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Authors:	Ro, Sang-ho (/jspui/browse?type=author&value=Ro%2C+Sang-ho)
Advisors:	Garon, Sheldon Marc (/jspui/browse?type=advisor&value=Garon%2C+Sheldon++Marc)
Contributors:	East Asian Studies Department
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Abstract:	<p>This dissertation examines the historical evolution of Korean print culture by studying the ways in which the reading public expanded its boundary beyond the confines of canonical texts in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this dissertation, I analyze the unexpected trajectory of the development of the Korean literary culture, which dynamically diversified its spectrum and encouraged the growth of new authors and readers, despite the powerful controlling mechanisms of the regime: the examinations and the police censorship from 1880 to 1931. These dynamisms originated from the socio-cultural contexts of the nineteenth century. In Part One, I examine how elite kinship organizations, literati associations, and new religious groups sponsored new cultural activities without the requirement of the classical curriculum for passing the civil service examinations. In the late nineteenth century, these three indigenous institutions, which had accumulated cultural capital, began to access printing, using either the new machine press or old woodblock printing, to present their subcultures to wider audiences. My goal is to show that Korean culture was not homogeneous in the nineteenth century, despite its having looked so under the civil service examinations and police censorship. Korean vernacular language and classical Chinese both contributed to the diversity of literary culture by developing new genres, such as popular literature, pedagogy, statecraft study, and philology. In Part Two, I investigate how the Korean society responded to powerful impacts from the outside after the Russo-Japanese War in 1905. The basic goal of Part Two is to contextualize the regime shift from the Chosŏn kingdom to the colonial empire in the context of Korean print culture. Under the Japanese occupation and colonization of Korea, the market economy, public school system, and the colonial empire dramatically transformed what Koreans read and how they wrote. The vernacularization of the literary culture proves that the interaction between the colonial regime and Koreans contained a complexity that cannot be simplified by nationalism. Indigenous writers adapted to the new regime and competed for profit and fame by projecting their books as the new vision of Korea. The complicated cooperation and negotiation between the regime and the society not only illustrates that the unexpected transgressions enriched Korean literary culture, but also suggests that Korean books were at the center of rivaling discourses and imaginations from the 1880s until the early 1930s.</p>
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