Ki U-man 奇宇萬
Kim Dae Jung 金大中
Kim Han-sŏp 金漢燮
Kim Kae-nam 金開南; 金開男
Kim Sang-gi 金善基
Kim Tŏk-myŏng [style: Yonggye] 金德明 [號: 龍溪]
Ko Kyŏng-myŏng [style: Chebong] 高敬命 [號: 霆峯]
Kōbu Uprising [1894] 古阜蜂起; 古阜 民亂
Koch'ang(-gun) 高敞(郡)
Kyŏngju(-si) 慶州(市)
lands for the procurement of expenses for memorial rites 享祀畑
Liberation Day [August 15] 光復節
local (Confucian) elite’s meeting 儒會
“man is heaven”; “man is God” 人乃天
Manju [Qing] Invasion of 1636 丙子 胡亂
Mangŏk Reservoir 萬石浦
May 16 Military Coup (d’État); May 16 Military Revolution [1961] 五一 事 事革命
memorial rites 祭祀; 享祀
Moch’ung-dan; Moch’ung-sa 慕忠壇; 慕忠祠
Mujang(-n); Mujang(-myŏn); Mujang-(hyŏn) 茂長(里); 茂長(面); 茂長(縣)
Murder of Queen Myŏngsŏng [née Min] [1895] 乙未 事變
-myŏn [town(ship)] 面
National History Compilation 國史 編纂 委員會
Neo-Confucianism 朱子學; 性理學; 新儒學
O Chi-yŏng 吳知泳
October People’s Struggle 十月 人民 抗爭
Paeksan (Consecrated Grounds) [Paeksan (Sŏngil)] 白山(聖地)
Pagoda Park; T’apkol Park 塔婆 公園
Pak Hŏn-yang 朴憲陽
Pak Hŏn-yŏng 朴憲永
Pak Ŭn-sik 朴殷植
(President) Park Chung Hee 朴正熙 (大統領)
Park Myŏng Kyu 朴明圭
(Ponghak) peasant troops 農民軍
(hereditary) petty country functionaries and clerks [ajŏn; isŏ; sŏri] 衙前; 史胥; 僕史
"practicing benevolence and saving all the people"
‘廣濟 蒼生’
Progressives, Progressive Party
開化派, 開化 獨立黨
provincial governor’s office, regional governor’s office
官衙
Records on the Tonghak Rebellion [Tonghangnan Kirok]
『東學亂 記録』
Revitalizing Reforms (of October); Yusin (of October) [1972]
(十月) 維新
righteous army 義兵
righteous patriot 義士
-sa [shrine] -祠
Samnye 參禮
Shinto shrine [Japanese: jinja]
神社.
Sin Ch’ae-ho [style: Tanjae]
申采浩 [號: 丹齋]
Sin Yong-ha 신용하
Sinjung(-m) 新中(里)
Sino-Japanese War [1894]
日 清日 戰爭
Son Hwa-jung 孫化中
Son Pyöng-hui [style: Ŭiam]
孫秉熙 [號: 義庵]
stone stela; stone stele
碑石; 石碑
"sustaining the state and providing for the livelihood of the people" ‘朝國 安民’
tai ji, “yin-yang” symbol
[Korean: t’aegük] 太極
Tangsan(-kol) 堂山(堂)
-łap [monument; memorial] 塔
The Bloody History of (Korean) Independence Movements[(Han'-guk) Tongnip Undong-jì]
Hyŏlsa 『(韓國)獨立運動之血史』
The History of Tonghak [Tonghaksu]
『東學史』
The Lamentable History of Korea [Han’guk T’ongsae]
『韓國 痛史』
The Tonghak Peasants Rebellion and Its Lessons [Tonghak Nong-minnan-gwa Kǔ Kyohun]
『東學 農民亂의 教訓』
“(theory of) (guarding the orthodoxy and) refuting the heterodoxy” ‘(為正) 斥邪(論)’
Tonghak Festival 東學祭
(Tonghak) newsletter (沙鉄) 通文
Tonghak [“Eastern Learning”]

東學

traveling peddler 烏負商

Ugūn-ch’i 牛金峙

Unbong(-myŏn) 雲峰(面)

untitled (Confucian) scholar 幼學

“Veritable Records on Chŏn Pong-jun” [“Chŏn Pong-

jun Silgi”] 「全琫準 實記」

“Veritable Records on Moch’ung-

sa [Moch’ung-sa Silgi]” Ch’ungmu-gong [posthumous title:

[謚號: 忠武公]

Yi Sŏl 李偲

Yi To-jae 李道宰

Yŏn T’ae 李容泰

Yŏm To-hŏi 廉道稀

(Translated by Kim Yoo-suk, SNU)