
*State Making under Imperialism*FRAGMENTATION AND CONSOLIDATION IN THE
CENTRAL STATE

THE STATE IN KOREA UNDERWENT more major changes at the turn of the twentieth century than it had the previous three centuries. Following the devastating Hideyoshi invasions of the 1590s and the Manchu conquests a few decades later, the late Joseon state had settled into a stable form by the latter seventeenth century. For two hundred years thereafter, there were no major revisions in the governing form, which reflected the general stability of the internal order and the protracted peace in East Asia. This relative calm was shattered by domestic uprisings and the pressures from abroad in the second half of the nineteenth century, and in less than a decade following the Korean court's capitulation to Japanese demands for trade and diplomatic intercourse in 1876, the central administration substantially expanded to meet the functional needs of the new era. Another decade later, in the mid-1890s, a sweeping set of reforms altered forever the basic organization of the Korean state. Thereafter, a series of political dislocations hit the peninsula, resulting in the further dissolution of Korea's long-standing governing order through the force of Japanese imperialism. By the 1930s, the state structure, represented by an imposing colonial rule, appeared to have retained only a few traces of the Joseon era.

To be sure, the Joseon dynastic state was itself a formidable institution, comprising a highly systematic collection of hierarchically arranged organs responsible for deliberative, juridical, and managerial functions. These agencies extracted resources (both material and human), exercised policing and defense functions, and governed social interaction within the state's sovereign territory. The long history of such a centralized administration, in fact, firmly cemented durable, normative patterns of state authority. Nevertheless, the Joseon system was also rationalized toward definitively

ancient ideals, and in committed conformity to the neo-Confucian social ethos.

The late nineteenth century, an era characterized by persistent contact with foreign influences beyond China, brought forth a *re-rationalization* of this state structure in accordance with a new set of guiding principles rooted in imperialism: first, an overriding concern to relieve external and, to an extent, resultant internal pressures through the creation of new governing functions and institutions, often in emulation of the Meiji Japanese state; then, soon after the turn of the twentieth century, the implementation, under Japanese control, of a more coercive and penetrative state that sought to maximize the interests of foreign rule. The increasing breadth of state responsibilities, which accompanied the diversification of society and economy, also necessitated an enormous expansion of the state itself, whether measured in personnel or material inputs, or in the degree of social presence and intervention. Over the colonial period (1910–45), the state grew fourfold in personnel, over twofold in personnel relative to population, and over twentyfold in invested financial resources, establishing a regime that far exceeded the scope and mobilizational capacity of any Korean administration that had preceded it.

Much of this increase took place in the final decade or so of the colonial era, when military expansionism turned the state into a mechanism for wartime mobilization. As this chapter will show through its explorations of the wartime state as well as of systematic land surveys both before and after the annexation, the colonial state's remarkable growth was, in many ways, an extension of the trajectory, largely drawn by military imperatives, that had begun in the late nineteenth century. At another level, however, two features of the state's development belied notions of progressive rationalization and systematization: the fragmentary, often bifurcated structure of the central state from the late Joseon era through the reforms culminating in the establishment of the Government-General in 1910; and the organizational disjunctures of foreign rule itself, as the challenges of implanting and normalizing a conquest state resulted in multiple, often divergent demands tugging at the colonial regime.

*The Joseon Central Administration and
Tongni Amun Agencies of the 1880s*

The reign of the monarch, Gojong (1864–1907), witnessed the emergence of a central state system in Korea that stood in stark contrast to the Joseon

model that he had inherited (see appendix). Indeed, the comprehensive changes to the governing order during Gojong's forty-four years on the throne appear all the more extraordinary considering that the existing structure—notwithstanding the abuses associated with the dominance of royal in-law clans in the nineteenth century—was not a despotic tool but rather a systematic organization constructed in emulation of a definitive model found in classical sources.¹ When the final Joseon revision to the dynastic legal code, the *Daejeon hoetong*, was promulgated in the second year of King Gojong's reign (1865), the central organization that it decreed differed little from the basic form inscribed in the original dynastic code, the *Gyeongguk daejeon* of 1471. However, by the 1880s, as demonstrated in the establishment of the *Tongni amun* agencies, new government organs were created to meet functional needs that the old Joseon system clearly could not have foreseen, much less accommodate.

The character of Joseon statecraft can be labeled as “Korean-Confucian,” a mixture of Confucian ideals and aristocratic interests, which in turn stemmed from ancient Korean patterns of social hierarchy as well as immediate political considerations regarding political access. It reflected a conscious, deliberate emulation of the models of ancient China, as found in the Confucian canonical texts such as the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli*), as well as both Chinese and Korean interpretations of this tradition. The enduring supremacy of such principles was ensured through the recruitment and promotion system, centered on the state examinations, which tested and reviewed potential appointees on their familiarity with these ideals.² The abolition of the examinations by the Gabo Reforms in 1894 thus heralded a major rupture not only in personnel recruitment but in the principles of governance as well.

The Gabo Reforms departed from the Joseon model also in more tightly concentrating administrative authority. The Joseon state, while incorporating the localities under the systematic supervision of the central state, had also allowed room for three separate divisions of government—the High State Council (Uijeongbu), the Six Boards (Yukjo), and a third group comprising the censoring organs as well as the Royal Secretariat (Seungjeongwon)—to jostle for authority.³ In the seventeenth century the High State Council, while remaining in existence, was replaced by the Border Defense Command (Bibyeonsa) as the supreme deliberative body, but most of the officials overlapped between these two agencies. Such a system of checks and balances, which extended in general to the relationship between the monarch and the

officialdom, might have been critical to the stability and longevity of the Joseon ruling mechanism,⁴ but the competition between the deliberative and administrative branches, in particular, helped also to fragment central authority. After King Taejong, the third Joseon monarch, instituted the basic model of the High State Council–Six Boards system, a series of struggles ensued during the fifteenth century over the precise hierarchy of these two branches,⁵ fueled by competing interpretations of the Confucian canon and by the interests of individual monarchs, who preferred either a joint custody of supreme deliberative authority or domination by one of the two sides.⁶ Meanwhile, the Three Censoring Organs (*Samsa*), staffed by ardent young Confucian idealists recruited through the examination system, came to grow sufficiently in stature to wield considerable clout.⁷ The power of the censoring organs in turn reinforced the primacy of especially the Board of Personnel and the Board of Rites as the representative administrative organs of Korean-Confucian statecraft, and the fact that neither agency survived the reforms of the late nineteenth century reflected their incompatibility with the era of imperialism. Thus emerged the *Tongni amun* organs of the 1880s.

The new *Tongni amun* agencies, modeled after the *Zongli geguo shiwu yamen* of Qing China, undertook a comprehensive range of new responsibilities associated with foreign contact. The *Tongni gimu amun*, the first of these agencies, was founded in late 1880 with twelve departments, including those for diplomacy, military affairs, and border control, as well as those for machinery production (*Gigyesa*), foreign language instruction (*Eohaksa*), and trade (*Tongsangsa*).⁸ A reduction in the number of departments to seven in late 1881 also eliminated the diplomatic distinction between China and other countries, including Japan, through the creation of a singular Diplomacy Department (*Dongmunsa*).⁹ In late 1882 this agency was replaced by two new *Tongni amun* organs: the Home Office and the Foreign Office.¹⁰ Officially, both fell under the jurisdiction of the High State Council, but like their predecessor, their authority superseded that of other organs, and the highest-ranking officials served in the *Tongni amun* positions while maintaining their posts in the traditional organs.¹¹

By assuming a broad range of duties assigned to the Six Boards as well as new functions made urgent by persistent contact with the outside world, the Home Office and Foreign Office of the 1880s expressed the drive to strengthen the Korean state's position both domestically and externally through institutional restructuring. They also demonstrated the willingness of the Korean monarch and his reformist officials to meet the needs of

“self-strengthening” in the new era.¹² In so doing, the *Tongni amun* agencies also showed the inadequacies of the Joseon institutional layout, in the age of sustained external contact and competition, for fostering advances in technology, military readiness, and education. The greater significance of the Foreign Office and Home Office, then, lay in their signaling the beginning of the end of the Joseon state order.

Gabo Reforms

Through two main stages in a short span of one-and-a-half years, the Gabo Reforms of 1894 to 1895—or early 1896 in the newly instituted Gregorian calendar—built on the innovations of the *Tongni amun* agencies and instituted a wholesale renovation of the Korean state. This system would survive in modified form for another decade, and arguably, another five decades, as the basic structure of central administration on the peninsula. The Gabo Reforms began with the enactments of the Deliberative Assembly, or *Gunguk gimucheo* (“Military state command”), which was established in the summer of 1894 following the occupation of the capital by Japanese troops in advance of their war against China.¹³ A provisional organ of approximately twenty councilors, the Deliberative Assembly exercised sweeping powers and, in only a few months, enacted over two hundred directives that amounted to an all-encompassing reordering of state and society.¹⁴

In addition to eliminating slavery and the Joseon examination system, which were perhaps the most prominent reforms, the Deliberative Assembly erected a new system of central administration, which combined the former High State Council and Six Boards arrangement into a cabinet system, albeit one still overseen nominally by the High State Council, while eliminating the censoring agencies. In one fell swoop, all organs of the sprawling central bureaucracy from the 1880s, except for the Royal Household Ministry, coalesced into a single state administration. The cabinet was headed by the premier (Chongni daesin) and included the ministers of state (Daesin) of eight ministries (*amun*): Home Affairs, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Military, Legal Affairs, Trade and Industry, Public Works, and Education.¹⁵ The second Gabo government, formed in late 1894—and now including leaders, like Seo Gwangbom, of the failed Gapsin Coup of 1884 who had returned from Japanese exile—took further steps at administrative streamlining, consolidation, and renaming the following year.¹⁶

Perhaps the most consequential series of organizational reforms came in the area of finances. In the late Joseon system the motley sources of tax revenue

were handled by not only the Board of Taxation but also organs such as the Board of War. This fracturing of fiscal authority had been cited by Korean reformers as one of the root causes of the administrative weakness and widespread corruption of the nineteenth century. Among the first steps taken by the Deliberative Assembly in the summer of 1894 was to separate the fiscal and other affairs of the newly created Royal Household Ministry (Gungnaebu), which contained the numerous agencies catering to the monarchy, from those of the central government.¹⁷ The consolidation of all fiscal administration in the Ministry of Finances (Takji amun, then Takjibu) was to follow in early 1895, along with the implementation of a modern “accounting law” (*hoegyebep*) that eliminated ad hoc or miscellaneous taxes, standardized practices of written authorization for revenue collection and expenditures, required annualized budgets and updated ledgers, and funneled all financial affairs, with very few exceptions, through the ministry.¹⁸

Notwithstanding the overt reliance on Japanese models, it is difficult to deny the epochal significance of the Gabo Reforms, for they re-rationalized the state structure from one in accordance with the Korean-Confucian ethos and ancient models to one driven by the geopolitical pressures of imperialism. The Koreans spearheading these reforms—most prominently, Bak Yeonghyo, Yu Giljun, Yun Chiho, and Seo Jaepil—undertook a conscious, determined effort to dislodge society and polity from the Joseon system, and to erect a state designed to secure Korean autonomy and spur economic, social, and cultural developments along the lines of external models. These goals would remain central to state restructuring efforts thereafter, even as political control shifted from one group to another, and even after the resurgence of the Crown re-fragmented the central state.

Korean Empire Period (1896–1905)

The monarch’s flight from the court, controlled by Japanese-backed officials, to the Russian consulate in February of 1896 triggered a widespread backlash against the Gabo Reforms and brought down the final Gabo cabinet, chasing most of its leaders to Japan. In the central government, however, the anti-Gabo atmosphere proved more powerful in sweeping away the *people* associated with the Reforms than the institutions. (Indeed, some Gabo figures were retained in influential positions.) The basic structure, authority, and thrust of the Gabo state would persist throughout the subsequent Great Korean Empire, or *Daehan jeguk*,¹⁹ which was declared in the fall

of 1897 as the new name and form of the Korean state, headed by a monarch now invested as an emperor. Concurring mostly with the 1897–1907 period of *Gwangmu* (“Glorious military”), in reference to the new reign for the old monarch, Gojong, the Korean Empire continued the Yi dynasty but changed the official name of the country as well as the character of the state itself.

Most notably, the imperial state, until the onset of the Japanese protectorate in 1905, was bifurcated and dominated by the monarchy—or more specifically, the Royal Household Ministry (*Gungnaebu*) and the various agencies and authorities under its command. The leaders of the Gabo Reforms likely did not imagine that their establishment of a Royal Household Ministry as a way to rationalize, through separation, the Crown’s relationship to the government would lead to the incremental appropriation of much of the state’s powers by the monarchy. Indeed, by the end of the *Gwangmu* period in 1907, approximately 150 organizational amendments had appropriated new powers for the Royal Household Ministry.²⁰ And the Gabo state’s segregation of the royal household’s fiscal affairs into the Office of Crown Properties (*Naejangwon*), within the Royal Household Ministry, had the ironic affect ultimately of strengthening not the central government’s finances but rather that of the monarchy.²¹ The Office of Crown Properties, under the direction of Yi Yongik, came to act as an independent bookkeeping entity, and within a few years it appropriated numerous sources of tax revenue from the central government and organized the Crown’s vast landholdings and monopolies into a formidable financial basis. By the opening years of the twentieth century the royal household took control of the leasing of mining and fishing rights, railroad concessions, and even the national mint. Such proactive management of the Crown’s financial resources also established the pattern of close state command over the macroeconomy that was to continue through the colonial period (see chapter 4).

The monarchy’s relatively stout financial position worked hand in hand with its appropriation of military powers as well. These efforts strived toward increasing the prestige and standing of the monarchy as the undisputed source of political authority and, indeed, as the symbol of the country itself. In 1899 came the establishment of the Supreme Military Council (*Wonsubu*), which acted directly at the behest of the monarch and independently of the central government.²² The council’s measures to flex the Crown’s muscle, however, which included staffing the highest military positions with loyal officials and the creation of capital and personal guard garrisons, ultimately did little to strengthen the country’s overall military condition. This reality

was on clear display beginning in 1904, when Korean high officials proved helpless in the face of intimidating demands from the Japanese, who landed thousands of troops in Korea in preparation for the war against Russia for preeminent control over northeast Asia.

This leads us, then, to question whether, indeed, we can classify the monarchy as a realm of the state itself.²³ Not only was it structurally segregated from the rest of the central government, but unlike the Gabo efforts to conceptually revamp the state several years earlier, the Royal Household Ministry for the most part simply seized or augmented its areas of authority. But the Crown was part of the Korean state by just about every other measure, whether in terms of exercising political authority or mobilizing resources and levying taxes. What the Crown's enhanced power actualized, then, was the institutionalization of the bifurcated modern Korean state, this time in correspondence to a split between the Crown and central government. This preceded the division of the state during the protectorate period according to nationality—with, oddly, the Japanese protectorate taking the position of the “state within the state” that the Royal Household Ministry had occupied in the Korean Empire period.

Protectorate (1906–1910)

In the aftermath of Japan's victory over Russia in the 1904–5 war, the Japanese Residency-General (Tōkanfu), proclaimed in 1905 and established in early 1906, appropriated the Korean government's foreign and fiscal affairs while taking an “advisory” role in other matters. The Resident-General—with elder statesman Itō Hirobumi as the first—served as the head of this organ to oversee the Japanese protectorate. Beneath him the protectorate was divided into two main parts: the (central) Residency-General; and its group of Affiliated Agencies (Sosoku kanshō), the composition of which shifted several times. The Residency-General contained three to four ministries depending on the year, including a separate Police Ministry (Keimubu—1906–7) and later, a Foreign Ministry (Gaimubu—1909). The Affiliated Agencies included Japanese consulates, the Rijichō, in the major urban centers with substantial Japanese populations, the Railroad Supervisory Bureau (Tetsudo kanrikyoku—1907), organs managing the Japanese courts, and agencies for postal and communication services, among others. Total outlays for the protectorate—the majority of which fell under the category of an “advance” to the Korean government (*Kankoku seifu*

ittaikin)—saw more than a 2.5-fold increase from 1906 to 1909,²⁴ while the total number of personnel increased from slightly over a thousand in 1906 to 1,751 by the end of 1909.²⁵

These personnel figures, however, do not include the dramatic expansion of the Japanese police and military presence, which provided the coercive elements necessary not only to gradually bring the Korean government and people under Japanese control, but to cultivate a new entrance point into the bureaucratic order for thousands of Koreans (see chapter 2). The momentous treaty of the summer of 1907 between the protectorate and the Korean government, which accompanied the forced abdication of the monarch, Gojong, in favor of his son, Sunjong,²⁶ gave the Residency-General power to approve personnel appointments in the Korean government and thus transmitted effective control over the state itself.²⁷ The police system was critical to this process. In August of 1907—three years before formal annexation—Japanese police officials were integrated into the Korean police system, authority over which went into Japanese hands. The former Japanese police advisor became the country's top police official (*Gyeongmu chonggam*, Jpn. *Keimu sōkan*), and other Japanese advisors assigned to the Korean provincial governments likewise now became formal police officials of the Korean state. In this way, the Residency-General's officials could claim to have been appointed by the Korean government, which now had "complete jurisdiction" over even the Japanese residents.²⁸ Of course, this represented Korean autonomy in name only; Japanese officials were firmly in control of the state's coercive apparatus, which expanded in the remaining years of the protectorate.

In the meantime, the Korean officialdom itself was racked with internal struggles between those favorably disposed to Japanese involvement—many from the same group of reformers who survived the downfall of the Gabo Reforms²⁹—and a mixture of anti-Japanese and conservative officials who had regained their high positions in 1896 and resolutely refused to capitulate to the geopolitical tides. This conflict was visible in the 1904–5 period, overlapping with the Japanese entrance into Korea to persecute the war against Russia. The upper hand gained gradually by the cabinet officials who either were pro-Japanese or succumbed to Japanese gunboat pressures was reflected in the reordering of the High State Council system, which scaled back the possibilities of monarchical intervention in state affairs, particularly in finances, to an extent similar to that of the Gabo system of 1895.³⁰ This trend reflected increasing Japanese efforts to debilitate the Korean monarchy and culminated in the scrapping of the High State Council for good in the

summer of 1907 in favor of a revamped cabinet system (*naegakje*).³¹ The elimination of the Ministry of Legal Affairs would follow in October of 1909, although oddly, the Ministry of War continued in existence despite having been stripped of most of its functions following the disbandment of Korea's army in 1907.³²

Colonial Central Administration, 1910–1945

These measures eventually dovetailed into the establishment of the colonial regime, or the Government-General of Korea (Chōsen sōtokufu), the organization of which was formally revealed at the end of September 1910, although the annexation itself had taken place a month earlier through the signing of the annexation treaty and the transfer of all governing authority to the new colonial regime.³³ On the surface, the new administrative order represented a melding of the two polities that had existed side by side in Korea over the previous five years: the Residency-General, including Resident-General Terauchi Masatake (Itō Hirobumi's successor) himself; and the Korean government that had increasingly come under Japanese control after the summer of 1907. The ministries (*bu*), meanwhile, were reduced from seven to four (Interior, Finance, Law, and Agriculture, Commerce & Industry) plus the Governor-General's Secretariat (Sōtoku kanpō, later Sōmubu), owing to the absence of the foreign and defense ministries and the subsuming of the Education Bureau under the Interior Ministry. And as with the protectorate government, the second main component of the colonial regime was the group of nearly two dozen Affiliated Agencies (Sosoku kanshō), big and small, that included the Advisory Council (Chūsuin), a body composed of pro-Japanese Koreans given titles of nobility, as well as the courts, the Communication Bureau (Yūshinkyoku) handling the postal services, the Police Headquarters (Keimu sōkanbu), the provincial governments, customs service, courts and jails, hospitals, and until 1918, the Provisional Land Survey Bureau, which became the largest state organ in the first decade (see below).³⁴ Indeed, the Affiliated Agencies, whether measured in financial or bureaucratic resources, were together far larger than the central Government-General (Sōtokufu) itself, serving as the site of most of the colonial state's expansion thereafter.

This general scheme remained in place until the March First independence uprisings of 1919 prompted the colonial authorities to revamp the system, purportedly for streamlining administration.³⁵ The Government-General's

four ministries of the first decade were replaced by a system of six bureaus (*kyoku*), as agricultural and commercial matters now fell under the jurisdiction of the Cultivation Bureau (Shokusankyoku), and as a separate Education Bureau (Gakumukyoku) was revived and a central Police Bureau was created to oversee the suddenly inflated civilian ranks of police upon the dissolution of the *kempeitai* military police units (chapter 2). Three departments at a similar level (Railroad, Public Works [Doboku], and General Affairs) were subsumed under the Governor-General's Secretariat, although by 1925 a separate Railroad Bureau (Tetsudokyoku) was established among the Affiliated Agencies.³⁶ And in 1921 a new Monopolies Bureau (Senpaikyoku) was created to direct the increasingly prolific colonial state enterprises in ginseng, tobacco, salt, opium, and other products.

Except for the addition of a seventh bureau, that of Agriculture and Forestry (Nōrinkyoku) in 1932,³⁷ this arrangement remained largely intact until the late 1930s, when the campaigns to procure resources for the war commenced (see below). The Bureau of the Interior changed its name to the Bureau of General Affairs and created a National Total Mobilization Section (Kokumin sōryokuka). Two ministries were added in 1939, the Bureau of Planning and the Bureau of External Affairs, in order to coordinate, respectively, the mobilization campaign within the colony and the colonial mobilization measures with the larger imperial effort. By 1941 the Industry Bureau (Shokusankyoku) contained divisions for special minerals and electricity provision, and the central Police Bureau contained divisions for coordinating security efforts such as air raid defenses (*Bōgoka*) and the operation of the economic police (*Keizai keisatsuka*), who were responsible for channeling material resources and repressing unauthorized consumption and activities such as black marketeering. Over the final twenty months of the colonial regime, the most signal organizational change for enhancing the procurement of war materiel was the merging of scattered organs into three dedicated bureaus for mining and industry, agriculture, and transportation, respectively.³⁸

Throughout this development the Government-General, like other colonial bureaucracies, functioned as the sturdy “backbone” of imperialist rule.³⁹ The vertical integration of authority in this bureaucratic autocracy was manifested most clearly in the person of the Governor-General, a Japanese military commander who was appointed by and, through the mediation of the Japanese premier, answered directly to the Japanese emperor.⁴⁰ His legislative autonomy conferred upon him powers to create special “system ordinances” (*seirei*) that pertained only to Korea, and in fact, over 80% of the 681 such laws

promulgated by the Governors-General of Korea in thirty-five years of rule were in effect only in Korea.⁴¹ This number constitutes over twice as many *seirei* as in Taiwan over fifty years, and in contrast to Taiwan, many of the most important statutes, including the Household Registration Act, maritime laws, and most laws concerning taxation, were *seirei*. And despite the metropolitan efforts to integrate the Korean administration into an empire-wide control system by establishing, for example, a cabinet-level Ministry of Colonial Affairs in 1929, in reality the regime in Korea—particularly the office of the Governor-General—successfully resisted such subordination for the most part, even during wartime mobilization.⁴² As many studies and the rest of this book will demonstrate, however, the Government-General fell far short of exercising a dominant autonomy from social forces, and the Governor-General hardly acted unilaterally, much less as an absolute dictator. He stood at the top of a multipronged bureaucracy with internal rivalries and disagreements, divisions that left the regime prone to public pressure from extra-state actors, whether Japanese residents, Korean elites in business or the press, or even the Korean masses—as shown in the sensitivities surrounding popular reaction to colonial state policies following the March First uprising of 1919. And despite the continuing insistence on their formal independence by the Governor-General and his administration, the metropolitan government, with its own array of interest groups, also exerted strong influence over the colonial regime, which remained fiscally dependent on Tokyo and thus had to report to and gain approval for major changes.⁴³

Indeed, the sources of revenue and the allocation of resources, both material and human, represent another key to understanding the colonial state, which underwent extraordinary growth in capacity, particularly from 1931 to 1945. Throughout the thirty-five years of colonial rule, in fact, remarkably the Government-General's published annual ledger sheet never showed a deficit.⁴⁴ This demonstrated not that the colonial regime established great efficiencies in revenue collection from the beginning, but rather that the metropolitan government provided a substantial portion of the necessary funds, labeled as "supplemental assistance" and including the Special Imperial Grace Endowment from the Japanese monarchy's own coffers.⁴⁵ The colonial regime itself underwent frequent structural adjustments in order to increase the revenue stream, and indeed this was one of the primary purposes behind the enormous investment in the colony-wide cadastral survey of 1910–18 (see below), for the land tax represented the foundation of government revenue inflows in the early colonial period. Over its first decade, in fact, the

Government-General relied upon the same basic sources of tax revenue as did the precolonial Korean government—primarily the land tax, plus consumption taxes on alcohol and tobacco, customs duties, various fees for licenses and other documentation services, possessions of public land and other holdings, and monopolies such as those over tobacco and ginseng production and distribution.

Over the 1920s and 1930s, however, the dependence on the land tax was reduced considerably,⁴⁶ replaced by other revenue sources such as customs duties, profits from public sector industries like the railroad and telecommunications, state monopolies, the issuance of bonds (including war bonds), as well as various surtaxes, particularly following the outbreak of war with China in 1937 (figure 1). Income from consumption taxes in general, particularly for alcohol, rose at a rate that corresponded to the reduction in land taxes, but perhaps the most notable increase came with the introduction of the personal income tax in 1934. A corporate income tax had been in effect since the 1910s, and in the 1920s a levy on interest income was introduced, but these had constituted only a fragment of the total revenue stream. But through several increases in the personal income tax and the number of people eligible for targeting, as well as the creation of manifold taxes on corporate, business, and interest income throughout the wartime mobilization period, the duties on earnings came to constitute the largest source of tax revenue by the 1940s.⁴⁷

Expenditures also underwent major expansion, and as with revenues, the most notable increases came in the latter half of colonial rule (figure A.2). Total government outlays increased threefold from 1911 to 1920, doubled over the 1920s, and grew fourfold from 1930 to 1940, which amounted to a twentyfold increase over the first three decades of colonial rule, more than double the rate of increase in the gross domestic product.⁴⁸ Although the official narrative declared these increases as unavoidable steps, even in the face of austerity, to meet the infrastructural, educational, welfare, cultural, or other pressing needs of the colony, most striking was the dramatic rise in expenditures associated with industrialization, beginning in the 1930s, amidst the transformation of the colony into a critical contributor to Japanese military expansionism. Indeed the communications and transportation linkages with Manchuria, especially the railroads, became a major focal point of budgetary attention in the 1930s, as did in general the overarching demands for investment in the mechanisms of resource procurement, from extending roads and harbors to increasing state management over forests and water resources.⁴⁹ With the

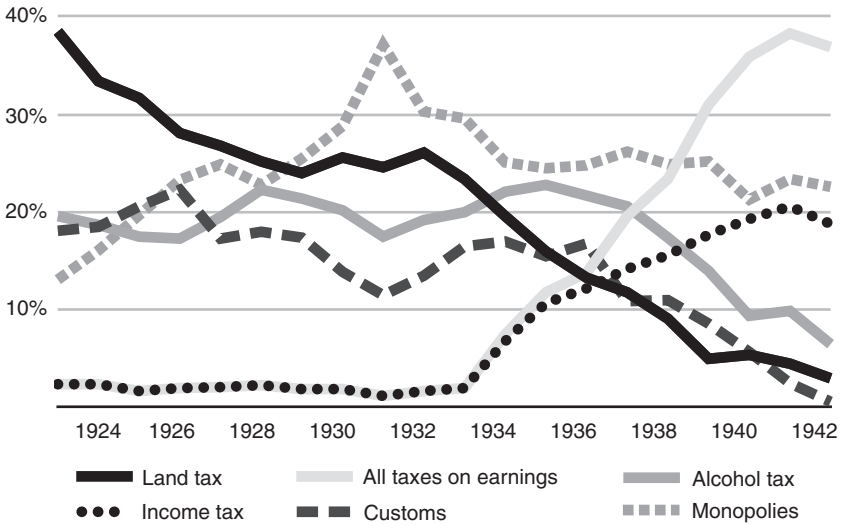


FIGURE I. Percentages of State Revenue from Major Tax Categories, 1923–1942. From Jeong Deok-ju, “Ilje gangjeomgi seje ui jeongae gwajeong e gwanhan yeongu,” p. 204.

transition to total wartime mobilization, government expenditures took another major leap, doubling from 1940 to 1943 at the height of the war.⁵⁰

LAND SURVEYS

Given the centrality of territoriality to the powers claimed and exercised by any modern state, and that the ultimate basis for the proliferation of such authority remained the increases in fiscal inputs and outlays, the land surveys undertaken by the state in Korea—the first from 1898 to 1904, and the second from 1910 to 1918—have become a focal point of research into the development of resource management and of the state as a whole. The ramifications extend to the broader issues surrounding the impact of Japanese colonialism, particularly its dependence on information for its dominion, and its relationship to efforts by the pre-annexation Korean state to rationalize fiscal administration.

As with many of the extraordinary changes promulgated by the Gabo Reforms, the stirrings of awareness of the need for a systematic overhaul of the land tax system, centered on a comprehensive land survey, had appeared several years earlier. Given that the last comprehensive survey of the country’s

land had taken place in the early eighteenth century,⁵¹ government officials recognized the hodgepodge of land taxes—marred by hidden parcels, lack of clarity of ownership for a large proportion of privately owned and cultivated lands, and multiple claimants to public lands—as a main reason behind the state’s shortfalls in the latter nineteenth century. This in turn prompted a debate about whether and how to undertake a wholesale reorganization of the relationship between the land tax (*jise*) and land ownership systems, particularly in light of the increasing commodification of privately owned parcels following the port opening of 1876.⁵² The Gabo Reforms thus began to institutionalize key features of the rationalization of land ownership that would continue well into the colonial period, including a push to establish a single owner for each parcel of land, eliminate the tax-exempt lands (*myeon-seji*) owned by certain government agencies (*yeokdunto*), consolidate all public lands under central government ownership (along with all attendant landlord rights), and in conjunction, abolish the somewhat fuzzy “cultivating semi-owner” (*jungdapju*) status of public lands having been passed down for centuries.⁵³ Alas, the Gabo Reform cabinets fell before these ambitions to begin the process of systematic surveying and rationalization could be realized, but as with other main features of the Gabo Reforms, the blueprint for action had been drawn, and this project would be taken up by the Korean Empire state beginning in 1898. In fact, many of the Confucian reformists behind the establishment of the empire viewed land reform as bridging the divide between core traditional values and the urgent demands for institutional change.⁵⁴

The so-called “Gwangmu Land Survey” (*Gwangmu toji josa sa-eop*) of 1898–1904, the object of a substantial amount of scholarship,⁵⁵ actually was a two-step process: first, of undertaking a survey of all land parcels in the country; and second, beginning in 1901, of using this information as the basis for issuing titles. This began with the establishment of the Land Surveying Agency (Yangji amun), a central, independent organ charged with increasing the state’s grasp of the main source of government revenue. An American, Raymond Krumm, was hired as the lead engineer (*sugisa*), responsible for training and supervising American and Korean surveyors in modern methods, with both central coffers and local treasuries providing the funds for new equipment and manpower as he traveled around the country.⁵⁶ The surveying work, beginning with the counties in Chungcheong province in 1899, was done on the spot as well as from existing documentation, and by the time the process was halted following a major crop failure in 1901, slightly



FIGURE 2. Korean survey official and American Raymond Krumm conducting the Gwangmu land survey, ca. 1901. From *Sajin euro boneun Hanguk geunbyeondaesa*, v. 1.

over a third (124) of all the counties in the country had been accounted for (figure 2).⁵⁷ The resulting land registers (*yangan*) graded each parcel of land through a traditional system of determining potential yield (*gyeolbuje*), indicated the relative location and approximate shape of each parcel, and recorded the owner (person, communal, or government body) and tenant. They also identified the “current owner” (*siju*), who would be responsible for paying the land tax for the parcel in question, and “current cultivator” (*sijak*), who was often the same person.⁵⁸

If this first phase was designed to increase the tax yield and determine ownership of each parcel of land, the creation of the Land Certification Agency (Jigye amun) a few months after the surveying process formally ended before completion, sought to establish the principle of state-recognized private land ownership. This agency’s issuance of official deeds for agricultural lands (*jeondap gwan-gye*) and homes (*gasa gwan-gye*), which were surrendered to and reissued by the government with every transaction, confirmed the state’s sole authority for determining and adjudicating property ownership.⁵⁹ As with the surveying effort, the new agency directed the activities of specialist officials trained to issue titles based on the new land registers; indeed, so close were these two agencies in purpose that they were merged into a single organ (Jigye amun) a few months later in early 1902. Efforts to increase the state’s authority in land transactions also were seen in the prohi-

bition on issuing deeds to non-Koreans,⁶⁰ a move designed to halt abuses at the hands of exploitative foreigners but which actually invited further complications, especially from Japanese residents who made arrangements for Koreans to purchase plots on their behalf. Another problem, which had beset the surveying process as well, was the lack of enforcement of a single name system in the legal and household registration realms, which made it unlikely that the land registers and titles would note the “real” names of the owners.⁶¹

These shortcomings highlight the difficulties of assessing the historical significance of the Gwangmu land reform project, for it developed in conjunction with, and depended upon, reforms in other state realms such as household registration and local administration. The Gwangmu survey, while incomplete, was clearly systematic and authoritative in the areas for which the surveying was completed, as both the surveying of lands and issuing of deeds produced extensive new data and documentation on which subsequent efforts at reform and rationalization would be based.⁶² Indeed, by early 1904, when the process was halted, two-thirds of all the country’s counties had been surveyed by either the original Land Surveying Agency or the Land Certification Agency, with titles issued in five of the eight traditional provinces.⁶³ Another gauge of the larger impact of this project was the effect on the land taxes flowing into state coffers, which appears to have been pronounced. This revenue in absolute terms increased fourfold from 1898 to 1904, with tax yield per unit (*gyeol*) increasing threefold.⁶⁴ According to a study of this era’s state budgets, the land tax increased from constituting approximately one-half to nearly three-quarters of all government tax income from 1898 to 1903, with the biggest gains coming in the last two years of this period.⁶⁵ On the other hand, these ledgers also suggested that the Gwangmu land survey did not always constitute a major state investment, and eventually the money dried up in 1902, before the project’s completion.⁶⁶

This stands in perhaps the starkest contrast with the comprehensive land survey launched upon the onset of the colonial regime in 1910, which appears to have received a great amount of state attention and resources until the end. While plans to pursue such a survey were already well developed in the late protectorate period, the process began formally the day after the signing of the annexation treaty (but before its formal proclamation), on August 23, 1910, through the promulgation of the “Land Survey Ordinance” (*Tochi chōsahō*) that outlined the basic procedure going forward, including the provisions for reporting ownership claims.⁶⁷ By the end of September 1910

the Provisional Land Survey Bureau (Rinji tochi chōsakyoku) came into being through one of the many imperial decrees proclaiming the commencement of the Government-General.⁶⁸ The official history of this project noted that the early and strong attention it gained in official circles reflected the imminent need for reforming both the land and taxation systems and, moreover, of clarifying once and for all the ownership of land parcels, around which there had been ongoing and innumerable disputes.⁶⁹ And in a further sign of the significance attached to this project by the colonial authorities, the bureau was headed by the Vice Governor-General, who formally sat atop an agency that underwent several changes in the first few years of existence, but which always focused on three primary tasks: the determination of ownership, the assessment of land value in order to assign tax obligations, and the study of each parcel's geological features, including its location, size, and category. Land registers and titles that recorded this information reflected a meticulous approach to surveying. Each urban or rural property, for example, was assigned one of approximately fifty grades, and its value was determined according to the property's purpose (residential, commercial, etc.) as well as its condition, while agricultural plots, for which there were 132 grades, were assessed according to their fertility and potential profitability. These assessments considered the preexisting valuations and land tax obligations, as well as the newly rationalized standard established for each province and locality. Such a process depended considerably on the bureau's new maps, which in turn accounted for regional differences and distinctive territories, such as Geumgang Mountain or the special historical cities of Gyeongju, Buyeo, and Gaeseong, in their detail.⁷⁰

All of this indicated a degree of systematization that far exceeded the earlier attempt by the Korean Empire government, although the rationalizing goals were very similar. The deliberate pace and thorough coverage of the later project, at least, appear to have reflected the purposeful determination touted by the authorities, who envisioned from the beginning an eight-year effort.⁷¹ The project for each district or locality proceeded through three steps: a preliminary survey that publicized and promoted the project, confirmed local administrative boundaries, and gathered existing ownership documentation and new ownership claim forms; the delineation of land categories and determination of ownership; and the resolution of ownership disputes through a process that culminated in investigations undertaken by a special committee.⁷² Special committees were created, in fact, also to review maps, hiring practices, field work, and documentation.⁷³ The assessment of

urban properties was mostly completed by 1914, after which the surveying of plots in the rural areas, the heart of the project, quickly escalated.⁷⁴ Most of this process—the on-site triangulation and standardization surveys, then the drawing up of land and tax registers, deeds, and maps—took place in the three-year span from 1914 to 1916. The project came to a close in 1918, having produced mountains of data and voluminous documentation that were still in official use in the late twentieth century as the basis of tax assessment and land transactions.⁷⁵ In expanding the colonial state's revenue stream, the survey seems to have had the intended effect: While the rise in the land tax revenue immediately following the completion of the cadastral survey was 17%—though some provinces actually showed a decrease—the cadastral survey resulted in a 53% rise in the total land area subject to taxation.⁷⁶

Equally pertinent for evaluating the colonial land survey was the prodigious investment of financial and especially bureaucratic resources to the effort. Indeed the outlays of the Provisional Land Survey Bureau increased nearly threefold from 1911 to 1915 and came to constitute over 5% of the total expenditures of the colonial state (table 2). At the peak of the survey in 1915, this organ deployed over 10% of all government workers—more than five thousand managers, inspectors, technicians, clerks, assistants, apprentices, runners, and contract workers (*go*)—with the majority in ranked official positions (*hannin*).⁷⁷ The ordinance promulgating the bureau in 1910 in fact had left plenty of room for an expansion of both financial and bureaucratic investments as deemed necessary,⁷⁸ and as it turned out, this growth took place immediately and continued through most of the project. And from the beginning, Korean employees, who were specially prepared for this work at government training centers, became integral to the process. Starting with approximately 600 ranked officials (managers and technicians) and 81 workers (mapmakers and clerks) in 1911, these training centers eventually graduated close to 3,500 Koreans destined for the bureau.⁷⁹ Indeed, by 1912 and 1913, Koreans constituted the large majority of the bureau's technicians, clerks, and of course laborers.⁸⁰ In 1915 Koreans occupied 78% of the 3,256 official positions in the bureau—although almost exclusively in the lower-ranked posts—and made up 76% of the 1,407 contract workers.⁸¹

The recruitment of thousands of Koreans into the colonial bureaucracy through the cadastral survey complicates any attempt to enter the long-running historical debate surrounding the project. The clarification of ownership and the purchase of large tracts of land by major financial institutions such as the Oriental Development Company and the Korea Development

TABLE 2 Settled Expenditures (*kessan*), for the Provisional Colonial Land Survey

	Total Expenditures of Govt. -General (yen)	Provisional Land Survey Expenditures (yen)	Percentage of Land Survey to Total	Proportion of Previous Year's Expenditures
1911	46,172,310	1,349,875	2.9%	331%
1912	51,781,224	2,085,389	4.0%	154%
1913	53,454,484	2,466,074	4.6%	118%
1914	55,099,834	3,074,939	5.6%	125%
1915	56,869,947	3,735,346	6.6%	121%
1916	57,562,710	3,322,003	5.8%	89%
1917	51,171,826	1,821,993	3.6%	55%

SOURCE: Derived from *Chōsen sōtokufu tōkei nenpō* (1918), pp. 1038–39.

Bank (see chapter 4) unmistakably stripped many people of lands the ownership of which had been either contested or unsettled. This likely also contributed to the rapid increases in tenancy that characterized the colonial rural economy. Understandably a prevailing historical judgment has viewed the cadastral survey, along with the financial and other nonstate institutions that facilitated the project, as instruments of Japanese economic conquest on the heels of the political takeover from 1905–10. While the increases in tenancy undoubtedly point to the consolidation of ownership in the hands of increasingly large landlords, however, what remain debatable are whether these landlords who benefited from the survey were mostly Korean or Japanese, and to what, if any, extent the colonial regime outright seized private Korean landholdings.⁸² For the purposes of considering the project's impact on the state's administrative development in the early twentieth century, a related issue comes to the fore: the connections between the colonial survey and the Gwangmu survey of the turn of the century. For there is a consensus— notwithstanding the contention over the degree of exploitation—about the sophistication and systematization, indeed *modernity*, of the colonial survey, which can be taken as a microcosm of the colonial state as a whole. The issue becomes, then, how close to this model the Gwangmu survey itself came, and how much the Gwangmu project established a basis for the colonial one.

Persuasive in this regard are scholars who argue that, despite the sheen of modern rationality, at its core the Gwangmu land survey's overriding purpose was to increase tax revenue, particularly for the Crown, and that everything else remained secondary to this basic concern. Furthermore, the

Gwangmu survey achieved little success in establishing a comprehensive ownership standard, as demonstrated by the absence of a real name system, a lack of precision in recording addresses or plot sizes, and a dependence on the traditional method of determining potential agricultural output (*gyeol-buje*).⁸³ In sum, the effort remained far short of a truly modern system like that implemented by the colonial state. Unlike the Gwangmu effort, the colonial survey did away with all vestiges of the long-standing “all land is the king’s land” principle, nationalized large plots for which ownership was unclear or vaguely attached to government offices, privatized tracts of mountainous regions as a means of promoting reforestation, restricted private joint ownership to officially recognized corporate bodies (“legal persons”), and in general instituted, for the first time, a highly legal-rational system that would serve as the basis of land management in Korea thereafter.⁸⁴ That the “Japanese” appropriated much land through these efforts, in other words, might have been true but also unavoidable in the process of modernizing the land system.⁸⁵

Scholars who stress the continuities between the two efforts, on the other hand, point out that the Gwangmu survey’s intent and organization reflected the push to apply essentially new rationalities to a practice that had been in existence for centuries, and while this project remained incomplete, systematic on-site surveying took place for a major proportion of the plots, followed by the issuance of deeds that acted as exclusively legal documentation.⁸⁶ Hence this process reflected the state’s exercise of an expanded, legal-rational, indeed modern sense of authority, while bolstering the state’s position as a promoter and protector of private property. Indeed, there is little doubt also that the broader purpose of both land surveys was first and foremost the clarification of ownership in order to assess tax liabilities more precisely and efficiently, and while the technical and administrative advances deployed in the colonial survey were impressive,⁸⁷ the differences with the Gwangmu survey could be seen as one more of degree than of kind. As Edwin Gragert has demonstrated, the colonial survey mostly accelerated patterns in private landholding, tenancy, and even state registration practices that had been developing for decades, and indeed, colonial exploitation processes benefited considerably from the ingrained systematization of land ownership in Korea.⁸⁸ And as Choe Won-gyu has detailed, the entire period from the Gabo Reforms to the colonial cadastral survey witnessed increasing efforts to streamline ownership for the purpose of increasing the state’s revenue collection, which had the effect of laying much of the groundwork for the

colonial effort.⁸⁹ Finally, there were clear bureaucratic continuities between the two regimes. A background investigation into the Korean technicians (*gistu*) who worked in the opening year of the colonial survey, for example, shows that one-quarter of them, nearly fifty, began their surveying careers in the pre-annexation Korean government, including several who participated in the Gwangmu survey itself.⁹⁰ There is much to support, in other words, the picture of the state's reform of the landholding system as a continuum from the late nineteenth century to the early colonial period, a consistent effort at resource mobilization and the application of ever more administrative (and mobilizational) rationalities.

THE WARTIME MOBILIZATION STATE

This accumulation of rationalities came to a head in the late 1930s and early 1940s, when the colonial state, in contributing to the Japanese war effort, attempted to exercise an altogether new level of social domination. As chapters 2 and 3 will detail, the organizational basis for wartime mobilization was the construction of a close administrative connection between the central and local governments through special mobilization agencies. These units pursued campaigns in the 1930s for increasing agricultural, and then industrial, output and for engendering a "spiritual" reorientation of the populace, following similar efforts implemented in Japan. Indeed, the increasing assertiveness of the metropolitan government in Tokyo directly effected major structural changes to the colonial state, which by the 1940s could be considered a provincial component of the imperial government.⁹¹

The second Sino-Japanese war of the modern era, triggered by the Marco Polo Bridge incident of July 1937, led to the transformation of the Korean colony into a major military-industrial base. Tellingly, wartime mobilization began with a focus on the ideological mobilization of the population. The National Spirit Total Mobilization Movement, in tandem with the same campaign announced in Japan in 1938, reflected the belief, as Governor-General Minami Jirō put it, that the spiritual component of a country's people would have the most decisive impact on achieving victory in such a "holy war."⁹² In the colony this campaign began with the establishment of the Korean League for Total Mobilization of National Spirit (*Kokumin seishin sōdōin Chōsen renmei*). This network of committees and agencies, connecting the center to the localities, formed the conduits for actualizing

surveillance and education directives as well as for disseminating and enforcing wartime behavioral guidelines for food, clothing, shelter, ritual activities, and social customs. Though formally overseen by the Governor-General and Vice Governor-General, the league functioned as an extra, almost parallel administration within the colonial state, with advisory committees overseeing correspondent spirit mobilization leagues down to the provincial, county, township, and village levels. This network culminated in the thousands of neighborhood patriotic associations (*aikokuban*), each comprising about ten households, that encompassed in principle everyone in the colony.⁹³

Following the Japanese imperial government's next escalation of wartime mobilization through the Imperial Rule Assistance Movement (*Daisei yokusan undō*) in 1939, the Government-General recast its own efforts by establishing the Korean League for National Total Mobilization (Kokumin sōryoku Chōsen renmei) in 1940, which integrated the organizational framework of the National Spirit Total Mobilization Movement with the Rural Revitalization Campaign that had begun in 1932 (chapter 2).⁹⁴ The Total Mobilization League, headed formally by the Governor-General and Vice Governor-General and led by high officials of the colonial state, was deemed to consist of "everyone in Korea as well as participating organizations."⁹⁵ It sought to "bring to complete realization the self-sacrifice of the home front" on the way toward establishing a "high-level national defense state structure" (*kōdo kokubō kokka taisei*) in accordance with the plans emanating from the metropole. The Supreme Committee (Shidō iinkai) of the Total Mobilization League gathered together the head of every ministry, as well as military and civilian officials and notables from business, education, and other realms of the social elite, to form planning and advisory committees at every level of colonial government administration. This apparatus also integrated over seventy major public associations—business, occupational, cultural, student, regional, local, etc.—often with names that switched to or added the tag of "Total Mobilization" (*sōryoku, sōdōin*). These agencies articulated the mobilization directives sent down to the administrative organs and officials in the provincial and local governments, who in turn organized local branches of the Total Mobilization League. By 1941–42, approximately 65,000 district- or village-level leagues, 430,000 neighborhood patriotic associations, and nearly 4.5 million households (out of approximately 4.8 million) had been integrated into the league.⁹⁶ The mobilization campaign led by the league developed, in sum, a mechanism that aimed to regulate the daily lives of nearly the entire population in some form or another.⁹⁷

The primary aim of this constant flow of regulations and restrictions, however, lay in procuring and increasing material and human resources.⁹⁸ Such measures, planned and promulgated by central organs, transmitted to local bureaucracies, and implemented mostly by neighborhood patriotic associations, ranged from encouraging savings and enforcing the recycling of waste to stamping out ostentatious rituals for weddings and funerals. Beyond these efforts to manage behavior, the Government-General of course tried to enact a dramatic shift in the colonial macroeconomy toward war-oriented industry and commerce, including a renewed focus on mining, machine tools, military vehicles, chemicals, and other predominantly heavy industry ventures.⁹⁹ The ministry-level Department of Planning (Kikakubu) established in 1939 surveyed the availability of resources in the colony and directed the procurement drive, particularly through the state's control over the production, distribution, preservation, and recirculation of natural resources.¹⁰⁰ In addition to the enormous increases in consumption and income taxes beginning in the mid-1930s (above), extra bonds and fees were levied, some of which fell under a "Special Tax Law [in commemoration of] the China Incident" (Chōsen Jina jihen tokubetsu zeirei) proclaimed in 1938.¹⁰¹

Although in effect all government organs participated in some capacity, separate ledgers were kept for the mobilization campaigns, which showed that the bureaucratic components created to manage the process, from the central league and committees to their equivalents in the localities, required a substantial financial commitment. The sources of funds, including donations, numbered only a few, but the largest amount of dedicated revenue, perhaps not surprisingly, came from extra money provided by the Government-General's central treasury (Kokko bojōkin). The total revenues budgeted for mobilization increased precipitously, from approximately one hundred thousand yen in 1938 to nearly eight hundred thousand in 1941 and then nearly two million by 1944: a rise of over 1,800% over a seven-year span. The targets for the budgeted outlays in that period were far more numerous—over forty categories—and demonstrated the broad scope of mobilization: along with salaries, travel fees, and other human resources expenses, mobilization funds went also to indoctrination and cultural campaigns, publishing efforts, and communication (radio, recordings, films) expenses, among others.¹⁰²

To what extent this enormous investment made a significant difference in the colonial state's procurement of resources, or in molding the people's outlook, is not only difficult to measure but fraught with contradictory evidence and inconsistent judgments in the documentation. The official history noted,

for example, that the government's goals for production increases were met successfully for 1941 and 1942.¹⁰³ But for every glowing official report on the rising industriousness and strengthening awareness of the people, there are accounts from other observers suggesting, as other parts of this book will show, distress, resistance, and the mundane, coerced, and performative nature of the mobilization activities.¹⁰⁴ What cannot be doubted is the determination of the colonial state to arrange and enforce dramatic changes in everyday life, particularly regarding economic activities. Gim Yeong-hui, for example, has detailed the wide range of mobilization measures followed in Hwanghae province, based on that provincial league's detailed overview from 1941: visiting Shinto shrines and war memorials; donating material goods; working on public cleanup and construction efforts; observing bans on hoarding, black marketeering, and price gouging; intensifying recycling and saving; foregoing the use of luxury items or any display of conspicuous consumption (such as in weddings); even following guidelines for what to eat.¹⁰⁵ Indeed restrictions on food and drink proved especially disruptive, for the wartime economy limited significantly the availability of not only staples such as rice, but also alcohol and other garnishments to the customary diet.¹⁰⁶ But beyond the struggles and grouching over these and other hardships—having to wear only colored clothing, for example, as traditional white garb required too much upkeep, so the reasoning went—these austerity measures did not reach the threshold of arousing widespread, organized opposition, as people mostly slogged through the war.¹⁰⁷ Still, it remains questionable whether the mobilization delivered enough of a gain in the war effort to counterbalance the severe deprivation, which bestowed a dark legacy in subsequent Korean history and in the collective memory of the late colonial period, indeed of the colonial experience as a whole.¹⁰⁸ Much could be said of the growth of the wartime state as well, for as Brandon Palmer has found, in its efforts to gain soldiers and industrial labor, the wartime colonial state fell far short of putting forth a domineering, efficient, secure, or even sincere effort at procurement and social control.¹⁰⁹

CONCLUSION

Whether one views these mobilization measures as the logical outcome of the administrative growth of the Government-General or as an aberration amidst extraordinary circumstances, the wartime colonial state left a lasting,

largely baneful imprint and reflected the core realities of state growth on the peninsula dating back half a century. For throughout the process, the circumstances of imperialism, particularly the demands of war and militarization,¹¹⁰ consistently drove the organizational and institutional development of the early modern state. From the initial state strengthening efforts in the 1880s in response to—and emulation of—imperial powers, and the systematic, sweeping changes of the Gabo Reforms under the protection of a Japanese military preparing for war against China in 1894, to the “Glorious Military” reign (*Gwangmu*, 1897–1907) of the Great Korean Empire, war and its prospects spurred state making as a defensive measure by the Korean state at the turn of the twentieth century. Needless to say, the succeeding colonial regime, the primary institutional manifestation of Japanese imperialism on the peninsula, was strongly militaristic in character, from its top official, the Governor-General, to its heavy-handed pacification priorities in its first decade that triggered the massive resistance movement of 1919. The colonizer’s response to the March First demonstrations introduced, in the form of Cultural Rule, a reprieve from this military orientation, but by the late 1930s, a war-driven regime stamped the last decade of colonial rule to cap more than a half-century of state growth inscribed by imperialism.

As tempting as it is to reduce state development in this era to the rationalities of militarized imperialism, however, until the mobilization of the late 1930s and 1940s, the state in Korea never pursued war, though often it was an expression of war’s repercussions. The growth in the state’s coercive power and institutional systematization, furthermore, followed its own logic and dynamics, characterized by precipitous increases in fiscal and bureaucratic resources and a rationalization of state organization toward both more efficient administration and more effective rule. The Gabo Reforms, for example, took numerous steps to increase and clarify revenue sources, including the separation of monarchical revenues from those of the state. As it turned out, the succeeding Great Korean Empire overturned the original intent of these reforms, as the Crown appropriated most fiscal powers and resources on its way toward constituting the heart of the state itself. The overarching path toward a re-rationalization of state organization continued apace, however, as seen in the revamping of the household registration system in 1896 (chapter 7) and in the cadastral survey pursued by the central government beginning in 1898.

Indeed, as seen in their respective land surveys, the continuities between the Korean- and Japanese-run states were as striking as the ruptures. And on

both sides of the temporal divides between Korean and Japanese rule (1905, 1907, or 1910), the state was characterized by cleavages. The late Joseon state, in fact, had long been administratively fragmented, and the *Tongni amun* organs of the 1880s, an expression of modernizing reform, prolonged this problem by operating next to, instead of replacing, the existing agencies. The Gabo Reforms briefly attempted to reconstitute a unity to the central state, but its small provision for administrative partitioning—the segregation of the monarchical agencies—paved the way toward a firmer institutional division in the succeeding Great Korean Empire between the ascendant Crown and a supplicating central government. The imposition of the protectorate further splintered the Korean state by adding a secondary state—soon to become primary in 1907—on the peninsula.

The colonial regime aimed to put a stop to this tendency through an emphatic administrative consolidation, but it, too, was organizationally Janus-faced, on several levels. First, in reflecting the strong continuities with the precolonial state, and in response to the legitimacy gap of foreign rule, the colonial regime depended upon the appointment of a great number of Korean officials. This feature, highlighted by the thousands of Koreans deployed to implement the land survey of 1910–18, became clear immediately following annexation and continued to mark the colonial state until the end. Second, the colonial state oscillated between coercion and social immanence as its preeminent manner of rule. The first decade, characterized by pacification as the overarching priority, was followed by the period of Cultural Rule in which the state was re-rationalized toward the dispersal of power and feedback mechanisms. This approach, though, was overrun by an intensively mobilizational wartime state that nevertheless fell well short of exercising totalizing power. Finally, the colonial government, like its predecessor on the peninsula, structurally reflected the multiple, often conflicting rationalizations of the modernizing state, from the competing institutional actors within the officialdom who represented different constituencies and interests, to the constraints against the transfer of Japanese models amidst the challenges of effecting popular identification with a foreign conquest state. As chapter 2 will show, such competing rationalities characterized the relationship between the central state and its provincial and local extensions as well.