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The Rise and Fall of the Fighters: Colonial Korean Exiles in China

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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Department of East Asian Studies

The Rise and Fall of the Fighters: Colonial Korean Exiles in China

by

Minseung Kim

A thesis presented to
The Graduate School
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts

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May 2019

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Master of Arts in East Asian Studies

Washington University in St. Louis, 2019

Professor Ji-Eun Lee, Chair

Professor Lingchei Letty Chen and Professor Rebecca Copeland, Advisory Committee

This thesis mainly aims to examine colonial masculinity, especially focusing on the national fighters for Korean independence during the Japanese colonial period. As China was a place that Korean exiles moved to, through an examination of Korean short stories by Chu Yosöp, Sim Hun, and Kim Kwangju, this thesis traces back to the rise and fall of Korean exiles in China who participated in political movements during the 1920s and 1930s. In the 1920s, male intellectual characters in stories by Chu Yosöp, and Sim Hun expressed their pride as national fighters while participating in Korean exile groups in Shanghai. The male character's identity as an aggressive fighter was based on gender disparity between men as national leaders and women as objects belonging to the male leaders. Following China's declaration of war against Japan in the 1930s, in the stories of Kim Kwangju, the previous activists disappeared. The failed dream converted revolutionaries from fierce nationalists and socialists into opium addicts, gamblers, and prisoners. A subsequent generation, younger than the previous fighters, decried the moral collapse of their fathers and teachers and lamented the hopeless period. Along with following Korean colonial men's revelation of masculinity,

considered to be their most important identity, this thesis also focuses on how it was suspended, contaminated, and extinguished as Japanese imperialism expanded to China.

Introduction

This thesis mainly aims to examine colonial masculinity, especially focusing on the national fighters for Korean independence during the Japanese colonial period. As China was a place that Korean exiles moved to, through an examination of Korean short stories, this thesis traces back to the memory of China by deeply looking into the Korean men who participated in political movements during the 1920s and 1930s. Other than China as a chaotic, cosmopolitan space, this thesis assumes that China was not just like that because of its historical importance for Koreans. China's transition to a modern society offered a unique space in which Korean revolutionists were able to wield their masculinities. Along with following Korean colonial men's revelation of masculinity, considered to be their most important identity, this thesis also focuses on how it was suspended, contaminated, and extinguished as Japanese imperialism expanded to China.

It might seem strange to consider China as an influence on Korean cultural products created during the Japanese colonial period. Japanese colonial hegemony has been presumed as dominant during Korea's colonial period. However, it is not an exaggeration to say that colonial Korea was distant from China in comparison to its previous history with the country. The decline of China, once the center of East Asian civilization, coincided with the rise of Japan, a newly-built, modern state. The "Middle Kingdom" had provided a social order for the Chosŏn Dynasty through Confucian philosophies and intellectual trends. Korea was surprised by the fall of the Qing Dynasty, which was attacked by Western powers while also being weakened by domestic turmoil. During the transition of power, Japan reigned as a

colonizer using cultural hegemony. Thus, during the colonial period in Korea, Japan played an important role in introducing modern culture to Korea.¹

As a part of Korea's process of conceptualizing itself as an independent nation, it turned the corner of a new century by redefining its relationship with China. Rather than considering China the center of a tributary system, Korea began to think that China was at the risk of losing its independent sovereignty. However, as Andre Schmid has pointed out, Korea redefining its relationship with China was urgent when the ideology of the Middle Kingdom became less central in Korea. "When the function of China as the Middle Kingdom had already begun to disintegrate," Koreans began to reconsider "the full range of practices, texts, and customs that for centuries had been shared by Koreans as part of their participation in the transnational Confucian realm."² His comment provides insight as to why the traces of connection between the two nations are evident even during the Japanese colonial period.

China maintained a close relationship with colonial Korea through a variety of interchanges in culture, philosophy, politics, and economy. In this transition of China to a modern society, the country offered a place for the resistance, providing adequate conditions to initiate Korea's national movements. China was geographically close to colonial Korea, but was not a colony of Japan itself. More than anything else, all different revolutionary changes, nationalistic anti-imperialism and socialist resistance happened there. Although Korean men in China were not completely free, they were able to better escape the vigilance of the colonizers, and could thus be, or presume to be, "real men" who partially wielded their own

¹ For the general background of colonial modernity in Korea, I referred to the following monograph. Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson, eds. *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).

² Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 10-11.

powers. That is why these Korean men were frequently interrogated by the colonizer Japan and portrayed as mysterious, yet seemingly righteous men.

Representative examples of this resistance include nationalist or socialist movements organized by self-exiling Korean intellectuals in China. By examining Korean short stories set in China during the colonial period, this paper argues that political activities in China were responsible for creating a sense that these Korean independence fighters were national heroes among colonial intellectuals. When Chinese political changes against the Japanese invasion were rising, Korean male intellectuals with ties to China tried to compensate for their colonized state by working as revolutionists, subscribing either to nationalism or to socialism. Their identity as revolutionists for the Korean independence, which emerged within Chinese territory, will be analyzed by looking at Korean literature describing male characters in China during that time.

One of the reasons of rethinking exiled independence fighters is to question the validity of their representation. This thesis argues that these men's identity as national fighters was seemingly solid but at the same time very feeble. These national heroes and unfatigued fighters have long been portrayed as icons of anti-Japanism and anti-colonialism. They have been perceived as formidable men whom no one could deny. However, they were not strong at all times because they defined their duties and themselves by excluding women from a sphere supposedly reserved only for men. Simultaneously, strict regulation by the Japanese system of security sent them to prison or they became addicted to opium on the backstreets of Shanghai. Rethinking this symbolism does not mean to dismiss the significance of national movements in the discussion of the Korean colonial period, but rather constitutes an attempt to closely explore the meaning of subjectivity through the perspective of gender, an

interpretation that has rarely been offered so far. At the same time, this perspective also reveals different and new aspects of Korea's long-glorified national fighters.

Thus, this thesis examines the rise and fall of Korean male leaders while discussing the limitation of their identity as national fighters, not only due to their failed revolutions, but also due their attitudes of discriminating against women. The texts to be analyzed are short stories set in China during the 1920s and 1930s. Told in two sections spanning two decades, the following works are set in China during the Japanese colonial period: “Ch'ötsarang Kap” [첫사랑 값, The Price of First Love] (1925) written by Chu Yosöp (朱耀燮, 1902-1972), “Tongbang üi aein” [동방의 애인, The Lover of the East] (1930) by Sim Hun (沈熏, 1901-1936), “Changballoin” [장발노인, The Senior Man with Long Hair] (1933) and “Namgyöngno üi ch'anggong” [남경로의 창공, The Sky of Nanjing Road] (1935) both by Kim Kwangju (金光洲, 1910-1973). The trajectory of discussion will be discussed in chronological order of their settings from the 1920s to 1930s.

Each chapter will delve into the following issues. Chapter two will provide historical and theoretical background. This section will explain the historical context in which these works were written. It will detail Korean intellectuals' move to China by following the discussions on movements for independence outside colonial Korea. In addition, this chapter will look into the background of publishing literature works which deal with China. Also, Japanese censorship of these texts associated with China will be discussed here while observing how the Japanese empire was sensitive to resistance movements in China.

Chapter 3 will look at the male intellectual characters in stories by Chu Yosöp and Sim Hun, who expresses a strong confidence while participating in Korean exile groups in Shanghai and cooperating with Chinese groups that resist imperialism. The discourses on colonial masculinity made by Vladimir Tikhonov, Yi Hyeryöng, and Chöng Hüijin will be

introduced as a theoretical basis for analyzing each text. This chapter will highlight how they discriminated Korean women in pursuing political agendas while confidently speaking out for Korean independence. The Korean female intellectuals in these stories play stereotyped gender roles in which women sacrifice themselves for their nationalistic husbands and lovers. Male characters' concept of the aggressive fighter was essentially based on gender disparity between men as national leaders and women as objects belonging to the male leaders. This fixed women's gender role based on a misogynistic perspective will be compared to the symbol of male outlaws who are praised in Korea as national heroes.

Chapter 4 will turn to the 1930s and analyze the depiction of the declining lives of activists after their failed resistance in the stories of Kim Kwangju. The stories written by Kim Kwangju can be read in terms of how these aggressive agents failed and disappeared in 1930s China. The expectation of resistance faded away and the passion for righteous duty also declined. These texts capture this situation and portray the failed dream which converted revolutionaries from fierce nationalists and socialists into opium addicts, gamblers, and prisoners. Interestingly, a subsequent generation younger than the previous fighters decried the moral collapse of their fathers and teachers and lamented the hopeless period. In this sense, ideal morality, which had been represented as national spirit, declined as the previous fighters became depraved. This section discusses how these men were once seen as fierce revolutionaries, but after their failure, they then became the subject of lingering rumors in Korean society.

Chapter 1: Background of Korean Political Activities in China during the 1920s and 1930s

This chapter outlines the formation of Korean exile communities. It has been known that most of the colonial Korean intellectuals popularly traveled to Japan to study abroad. Interestingly, quite a few intellectuals elected also to study in China, despite having had experience with the Japanese education system. They became exile activists while working in political groups for anti-Japanese resistance. Other groups studied at Chinese universities, possibly due to cheaper tuitions than in Japan or increased opportunities to study abroad in European countries and the US, offered by missionary schools in China. As either activists or students, they as writers also produced literary works set in China. In the following pages, this chapter explores details regarding this background.

1.1 China as a Center of Resistance

When Japan banned political activity within Korea in 1900s, more self-imposed exiles congregated in Shanghai and Manchuria resisting to Japanese colonialism. At that time, the Japanese empire was not yet equipped to monitor anti-colonial movements outside Korea, so Koreans who had exiled themselves could move to China. Korean intellectuals such as Pak Ŭnshik (朴殷植, 1859-1925) and Cho Soang (趙素昂, 1887-1958) went to China when the Chinese Revolution succeeded in 1911. Even though Koreans were surprised by the collapse of the Qing dynasty, they still believed China could help solve political conflicts between Korea and imperialist countries.³ After the Revolution of 1911, many Korean activists and students

³ Pae Kyōnghān, “Tongasia yōksa sok ūi sinhaehyōngmyōng – konghwa hyōngmyōngŭi hwaksan kwa tongasia kukchejilssō ūi chaep'yōn” [The Chinese Revolution in East Asian History- The Expansion of the Chinese Revolution and Remapping of International Relations in East Asia], in *Tongasia yōksa sok ūi sinhaehyōngmyōng* [The Chinese Revolution in East Asian History], ed. Pae kyōnghān (P'aju: hanul, 2013), 26.

moved to Beijing to get support from Chinese government led by Yuan Shikai (袁世凱, 1859-1916).⁴ Based on their observation of the successful establishment of the Republic of China, Beijing was considered a center of revolutionary movements among Korean intellectuals.

In March 1919, demonstrations for Korean independence arose near Kyōngsōng (Seoul) and then spread all around the country. The protests heightened a sense of national identity and political consciousness, which stimulated the establishment of a government in exile, the Shanghai Provisional Government. Korean intellectuals proclaimed their nation's liberation toward international society, based on of the Treaty of Versailles, which emphasizes self-determination of European nations. Korean exiles also organized underground political groups, often by cooperating with Chinese military institutes.

The Shanghai Provisional Government was a camp for Korean exiles. The participants in the government also formed nationalist, communist, and anarchist political groups based on Korean organizations. The exile movement struggled due to factional disputes among political groups. Nationalists who advocated for gradual reform, such as An ch'angho (安昌浩, 1878-1938), emphasized an incremental program of education and economic development.⁵ A group led by Syngman Rhee (李承晚, 1875-1965) argued for a diplomatic plea to European countries and the United States which would include diplomatic strategies which advertise colonial situation in Korea to the world.⁶

Other activists who were supported by Chinese warlords, such as Pak Yongman (朴容萬, 1881-1928), attempted to build military camps for guerrilla terrorists.⁷ More radical group

⁴ Son Yōmhong, "1910-1920 nyōndae chungban pukkyōng haninsahoe wa minjogundong ūi t'ūkching" [Korean Communities in Beijing 1910s-1920s and the Features of National Movements], *Han'gukkūnhyōndaesayōn'gu* [The Journal of Contemporary Korean History] 30 (2004): 37.

⁵ Michael Robinson, *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1988), 6.

⁶ Kim Hakjun, *Hyōngmyōnggadūl ūi hangil hoesang* [Revolutionists' Memories of Anti-Japanese Resistance] (Seoul: Minūmsa: 2005), 67.

⁷ Son Yōmhong, 64.

who was fascinated with social revolutionary thought after the Russian revolution. Korean revolutionary agents led by Yi Donghwi (李東輝, 1873-1935) and Yŏ Unhyŏng (呂運亨, 1886-1947) expanded their groups by establishing a Korean communist party in Shanghai (高麗共產黨).⁸ This communist party planned to achieve national liberation ahead of moving toward the liberation of Proletarians. Split from Shanghai Provisional Government and Communist party, anarchists including Sin Ch'aeho (申采浩, 1880-1936) and Yi Hoeyŏng (李會榮, 1867-1932) communicated with Chinese anarchists and sought their own way to work toward the liberation of the colonial Korean people.

In the mid-1920s, Korean people in China were exposed to new political developments. The Kuomintang of China (KMT) and the Communist Chinese Party (CCP) presented the first united front. Along with the unification of political parties, Chinese warlords also tried to be unified after military conflicts.⁹ Meanwhile, Korean movements for independence also attempted to establish alliances between different factions of nationalists and socialists. In the late 1920s, Korean nationalists and socialists pursued a campaign for “one party in one nation” by starting an organization called *Sin'ganhoe* (新幹會).

During the same time period, Korean students believed in the potential success of the May Fourth Movement in China, which inspired self-awareness among Chinese people.¹⁰ Korean students were fascinated by the New Culture Movement, which led to an increase in the number of students studying abroad in China. As Beijing was perceived as the center of Chinese politics and culture, which attracted liberal intellectuals and established modernized educational institutes, Korean students wanted to personally observe this cultural change in

⁸ Kim Hakjun, 67.

⁹ Son Yŏmhong, 50.

¹⁰ Pae Kyŏnghwan, “Chungguk mangmyŏng sigi(1910-1925) Pak ũnsik ũi ōllonhwaldong kwa chungguginsik” [Pak ũnshik’s Media Activity and Perspective on China during Exile (1910-1925)], *Tongbanghakchi* [The Journal of Korean Studies] 121 (2003): 260.

Beijing. In particular, Korean students gathered at Beijing University to be exposed to a central wave of the New Culture Movement led by Chinese intellectuals including Hu Shih (胡適, 1891-1962), Chia Yuanpei (蔡元培, 1868-1940), and Chen Duxiu (陳獨秀, 1879-1942).¹¹ This group of Koreans studying abroad at different universities organized associations to promote national movements. Their new organizations included *Sanghae hanin yuhaksaeng hoe* (上海韓人留學生會) and *Pukkyōng josōnyu haksaeng hoe* (北京朝鮮留學生會). These student unions conducted political activities inspired by anti-Japanese sentiment and encouraged academic interchanges. Some of them had a role to check Shanghai Provisional Government and were involved with preparation of socialist's revolution.¹²

Japan pursued harsh investigations and censorship of political resistance. Revolutionaries who disappeared were sometimes found in the backstreets of Shanghai where prostitution and drug trafficking were prevalent. Before the Japanese expansion, in the early 1930s, Korean migrants were mainly young intellectuals and their family members. After the war ended, the number of politically-motivated Korean migrants decreased, and more common people pursuing economic interests and pro-Japanese Koreans came to Shanghai. This shift in the composition of the Korean migrant population led the importance of Shanghai as a political center to fade.¹³ In 1932, the Shanghai Provisional Government moved its headquarters to Hangzhou. It had lost the protection of Chinese government after Yun Pongil (尹奉吉, 1908-1932)'s suicide terrorism to several Japanese dignitaries. From this moment, Korean groups in Shanghai were dispersed and more heavily restricted by Japanese

¹¹ Son Yōmhong, 38.

¹² Cho Kyut'ae, "1920nyōndae pukkyōngjiyōk haninyuhaksaeng ūi minjogundong" [The Campaign for Liberation by Korean Students Studying in Beijing in 1920s], *Han'guktongnibundongsayōn'gu* [Journal of Korean Independence Movement Studies] 30 (2008): 223.

¹³ Ha Sangil, "Kūndae sanghae iju han'guk mundan ūi sanghae insik kwa sanghae chiyōk taehak ūi yōnghyang" [Korean Writers' Perceptions toward Shanghai during the Modern Period and the Influence of Regional Universities Located in Shanghai], *Haehangdosimunhwagyosōphak* [Cultural Interaction Studies of Sea Port cities]14 (2016): 102.

security. Alliances of leftists and rightists reembarked on movements for independence, but the movement was disturbed by unstable political situation in China. Anti-Japanese military campaigns in northeastern area, joined by Chinese resistance of Communist Party, strived to reorganize camps, but they had to continue combat against the Japanese army.

1.2 China in Colonial Korean Texts

In the early 20th century, Japanese knowledge of Westernized modernity held tremendous influence over East Asian countries, such as Korea, China, and Taiwan. As part of the “Literary Contact Nebulae,” an inter-transcultural intellectual trend in East Asia, readers in each metropolis, colony, and semi-colony interpreted, incorporated, and translated Japanese-language texts.¹⁴ College students and political activists in Korea not only translated Japanese texts into Korean, but also were eager to study abroad in Japan. The students’ immersion in Japanese culture resulted in an intellectual and cultural reliance on the Japanese Empire.

The existing research argues that colonial Korea, while being forced to modernize, became less interested in its declining neighbor, China. The research is based on an assumption that colonial Korea adopted the Japanese perspective on China, “China (支那),” which described China as a backward and feudal country.¹⁵ However, in the early 1920s, China-related content frequently appeared in Korean magazines such as *Ch’angjo* (創造, The Creation, 1919-1921) and *Kaebiyŏk* (開闢, The Dawn of Civilization, 1920-1926). The articles in these magazines depicted the development of Chinese cities, such as Shanghai. They also pointed out the

¹⁴ Karen L Thornber, *Empire of Texts in Motion: Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese Transculturations of Japanese Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 27.

¹⁵ Stefan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient: Rendering Pasts into History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, c1993), 198.

hierarchies of race and class that were part of the daily lives of ordinary people. Some of them importantly discussed China's potential as a revolutionary country that could resist Western imperialism.

The list of Korean intellectuals who worked in China includes not only established writers but also many correspondents from individual magazines and newspapers. Representative figures are Sin Ch'aeho (申采浩, 1880-1936), Yi Kwangsu (李光洙, 1892-1950), Chu Yosöp, Chu Yohan (朱耀翰, 1900-1979), Ch'oe Dokkyön (崔獨鵬, 1901-1971), Kim Kwangju, and Sim Hun. Several Chinese universities were popular among the Korean writers, such as Hujiang University (滬江大学), and Zhijiang University (之江大学, also known as Hangchow Christian College). Korean writers were interested in both modernity and coloniality in China. The cosmopolitan city of Shanghai can be seen as a modernized city confronting a tidal wave of Western culture, but also as a site concealing coloniality, which reminds of colonial situation in Korea.¹⁶

Literary works chosen for this thesis are divided into three categories. Stories such as those written by Chu Yosöp describe Shanghai as an urban space, pointing out the problems of capitalism which are based on hierarchy between dominated center and submissive periphery. Stories like those written by Sim Hun consider Shanghai an ideal alternative site for revolution and a center for conspiracy, terrorism, ideology, and resistance. The third type of modern Korean novel is exemplified by 1930s writer Kim Kwangju, who focused on degenerate intellectuals who lost their political passions and had decadent lives after the Shanghai Provisional Government moved to Hangzhou.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ha Sangil, 106.

¹⁷ Kim Kyöngmi, "Modön sanghai üi chosön modön köl -ch'oe dokkyönüi 「hyangwönyömsa」rül chungsimüro-" [Modern girl of Joseon in Modern Shanghai – Focus on "hyangwönyömsa" written by ch'oe dokkyön], *Pan'gyoömunyön'gu* [Journal of Bangyo Language and Literature] 46 (2017): 104-105.

Korean texts written at other times also described China. The legacy of Chinese culture still lingered even though Japanese modernity grew. The colonial period was a transitional time in which the traditional Chinese legacy and modern Japanese culture coexisted. The popular perception that Colonial Korea had been detached from Chinese culture is not accurate. A Korean translation of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (三國志演義), one of the Four Great Classical Novels, was serialized in 1929-1931 under the title *Samgukyŏnŭi* (三國演義) in *Mailshinbo* (每日申報, 1910-1945), a newspaper published by the Japanese colonial government. Yang Paekhwa (梁白華, ?-?), a famous Korean translator of Chinese literature, completed the translation of the novel's 120 chapters in two years.

However, discourses on China could not always be freely published under the Japanese system of censorship. According to the monthly reports of censored texts from 1928-1938, the Japanese government was sensitive to texts written in contemporary Chinese or texts published in China. Those texts were about political resistance, and they were written by Korean politicians working in the Korean Provincial Government in Shanghai; they were meant to fight against Japanese imperialism. Other popular topics included the Manchurian Incident in 1931 and the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, which involved a violent Japanese invasion in East Asia. However, the publication of these texts was not prohibited.¹⁸ Another governmental report published in 1937, the year that Japan invaded China, indicates that texts written in Chinese before and after the Japanese annexation of Korea expressed furious resistance to Japan and were censored for their anti-Japanese statements. Even if they were

¹⁸ Ryu Chinhŭi, "Shingminji komyŏlchangŭi hyŏngsŏnggwa kŭ anŭi pang - t'ekchosŏnch'ulp'an'gyŏngch'arwŏlbot'elme issŏ "china"ranŭn met'abŏmju" [Outside of the formation of Colonial Censorship Field -Meta Category regarding "Shina" in *The Publication Police Monthly of Korea*], *Taedongmunhwayŏn'gu* [Daedong Cultural Studies] 72 (2010): 421-431.

not about political resistance, texts that acclaimed Chinese culture, history, and customs were not allowed to be produced.¹⁹

These documents demonstrate that the Japanese colonial government attempted to prohibit Korean people from being exposed to Chinese texts that involved revolutionary changes in politics. After Japan invaded China in 1937, the colonial government dealt even more strictly with texts pertaining to Chinese culture, especially those that highlighted the brilliant legacy of Chinese civilization. For example, Chinese Confucian philosophy and culture was only introduced as the origin of Japanese civilization while injecting the idea that China was declined country, no more than a previous center. Considering that the Japanese empire desired to be the new center of East Asian civilization by creating a discourse in Asia which discriminated against Chinese civilization as an “inferior” culture,²⁰ this censorship of Chinese culture is not different from that discourse.

Judging from political connections and cultural representations, China in colonial texts needs to be further explored to see Korean perceptions on China and East Asia and their meaning in modern period. Two later chapters of this paper will look at colonial Korean youth in China. Fictional representations which reflect historical background will provide an opportunity to rethink the meaning of independence resistance in exile, and the participants in it.

¹⁹ Han Kihyŏng, “Shingminjigŏmyŏrŭi hanmunjaryo t'ongje - chosŏnch'ongdokpu tosŏgwa kanhaengmurŭi kŏmt'o” [The Control over Classical Chinese Materials in Colonial Korea : Reviewing Official Documents of the Publication Department of the Japanese Government General of Korea], *Minjongmunhwa* [Journal of Korean Cultures] 40 (2012): 117.

²⁰ Stefan Tanaka, 11-14.

Chapter 2: Masculinity for Men from a Colony in the 1920s

This section will explore how colonial Korean males involved in political activities pursued their objective to become national subjects during their stay in China. Referring to the discussion on colonial masculinity argued by scholars of Korean history and literature, Vladimir Tikhonov, Chŏng Hŭijin, and Yi Hyeryŏng, this chapter looks at the aspects of colonial masculinity, based on gender bias between men and women, morality and sexuality, and public and private life. Two stories, “Ch’ötsarang Kap” [The Price of First Love] by Chu Yosŏp, and “Tongbang ũi Aein” [The Lover of the East] by Sim Hun, are analyzed in terms of colonial masculinity, especially by applying the discussed aspects of colonial masculinity to Korean exiled men in China. Each story deals with male characters who are Korean students and political students. It will show how the independence fight for Korea, considered as a public duty for the nation, strengthened exiled men’s identity as national heroes.

2.1 Concept of Colonial Masculinity

In modern Korean history, youth has been an important subject. In the early 1900s, when the Chosŏn dynasty was transitioning to modern society, teenage boys, symbolizing “marine boys” or “tiger men,” were cover models of magazines for the youth that had to be enlightened in the tidal wave of Western civilization. Vladimir Tikhonov has discussed ideal masculine types in the early 20th century Korea. The first feature that he identifies is that an individual who is inseparably related to the state, which he either serves in a self-sacrificial manner or rules.²¹ What is interesting here is that he points out that the terms that this

²¹ Vladimir Tikhonov, “Masculinizing the Nation: Gender Ideologies in Traditional Korea and in the 1890s-1900s Korean Enlightenment Discourse,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 66, no.4 (2007): 1032.

relationship depends on reflect the standard Confucian rhetoric—such as “virtuous,” “patriotic,” and “gentleman”—and Meiji Japanese discursive appropriations from European languages—“self-sacrificial spirit,” “sacred national flag,” and “Independence Army.”²² This point shows that conditions of ideal men originated from Confucian traditions and at the same time were interrelated with modern values imported though Western cultures.

This ideal man should have been qualified not only in terms of the patriotic spirit, but also in psychological and physical strengths, such as “preparedness to die in battle” and “iron bones and muscles.”²³ Tikhonov's argument illustrates the process of constructing ideal masculinity in the 1890s-1900s, which redefined the previous dynasty as a nation and assigned the most prestigious position to the nation. As both the previous noble class *yangban* and middle class *sangin* became a part of the nation, they were exposed to discipline for creating a strong body while simultaneously developing “masculine virtues” like self-restraint and righteous indignation.

When Korea became a colony of Japan in 1910, the Korean youth in the modern era were forfeited an opportunity to be “real men” by a new father of imperialism, Japan.²⁴ More specifically, becoming a “real man” means to be subjects who represent the nation, but the colonizer Japan prohibited Koreans from having sovereignty. Even though Korea lost its right as an independent modern state, Korean men maintained and emphasized the concept of the “ideal man.” Defining this emasculated masculinity, Chŏng Hŭijin introduced the characteristics of a “colonized masculinity.” The critic provides details of colonized masculinity, which has been an essential part of the Korean masculine culture. Parts of her

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Hŏ Yun, “Uik ch'ŏngnyŏndanch'e wa paeksaekt'erŏ ūi namsŏngsŏng: 2015nyŏn kwa 1945nyŏn ūi chŏpsok” [Rightist Youth Organization and Masculinity in White Terror: The Connection between 2015 and 1945] in *Kŭrŏn namjanŭn ŏpta* [There Is No Such Man], ed. Yŏnsedaehakkyo chendŏyŏn'guso (Seoul: Owŏr ūi bom, 2017), 63.

provisions are as follows: 1) Men in general identify themselves with the nation and the state. 2) They construct their sexual identity in their relationships with foreign countries, rather than those with women. 3) The liberation of women should be embarked on only after completing the liberation of the classes and the nation. 4) Women's roles that replace busy men include educating children and fulfilling men's sexual desires. In other words, women should fulfill gender roles for the greater cause.²⁵

One of the key assumptions is that Korean men had an inferiority complex toward foreign countries while Korea had been suppressed by various foreign powers including the United States, Japan, China, and Russia.²⁶ The aspects of colonized masculinity, as discussed by Chŏng Hŭijin, provide insight into how Korean men have constructed their relationships with other countries, like Japan, a larger nation with a hegemonic influence. Her main point is that Korean men have persistently been obsessed with confronting or emulating powerful nations. Both a sense of victim mentality and a sense of duty to catch up with powerful nations have obstructed their self-reflection and self-development. In this process, men

²⁵ Other provisions additionally include these following ones. 1) They believe that they should resist or "utilize" foreign powers because they are 'essentially' men. At this moment, they consider raising the voice for gender equality, which is presumed to be distant from men's duty, as an anti-national and anti-state activity. 2) Simultaneously, women should be political "comrades" who comfort and support distressed men. 3) If resources are deficient, men force domestic women to earn provisions by making them "sexual objects" for the enemy. At this time, they feel depressed, or are hurting their own pride, and they hate the women who physically abuse their bodies. They also put a stigma on such women by considering them as "sluts" (Hwanyangnyŏn) and ostracize them. Furthermore, they worship victimized women who are genuine, while aggressively despising middle-class bourgeois women. Otherwise, they will lose their minds. 4) They request bigger sacrifices from their mothers and sisters in order to save their and their fathers' damaged prides. 5) Leftist nationalists insist that "we raise the issue of 'comfort women'" to threaten foreign powers, especially in their struggles against the offender, Japan. On the other hand, right-wing nationalists establish a treaty for economic cooperation and military support instead of demanding an apology for the 'comfort women.' If strong nations utilize military power as a resource for guiding negotiations, Korea utilizes women as the resource instead. Even though the only way to solve men's 'agony' is to do an introspection of themselves or resist power, it seems this is difficult to realize because power is distant and power itself is not homogeneous. Therefore, men drink alcohol. They are stuck in being self-absorbed and lethargic and pitying themselves. Chŏng Hŭijin, "Han'guk namsŏng ūi singminsŏng kwa yŏsŏngjuŭi iron" [Korean Male Coloniality and Feminism Theory] in *Han'guk namsŏng ūl punsŏkhanda* [Analyzing Korean man], ed. Kwŏn'gim Hyŏnyŏng (Seoul: kyoyangin, 2017), 58-60.

²⁶ Ibid. 27-30.

continuously require support and comfort from women.²⁷ As Tikhonov has argued that defining the ideal man in the 1900s did not abolish the structure of male dominance over women, Chŏng's discussion on colonial masculinity also shows this continued gender hierarchy. Judging from what Tikhonov and Chŏng have discussed, from the late 19th century to the colonial period, ideal masculinity had been defined within the declining power of the state and in relationships with dominating foreign powers while being based on gender hierarchy, which had been rooted long before.

While referring to post-colonial gender studies in India, Yi Hyeryŏng has determined specific features of colonial masculinity, in terms of the gender binary between man and woman. This binary is based on a few distinctive binaries, including one between man and woman, the spirit and the body, morality and sexuality, and the public nation and the private individual. Korean men are affiliated with the sphere of a purified spirit for the nation. Within this division, a national crisis involving domination by Western or other imperialistic powers can destabilize male identity. In order to recover this damaged male identity, the men “otherize women” and sexually dominate them by regulating and controlling women.²⁸ Using the concept of otherizing women for being figures with a physical desire, the author shows a world of men who are superior to women on the basis of men's morality and spirituality.²⁹ The role of the man as the regulator solidifies the man's superiority while reinforcing male intellectuals' idealistic and spiritual love and degrading women's sexual desire for physical affection. Men highlighted their supposedly innocent morality through their portrayal of women's desires, feminine duties, and motherly virtues. Women and women's submissive gender role constituted the grounds to support men's national projects.

²⁷ Ibid., 64.

²⁸ Yi Hyeryŏng, *Han'gu kŭndaesosŏl kwa seksyuŏllit' ūi sŏsahak* [Korean Modern Novels and a Narratology of Sexuality] (Seoul: Somyŏng ch'ulp'an, 2007), 17–20.

²⁹ Ibid., 67.

These perspectives on ideal masculinity in the early 20th century Korea would be applied to analyze Korean exiled men in short stories. As introduced in the previous chapter, many colonial Korean men in China were involved in politically defiant activities, fighting the colonizer Japan. By undergoing this process of becoming subjects for the nation, they considered themselves to be supposed authentic men. The historical fact that Korean men in Shanghai symbolized passionate revolutionists for national liberation reminds us of stories that focus on Korean martyrs in China. What this chapter aims to examine is the use of gender hierarchy, based on the gender binary between man/woman, public/private, spiritual/physical, and morality/sexuality, which had been rooted in Korean society, within the context of Korean exiled fights in China. As this chapter will show the extent to which male exiles emphasize their responsibilities as political leaders, this perspective would locate the experience of Korean exiled men in China within the discussion of colonial masculinity, which has been focused on Korean intellectuals inside Korea. This perspective will reexamine the symbolism of unfatigued fighters, which has been considered sacred and perfect.³⁰

The stories set in Shanghai during that time further reflected the process of political division among intellectuals in exile. This chapter specifically focuses on two stories from the 1920s, “Ch’ötsarang Kap” [The Price of First Love] written by Chu Yosöp and “Tongbang üi Aein” [The Lover of the East] by Sim Hun. Although the stories deal with different political lines, they share a commonality in that the male protagonists attempted to establish their own identity as defiant agents by crossing over the border with China. Whether conservative or

³⁰ It can be argued that male dominance over women is not unique to the colonial Korean situation. While accepting that gender hierarchy has been problematic in many societies, this thesis discusses a similar problem of male dominance regarding women within the society of Korean exiles. For a specific experience of exiles in China, which could have influenced the revelation of masculinity and discrimination of women, I develop my thoughts in future research.

progressive, the idea of nationalism in Korea in the 1920s had a profound influence on shaping the colonial intellectual's consciousness. Among a great variety of so-called nationalists, there were Korean men who became outlaws due to violations of the security rule. These individuals could be acknowledged as political leaders. The status of being an outlaw, the illegal border crossing and the participation in the anti-Japanese movement, could all empower male subjects, even when they were sacrificing their private lives.

These writers share similarities in observing the huge anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism demonstrations of the common Chinese people. Both writers also stayed in Shanghai before and after the March First Movement of 1919. Before coming to China, Chu Yosöp was imprisoned for ten months due to his commitment to publishing illegal newspapers during the March First Movement. He moved to China in 1920 so as to attend Ansheng Middle School (安晟中學) in Suzhou and then enrolled in Hujiang University (滬江大学) in Shanghai. He was also a member of the Korean provisional government in Shanghai while studying at the university. After a short visit to Korea, he was back in Beijing in 1934, employed as a professor at Fujen University (輔仁大学). Right after his release from imprisonment due to his involvement in the March First Movement, Sim Hun lived in a self-imposed exile in Beijing. Disappointed by the theater studies curriculum in the department of literature at Beijing University (北京大学), he moved to Shanghai three months later, hoping to find a better qualified college program under the French government. In reality, he was more inclined to keep contact with Korean revolutionists, such as Pak Hönyöng (朴憲永, 1900-1955) and Yö Unhyöng. Before returning to Korea in 1923, he stayed in Hangzhou and attended Zhijiang University (formerly known as 之江大学, Hangchow Christian College).

In "Ch'ötsarang Kap," Chu Yosöp depicts young Korean intellectuals who studied in China around the early 1920s. This story mainly follows the protagonist's inner voices in the

form of a diary, reflecting his thoughts on the duty of the colonized man, of a student, and more the agony over his lover, the female Chinese student N. After his failed attempt to reach out to his lover N, he returns to his hometown in Korea. However, depressed by his failures in both love and the unchanging colonial situation, he commits suicide in a deep depression. “Tongbang ũi Aein” by Sim Hun, illustrates the Shanghai of the late 1920s and centers on four protagonists: Pak Jin and Lee Dongnyŏl, two male revolutionists working toward national liberation and a socialist revolution, and Kang Sejŏng and Pae Yŏngsuk, the respective female partners of the male protagonists. These four Korean youth are inspired by anti-Japanism and secretly prepare for a socialist revolution, following the lead of another character, Mr. X. However, the serialization for this story was stopped when the four characters reach out to the Soviet Union to participate in an international convention for socialists.

2.2 A Spiritual Man and a Femme Fatal

To explore the detailed representations of male figures, one needs to first look at what they observed and experienced in China, which was considered to be a place for revolution. The narrator of “Ch'ŏtsarang Kap” begins the story by revealing that his old friend Yugyŏng, the protagonist, committed suicide after they came back to Korea from China. Yugyŏng was not physically exhausted, even though he had had a hard time roaming around the northeastern areas of China for a few years. Wondering about the reasons for Yugyŏng’s tragic death, the narrator introduces a diary written by his friend during the last few years he stayed in Shanghai. The diary begins when Yugyŏng returns to Shanghai after a journey to Hangzhou. As the narrator mentions, the protagonist Yugyŏng probably moved to the northeastern area first. Given that quite a number of Korean migrants in northeastern China were involved with

the unofficial military army of Korean guerillas, Yugyŏng seems to have been implicated in the resistance movement, or at least was exposed to this atmosphere. Although the story does not disclose his previous history, it can be implied that Yugyŏng's association with anti-Japanese movements could encourage him to the supposed national fighters, as opposed to an image of emasculated, colonized men.

The story mainly centers on his stay in Shanghai as a study abroad college student. The first scene describes Yugyŏng's arrival in Shanghai, when he bumps into roaming refugees at each train stop. From these encounters, Yugyŏng detects the oncoming war, realizing the refugees might be victims of conflicts between warring warlords. He thinks that "life is originally meant to be this way."³¹ His pessimistic perspective on the world, probably connected to the despair of the colonized Korean people in general and his life specifically, is toward the Chinese refugees. They foreshadow the turmoil of being stuck in a tidal wave of Western imperialism and modernization, as well as the domestic conflicts for achieving a national unification. He is the type of person who is capable of diagnosing social problems.

Yugyŏng is also involved with social movements after the May Fourth Movement, including the unified student strikes that supported labor strikes in Shanghai. On May Day when listening to the public address from a famous socialist, he observes that other students seem to be inspired by something and feel brave enough to sacrifice themselves.³² He even tries to rush into a unified student strike, which is protesting the execution of Chinese students who have shot English officers. In the eyes of Yugyŏng, the groups of the Chinese students raise funding for laborers and demonstrate their propaganda that aims at a socialist revolution. Like this, Yugyŏng observes bleeding Chinese students participating in

³¹ Chu Yosŏp, "Ch'ŏssarang Kap" [The Price of First Love], in *Sarangbang sonnim kwa ōmŏni: Chu Yo-sŏp chungdanp'yŏnsŏn* [Mother and a Guest: The Collection of Short Stories by Chu Yosŏp] (Seoul: Munhakkwajisŏngsa, 2012), 54.

³² *Ibid.*, 103.

demonstrations every day. His words do not only reveal his humanistic sympathy for the struggles of the common people, but furthermore hint at possible social movements for the Korean nation, similar to the waves of activism that China was seeing.

We can note that Yuyǒng repeats what a man should do and should not. While Yuyǒng desires to achieve his ideal goals, such as the enlightenment of the nation, he keeps denying his personal emotions related to his love for the Chinese student N. Yuyǒng, clarifying the reason why he should not be disturbed by his feelings, says “I must forget about this. What time period is it now? It is not adequate to enjoy this sweet taste.”³³ This situation encourages him to consider doing something. As “Korean youth are in an exceptional situation,” he believes that “Korean youth should do extraordinary things.”³⁴ In his mind, love is not necessary, even though he has strong feelings for his first love. In this sense, Yuyǒng’s concern of duty for the Korean nation, including anti-Japanese resistance and educational enlightenment, demonstrates his responsibility to his nation, which he himself defines.

While emphasizing that he is such a “great man” who is able to abandon his private feelings, he believes that he is “the person who throws off all his reserves to remain living single only the nation.”³⁵ He even thinks that writing a letter to women is not adequate because male youth – so-called intellectuals – are so proud of themselves.³⁶ When Yuyǒng encounters N at school and falls in love at first sight, he desperately refuses to accept the fact that he is attracted to N. He feels guilty whenever he absentmindedly sits next to a female student. Thus, with a division between his work for the nation and his feelings of private

³³ Ibid., 67.

³⁴ Ibid., 72.

³⁵ Ibid., 72.

³⁶ Ibid., 78.

love, Yugyǒng attempts to act as a subjective leader while disallowing any disturbance caused by sexual desires.

The more he desires to be a national leader, the more he distinguishes himself from his lover, N, by deploring her as a *Femme Fatal*, which might disturb his intention to fight against colonialism. N is depicted as harmful to the “sacred” young men. His focus on N’s sexuality, in particular her physicality, exemplifies this point. He basically suspects that N might be a delinquent who becomes a *femme fatal* to randomly seduce any men within her grasp.³⁷ N is portrayed as “a nasty foreign girl”, who prevented Yugyǒng from exercising his national duty to enlighten people.³⁸ Even though there is no specific description of N’s activities, she is cast as a seductive woman. N is suspected to be obsessively attracted to Yugyǒng’s appearance, but eventually chooses a rich Chinese man with a doctoral degree from the United States.³⁹

His agency as an intellectual and a political leader depends on a misogynistic perspective toward women. One wonders how solidly Yugyǒng can maintain his confidence in becoming a national subject. Although he expresses a supposed subjectivity – consisting of his identity as a colonized subject and an elite within the colonized society – this self-description is a sense of subjectivity that can be feeble in that relies on marginalizing women. The more a male subject argues for the great reasons for a nation, the more easily the women are objectified as hurdles, which prevent men from fulfilling their public work.

Although Yugyǒng works in the association of Chinese students, which is associated with demonstrations for Chinese laborers, N is ostracized by Yugyǒng because of her Chinese nationality. This condemnation stands in contrast to his attitude toward political

³⁷ Ibid., 69.

³⁸ Ibid., 21.

³⁹ Ibid., 83.

demonstrations in China. He is surrounded by the sounds of bombing in the night. He assumes that this sound comes from a battle happening near to his place, which presumably involves warlords or Western officers, representing the unstable circumstances of the Chinese people. At this moment, Yuyǒng seems to share an awareness of the political changes occurring both in Korea and China, influenced by the influx of Japanese and Western imperialism into the two countries. From his perspective, revolutionary China would be led by young, Chinese men, who might successfully resist imperialism and enable the country to reclaim its national identity, thus allowing males to recover their masculinity.

Yuyǒng justifies this thinking, “[T]his is for a sense of morality or responsibility. This is the concept of a nation. I have always thought that I should not date a foreigner.”⁴⁰ He further suggests several reasons. First, Yuyǒng thinks he cannot get married to a Chinese girl because she cannot become a part of the Korean community. He assumes that N cannot live with his parents and serve them as a daughter-in-law. She is described as being doomed to fail at getting used to living in Korea, which has a vastly different culture, moral, language, as well as history than China. This point can be interpreted as that N does not qualify to sustain the patriarchal order in a Korean family by serving her husband and parents.

N is additionally described as a foreigner who is not able to understand the public work for a Korean nation. The most important goal that Yuyǒng has in mind as a descendent of Korea is to educate and enlighten Korean children to make them patriotic beings⁴¹, as that is the only way to respect his ancestors. To embark on his plan, he thinks there is no other ways but to return to Korea or to go to the northeastern areas of China. In the meanwhile, N,

⁴⁰ Ibid., 60.

⁴¹ Ibid., 80.

as an elite Chinese woman, who is more likely to enjoy modern culture in Shanghai, e.g. by going to the theater or watching operas, cannot endure the hardships of working for the Korean nation. This point clearly shows that N would fail as a member of Yugyǒng's family, but might also not be able to serve for national male leaders.

It is remarkable that the story barely reveals any of N's words and thoughts. Most of descriptions are made through Yugyǒng's inner thoughts. Within his purview, he can collaboratively work with Chinese men regarding the anti-imperialism and socialist movements, which can provide them the status of sacredly spiritual fighters. On the other hand, as N represents, a female student is merely a *femme fatale*, who disturbs the performance of public duty with her sexual seductions, even if the woman has not spoken. While objectifying a female character by positioning her into an anti-national and apolitical sphere, the story highlights how Yugyǒng is eagerly concerned with the future of the nation.

2.3 Men in Revolutions and Excluded Women

Along with Chu Yosöp's story, "Tongbang ũi Aein" [The Lover of the East] by Sim Hun, also provides an example of how the Korean youth in China was exposed to political changes. This story starts with envisioning the image of the self-imposed exiles. As Jin, from "Tongbang ũi Aein" shows, exile men have the image of an outlaw under the Japanese perspective. The men in self-imposed exile, particularly if involved with the illegal movement for national liberation, could become "legitimate" agents because they worked for a great cause while sacrificing their own safety. According to Jinsoo An's comment in his monograph, which discusses Korean film settings in Manchuria, Korean men in self-imposed exile "were capable and determined," and involved in "secret covert operations, such as

espionage, surveillance, guerrilla attacks, and the procurement of war funds.”⁴²Jin is portrayed as a rebellious Korean who has been involved with the Independence Movement. After experiencing the March First Movement in 1919, Jin went to China, where he participated in a variety of political movements, including military campaigns for the independence and socialist movements. His story provides insight into how defiant male agents were represented in Korea during the 1920s when they returned from China to Korea. Male figures who crossed the borders symbolized their double-bound status, which includes the status of an outlaw in accordance with the Japanese legal system as well as a justified national resistance fighter acclaimed by the Korean people.

The beginning of the story includes the portrait of an illegal offender who crosses the border. The first scene of the story is highly suspenseful because Jin disguises himself as a merchant to avoid interrogation by a Japanese police officer. The officer asks him, “Aren’t you Pak Jin, a member of XX group? I am sure that you are heading to Seoul after leaving Shanghai four days ago.”⁴³ This question implies that Jin is a seditious Korean man who has offended the Japanese empire (不逞鮮人). He is a suspect because he has been planning to commit a terror attacks in the Japanese offices in Korea. In Andong, which is located on the border between China and Korea, there are “Japanese officers who protect the border, Japanese patrols armed with pistols, and they ride on each train like a group of hungry ants which desire to gnaw a giant insect.”⁴⁴Jin is an obvious outlaw under Japanese that these Japanese officers are eager to track down.

⁴² Jinsoo An, *Parameters of Disavowal: Colonial Representation in South Korean Cinema* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018), 55.

⁴³ Sim Hun, “Tongbang ūi aein” [The Lover of the East] in *Tongbang ūi aein · Pulsajo* [The Lover of the East: The Phoenix], ed. Kim Chongguk (Seoul: küllurim, 2016), 23.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 17.

The image of an offender enables the readers to recall the forbidden national spirit for independence. They are outlaws under Japanese, but at the same time revolutionaries and fighters for independence. All activities were under strict surveillance in order to hunt down outlaws. Here is a reference, which has a parallel point with this story. After describing Jin successfully escaping from surveillance and sneaking into Seoul, the story details his background as a political agent. What can be mentioned here is that a Korean man, who is defiant toward the colonial system, is more likely to become an authoritative nationalist acknowledged by other Koreans.

The story further elaborates on the experiences of two male protagonists, Pak Jin and Yi Dongnyŏl, who are active participants in the March First Movement. When Jin and his close friend Dongnyŏl graduated from junior school, they were called as “righteous students.”⁴⁵ While Dongnyŏl copied scripts for demonstrations, Jin spent all his days delivering them in secret, activities which led to their arrests by the Japanese patrols. It is noticeable that the young activities were passionate to their experience of the March First Movement, which is linked to their decision to move to China.

In this story China is the center of military campaigns against Japan and socialist movements. When, after about a year of imprisonment, Jin and Dongnyŏl leave Sŏdaemun Prison in Seoul, they shout, “Let's find a bigger stage! Let's move toward where we can speak up freely and run with all our strength.”⁴⁶ They are described as youths who “have a righteous attitude and new hope” running in their veins.⁴⁷ The next stop, which these passionate men choose, is Shanghai, where “people who wear white clothes (another name of Koreans) aspired to call out.”⁴⁸ The reason why Korean people chose to move to the Chinese

⁴⁵ Ibid., 35.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 36.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 37.

city is because they believed “all agony and misfortune could be delivered through antennas from Shanghai” and that even the “newly uprising sunshine in the current darkness can be found there.”⁴⁹ In this sense, China is considered the site where political changes can happen through fighting against imperialism and colonialism in East Asia. Even though China was not a officially colony of Western or Japanese imperialistic domination, these nationalist youth headed to China expecting new changes.

The male protagonists, Jin and Dongnyŏl, are always worrying about the future of colonized Korea and are trying to find a way of solving the problem of political suppression. Jin, for example, enters a military academy, as suggested by his leader Mr. X. The military academy is set up as a school to train both Chinese and Korean men as soldiers. Jin is sent to this institution organized by Chinese to later be dispatched to attack Japanese offices. He successfully adapts to the training while developing as “a brave and agile youth” that has “excellent physical conditions.”⁵⁰ This symbol of a manly soldier can constitute an example of a public figure, showing that Korean men could choose to become national leaders.

Meanwhile women, who are excluded from national movements, are described as figures who bother male leaders with their sexuality. Even though Sejŏng, Dongnyŏl’s lover, hopes to be part of the revolutionary movement, he ignores her willingness and leaves for China without any further contact with Sejŏng. When Sejŏng arrives in China following after Dongnyŏl, she asks to him, “[Y]ou did not believe in me as a comrade?”⁵¹ The woman here cannot but be disqualified to be a political agent as men are. As for Yŏngsuk, another heroine, she is also not qualified, from Dongnyŏl’s viewpoint, to be an agent “who can endure all hardship like a straight pine tree” because she is feeble like “the wet branch of a

⁴⁹ Ibid., 37.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 124.

⁵¹ Ibid., 49.

willow tree.”⁵² Thus, the two female figures are rejected from the league of national resistance.

Even though the male characters have their lovers, while separating the spheres of public affairs from a private life, they attempt not to be disturbed by dating Sejōng and Yōngsuk respectively. When Dongnyōl and Sejōng reunite in China, Dongnyōl warns her that “it is not allowed to have sentimental emotions. Aren’t there outside people whose lives are so miserable?”⁵³ These words deliver the clear message that they should not be too obsessed with their romantic relationship, but should work for the sake of society. Their sexual relationship is even suspended by the leader of the XX group, Mr. X, at the moment he witnesses the scene when entering the room. Instead of illustrating sexual intercourse, the story focuses on Dongnyōl’s confession to Mr. X, as he says “I have kept my promise not to be close to women because I am a person who is eager to sacrifice himself. I have endured well. I have even tried to forget the fact that Sejōng and me are youth.”⁵⁴ He further adds that “being a colonized Korean man prevents me from hugging any lover. Being a proletarian deprives us of the right to have women.”⁵⁵ Their relationship can eventually be acknowledged through marriage, as it appears here that the formation of a patriarchal family excludes any connotations of a sexual life.

When Dongnyōl and Sejōng become a married couple, Mr. X also becomes their stepfather. Sejōng promises her sincere sense of filial duty to Mr. X. In this sense, Mr. X asks her to be “a good wife to Dongnyōl, a role model to all other Korean women” and to “produce superior boys of XX (erased by censorship but implied as revolution).”⁵⁶ It can be

⁵² Ibid., 98.

⁵³ Ibid., 88.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 89.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 90-91.

interpreted that Sejöng can only stand by Dongnyöl as a wife who is like a non-sexual woman, rather than as a girlfriend who might disturb him with her sexuality. She has to adhere to traditional gender roles, such as respecting the parents and taking care of the children. Within such a stable conjugal relationship, Dongnyöl does not need to worry about his sexual attraction to women and can fully concentrate on his public duty.

Additionally, Jin, another male protagonist, also exemplifies a similar perspective for romantic relationships. Jin clearly expresses his hatred toward romance by saying “it is absurd to interchange spirits between a man and a woman, while connecting each person’s heart. That is very much irrational, but also a poisoned concept like opium, which anesthetizes men.”⁵⁷ He even does not acknowledge women as romantic partners because “women are naturally subdued to men even though nowadays women claims economic independence and liberation from men.”⁵⁸ He repeats that women’s roles lie within the family and include “being a sex partner to their husband, cooking, and giving birth.”⁵⁹ This attitude encourages questions on how gender roles, based on a male superiority, see male figures embark on work in the political resistance while being fully ignorant of the private sphere associated with women.

Jin’s perspective on Yöngsuk clearly shows how female characters are objectified. When Jin runs into another guy who is stalking Yöngsuk, he looks at her as “an obscene woman.”⁶⁰ Even though Yöngsuk is not cheating on Jin, he furiously condemns her only because she is walking with another guy. His violent language parallels the violent attack occurring in front of her. Jin cannot accept the fact that Yöngsuk keeps playing the mandolin for her major in music because artistic performance is not helpful for resolving the current

⁵⁷ Ibid., 120.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 51.

problems. Furious with her, he cries out “Why do you not listen to my words?” and throws her instrument on the floor.⁶¹ As Jin expresses his decision as a way to destroy Yōngsuk’s sense of vanity, Yōngsuk remains silent, barely reacting to Jin’s violent attack.

The fact that women cast as ignored objects conspicuously appear in both stories leads us to inquire whether a nation cannot be constructed without misogyny being enacted toward women. Even if the men’s public work for the nation is morally sacred, it should not lead to the assumption that women are obstructive to pursuing the public work. If women are confined to being either vulgar femme fatales or submissive wives/mothers in families, is it possible for the men to be completely confident of their subjectivity as national heroes? The three male figures in this chapter – Yugyōng, Dongnyōl, and Jin – hold no doubts about believing that they are subjects with flawless morality and masculinity. Considering their otherization of women, their identity as heroes in exile should be reconsidered.

This question is a reminder of the fact that the interpretation “gender category as ‘man’ cannot be constituted without making ‘woman’ as an exterior which compose the boundary of masculinity.”⁶² Kim Younghui expands further, writing:

‘Woman’ plays a role as ‘compositional exterior’ which draw a boundary and maintain it by staying outside of ‘man.’ At this moment, ‘man’ frequently fails to recover its deficiency, without meditating ‘woman’. Gender strategies which Otherize ‘woman’ including misogyny, are the only way to protect gender boundaries, even though those are incomplete.⁶³

⁶¹ Ibid., 118.

⁶² Kim Yōnghŭi, “Namsōng’ ūi puran kwa uul ūl taerihanŭn ‘yōsōngŭi chŏe’ : kusul sōsa ūi yōnhaeng kwa chendō chuch’erosō ‘namsōng’ ūi hyōngsōng” [‘Sin of a Woman’ Subrogates Depression and Anxiety of ‘Man’: The Practice of Oral Narrative and the Formation of ‘Man’ as Gender Subject] in *Kūrōn namjanŭn ōpta* [There Is No Such Man], 39.

⁶³ Ibid., 60.

If the aspects making men more masculine depend on their relationship with women, the seemingly subjective identity becomes less obvious. Masculine power, prominent with objectifying women, can be at risk when there are changes in contingent boundaries.

China, in these stories, offers a place for male exiles to pursue anti-Japanese resistance and socialist revolutions. Yugyŏng is continuously concerned with colonial Korea, while witnessing how Chinese society transitions into a modern society that is accompanied by anti-Imperialist and socialist movements. Dongnyŏl and Jin can be a part of the military resistance, while even being trained as soldiers. These experiences in China appear to enable them to construct their identities as exile fighters, which could be more restricted within the Korean Peninsula. However, the figures indicate that they understood the experience of exile to be their special experience. They attempted to be aggressive fighters in front of the colonizer, within the territory outside the Japanese empire, but simultaneously, they did not stop being aggressive men toward their female partners. The rise of national heroes regarding their hierarchical relationship with women presents to an extent how difficult it was to abolish male dominance.

Chapter 3: Fallen Revolutionists in the 1930s

This chapter discusses how the new generation decried the fighters of the older generations due to their powerlessness brought on by gambling and opium, resulting in the fighters' disappearance from "Changbal loin" [The Old Man with Long Hair] and "Namgyöngno ũi ch'anggong" [The Sky of Nanjing Road] by Kim Kwangju. This chapter emphasizes that morality for the nation, which had been considered a duty for men, could no longer exist. The gender division between men and women, based on the hierarchy of morality/sexuality and public/private, appears to be unclear, as these previous men were no longer participating in their public duty for the nation when addicted to their desires for entertainment. Although the previous revolutionists believed they were the only ones responsible for the public duty as sacred fighters, there appears to be no greater sphere of spirit and morality regarding them. Succeeding generations redefined what it meant to be a national hero, implied as not obvious frame, by faintly reminding of their memories of the 1920s. This redefinition was associated with the limitations faced by Korean independence movements imposed by the Japanese colonial government.

3.1 Failed Dreams of Revolutions

Political movements in Korea faced harsh repression, especially after 1931 when Japan began to militarily occupy parts of China. Reined in by the colonial government's surveillance, Korean political activists were forced to reduce their open displays of resistance. Fiction came to reflect this milieu. Before this time, stories by Sim Hun and Chu Yosöp often featured men who were doomed to ruin through imprisonment or hedonism. Sim Hun's stories vaguely describe Chinese revolutionary movements but show how the male characters

were not able to engage in real resistance against Japanese colonial authority. The male characters finally suffer great frustration after they experience the failure of their efforts.

A lack of concrete descriptions in these stories leaves readers curious as to exactly what forms of resistance Korean freedom fighters actually engaged in. As Han Kihyung brilliantly argued, Shanghai was recognized as an “extension of colonial Korea,” a place of liberty for repressed Koreans, but the specific locality itself was not portrayed in much detail.⁶⁴ Rather than illustrating an East Asia on the brink of revolution like the Soviet Union in 1917, Sim Hun recalled his personal experiences in praise of Shanghai as an ideal place for learning and practicing socialism which is why he described Chinese revolutionaries less than realistically and depicted many political movements as taking place in the city. Instead of developing China as a center for revolutionary activity in East Asia,⁶⁵ Sim Hun was not able to complete his writings due to censorship. He sets later stories in Korea, including rural areas, to establish a plan for reformation.

Similar descriptions appear in Chu Yosöp’s stories. He was not able to plainly discuss the colonial situation in Korea and the pain and suffering of the Korean people, so rather than commenting on social changes accomplished by strikes and other social movements in China, he conceptually argued for why he should be the one to lead the nation to enlightenment. His ideological speculations about the future of the nation sounded abstract and hollow. He continuously claims that he should lead the nation, but provides no concrete suggestions about what to do.

In the 1920s, China was experiencing a great deal of turbulence, including the May Fourth movement and other interrelated changes such as conflicts among warlords, the

⁶⁴ Han Kihyŏng, “Sŏsa ūi rok’ŏllit’i, sosildoen tongasia- simhun ūi chunggukch’ehŏm kwa *tongbangŭi aein*” [A Locality of Narrative, Vanished East Asia: Shim Hoon’s Experience in China and the Lover of the East], *Taedongmunhwayŏn ’gu* [Daedong Cultural Studies] 63 (2008): 435.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 428.

creation of socialist party, and labor and anti-imperialist demonstrations. Even though many Koreans were politically motivated and active, one reason that these activities and passions were not reflected in literary works as a result of Japanese censorship. An example of this was the suppression of Sim's story about people traveling to Russia to join the international socialist party. However, the other reason for this lack of reflection in literature is uncertainty regarding the success of the resistance. As colonial subjects, they may not have believed as strongly in the success of their desperate revolution.

There is a hint of this attitude in the final scene of one of Sim's stories. A group supporting the "XX movement," the actual name of which was censored but which was likely the socialist movement, developed inter-faction schisms, threatening its success. A few members who betrayed the group and who refused to submit to Mr. X's control spied on their group while unexpectedly attacking individual agents. The narrator describes Shanghai as a French concession rife with tension that attracts revolutionaries from all over the world. On *Baokangli* (寶康里) and other streets like it, it is not difficult to find the frightened witnesses of the massacred corpses of murder victims. It is not strange for activities to cease abruptly because they might be hijacked by other factions.⁶⁶ This description of Shanghai's horrible atmosphere is contrary to its image as a center of passionate anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist sentiment. Thus Shanghai becomes a place of preparation for resistance and of the inevitable collapse of collective action.

The revolutionaries are enfeebled by their status as outlaws in society. In Chu Yosŏp's story, the protagonist, Yugyŏng, sensed that his efforts were doomed to failure upon returning to Korea when he overhears the conversation between a Korean man pulling a rickshaw and Japanese man wearing Western suit. The Korean man requested that the

⁶⁶ Sim Hun, 102.

Japanese man pay his fare, but the Japanese man refused. Yugyŏng felt that this conversation was little more than “sounds of imploring, begging, reproaching, and scorning.”⁶⁷ This interaction symbolized the colonial structure which was based on the economic and social domination of the colonized by the colonizer. Even though Yugyŏng’s spirit of resistance was instilled in him during his time in China, he did not think that the colonized Korean society that he observed was ready to realize revolution.

Struck by his failure in both what he perceives as his public duty and his private love affairs, he suffers mental breakdown. Betraying his confidence in working for the nation, he exclaims “I am so isolated.”⁶⁸ He asks “why did I come back home? Everything that I see, hear, and think about are despair and weakness.”⁶⁹ He heard the story of a widow whose husband was executed for his assassination attempt against Mr. Yi. The husband was presumed to be a rebellious terrorist who sought to make an example of a pro-Japanese collaborator. The husband’s execution likely represented Yugyŏng’s thoughts about the end of the Korean nationalist movement. The more frustrated he grows with Korea’s colonial reality, the more he regrets breaking off his relationship with N. He exclaimed that “Something’s wrong in my head! I’m going crazy!”⁷⁰ At this moment, the reader feels how difficult it was for Korea to throw off its colonial domination and the degree to which Korea’s future was dominated by its youth.

⁶⁷ Chu Yosŏp, 131.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 135.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 143.

3.2 Dispersed Duties for the Nation

The 1930s saw huge sociopolitical changes in China. The unification of the exile movement was impeded by the censorship and limitations imposed by the Japanese colonial authority. Financial resources were insufficient to fully fund an independence movement. Even worse, as the Shanghai Provisional Government moved to Nanjing in 1932, the longing for independence began to languish. In reflection of this change, writers began to focus on the darker revolutionaries, such as spies and swindlers, involved with terrorism and political schemes. One major noticeable change was that the descriptions of Shanghai's decadence became more intense. Kim Kyöngmi's said that Shanghai in the 1930s had a complicated and deviant culture as a result of the binaries that defined China at the time: Western concessions and Chinese regions, empire and colony, colonization and decolonization, revolution and opium, and consumption and decadence.⁷¹

There are several examples that reflect Shanghai's decadent backstreet culture. In Yu Chino's short story "Sanghae üi kiök" [The Memory of Shanghai] (1939) calls Shanghai "a mere curiosity suited for sightseeing which has been made famous with the name of an international city of pleasure."⁷² He represents Shanghai by its entertainment industry rather than his comrades forming resistance groups in the backstreets. Instead of a crumbling building, which has been likely used as the hidden headquarters for political groups, he first heads to a brightly lit street, *Dashijie* (大世界), full of various shops. He describes *Dashijie* as follows: "the basement is a casino. And all forms of distractions, including new and old plays, movies, magic shows, and a circus, gather together in this building. . . . The mumbling

⁷¹ Kim Kyöngmi, 103.

⁷² Yu Chino, "Sanghae üi Kiök" [The Memory of Shanghai] in *Kim Kangsa wa Tkyosu: Kim Nam-ch'ön, Yu Chin-o tanp'yönsön* [Instructor Kim and Professor T.: The Collection of Kim Namch'ön and Yu Chino] ed. Yun Daesök (Seoul: Hyöndaemunhak, 2011), 287.

sounds of crowds. A stink. A pornography in the shadows. The entertainment of *Dashijie*, made by all these things, makes me intoxicated in this dizzy air.”⁷³

Kim Kwangju captured the changes taking place in Shanghai and wrote captivately about the Koreans there. He himself was a member of a Korean independence group in exile. Until he left Shanghai after the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese war in 1937, Kim Kwangju wrote a broad range of literary works including poetry, a novel, a film critique, essays, and a translation of Chinese literature. He maintained close relationships with political activists such as Kim Ku by participating in anti-Japanese protests at the *Hŭngsadan* (興士團). His ideology was based on nationalism while his literary work included strong socialist themes.⁷⁴

Kim Kwangju’s stories, “Changbal loin” [The Senior Man with Long Hair] and “Namgyōngno ūi ch’anggong” [The Sky of Nanjing Road], both set in Korean communities in Shanghai, portray old Korean men, including a former revolutionary, an opium smuggler, and a professor at a Chinese university. The biggest difference between these stories and those published in the 1920s is that the young generation, represented by a playwright, a college student, and an impoverished political activist, are aware of the previous generation’s failure in their political struggles. While distant from their elders, the young Korean men have less confidence in liberating their nation and are more anxious about their uncertain futures. The former revolutionary seems to have disappeared when the narrator refrains from expounding on the episode, though it is unclear whether this is due to censorship or declining interest in the character.

⁷³ Yu Chino, 279.

⁷⁴ Ha Sangil, “Singminji sigi sanghae iju chosŏn munin yŏn’gu ūi hyŏnhwang kwa kwaje” [The Status and Direction of Research on Korean Writers who Moved to Shanghai in Colonial Era], *Pip’yŏngmunhak* [Literary Criticism] 50 (2013): 313.

As the title suggests, “The Senior with Long Hair” is the story of an old Korean man with long, untrimmed hair. He is a mysterious figure he hates to talk about his past. His friends know about his reluctance and so do not ask him about it, but they do get little hints of his story from rumors. He was said to have left Korea when he was 25 years old and had roamed around northeastern China since then. What is significant about this man is that he was “not afraid of using a gun in his heyday,” and “even went on some adventures.”⁷⁵ Although it is unclear, it is implied that he partook in armed struggles. Given that “he came to Shanghai two decades ago because he was discontent with something,”⁷⁶ the man seems to have been entangled in the chaotic political goings-on of the time. His appearance represents the result of the activities which he passionately threw himself into for a decade of his life. The man is described as withered and thin with lean cheeks and grey hair, all of which point to the hardships he had to endure.⁷⁷

Another important figure is Mr. Pak, a Korean playwright educated in China. It is interesting that he came to China early in his life, right after graduating from elementary school, and so spent most of his life there. He is a foreigner who has adapted to Chinese culture and is acclaimed in the Chinese literary world. His status as an established foreign writer in China encourages the reader to think about the second generation of Korean immigrants. Compared with the previous generation who moved to China during their youth, the second generation is more knowledgeable about China because they moved their earlier in life or were even born there to an immigrant family.

One of the plays written by Mr. Pak hints at how he attempts to rethink patriotic nationalism. His play performed a few years prior to the events of the story ago was criticized

⁷⁵ Kim Kwangju, “Changbal loin” in *20-segi Chungguk Chosŏnjok munhak saryo chŏnjip* ed. Yŏnbyŏndaehakkyo chosŏnmunhagyŏn’gu (Seoul: Pagijŏng, 2013), 24.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

by the Korean community because it pointed out the immorality of exiled Korean intellectuals and seemed uninterred in inspiring patriotism. This play described revolutionaries as “immature young men lured by an illusion of revolution” and called them “people who denies humanism while obsessively desiring fame.”⁷⁸ After the play was performed, Mr. Pak was widely denounced by audiences. His intention in producing the play was to encourage his audiences to think about revolutionary heroes instead of blindly believing in them as heroes. He seemed to ask who a real revolutionist in an environment could be in which the fighters had become hypocrites. He presents the image of the revolutionary fighter as less than perfect.

Throughout the story, Mr. Pak and the narrator, Mr. Kim, a friend of the protagonist, agonize over their unstable economic status, rather than the future of revolution. Mr. Pak tries to finish writing a script to pay his overdue rent, but it is difficult because his landlady, an old Chinese woman, continuously harasses him about his inability to pay. Mr. Kim says to himself “I feel sad for no reason at all because I am like this unproductive man.”⁷⁹ The problem of making a living occupies their minds. These young men feel ashamed because they are unproductive, not because they fail to become passionate revolutionaries.

What insights about generational differences does comparing the old man with long hair and the two young men provide? As mentioned above, the old man represents the self-imposed exile of Korean men who went to China in the early 1920s. The old man first moved to northeastern China where military training institutes had been established to support independence movements. However, the two young men, Mr. Pak and Mr. Kim, have different sensibilities. They are not confident men who believe in what they do. Being a little

⁷⁸ Ibid., 23.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 19.

more distant from the political struggles of their day, they have a weaker sense of dedication to a cause in their lives than the previous generation.

While watching the two young men, the old man calls out several questions to them. When Mr. Pak was attacked by Koreans because of his play, the old man reached out and consoled him even though they had not spoken before. The old man exclaims “Mr. Pak, your play is well-written! They hit you because these ignorant people felt the shame of their despicable heroism, which your play displays right in front of their eyes.”⁸⁰ The old man’s remark showed how the seemingly unified fight for independence had actually splintered, which would make the idea of national leadership unlikely. In this strong tone, the old man reproaches the internecine feuds between Korean independence groups. His reference to the collapsed movements shows how independence activities had become fractured by combatting each other to achieve their own private aims. Thus the old man represents the previous ideal of a monolithic independence movement. Even though the new generation of activists call the old man “a degenerate who dropped out of the revolution,” he is merely someone who “does not want to routinely force himself into the framework of any ideology.”⁸¹ The colonized Korean men did not have a leader whom they could gather around, so instead they held up their friends and comrades as the models of modern manhood.⁸² Thus, divisions between the previous generation of revolutionaries reflects the ruptures in the presumed alliance among the new generation of revolutionaries.

Contrary to the old man’s narrative, Shanghai seems to have a somewhat apolitical and rather capitalist atmosphere. While walking down the street, Mr. Pak sarcastically remarks that “this is Paris of East Asia! Such a great name! What shit! If it were a person, I

⁸⁰ Ibid., 23.

⁸¹ Ibid., 25.

⁸² Kwŏn'gim Hyŏnyŏng, “Kūndae chŏnhwan'gi han'gugŭi namsŏngsŏng” [Korean Masculinity in the Transition Period in Modern], in *Han'guk namsŏng ŭl punsŏkhanda* [Analyzing Korean man], 78.

wish it would get bitten by a dog!”⁸³ This sentiment can be compared with older descriptions of Shanghai in the 1920s. The newer intellectuals only see brilliantly dazzling neon signs and crowded streets, not the political demonstrations that their predecessors saw. Even a gathering place for Korean students became a center of entertainment. Everyone, including “activists, exiles, young artists, and other young men who left Korea without their parents’ permission” gathered at the Korean Bar where “people stay up all night surrounded by the smell of alcohol, perfume, and meat.”⁸⁴ It is here that Mr. Pak and Mr. Kim heap scorn upon themselves, calling themselves irresolute vagrants.

On a street famous for entertainment, Mr. Pak and Mr. Kim do not have hope for future and the old man dies. In the last scene, the old man dies alone in front of a Korean bar, a corrupt place where Korean students give themselves up to pleasure. No one is interested in the death of an old man. He remains a vagabond on the street, a stranger separated from society. This final scene is ironic because he dies as a deviant from the society for which he gave a decade of his life. He says that, “people who hate to dominate others and people who hate to be dominated, they are really fortunate ones,”⁸⁵ referring to the people like himself who were lost in the complicated inter-factional strife.

Inter-factional strife is not the only reason that threw Shanghai into hopeless chaos. In addition to their own worries, Korean exiles were caught in the brewing storm of war between China and Japan and the conflicts between nationalist and socialist groups. Expanding capitalism created social problems by forcing those who failed to join it to the bottom rungs of society. Mr. Pak and Mr. Kim, part of the new generation in China, were uncomfortable with their contemporary environment. They did not see any men who

⁸³ Kim Kwangju, 26.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 26.

projected themselves to the idea. They thought that the old man represented the disappearing past. His story did not have any value when the revolution seemed weak and ill-defined. Meanwhile, the old man, who burned with a revolutionary passion, was surrounded by comrades who no longer believed in the ideal. The old man became an outcast in an increasingly apolitical society that encouraged people to indulge in pleasure. This time of fragmentation and division made it hard to know who would lead the nation. The previously obvious concept of the revolutionary was disappearing.

In Kim's second story, "Namgyöngno ũi ch'anggong," a young Korean man in the 1930s directly questions the corruption of older generation. Along with the generational differences discussed in the previous story, which include changing public duties and the increasing importance of economic status, this story also covers two generations, the older one of those who came to China before the 1920s and the newer one of those born in China during the 1920s. While showing a variety of young Korean men who seem to have stable lives through marriage and employment, the story also deals with how the older generation, represented by the protagonist Myöngsu's father and teacher, were involved with the hedonistic culture of Shanghai.

Myöngsu graduated from the humanities department of K University in P. His friends held a banquet to celebrate his successful return to his hometown of Shanghai. This celebration shows that his diploma, a symbol of intellectual capital, would guarantee him a stable position in society. His friends discussed how much Myöngsu was qualified as an intellectual because of his knowledge of English, Chinese, and French and his literary writing ability. It is interesting that his friends have different backgrounds. One of them is unemployed but gets married to a wealthy woman while another becomes a middle school teacher. One of his literary friends, who had attempted to write a novel, became a necktie

seller. This group shows the diverse opportunities that young Korean had in China. They could participate in political activities, but they could also simply work for themselves as individual members of Chinese economic society.

This portrayal reflects how the story is concerned with the class and status of young Korean men. It shows how they were able to achieve stability in various ways. The scene shows that Myöngsu's friends are envious of his presumed ability to find a job with his degree, emphasizing their focus on earning money. If the previous story told about the fragmented and diversified lives of nationalist movements, this story told about the apolitical life outside of nationalist movements.

What differentiated Myöngsu from Mr. Kim and Mr. Pak is that he had secured economic power and intellectual capital. However, Myöngsu challenges the immoral origin of his success because his father was an opium smuggler. Myöngsu feels uncomfortable as his friends seem to sneer his father's job. Even though they outwardly wish him success and are envious of his wealth, Myöngsu can almost hear them say, "You are the son of an opium smuggler," and "you are the son of fixer, who does terrible things."⁸⁶ He even asks his younger sister "Did you really hope that I would get a university degree, even with the dirty money taken from opium addicts?"⁸⁷ He is not confident in his intellect because his achievements are only made possible because of social depravity.

Myöngsu's father was morally dissolute, indulging in alcohol and sex, and lacked a sense of public duty. Before becoming an opium smuggler, Myöngsu saw his father as a man who "was incapable of cheating people" and "never compromises."⁸⁸ However, after he became an opium smuggler, Myöngsu's father spent his nights pursuing attractive women

⁸⁶ Kim Kwangju, "Namgyöngno ūi ch'anggong" in *20-segi Chungguk Chosönjok munhak saryo chönjip*, 73.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 78.

with sweet perfume. Myöngsu believes that there are several reasons for this change. First, he thinks that his father probably has a “desire for materials because his life was so hard” and that his depravity arises from the belief that “heroes naturally enjoy physical pleasures.” He even wonders whether his father’s behaviors are the result of “a sense of disillusion from failed plans to accomplish something.”⁸⁹ His father seems to have been a righteous man who fell to the dark side due to some failure. It is implied that his father is no longer a “moral and upright” person, though the story does not provide information about his previous life.

Another figure from the older generation is Myöngsu’s middle school English teacher. When Myöngsu visits his teacher’s house to ask about getting a teaching job at a university, the teacher shows signs of having plunged into Shanghai’s decadence. He implores Myöngsu to “not scoff at my life. Drinking and dancing, in a city like Shanghai, is necessary to live. This is the way of things in Shanghai.”⁹⁰ Myöngsu is disappointed by his teacher because he is reminded of the past when he thought of his teacher as good man who was concerned with the good of society and the nation.⁹¹ Ignorant of Myöngsu’s reaction, the teacher continues, saying “Men should dance and have a drink once in a while. Anything can happen. We can’t live in this world only following the values of morality and honesty.”⁹² This statement shows how Korean men were no longer expected to be honored national leaders. Far from being a national hero, this man confidently asks why men should not be prodigal individuals.

Myöngsu wonders about the moral standards of his father and teacher and begins to doubt the morality of the previous generation. The older men, who were assumed to have been part of revolutionary movements and so to have been honored leaders, no longer boast

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 80.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

of their identities, based on a presumed sense of subjectivity. This situation can be interpreted as the result of the collapse of morality and a slide into apolitical languor. The father, the teacher, and anonymous revolutionaries who had become opium and alcohol addicts are described as following their basest desires, something that was abhorred by the male protagonists in the stories set in the 1920s. Even though they strove to purify themselves through nationalism, they were unable to maintain their dedication.

The questions and critiques posed by Myōngsu's generation were related to the disappearing concept of subjectivity which carries with it no standards nor ideals. However, the depravity of older Korean generation cannot be completely explained by their failure to reach their political goals. The Japanese domination of China carried with it the innate risk of collapse. The moral duty they had to their nation was imperfect. The newer generation became disappointed by seeing the fall of men of such confidence. However, even from the beginning there had been no perfect combination of nationality, morality, and masculinity. In light of this perceived failure, the new generation may choose to imitate the older generation and become colonial subjects or else imagine new paths forward for nationalism and gender identities.

After Japan extended their invasion to China in the early 1930s, many colonized Korean men were mobilized by the Japanese army and were dispatched to China to fight. Some of these soldiers escaped and joined the Chinese army, fighting against Japanese colonialism. Colonized Koreans did not possess clear boundaries between public and private life in the context of colonization and beneath the clouds of war. Due to these blurred lines, the older generation of revolutionaries kept their stories private and hid from strict surveillance. In this sense, the previous revolutionists could no longer maintain their supposed duty for the nation, which had been considered the leader's sacred morality.

Obsession with entertainment, which symbolizes immoral desires, served as a reminder of the private feelings that the previous revolutionists opposed and associated with women's lives.

It is noticeable that these collapsing ideals for colonial fighters were criticized by the incoming generation. The younger men, who could have different experiences in the exile situation, questioned whether their fathers and teachers should be revolutionists. They did not proclaim another ideal for society or their responsibility to them. Although they likely maintained hierarchical relations, at least here, they appear to have envisioned diversified masculinities, which were different from the supposedly ideal one. Within a situation in which the previous fighters disappeared and the incoming men were concerned with their poverty and personal careers, who can declare and define the value of public duties? Here, dispersed values allowed exhibiting diverse masculinities.

Conclusion

The old man named Ch'unsǒng (春城) is a figure who appears in “Gogo” (孤高, 1940) written by Chǒng Bisǒk (鄭飛石, 1911-1991). He is weak, deaf, wears shabby clothes and stays calm by fishing all day long. However, his mysterious personal stories suggest that he is not just a regular old man. Fifteen years prior to 1940, he was inspired by passion for national independence, and he went to Shanghai, the political center for Korean independence movements. However, no one knows about his previous life in Shanghai, and the old man avoids sharing his story. There are only rumors overheard about his association with both the socialist and nationalist movements.

Looking at Ch'unsǒng, it becomes apparent that revealing their personal, secret story might not have been allowed primarily due to the Japanese censorship on anti-Japanese resistance. These men should have hidden their previous complicity. This censored story itself makes these men mysterious, yet legendary incarnations. However, this story also has the potential to reveal figures that have thus far been excluded from the league of male fighters. How can we now find the voices of marginalized women who might have participated in the fight for resistance as well the men who fell into depression? Plural subjects and diverse moralities still need to be discovered.

The stories that this paper analyzes show that the confident identity of colonial men as national fighters could not be perfect all the time. Why would they exclude women who stood by them as lovers? What about the comrades that deserted from idealized fights? Things that had been obvious could be violent. Without considering these men's vulnerabilities, reading and understanding the history of independence fights of Korea's past is worthless. This reconsideration of history is also profoundly related to a rethinking of

colonial masculinity and colonial subjectivity, two factors which have maintained the structure of the patriarchal system in Korea to this day.

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