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Arirang People:

A Study of Koreans in Transnational Diasporas of the Russian Far East and Manchuria,
1895-1920

By

Hye Ok Park

Claremont Graduate University
2019

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APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

This dissertation has been duly read, reviewed, and critiqued by the Committee listed below, which hereby approves the manuscript of Hye Ok Park as fulfilling the scope and quality requirements for meriting the degree of Ph. D.

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ABSTRACT

Arirang People:
A Study of Koreans in Transnational Diasporas of the Russian Far East and Manchuria,
1895-1920

by
Hye Ok Park
Claremont Graduate University: 2019

Much attention, scholarly and popular, has been given to the Japanese deployment of Koreans in their war efforts during the Pacific War from the 1930s to 1945. Much less attention, however, has been given to the subject of the pre-Colonial period prior to 1910. The main objectives of this dissertation are to: 1) present the evidences which reveal the presence of Korean nationals in the Japanese military during the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905, years before the formal annexation of Korea by Japan and decades earlier than the historiography has established, 2) analyze the new evidences of the presence of Koreans not only on the Japanese but also on the Russian side of the war, and 3) investigate why and how these Koreans came to settle as transnational diasporas in the Russian Far East and Manchuria at the end of the Yi Dynasty of Korea at the turn of the twentieth century, resulting in their involvement in the Japanese and the Russian military forces.

From a geopolitical and multicultural perspective, this is a study of transnational diasporic communities of Koreans in Russia and Manchuria, formed by their desire for better lives and their struggle for survival during a time of conflicts and dissatisfaction in their homeland. The Yi Dynasty was about to collapse in its attempts to secure sovereignty as well as achieve modernity and westernization in the geopolitical environment of turn-of-the twentieth century Asia. This dissertation will focus on the period from 1895, when Korea was declared independent from its tributary relationship from China, to 1920, after Korea was formally

annexed by Japan, to understand the context behind the presence of Koreans in someone else's countries and wars.

Acknowledgement

This dissertation is an outgrowth of a short paper I wrote for an independent study under Dr. Dan Lewis, Professor and the Chief Curator of the Huntington Library at the time, while I was in chemotherapy to battle a surprise, unwelcome visit by cancer in the spring of 2016. I discovered, simply by searching through the catalog of The Huntington Library, that an American writer Jack London had been to Korea in 1904 as a war correspondent for the *San Francisco Examiner* to cover the Russo-Japanese War. The resulting paper was accepted for presentation at the Jack London Society Symposium in Napa Valley in September 2016. Having received encouragement from the London enthusiasts, I spent the last three years researching and writing this dissertation.

Although the focus changed quite a bit away from just sharing London's perspectives on the people of Korea, their transnational diasporic lives across the borders in the Russian Far East and Manchuria during the final decades of the old monarchy of Korea are very much in the core, thanks to the insight and guidance given to me by my dissertation chair, Dr. JoAnna Poblete. I am grateful to Dr. Poblete for brainstorming with me to narrow down my urge to tell many stories into a dissertation-worthy argument of a budding historian. I thank Dr. Joshua Goode for his mentoring as my advisor throughout my doctoral study at CGU. I am indebted to Dr. Lewis for the initial seed he had planted and the ongoing suggestions and constructive criticisms on the subject. I am grateful for Dr. Albert Park's suggestions for relevant scholarship in the history of Korea and for his insightful comments, support, and encouragement. My special thanks are due to Dr. Lewis and Dr. Park for agreeing to be on my dissertation committee despite their otherwise full commitment.

The support I received from Sue Hodson, the Curator of the Jack London Collection at the Huntington Library, is what helped me into the door as a scholarly researcher. I am forever

thankful for the dedicated service I received from Salima Lemelle, Antoinette Anderson, Michelle Levers, and Adam Rosenkranz at the Honnold Library. I also owe many thanks to Joy Kim and Sun-yoon K. Lee of the Korean Heritage Library at the University of Southern California for their help in accessing Korean primary source materials.

I was privileged to have received a travel grant, Albert B. Friedman Award, from the CGU School of Arts & Humanities, which paid for my expenses to conduct research in New York City in May, 2017. A month-long fellowship for research in the Kyujanggak at Seoul National University in the fall of 2017 and the invitation to attend Summer Workshop for Korean studies dissertation writers worldwide, organized and funded by the Korea Foundation in the summer of 2018, were not only prestigious but also afforded me opportunities to meet and brainstorm with my colleagues in scholarly pursuit to uncover and introduce various aspects in the history of Korea.

I thank all my cheerleaders—my family and friends—who believed in me and convinced me that I can pull it off. Without their encouragement and understanding, I could not have come this far. My children and grandchildren—Cameron, Omar, Collin, and Waverly—have sustained me with tremendous joy and energy. Last but not least, my husband, Chuck C. Y. Park, my life-long *big brother*, deserves a big kiss for his patience while I spent many hours and days buried in the books and tapping on the keyboard of my computer.

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Conventions

Romanization and Translation

Finding consistent rules and practices of romanization and use of diacritical characters has been one of the most challenging tasks in writing this dissertation. Even the same names or words in the Korean language have been Romanized differently as the rules have changed in the past several decades. Therefore, I have chosen to transcribe names and words as they are pronounced in an everyday Korean language. For the names and words that can be presented in Chinese characters, which are used commonly in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean languages, I have provided the Chinese renditions in parentheses: *yangban* (兩班), for example. I have also used Gojong (高宗) to refer to King Gojong until 1897 and Emperor Gojong (高宗皇帝) afterward when he enthroned himself as the monarch of the Great Taehan Empire.

For place names in the Korean peninsula, I have used Korean pronunciation with traditional Chinese characters in parentheses as much as possible: for example, Hamgyongdo (咸鏡道) and Baik-du-san (白頭山) in their first occurrences. Place names that are more recognized by English readers, such as “Yalu River (鴨綠江),” I have preferred to use them consistently rather than their variant Korean pronunciations of “Aprok-gang” or “Amnog-gang.”

For quotations of primary source materials, such as *Yijo* and *Gojong Sillok*, newspaper articles, other documents in Korean, Classical Chinese, or Japanese, I have quoted them in their original languages, followed by English as translated by me. For all other languages such as Russian and French, I have transcribed them in their original characters.

INTRODUCTION

*A-ri-rang A-ri-rang A-ra-rio,
You are going over the peak of A-ri-rang,
My love, you are leaving me behind,
Your feet will get sore before you reach ten li.*

*A-ri-rang A-ri-rang A-ra-rio,
You are going over the peak of A-ri-rang,
As many as are the stars in the sky,
So are the many dreams in my heart.*

*A-ri-rang A-ri-rang A-ra-rio,
You are going over the peak of A-ri-rang,
Over yonder is Baik-du-san Mountain,
Full of blossoms in wintry cold December.*

“It’s an ancient Korean song of the Exiles,” said Bruce Albert Wilder Taylor, the chief engineer and manager of the Unsan Gold Mines in Hamgyong Province, Korea to his newly-wed English wife Mary Linley, when someone outside their window was heard humming the song of *Arirang* one night in Unsan.¹ “It always reminds me of the Volga Boat Song. No matter what words they put to it, and they have dozens of interpretations, the tune itself has a political meaning. It’s a sort of pass-word,” explained Bruce to Mary in 1917.²

Arirang is a folk song of Korean people, so popular that it is almost better known than the national anthem of Korea and was inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2012. Believed to have originated from the town of Jeongsun in Kangwon Province, thus called *Jeongseon Arirang* by some, the song has been estimated to have 3,600

¹ Mary Linley Taylor, *Chain of Amber* (Sussex, England: The Book Guild, 1991), 147.

² Taylor, *Chain of Amber*, 147.

variations of 60 different versions, such as *Jindo Arirang* and *Miryang Arirang*.³ As Bruce told Mary, *Arirang* was used by Koreans to pass secret codes to each other during the Russo-Japanese War and became a resistance anthem of Korea during the Japanese colonial occupation period.

Arirang was indeed the most favored folk song of Korean people at home and in exile. During the hard times, as there were many, in the history of Korea, the song has sustained the Korean people in a shared, collective spirit throughout their lives in transnational diasporas in the Russian Far East, Manchuria, and Japan as well as in Korea. Therefore, it seems appropriate that the song with its four verses is used to demarcate the chapters of this dissertation: Chapter I: Koreans in the Russian Far East and Manchuria, Chapter II: Koreans in the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-1905, Chapter III: Korean Transnationals as Stateless People, 1906-1920, and the conclusion.

The first verse of the *Song of Arirang* expresses the sadness and apprehension of being separated from loved ones—be it a lover, family, neighbors, or country. In a similar way, Chapter I discusses the destitute peasants who packed up and crossed the borders to get away from hunger, disease, and abuse from the upper class in the Korean society and the corrupt government. The second verse portrays their new lives in strange lands, struggling to make it work as another hardship is dealt them in the form of the Russo-Japanese War, examined in Chapter II. Korean transnational migrants had to choose whether to continue to live in secluded exile or engage themselves as spies or soldiers on either side of the belligerent nations, Russia or Japan. Also studied will be the circumstances behind their deployment, whether voluntary, coerced, or forced, and what would have motivated them to participate on either side of the war as

³ “Arirang, Lyrical Folk Song in the Republic of Korea, Inscribed in 2012 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity,” United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2012.

transnational people of Korean diasporas in the Russian Far East and Manchuria. Their longing for loved ones back home continued in their wish to join their gazes up in the sky, counting many stars and dreams, together in spirit.

The third verse expresses the sorrowful grief of Korean transnationals as they became stateless or inferior subjects of the colonizer, Japan. In Chapter III, their lives became more difficult and complicated as their newly-adopted countries went through their own revolutions, regime changes, and financial difficulties. The final verse of lamenting the river of no returns by these transnationals, long lost without a homeland to return to. These groups were forced to continue to migrate from one place to another not knowing what lay ahead but still determined to work hard and survive in their given situation. The Conclusion discusses Korean transnationals as they continue on their journeys in the Russian Far East and Manchuria after 1920.

Much attention, scholarly and popular, has been given to the Japanese deployment of Koreans in their war efforts during the Pacific War from the 1930s to 1945. Historiography has already established that the Japanese military forces started deploying Koreans who supposedly volunteered to serve in Japanese Army in 1938 before the system of conscription began in 1944 and 1945. With more than 214,000 Koreans serving in the Japanese Army and Navy in 1938 plus 150,000 Korean civilians deployed in Japanese Imperial Forces from 1938 to 1945, Korea proved itself to be “Japan’s largest formal colony and by far the most significant nonmetropolitan source of civilian and military labor.”⁴ During the five year period between 1938 and 1943, approximately 800,000 Koreans were deployed under the special volunteer

⁴ Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Koreans during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 18.

system for the Japanese Army Special Volunteer System (陸軍特別志願兵制渡) even before the conscription system began in 1944.⁵

Much less attention, however, has been given to the subject of Koreans in the Japanese military in the pre-Colonial period prior to 1920. This dissertation aims to push back the dates of the Japanese engagement of Korean nationals in their imperial projects, military and commercial, to the pre-annexation days of early 1900s—decades before the 1930s. Results of historical research on whether, why, and how these Koreans became involved in the Japanese military forces in the pre-colonial times will be presented.

The main objectives of this dissertation are to: 1) present the evidences which reveal the presence of Korean nationals in the Japanese military during the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905, years before the formal annexation of Korea by Japan and decades earlier than the historiography has established, 2) analyze the new evidences of the presence of Koreans not only on the Japanese but also on the Russian side of the war, and 3) investigate why and how these Koreans came to settle in the Russian Far East and Manchuria as transnational diasporas at the end of the Yi Dynasty of Korea, resulting in their involvement in the Japanese and the Russian military forces due to their lives in transnational diasporas.

Although this dissertation will focus primarily on Korean involvement in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, it will span three chronological periods: 1) between the 1860s to the early 1900s for the migration and settlement of Korean transnationals in the Russian Far East and Manchuria in the aftermath of the Sino-Japanese War which ended at Japan's victory in 1895, 2)

⁵ Cho Gun, "Production of 'Moving Tale During the War' of Japanese Forces and Mobilization of Soldiers from Joseon in Late Japanese Imperial Rule," *The Journal of Korean-Japanese National Studies*, Vol. 31 (December 2016), 53.

the Russo-Japanese War from 1904 to 1905, and 3) the beginning of Japanese colonial rule of Korea between 1906 and 1920.

The geopolitical environment of the turn-of-the twentieth century Asia was ripe with Japan's imperialistic aggression toward Korea to publicly deny control of Korea by China, Russia, or any other powers of the world. Just as aggressive were the capitalistic exploitations by western powers, such as England, France, Germany, Russia, and the United States, for the rich natural resources of Korea—hitherto untapped. And the Yi Dynasty of Korea (1392-1910) was about to collapse in its futile attempts to secure sovereignty, as well as achieve modernity and westernization, largely due to internal factionalism and a weak government.

Both the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War were fought on Korean soil and won by Japan, leading to utter devastation of farm lands and inundation of cities of Korea by troops, army followers, and early migrant settlers of Japan. Successful removal of all foreign super powers from the Korean peninsula, engineered by Japanese political machines and strong military forces by 1905, contributed to the success of Japan's imperialism and the collapse of Korea's independent monarchy. The poor and powerless of Korea were left to their own devices to survive in this tumultuous era of their country's history.

This is a study of transnational diasporic communities of Koreans in Russia and Manchuria, formed by their desire for better lives and struggle for survival during a time of conflicts and dissatisfaction. I define transnationalism as a phenomenon in which subjects of one nation cross over political boundaries into another. While they have left their homeland and work to adapt in their new homeland, transnationals remain committed to their original homeland and continue to be involved in the affairs of their homeland from overseas or across borders. Members of transnational diasporas can maintain emotional and social ties with members of the

old homeland as well as take active roles in the social/personal networks in socio-economic and political connections across borders while living and engaging themselves as members of their new homeland. In the case of these Koreans, their main motive in crossing the borders initially was the desire for better work and living conditions which could not be met in their home country. Once they crossed over, they struggled in the hard work of farming or laboring in the vast uncultivated lands of the Russian Far East (RFE) and Manchuria. They also constructed homes in the old Korean style, forming villages of families and fellow migrants into a diaspora.

Diaspora, as defined by scholars such as Rogers Brubaker, is formed by members of an ethnic group who originated from the same place but dispersed due to traumatic conditions. The Korean migrants who formed diasporas in the RFE and Manchuria met three classic aspects of diaspora: 1) “dispersion in space” by crossing over state borders, 2) “orientation to a homeland” maintaining their “collective memory” of their homeland to which they or their descendants long to return, and 3) boundary maintenance by “preservation of a distinctive identity vis-à-vis the host society” by maintaining their Korean customs and cultures as well as languages.⁶

Some of these Korean transnationals who gained financial stability and citizenship in their adopted homelands became involved in the affairs of their old homeland from across the borders. Some took part in the Righteous Armies on the Manchurian and Russian sides and frequently crossed the borders down to Korea to fight the Japanese army and police after the War was over and Korea became a protectorate of Japan in 1905. When Koreans in the RFE and Manchuria became more “collectively committed to the restoration of the homeland and to its safety and prosperity” after the Russo-Japanese War, these groups became a truly transnational diaspora, even more so than at the beginning.⁷ I define a transnational diaspora as a population of

⁶ Rogers Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 122.

⁷ Brubaker, *Grounds*, 122.

migrants with a diasporic identity of exile as well as multiple commitments, allegiances, engagements, and loyalties with the land of origin and new host countries.

What would have pushed the people of Korea—despite their long history as a nation—to cross the northern borders over the rivers and mountain ranges with their possessions on their backs in the late nineteenth century? Who were these people? How did they maintain their national identity in their new lives in the transnational diasporas with a new set of challenges? How did they perceive and deal with the boundaries of their new lives—geographical and cultural, “permeable or soft in certain respects and rigid” in others—in their practices of “language, eating habits, and marriage taboos.”⁸ These are the questions of main focus in this dissertation.

Research findings in the following primary sources of multilingual and multinational documents will furnish pieces of evidences to support the thesis of this dissertation: *Yijo Sillok*, “The Annals of the Joseon Dynasty (朝鮮王朝實錄)” also known as “Veritable Royal Records”—daily recordings of the royal courts in each of the Korean kings’ reign, compiled posthumously upon their deaths, and The National Institute of Korean History Archives; the National Archives of Japan at Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), and Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Diplomatic Documents (*Nihon Gaiko Bunsho* [日本外交文書]), Records of Japanese Consulate in Korea (*Chukan Nihon Koshikan Kiroku* (CNKK) = 駐韓日本公使館 記録); The Archives of Korean History at National Institute of Korean History (國史編纂委員會), and Korean newspapers, such as *The Independence*, *Hwangsung Sinmun* and *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, published in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century; the

⁸ Prasenjit Duara, “Nationalists Among Transnationals: Overseas Chinese and the Idea of China, 1900-1911,” Chapter One in *Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism*, ed. Aihwa Ong and Donald Macon Nonini (New York: Routledge, 1997), 29.

Archive of Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) Diplomatic Dispatches; the Horace Allen Archives at the New York Public Library; the Patricia D. Klingenstein Archive of the New York Historical Societies; and the Jack London Archives at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. In-depth research was also conducted in relevant contemporary Westerners' travel logs, memoirs, and newspaper reports. Findings of many historians in the past two centuries have also been researched to uncover the historical and political circumstances surrounding Korea as a nation and Korean people's involvement in Japanese endeavors of empire-building and colonization, be it as transnational emigrants to Russia and Manchuria in the pre-colonial period or as soldiers in the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-1905.

Historiography on Relevant Topics

a. Historiography on Transnationalism, Diaspora, and Diaspora Studies

What is transnationalism? What is a diaspora? A Boolean search of combined keywords for “transnationalism and diaspora” performed in the WorldCat retrieves 5,295 results in 2019.⁹ When limited to works in history and auxiliary sciences, the results are narrowed down to 220 entries. Still, it shows the prolific nature of studies on transnationalism and diasporas in the past few decades, which will be examined in this section.

Moving away from the earlier scholarship of Robert Park (1928) and Oscar Handlin (1941 and 1973) on the static patterns of immigration, scholars such as Madeline Y. Hsu (2000), Adam McKeown (2001), and Mae M. Ngai (2004) introduced a shift in the historiography of migration and immigration to that of transnational migration. Rather than identifying specific places on a map where immigrants came from and tried to fit in—suggesting uprooting and assimilation—these scholars of the transnational approach raised a new question: Can migrants

⁹ WorldCat is an online catalog of 72,000 libraries in 17 different countries—a worldwide union bibliographic database, formed and maintained by OCLC which was founded by Frederick Kilgore in 1972.

belong to more than one place at any given time? Instead of a melting pot of “unidirectional” assimilation, the new shift recognized transnational diasporas where “flexible citizenship” and “continuing loyalty” to the old place are also accepted.¹⁰ This pattern of migrants’ forming and living in transnational diasporas, or even in borderlands, by Koreans in the Russian Far East and Manchuria will be examined in this dissertation.

Seminal works by scholars such as Ann Laura Stoler (1999 and 2016), Frederick Cooper (1999 and 2005), and Benedict Anderson (2006) provided foundation studies on nations and empires. Stoler and Cooper saw that nations and empires were “mutually constitutive” and “imagined” in “contiguous as well as noncontiguous territory,” as seen in the cases of Great Britain and the Third Republic of France with colonies in far-away lands. Based on Cooper’s theory that the world is interconnected and unequal, the unequal relationship between the colonials and the colonized is seen in the history of slavery and colonial exploitation in Africa.¹¹

In the nation defined as “imagined community” by Anderson, the members will never meet or hear of each other yet feel such close ties and comradeship with each other. It is because the nation is imagined, limited, and sovereign as a community. For example, members of the British Empire feel interconnected by “stretchable nets of kinship and clientship” in which the relationship between England, Ireland, and Scotland is one of imagination.¹² In such an imagined environment, members feel bound or connected by a sense of fraternity and solidarity toward their nation through “horizontal comradeship.”¹³

¹⁰ Madeline Y. Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration Between the United States and South China, 1882-1943* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 7-8.

¹¹ Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds. *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 22.

¹² Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), 6.

¹³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

Cooper and Stoler professed that “nation building” and “empire building” were projects of mutual constitution, albeit in relationship of problematic and contested on the question of extending citizenship to the colonized. One case in point was, despite France’s rhetoric of assimilation, the colonized population were extended citizenship not to France as a nation but to the empire of Union Française.¹⁴ In the case of Korea, Koreans after the Japanese colonization were considered Japanese subjects but without the full rights and privileges, such as voting or owning lands, and treated as second-class citizens.

On the studies of transnationalism as economic, political, and cultural processes that extend beyond the boundaries of nation-states, weakening the state’s control over its borders, inhabitants, and territory, scholars have contributed many books and journal articles published and listed in the WorldCat database over the past several decades. Randolph S. Bourne (1916) planted the seed with his 1916 article, “The Jews and Trans-national America,” regarding the American nationalism after the World War I. In contrast to nationalism as “a strong belief among people who share a common language, history, and culture,” Bourne called for a new way of thinking about relationship between cultures through the notion of transnationalism: “give us a new vision and a new orientation of the American mind in the world.”¹⁵

In subsequent decades, immigrant groups were expected to lose their ethnic identity and assimilate into the local norms. In the 1970s, the concept of diaspora, recognized by Michel Bruneau and Judith T. Shuval, emerged progressively to describe migrant groups maintaining their ethnic tradition with a strong sense of collectiveness. In the 1980s and 1990s, dispersion of population that originated from one nation-state into new host countries became more prevalent,

¹⁴ Cooper and Stoler, “Between Metropole and Colony,” in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 22; Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), 7.

¹⁵ Randolph Bourne, “Trans-National America,” *Atlantic Monthly*, 118 (July 1916), 86-97.

calling for academic theoretization to define and establish criteria for diasporas. Several types of diasporas were named by scholars: entrepreneurial (Chinese), religious (Jews), and political (Palestinians) diasporas as defined by Michel Bruneau (1995). This was followed by Robin Cohen (1997) who defined diasporas into five types: labor diasporas (Indians), imperial diasporas (British), trade diasporas (Chinese), cultural diasporas (Caribbeans), and hybridity of mixed culture, as seen in Paul Gilroy's Black diaspora debate of "travelling culture" between a nation-state of their dwelling through assimilation and diasporas of "astral or spiritual" sense.¹⁶

It was in the 1990s when the understanding and theorization of transnationalism and transnational diaspora matured by the scholarship of Basch, Glick-Schiller and Szanton Blanc (1994). Their collaborative work of *Nations Unbound* introduced the concept of transnational diasporas as those who live dispersed physically but remain connected culturally, socially, economically, and politically as part of the nation-states in a "nation unbound" of their original homeland of their ancestors.¹⁷ Their transnational ethnographic studies focused on transmigrants from the West Indies, Haiti, and the Philippines. Robert Anthony Orsi's *The Madonna of 115th Street* (1985), Khachig Tölöyan's article (1996), "Rethinking Diaspora(s): Stateless Power in the Transnational Moment," Arjun Appadurai's *Modernity at Large* (1997), and Aihwa Ong's *Flexible Citizenship* (1999), for example, brought transnationalism into the foreground of scholarly discourse on the migration of peoples across borders in the twentieth century.

Aihwa Ong defined transnationality as a phenomenon of people "moving through space or across lines" as a "condition of cultural interconnectedness and mobility across space"

¹⁶ Lisa Anteby-Yemini and William Berthomière, "Diaspora: A Look Back on a Concept," *Bulletin du Centre de Recherche Française à Jérusalem*, 16 (2005), 265.

¹⁷ Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc, *Nation Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach, 1994), reviewed in Daniel A. Segal, *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Aug., 1995), 638.

whereby political borders and nation-states lose significance “over the affiliations and behavior of its subjects.”¹⁸ Ong’s definition of transnationalism reflected the “multiplicity of the uses and conceptions of ‘culture’” with tension over family, state, and economic ventures that shaped border crossings and transnational relationship. More specifically, the multiple passport holders of Hong Kong felt both the willingness to work with the Communist China while looking for a way out for the security of their family and business investment at the time of Hong Kong’s return from Britain to China in 1997.¹⁹

These earlier works on transnationalism were followed and revamped by Adam McKeown on Chinese migrant networks (2001), Rogers Brubaker (2005 and 2015), and Akira Iriye (2013) who provided historiography of the global and transnational history of the past, present, and future. McKeown’s theoretical framework to recast Chinese migration from a passive diaspora to transnational diaspora in his 2001 work, *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change: Peru, Chicao, Hawaii, 1900-1936*, presented a global perspective. Brubaker’s definition of the modern use of the term diaspora in the humanities and social sciences in his 2005 article, “Diaspora’ Diaspora,” was instrumental in broadening the scope of studies of transnationalism with diaspora studies, which expanded from the Jewish, Armenian and Greek diasporas to Albanians, Basque, Hindu Indians, Irish, Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans since the 1990s.²⁰

Stéphane Dufoix and Brubaker pointed out that the word, diaspora, was first derived from the Septuagint—the first Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible—on the Babylonian Exile of Jews. Dufoix demonstrated that the word “morphed from a religious to a secular word, from a

¹⁸ Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 4-6.

¹⁹ Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, 6.

²⁰ Rogers Brubaker, “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 20 (1), (2005): 1-9.

negative to a positive inflection,” according to Robin Cohen and Carolin Fischer.²¹ Cohen and Fischer noted the “social constructivism in diaspora studies” emerging with questions on: “how are diasporas made, who makes claims to be part of a diaspora, and what claims are made on behalf of a diaspora?” bringing more complexity in the present day.²²

As discussed earlier, Brubaker’s definition of diaspora in 2005 included three elements: dispersion in space, orientation to a homeland, and boundary maintenance. Dispersion, being the “most widely accepted criterion of diaspora,” denotes forced and traumatic crossing of state borders of people to live “outside of the homeland.”²³ Those people with a “homeland orientation” for a real or imagined homeland maintain “a collective memory or myth about homeland” regarding their ancestral state “as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would or should eventually return.”²⁴ They are also “collectively committed to the restoration of the homeland and to its safety and prosperity.”²⁵ The third element of diaspora, according to Brubaker, was boundary maintenance of preserving “a distinctive identity vis-à-vis the host society” which he viewed as indispensable.²⁶ These are the elements represented in the Korean transnational’s experience of forming and maintaining their diasporas.

Revisiting his initial definition of a diaspora in 2005, Brubaker offered in 2015 an expanded viewpoint of diaspora studies which have evolved and increased in the intervening ten years from “the age of the nation-state” to the “age of diaspora” in the 1990s.²⁷ The field of

²¹ Robin Cohen and Carolin Fischer, “Diaspora Studies: An Introduction,” in *Routledge Handbook of Diaspora Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 4

²² Cohen and Fischer, “Diaspora Studies,” 5.

²³ Brubaker, *Grounds*, 122.

²⁴ Brubaker, *Grounds*, 122.

²⁵ Brubaker, *Grounds*, 122.

²⁶ Brubaker, *Grounds*, 124.

²⁷ Rogers Brubaker, “Revisiting ‘The ‘diaspora’ diaspora: A Response to Claire Alexander,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (2017), Vol. 40, No. 9: 1556-1561.

diaspora studies since 2005 has proliferated and reached “a kind of saturation point,” as Brubaker acknowledged in his 2015 article, “Revisiting diaspora’ diaspora,” since new regions of disciplinary and conceptual space helped bring together topics of nation, nation-state, empire, and colonialism with globalization as new phenomenon affecting diaspora studies in the twentieth century.²⁸

Earlier works by Elaine Kim (1982) on Asian Americans or Korean Americans in the U.S., Aiwha Ong (1999) and Mia Tuan (1999) on the Hmong experiences laid the foundation of diaspora studies to be expanded to ethnic diaspora studies by Monica Yang’s anthology (2013), Kou Yang’s comprehensive historiographical reviews on Hmong accumulation (2013), and Mark Edward Pfeiffer (2013) on the subjects of diversity, flexible citizenship, and crossing over territorial boundaries in transnational diasporas in the twenty-first century. Other scholars such as Appadurai’s work on the cultural dimensions of globalization (2008), Dufoix’s work on the semantic history of African diaspora (2012), Brubaker and Jaeun Kim’s co-authored work (2011 and 2016) on the states’ effort to recreate ties with their transborder populations in Germany (in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union) and Korea (in Japan and China) also told new stories on the language of diaspora which expanded by the globalization in the twenty-first century.²⁹

In summary, based on such a rich historiography on diaspora studies which matured over the past few decades, the subjects of this dissertation—the Korean transnationals in the Russian and Manchuria—fit all three elements of diasporic communities, as identified by Brubaker and other scholars. These Koreans in their transnational diasporas 1) had been forced to leave their

²⁸ Brubaker, “Revisiting,” 1556.

²⁹ Rogers Brubaker and Jaeun Kim, “Transborder Membership Politics in Germany and Korea,” *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, Volume 52, Issue 1 (April 2011), 21.

homeland across national borders by *dispersion* due to natural disasters and lack of upward mobility in Korean society, 2) maintained their *homeward orientation* with collective memory and preservation of their customs and cultures with the hope of returning someday, and 3) maintained their distinctive identity vis-à-vis the host society. The Korean transnationals' migration and living in diasporas—the *Arirang* diasporas—will be examined in depth as the main subject of this dissertation.

In the next section the historiography on the history of Korea in the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century will be presented to set the stage on the subject of this dissertation and provide background on the monumental contributions made by historians and other scholars as well as Western observers of Korea.

b. Historiography on the History of Korea in the Early Twentieth Century

Nearly a century and a half has elapsed since the opening of Korea to the world in 1876 and one hundred and fifteen years since the start of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904. Many historians writing in English have provided the chronicles of what, why and how things happened to force open Korea, hitherto known as The Land of the Morning Calm (*Chosun*, 朝鮮). Also known as The Hermit Kingdom in the late nineteenth century, Korea is a small peninsula, occupying approximately 84,616 square miles of land—North and South Korea combined—wedged in between China and Japan and Russia, in Far East Asia.

Koreans have historically been known as a people who possessed a strong sense of national spirit (民族魂) as a homogeneous race (*tan'il minjok*, 單一民族) and endured many foreign invasions throughout their thousands of years of written history.³⁰ Historical evidence of

³⁰ Hyung Il Pai, *Constructing "Korean" Origins: A Critical Review of Archaeology, Historiography, and Racial Myth in Korean State-Formation Theories* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000), 2.

Korea's origins date back to the Paleolithic Age, as archaeological sites with specimens of tools for hunting and fishing in the Old Stone Age were unearthed by a historian Son Pow-key in the southern region, Kongju (公州) of Choongchung Province, in the 1960s.³¹

The first set of foreign accounts came in the form of travelogues, memoirs, diplomatic correspondences, war correspondents' reports, letters to friends and families, newspaper articles, as well as official reports and archival documents of governments such as China, Japan, Russia, the United States, and others in the 1880s-1900s. Isabella Bird Bishop's eye-opening travelogues (1898) of newly-opened Korea in the aftermath of the Sino-Japanese War were followed by the reports of the Russo-Japanese War correspondents, Jack London (1904) and Frederick A. McKenzie (1905).

Next came the early historiography by scholars who witnessed and shared their accounts on the opening of Korea, such as B. L. Putnam Weale (1903), H. J. Whigham (1904), K. Asakawa (1904), and Charles Oscar Paullin (1910). These narratives were followed by the early historical interpretations on both sides of U.S.-Asia relations by Tyler Dennett (1925), Joseph Barnes (1934), and Yoshi S. Kuno (1937), offering critical assessments of the Open Door Policy of the United States. In the 1950s and later came the monumental contributions made by Hilary Conroy (1960) and Fred Harvey Harrington (1966) with detailed accounts of the commercial imperialism and exploitation of Korea employed by the superpowers of the world. Donald G. Tewksbury provided a bibliographical compilation of source materials in 1950.

Early works written in English by Korean historians include C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-kyo Kim (1967), Dae-Sook Suh (1967), and Young Ick Lew (1977) who were able to access and interpret multi-lingual primary sources in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and English languages to

³¹ Pow-key Sohn, "The Early Paleolithic Industries of Sokchang-ni, Korea," in *Early Paleolithic in South and East Asia*, by Fumiko Ikawa-Smith (The Hague: Mouton, 1978), 233.

shed lights onto what had happened in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Historians Kim and Kim, for example, were able to access official documents of the Chemulpo Treaty of 1882 first-hand and reveal discrepancies between versions as signed by national representatives of the U.S., China, and Korea. The American draft had “no reference to China’s claim to suzerainty over Korea” but included “a ban on opium trade” at Commodore Shufeldt’s insistence,³² whereas the Chinese version, which Li handed to Shufeldt as the “Korean draft” to be passed onto King Gojong for his signature, clearly mentioned that “Korea is a vassal state of China, but has always enjoyed autonomy in both its internal and external affairs” in Article I.³³ The Chinese intention to maintain its superior position in the tributary relationship with Korea while appearing to stay out of Korean affairs became apparent.

Dae-Sook Suh’s scholarly insights on the lives of Koreans in the Russian Far East and Manchuria were equally pioneering and revealing of the effects, positive and negative, of communism on the region as shared in titles including, *The Koreans in the Soviet Union* (1987), *The Koreans in China* (1990), *The Korean Communist Movement* (1967), and *Documents of Korean Communism: 1918-1948* (1970). Suh’s description of the impact of communism shown by the Lenin’s leadership with a promise of support for independence endeavors of China and Korea against Japanese imperialism portrayed the standoff-ish stance of the United States and the American President Woodrow Wilson in stark contrast with the Russian’s in the 1920s.

Traditionalist, conservative historical accounts of Korean King Gojong’s modernization reform plans, political factionalism in the court, and the Tonghak Uprisings of the poor peasants of Korea were given in Korean or English languages by Korean scholars, Han Woo-keun (1970), Ki-baek Lee (1984), and Young Ick Lew (1998) in the late twentieth century. In the 1980s-

³² Charles Oscar Paullin, *Shufeldt Papers: The Opening of Korea by Commodore Shufeldt* (Washington, 1883), 489.

³³ Kim and Kim, *Korea*, 22.

1990s, works by U.S. historians such as Emily Rosenberg (1982), James Scarth Gale (1983), Ramon Myers and Mark Peattie jointly (1984), and W.G. Beaseley (1987) were published to shed renewed insights into the role of missionaries in U.S. relations with the Far East Asia at the turn of the twentieth century. These works were followed by the 1990 collaborative work of Carter Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, and Michael Robinson on the history of Korea, expanding on the Korean language version of Ki-baik Lee's 1984 book, which laid a foundation of Korean history as told by a Korean historian. The 1990 publication incorporated up-to-date archaeological discoveries of the pre-historical period of Korea by Lee as well as new analysis of new materials on the period of 1864-1910 by Lew, and chapters on Japanese colonial period by Robinson and post-liberation Korea by Eckert, yielding a work of scholarly collaboration.

Martina Deuchler (1992 and 2015), Akira Iriye (1992), John J. Stephan (1994), Peter Duus (1995 and 1996), and Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson (1999) presented comprehensive studies of what had happened nearly a century ago, seen through the lens of Neo-Confucianism, colonialism, imperialism, nationalism, and racism. Deuchler's contribution to the study of Neo-Confucian influence on Korean society came under multiple titles over the decades, as were Duus's scholarship on the Japanese economic imperialism toward Korea. Shin and Robinson defined the term modernity as a Western phenomenon associated with Enlightenment, industrialism, nationalism, and the nation-state, giving birth to East Asian modernity. Iriye and Stephan brought transnationalism into the scholarship of global Korean communities in their understanding of what had happened over a century ago.

As the twenty-first century dawned, renewed interests on the affairs of Korea, China, and Japan in regard to the globalization and transnationalism began to be expressed through historical works by another group of historians: Hyung Il Pai (2000), Jongsuk Chay (2002),

Hyun Ok Park (2005), Evgeeny Sergeev (2007), Alyssa Park (2009 and 2019), Takashi Fujitani (2011), Jun Uchida (2011), Henry Em (2013), Yumi Moon (2013), and Albert Park (2015).

These scholars presented revisionist interpretations on wide-ranging issues from national sovereignty, Korea's entry into modernity, and the identity and reactions of Koreans in the new geopolitical environment under Japanese colonial occupation of Korea which began in 1905 and lasted for forty years. The movement of peoples from China, Japan, and Korea across national borders—whether voluntary, coerced, or in desperate attempt for survival and expansion—and the formation of transnational diasporas across the region were documented and debated by these scholars through the lens of imperialism, racism, nationalism, and transnationalism.

Historian Alyssa Park (2009) took the notion of living in transnational diasporas a step further and introduced borderland living by Korean migrants and “the attempts of multiple states to govern Korean migrants” in the borderland of Tumen Valley (2019).³⁴ A nation (*kukka*=國家) constituted “not just the royal family or government, but a collective entity of people, land, and government (*kunmin ilch'ae* (君民一體))”—at least in theory.³⁵ This way of thinking explains how the transnational migrants who left Korea in hardship to settle down abroad in diasporas still adhered to the Korean customs and lifestyles and were eager to come together in defense of Korea as a sovereign nation. Equally importantly, the King of Korea lamented the unfortunate situations of his former subjects and attempted to help out long after they left the realm of his protection.

Entering into the new millennium, the earlier historical accounts written in English were complemented by the contributions made by Korean historians Pak Hwan (1995), Park Chong

³⁴ Alyssa Park, *Sovereignty Experiments: Korean Migrants and the Building of Borders in Northeast Asia, 1860-1945* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019), 3.

³⁵ Alyssa Park, *Borderland Beyond: Korean Migrants and the Creation of a Modern State Boundary Between Korea and Russia, 1860-1937*. Ph.D. Dissertation (New York: Columbia University, 2009), 51.

Hyo (1997-2018), Kim Yong-p'il (2013), Kim Kyung-II (2014), Sung Hee Lee (2004-2017), Sun Young Park (2006), Young-Jun Cho (2016), and others from the nationalist standpoint, expressed in the Korean language. Their contributions uncovered many primary sources hitherto ignored or buried in the deep archives of various governments, such as Japan, Russia, and Korea.

Most importantly, scholarly works by Russian-Korean historians such as Igor Saveliev (2004), Igor Ermachenko (2005), Evgeny Sergeev (2007), Sergei Kurbanov (2016), Jon K. Chang (2016), and Park Chong Hyo (2018) enriched the historiography by presenting Russian archival materials in English or Korean language. These scholars gave insights into the lives of Koreans in the Russian diaspora, trying to become good Tsarist subjects while maintaining their allegiance to their old country and fighting against the Japanese imperialism, as treated by the Russian news media and official government documents.

This dissertation takes advantage of all of these historical findings and interpretations on Koreans in the Russian Far East and Manchuria available in English, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, French, and Russian languages.

c. Historiography on the Opening of Korea and Modernization Efforts

A corpus of historical writings exists on this period of Korea where tensions escalated among the world's superpowers, each maneuvering for hegemony around the Korean peninsula: China, Japan, Russia, European countries, and America over the banking, trading, gold-mining, railways, and other enterprising capitalistic interests. In his 1934 book, *Empire in the East*, a collection of essays written by experts and scholars, historian Tyler Dennett discussed American involvement in the situation of the Far East. As Dennett wrote, "No realistic statement of the

processes by which the West sought to ‘civilize’ the East could be complete without an appraisal of the part played by the Far Eastern [Open Door] policy of the United States.”³⁶

Historian W.G. Beaseley echoed and pushed Dennett’s appraisal further by characterizing Western imperialism as ‘economic imperialism,’ following the argument raised by J. A. Hobson in his 1902 book, *Imperialism: a study*.³⁷ Hobson had identified overproduction as the “root cause” of modern imperialism as seen in the development of American imperialism, which he saw as “the natural product of the economic pressure of a sudden advance of capitalism which could not find occupation at home and needed foreign markets for goods and for investments.”³⁸ Duus noted a similar impetus among the European powers in search for new global markets as well as new sources of raw materials which intensified during the pan-European great depression in the 1870s through the 1890s, “more or less coinciding with the era of new imperialism.”³⁹

The key to this new modern imperialism of the nineteenth century was the industrialization which extended the reach of Western political powers as well as enabled domination of the new global market through aggressive export policies, protective tariffs, and colonial expansion. Conveniently sanctioned by unequal treaties with the *Other* nations of “backward or uncivilized peoples” who were deemed to have “no sovereign rights over the territories they inhabited” but rather in need of protection, these new imperialistic nations pushed on in their quest of new markets.⁴⁰

³⁶ Tyler Dennett, “The Open Door,” in *Empire in the East*, ed. By Joseph Barnes (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1934), 269.

³⁷ J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: a Study* (1902), 8, quoted in W.G. Beaseley, *Japanese Imperialism, 1894-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1.

³⁸ J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: a Study* (New York: Gordon Press, 1975. Reprint of 1938 ed.), 79.

³⁹ Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: the Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1995), 7.

⁴⁰ Duus, *The Abacus*, 7.

In this regard, Duus deduced: “It is possible to imagine an industrialized Japan that was not imperialist, but it is difficult to imagine an imperialist Japan that had not been industrialized.”⁴¹ The Meiji Restoration was a reform movement “intended to remake Japan as recognizably similar to the Western powers” which swept through Japan in 1868 to 1912 upon the forcible opening of Japan by the United States Commodore Mathew Perry in 1868.⁴² Japanese leaders felt not only compelled but empowered to imperialize Korea, after having achieved industrialization through the Meiji Restoration.

The opening of Korea took a series of events from July 29, 1866, when an American schooner, *General Sherman*, got stuck on a high tide and destroyed by a fire, allegedly caused by Koreans, to May 1871, when the U.S. responded by sending an American Asiatic Expedition to force open Korea. The Expedition comprising five steamships—HSS *Alaska*, *Colorado*, *Monocacy*, *Benecia*, and *Taloo*—came armed with 85 guns and 1,230 men and docked along the Sallé-River (Han River of Seoul), resulting in mass killing and wounding of 350 Koreans.

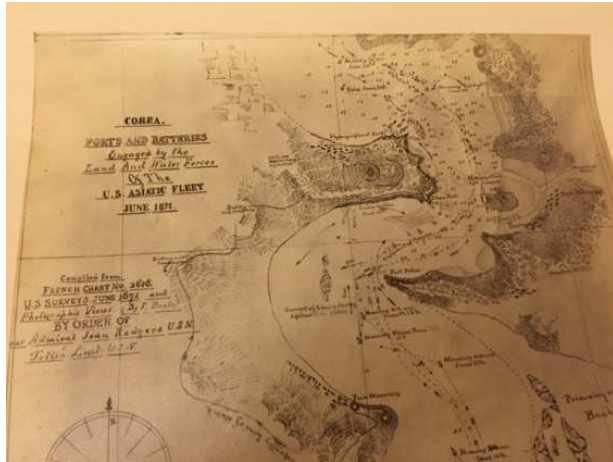
This incident was called *Shinmiyangyo* (辛未洋擾) or “the 1871 American Incursion”—the first American military action in Korea taken by Commanders John Rodgers and Frederick Low.⁴³ On July 3, the Navy Department cautioned Low against any further attempt for “the conquest of Korea” as the expedition was deemed insufficiently manned and the force inadequately equipped “to make its way to Seoul” and ordered it to return to the U.S.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Duus, *The Abacus*, 24.

⁴² Henry Em, *The Great Enterprise: Sovereignty and Historiography in Modern Korea* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 30.

⁴³ Felice Beato, [Album of photographs made during the expedition of the American Asiatic fleet into Korea, May and June, 1871], 1871 May – 1871 June, housed in New York Historical Society Patricia D. Klingenstein Library Print Room PR-002-406, 25.

⁴⁴ Asiatic Squadron Letter for 1871, quoted in Charles Oscar Paullin, “The Opening of Korea by Commodore Shufeldt,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Sept., 1910), 476.



(Figure 1. “Corea. Ports and Batteries.”)⁴⁵



(Figure 2. Rodgers and Low, and two Chinese)



(Figure 3: Korean casualties on Kangwha, 1871)⁴⁶



(Figure 4: Officers on board the HSS *Monocacy*, 1871)⁴⁷

This incident, *Shinmiyangyo*, although it was stopped short of opening Korea, served as a precursor to the Treaty of *Kanghwa* of 1876 when Korea was opened by Japan. After the failed attempts by America to open Korea through the *General Sherman* and *Shinmiyangyo* Incidents,

⁴⁵ “Corea. Ports and Batteries, Engaged by the Land and Water Forces of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet, June 1871,” compiled from French Chart No. 2618. U.S. Surveys, June 1871, and Photographic Views (By F. Beato) by order of Rear Admiral John Rodgers. Photographs presented in these figures were taken on the author’s research trip in May, 2017 from: Felice Beato, [Album of photographs made during the expedition of the American Asiatic fleet into Korea, May and June, 1871], 1871 May – 1871 June, housed in New York Historical Society Patricia D. Klingenstein Library Print Room PR-002-406.

⁴⁶ Beato, [Album,] 25.

⁴⁷ Beato, [Album,] 42.

the Treaty of Kanghwa of 1876, established between Korea and Japan, finally opened Korea to the world. This Treaty, signed on February 22, 1876, was “Korea’s first modern treaty” of coming out of a long seclusion into the international stage.⁴⁸ Engineered by Japan to seize the opportunity to open Pusan and two other ports for trading, the treaty gave exclusive privileges to Japanese merchants.

Commercial development of Korea began with the opening of ports of Gensan [Wonsan]⁴⁹ and Fusan [Busan] to trade only with Japan, as stipulated by the Treaty of Chemulpo of 1876 and followed by the additional openings of Chemulpo, Gunsan, Chinnampo, Mokpo, Masanpo, and Song Chin. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor report of “Commercial Korea in 1904,” the imports of \$800,000 in 1884 grew to \$7,000,000 in 1902, and exports of \$475,000 to \$4,200,000 in respective years. The same report documented the imports of cotton goods, kerosene oil, mining supplies, railway construction materials, tobacco and silk goods, while the exports of “greatest importance” were rice, beans, ginseng, and hides in 1902, with rice topping at a million dollars.⁵⁰

Angus Hamilton, an English war correspondent for the *Pall Mall Gazette* of London and author of *Korea* in 1904, was quoted for his first-hand description of the port of Chemulpo, only thirty-five miles away from Seoul. Hamilton depicted it as “an important distribution center” of foreign trade with 5,973 dealers and administrative officers of various concessions of America,

⁴⁸ Carter J. Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, *Korea Old and New: A History* (Seoul, Korea: Korea Institute, Harvard University, 1990), 200.

⁴⁹ This port, located “about 100 miles northeast of Seoul” on the eastern coast, was called “Yuensan by the Chinese, Gensan by the Japanese, and Wonsan by most foreigners residing or doing business in Korea”—not to be confused with another open port of Gunsan [Kunsan], located on the southwestern coast.— United States. Department of Commerce and Labor. Bureau of Statistics. *Commercial Korea in 1904: Area, Population, Production, Railways, Telegraphs, and Transportation Routes and Foreign Commerce and Commerce of United States with Korea [From the Monthly Summary of Commerce and Finance for January, 1904]*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), 2452.

⁵⁰ *Commercial Korea in 1904*, 2449.

Japan, France, and Britain by 1904 in the above report.⁵¹ In another book of memoirs which he co-authored with Major Herbert H. Austin and Viscount Masatake Terauchi, the Imperial Japanese Resident-General, in 1904 and republished in 1910, entitled *Korea: Its History, Its People, and Its Commerce*, Hamilton described how Koreans, originally an agricultural people, engaged themselves in farming and were subsidized by their wives who produced cotton, silk, linen, and grass-cloth in their spare time.

With the opening of Korea in 1876 flocked the foreign gold-diggers, since the “presence of gold has been known from the earliest times” throughout the country—“gold, silver, lead, copper, iron, coal—but that which yields the richest harvest is gold,” as Hamilton affirmed.⁵² Thus began the Western war of concessions in Korea which Japan had already claimed as “an indispensable market for the growth of Japanese capitalism.”⁵³ Western industrialized powers collided against each other with mutually-conflicting interests and the Japanese imperial ambitions over the rich natural resources of Korea, hitherto untapped due to lack of industrialization. The pre-Modern, pre-industrialized Korea seemed to be standing, conveniently or inconveniently, in the gateway to China and the Asian continent.

In this geo-economic and political atmosphere at the turn of the twentieth century the successful removal of all foreign superpowers from the Korean peninsula, engineered by well-run political machines and facilitated by strong military forces of Japan, would guarantee the success of Japan’s imperialism. And Korea would serve Japan as a convenient bridge to China and the continent of Asia, except for one obstacle standing in the way—China.

⁵¹ Harold F. Cook, *Pioneer American Businessman in Korea: The Life and Times of Walter Davis Townsend* (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society Korea Branch, 1981), 72; Angus Hamilton, quoted in “Commercial Korea in 1904,” 2450.

⁵² Angus Hamilton, Herbert H. Austin and Masatake Terauchi. *Korea: Its History, Its People, and Its Commerce* (Boston: J.B. Millet, 1910), 74.

⁵³ Hilary Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea: 1868-1910. A Study of Realism and Idealism in International Relations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), 444.

It was imperative for Japan to remove China from its centuries-long, if not longer, relationship of suzerainty over Korea as the self-proclaimed “Big Brother” with a political influence which “reached its zenith in the years 1885-1894.”⁵⁴ China’s share in Korea’s import trade rose from 19 to 45 percent, while that of Japan declined from 81 to 55 percent from 1885 to 1892.⁵⁵ Sino-Japanese rivalry in the trade war escalated into a diplomatic tug-of-war with Ito Hirobumi at the helm in Japan.

The long-standing “Korea problem” (*Chosen Mondai*=朝鮮問題) in Japanese foreign relations regarding the Korean court’s refusal to acknowledge the Japanese ruler’s superiority over the Korean monarch had been at the center of Japanese political debates since the Meiji Restoration of 1868. This dispute over the Korea problem—to subdue Korea or not—expressed as *Seikan Ron* (征韓論), was modeled after the gunboat diplomacy of the West and caused a “great divide” in Meiji political history over the years.⁵⁶ The Korea problem emerged again at this time of trade wars as a matter of “national insult” in the face of Japan’s “aggressive foreign policy,” split between the pro-conquest party led by Mutsu Munemitsu and the anti-conquest party led by Okubo Toshimichi.⁵⁷

A pro-conquest loyalist Sada Hakubo, who considered Korea as Japan’s vassal state, wrote “Those who are early control others; those who are late are controlled [by others]....If Imperial Japan passes this great opportunity to the foreigners, we will lose our lips [i.e., Korea] as a consequence, and one day our teeth will surely suffer from the cold....Korea is a gold mine, and rice and wheat are abundant.”⁵⁸ Such powerful rhetoric on the importance of Korea with rich

⁵⁴ Conroy, *The Japanese*, 460.

⁵⁵ C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism, 1876-1910* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1967), 70.

⁵⁶ Duus, *The Abacus*, 32.

⁵⁷ Duus, *The Abacus*, 31; Conroy, *The Japanese*, 20.

⁵⁸ Sada Hakubo, “Sei-kan ron no kyumondan,” 38-39, Quoted in Duus, *The Abacus*, 35.

resources as the stepping stone to the continent was exactly what Japanese politicians needed to justify their plan of aggression to remove China from Korea.

As debates on the Korea problem reemerged in Japan, King Gojong (高宗) made a bold announcement of *Oath of Independence* from China and a *Declaration of Reforms* with fourteen articles, also known as the Kabo Reforms on January 8, 1895. The King declared his resolve to bring his country into modernity by adopting the ways of other more-advanced countries, whether European or Japanese:

If the (foreign) doctrine is to be regarded as a doctrine of lechery and sensuality, then it can be kept at a distance; if a foreign mechanism is advantageous, then we can reap advantage from it and use it to increase our wealth. Why fear, instead of having recourse to, such things as agriculture, sericulture, medical science, medicines, military weapons, ships and carriages? Let us repel their doctrines, but learn to use or imitate their machinery....⁵⁹

The King acknowledged the weakness of Korea and pledged to strengthen the country by learning from the more advanced nations for their advanced systems. This statement was followed by the King's *Oath of Independence from China*. With the fourteen-article *Oath*, the King declared the severing of tributary relationship and subjection to China by establishing Korea's independence— *chaju tongnip* [自主獨立].

The new set of modernization plans of 1895, after the failed Kapsin Reform of 1884, outlined a plan of reforms, ranging from tax, land tax, discrimination, finances, military system, to equal rights of employment regardless of their origin. As historian Martina Deuchler pointed out, the “truly revolutionary” Kabo Reform set out to dismantle the elite-centered social system

⁵⁹ “The King’s Oath,” in Isabella L. Bird, *Korea & Her Neighbours: A Narrative of Travel, with an Account of the Recent Vicissitudes and Present Position of the Country* (London: John Murray, 1898), Volume II, 35; as published in Tewksbury, Donald G. *Source Materials on Korean Politics and Ideologies*. Volume II of the Series, Source Books on Far Eastern Political Ideologies (New York: International Secretariat Institute of Pacific Relations, 1950), 6-7.

that had dictated the Korean society for two millennia.⁶⁰ These terms of social reform were much-needed and would have been welcome by the Korean people, had the reforms been implemented successfully and continuously without the Japanese interference of colonial scheme in the coming years.

However, such a grand plan failed largely due to the fierce factionalism among the three leading groups in the new cabinet: The “Chinese party” or “the old group” headed by Prime Minister Kim Hong-jip, the progressive “Japan Party” headed by Home Minister Pak Young-hyo and So Kwang-pom, and the “American Party” represented by Yi Wan-yong, Chung Kyung-won, and Yi Cha-yun.⁶¹ A political storm split the government between the old group, led by T’aewongun, and the young group of Pak Yong-hyo backed by the King and the Queen. The Kabo Reforms also failed to provide a sense of protection and stability to the Korean people, leading to unrest among the populace and the Tonghak movement.⁶²

The Tonghaks, generally referred to as Tonghak Movement (東學運動) or Tonghak Revolution (東學革命), rose sporadically at first in the southern part of the country, namely Gobeu in Cholla province on January 11, 1894. This group of peasants was led by Ch’oe Che-u (崔濟愚), the first leader, who was not eligible to sit for the civil service examination due to his questionable parental background of scholarly *yangban* status and joined forces with other scholars of the *choong-in* status in pursuing the Tonghak movement. By the 1890s Tonghaks were 300,000 member strong with 339 regional organizations and gained strength steadily to

⁶⁰ Martina Deuchler, *Under the Ancestors' Eyes: Kinship, Status, and Locality in Premodern Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), 396.

⁶¹ Hilary Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea: 1868-1910. A Study of Realism and Idealism in International Relations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), 274-275.

⁶² Albert L. Park, *Building a Heaven on Earth: Religion, Activism, and Protest in Japanese Occupied Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 24.

enjoy their first victory at Hwangto-hyun on April 6.⁶³ After occupying the city of Jeonju on April 27 and securing the Treaty of Jeonju on May 8, the Tonghak movement was recognized as an uprising to be reckoned with by the government. It was under the leadership of Chon Pongjun (全捧準, 1854-1895), an “impoverished local scholar-farmer who owned and tilled three *majigi* (ca. 800 square yards) of land for a family of six” and “upright Confucianist” with a military experience in Cholla Province, the Tonghaks became organized into a rebellious uprising against the Min oligarchy in 1894.⁶⁴ The unrest led by the Tonghaks prompted Queen Min and her faction to enlist China’s help in suppressing the revolts on June 1, 1894.

The Chinese government promptly responded by sending in 1,500 soldiers and two warships on June 8. Within two days 400 Japanese marines arrived in Seoul, reinforced by 4,000 additional soldiers who were assembled in the Seoul-Inchon area.⁶⁵ Alarmed by such a quick assemblage of foreign troops on demand within a few days and the overnight subjugation of the Tonghak rebels upon the arrival of Japanese and Chinese troops, the Korean government announced the situation was promptly resolved and requested all foreign troops to withdraw, wanting to back out of the chaos of having two foreign troops at hand.

While Li Hongzhang of China was willing to remove his soldiers, Tokyo was not. Japan had long been anxious to push forward with an aggressive foreign policy to make Korea “a part of the Japanese map.”⁶⁶ Japan was not about to stop short of reaching its goal of removing China from Korea now that the sword was out of the sheath. Military hostilities commenced upon Japan’s declaration of war with China over Korea in the last week of July 1894. The *Imperial*

⁶³ A. Park, *Building*, 36.

⁶⁴ Young Ick Lew, “The Conservative Character of the 1894 Tonghak Peasant Uprising: A Reappraisal with Emphasis on Chon Pong-Jun’s Background and Motivation.” *Journal of Korean Studies*, Volume 7, (1990), 154.

⁶⁵ Kim and Kim, *Korea*, 78.

⁶⁶ Kim and Kim, *Korea*, 79.

Rescript was issued as “Japan’s Declaration of War Against China” on August 1. Within two months of the beginning of hostilities with China on Korean soil Japan claimed a swift and decisive victory over China and secured control of Korea from the royal palace to much of the government operation by September 16, 1894.

Upon the signing of the Shimonoseki Peace Treaty by Envoy Li Hongzhang on April 17, 1895, China officially conceded to Japan’s victory and recognized Korea’s independence from Q’ing China. China agreed to pay an indemnity of 200 million taels, as well as cede Taiwan, the Pescadores Islands, and the Liaodong Peninsula to Japan. Six days later, however, Russia, Germany, and France raised a red flag, referred to as *Triple Intervention*, on April 23, 1895, as they were not ready to give up on their commercial opportunities. This Triple Intervention was a show of “multilateral imperialism” arranged by Russia to press upon Japan to relinquish Port Arthur of the Liaodong Peninsula with a penalty payment, sowing a seed for further turmoil that would result in the Russo-Japanese War within a decade.⁶⁷

Japan’s victory over China in 1895 secured Korea as Japan’s sole prey politically with greater access to the Chinese market commercially as well as 364,510,000 Yen as the Chinese indemnity, which amounted to “nearly one third of the national GNP” of Japan—“a healthy profit” as Duus called it.⁶⁸ Although the Tonghak movement of 1894 as a political protest against foreign evils of the Korean society failed, it “served as a catalyst” for the Sino-Japanese War, a war of foreign-armed interventions.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Kirk W. Larsen, *Tradition, Treaties, and Trade: Qing Imperialism and Choson Korea, 1850-1910* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008), 238.

⁶⁸ Peter Duus, “Economic dimensions of Meiji imperialism: the case of Korea, 1895-1910,” in Myers, Ramon, and Mark Peattie, eds, *The Japanese Colonial Empire: 1895-1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 143.

⁶⁹ Kim and Kim, *Korea*, 75.

Overall, scholars have studied the opening of Korea and its attempts to enter into modernity from a variety of perspectives. In general, the world's superpowers interacted with this region through imperialism and nationalism at the end of the nineteenth century, resulting in the collapse of the 500-year-old Yi Dynasty. This chaotic situation of international intrigues and exploitation of resources contributed to the struggles of the Korea's common people, who got pushed further out into the periphery of the national borders in search of a better future.

Historical Contexts of Korean Migration

This dissertation identifies three main factors as responsible for the Korean migrations to the Russian Far East and Manchuria in the late nineteenth century: 1) the extreme case of repeated flood and famine, known as 'The Great Famine' of 1869, further aggravated by the burden of taxation, called skeleton levies (*packkol chingp'o* = 白骨徵包), on poor farmers, 2) the intensified struggles of the lower-class populace in *yangban* society and the corrupt local government in the Hamgyong Province (咸鏡道) which was far removed from the central government of Korea, and 3) the devastating effects of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 on the livelihood of the Korea's poor, as the country was being pushed into another foreigners' war, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905.⁷⁰

All of these natural, societal, and human-induced disasters placed extreme burdens on the peasant farmers of Korea, pushing them to seek their lives elsewhere across national borders in the immediate north into Russia and Manchuria, as well as to the other parts of the world such as Hawaii, California, Mexico, and the South America.⁷¹ This dissertation will focus on those who

⁷⁰ Throughout the history of Korea the peninsula has been divided into eight provinces which are called "do" (道) as administrative units. Therefore, the province of Hamgyong, is referred to either as Hamgyong-do or Hamgyong Province in this dissertation, since calling these provinces "Hamgyongdo Province," for example, is redundant, the same as calling Texas as "State of Texas State."

⁷¹ *The Ho Young Ham Papers*, Special Collections of Research Library, University of California in Los Angeles (Seoul: Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation, 2013), 26.

walked northward to Russia and Manchuria and eventually participated in direct military and/or reconnaissance activities during the Russo-Japanese War on both sides.

A map of Korea, shown below in Figure 5, is provided to delineate geographical divisions of the country at the time of this study, 1895-1920. The eight provinces of the Korean government such as Hamgyongdo, Pyongando, Choongchungdo, and Chollado are indicated by different colors; some of the major cities such as Seoul, Pyongyang, Wonsan, and Busan, that are mentioned in this dissertation are represented by red dots. Two rivers, Yalu and Tumen, are indicated on the borders which separate Korea from Manchuria and the RFE in the very north of Korean Peninsula.



(Figure 5: Map of Korea, circa. 1900, by the Author)

In order to understand what went on in Chosun in its final years of sovereignty, one needs to understand the Neo-Confucian influence on Korean society that permeated into every level and every fiber of Korean people's existence. Historians Carter J. Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, and Young Ick Lee have traced the first transmission of Confucianism from China to Korea as early as in 372 A.D. During the Three Kingdoms period, a Confucian academy was founded by King Sosurim (371-384) in Koguryō, the northern kingdom, followed by the opening of others in the southern kingdoms of Paekche and Silla in 682 A.D.⁷² Confucianism contributed to the scholarly advancement of knowledge and culture in Korean society through the Koryō Dynasty. Its founder, Wang Kōn (877-943), adopted Confucianism as "the ideology of a centrally organized state."⁷³ Government-sponsored as well as many private schools were established based on the Confucian ideology to educate upper-class students and aspiring government officials. Such influence reached further into the Chosun Dynasty when Neo-Confucianism was introduced by scholars such as Yi Che-hyōn and his disciple, Yi Saek. Yi Saek studied overseas in China and revived the Confucian Academy in the early to mid-fourteenth century. This Neo-Confucianism greatly influenced the Korean society with its pragmatic teachings and widely-used study materials, such as the *Classic of Filial Piety* and *Four Books*.⁷⁴

Although the Confucianization of Korean society was basically an upper-class phenomenon, the ideology of three cardinal human relationships (*Samgang*=三綱) and five moral imperatives (*Oryun*=五倫) had a far-reaching and comprehensive influence into the very fabric of Korean society at every level. *Samgang* dictated the hierarchical relationships between

⁷² Eckert, et al., *Korea Old and New*, 26.

⁷³ Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992), 15.

⁷⁴ Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation*, 14 & 22.

ruler and subject, father and son, and husband and wife, while *Oryun* reinforced the interpersonal virtues:

Righteousness (üi=義) between sovereign and subject, proper rapport (ch'in=眞) between father and son, separation of functions (pyöl=別) between husband and wife, proper order of birth (sǒ=序) between elder and younger brothers, and faithfulness (sin=信) between friends.⁷⁵

In other words, these five virtues of *oryun* were to be adhered to not only in everyday lives of people but also in performing the four rites (四禮)—"capping, wedding, mourning, and ancestor worship"—“tied together by a three-fold mechanism of *samgang*” (三綱).⁷⁶ Consequently, this notion of *samgang oryun* was mandated at every level of the interpersonal relationships in the social organization of Korea. Both domestic and public spheres existed ultimately under the sovereign's spheres.

The traditional society of pre-modern day Korea, more specifically of Chosun during the Yi dynasty, was built on a rigid, caste-like structure determined at birth. There were four hierarchical classes: 1) *yangban* [兩班], a scholarly upper class from a clear, distinguished “line of descent” of ancestry and members of “two orders of officialdom” in civil or military capacity; 2) *chungin* [中人], the so-called 'middle people' class who performed clerical and civil duties; 3) *sangin* [常人] or commoner class, also known as *yangmin* [良民] (good people) who were farmers, fishermen, merchants and craftsmen; and lastly 4) *chǒnmin* [賤民], meaning 'low-born' or 'inferior people' who worked in grave-digging, tanning and butchery.⁷⁷ Shamans, exorcists, entertainers and the female *kisaeng* [妓生], the Korean equivalent of the Japanese geisha girls,

⁷⁵ Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation*, 110.

⁷⁶ Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation*, 111.

⁷⁷ Ki-baek Lee, “Ch. 9: The Creation of a Yangban Society,” in Eckert et al., *Korea Old and New*, 108.

were classed in the same status as slaves until 1650 when government slavery was technically abolished.⁷⁸

Learning was only allowed for and afforded by people born into the upper *yangban* class and, extremely rarely by *chungin*. The “sole duty of the *yangban* was to devote themselves exclusively to the study and self-cultivation” and their “sole profession” was to hold non-technical public offices, while the *chungin* class served in routine, technical positions in fields such as medicine, accounting, law, scribing, and art.⁷⁹ Commoners, or *chungin*, were expected and required to bear “the burden of taxation” and military service without any upper-class privileges and benefits in the hierarchical, unequal society of traditional Korea. The most visible distinguishing factors determining *yangbans* from *commoners* were in ways the latter group dressed and lived “by their simpler mode of life.”⁸⁰

Social differences could be easily identified by dress styles and bright colors worn by upper-class men and women who were clad in silks, whereas lower-class populace could only wear white or gray dresses made with plain fabric woven from hemp or cotton in later years. The bright red color was worn exclusively by privileged *yangban* women or high-class female entertainers. Korean headdresses worn by men and women, in general, served a dual purpose—to “protect and decorate the head, while indicating the wearer’s rank and the formality of ceremonial occasions.”⁸¹ These dresses and headgears of plain white cotton wrapped around their heads will be seen in the photographs of Korean transnationals in the RFE and Manchuria, presented in later sections of this dissertation.

⁷⁸ Michael Breen, *The Koreans: Who They Are, What They Want, Where their Future Lies* (New York: St. Martin’s, 2004), 87; Hye Ok Park, “Veiling of Korean Women: The Neo-Confucian Influence in Comparison to the Veiling of Muslim Women,” *Journal of Arts & Humanities* (2016), Vol. 05, No. 03; 4.

⁷⁹ K. Lee, *A New History*, 174.

⁸⁰ Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation*, 13.

⁸¹ K. J. Lee, H. N. Young, and C. S. Hwan, *Traditional Korean Costume* (Kent, England: Global Oriental, 2003), 18.

a. Sharecropping and Burdens of Taxation on the Poor

In such a rigidly-structured *yangban* society of Korea, the bureaucratic and excessive taxation system forced upon commoners, peasants, and farmers of the Yi Dynasty was the main factor for the massive exodus to the RFE and Manchuria in the 1860s and 1870s. The “ownership of all the nation’s land formally resided in the king” who alone held the right to allocate the use of land by rank to *yangban* bureaucrats who, in return, enjoyed the right to collect the rent from the land, but not to own or pass it down hereditarily.⁸² However, in practice, private ownership of public land continued for generations by many *yangbans* who held large estates of land to be cultivated either by slaves or by tenant farmers. The practice of “a half and half crop sharing arrangement normally prevailed between owner and cultivator” involved the owner paying ten percent rent to the state out of his share.⁸³

In this type of sharecropping arrangement, the peasant farmers who were the tillers of the land became experts on how to cultivate the earth, fertilize for better crops, and improve the seedlings for increased harvests. These sharecroppers eventually improved their own relatively independent status as freeborn commoners in the society in comparison to the lowborn or slaves. On the other hand, the peasant farmers were required to pay a land tax, set at one-tenth of the harvest under the Rank Land Law until the Tribute Tax Law was enforced by King Sejong in 1444, lowering the tax to one-twentieth.⁸⁴ These *yangban*-tenant relationships became more prevalent as agricultural slaves were increasingly replaced by rent-paying commoners and slave tenants in the late eighteenth century. Even poor scholars who owned very little, except for a few slaves, could manage by letting their slaves work in someone else’s fields as tenants.⁸⁵ Tenancy

⁸² Lee, *A New History*, 183.

⁸³ Lee, *A New History*, 183.

⁸⁴ Lee, *A New History*, 184.

⁸⁵ Deuchler, *Under the Ancestors’ Eyes*, 348.

in some areas in Chölla Province accounted for 70 percent of all forms of agricultural cultivation.⁸⁶

These arrangements might have worked with everyone's expectations set and understood in peacetime. However, during the *Imjin Waeran* (壬辰倭亂) of 1592, the Japanese army led by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (豊臣秀吉) invaded Korea from the southern shores. Japanese troops marched up all the way to Seoul and took the royal court in hostage for several years. The country's farmlands lay fallow for years while farmers were deployed in battles. To make matters worse, land registers got destroyed in the war, increasing the number of "hidden fields" which became untraceable due to missing records and reducing the tax revenue from 1,700,000 *kyôl* (Korean unit of measuring farmlands) down to 540,000.⁸⁷ This amount was less than a third of previous years during the reign of Kwanghaegun (光海君, 1608-1623) immediately following the *Imjin War*.

In 1608, a new law called the Uniform Land Tax Law (Taedongpöp=大同法) was enacted to alleviate financial difficulties in the government due to the dwindling tax revenue. This new law yielded one percent of the rice harvested—about twelve *tu* (斗) of rice from each *kyôl* (結) of land—payable in cotton cloth (taedongp'o) or in coins (taedongjôn).⁸⁸ A new agency called *Sônhyech'ông* (善惠廳), literally meaning "Agency to Bestow Blessings," was also established.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Deuchler, *Under the Ancestors' Eyes*, 348.

⁸⁷ Lee, *A New History*, 224.

⁸⁸ The term "tu" was a unit of weighing grains and "kyôl" a unit of measuring farm land for the purpose of taxation.

⁸⁹ Lee, *A New History*, 224; Yijo Sillok, *Kwanghaegun Ilki*, "비변사에서 곽재우가 올린 상소문의 내용을 들어서 논하다 [Bibyunsa discussed the contents of the report by Kwak Jae-woo]," vol. 33 (Kwanghae 2) 1610. 9. 14.

This new law had unintended ramifications, some positive but others devastatingly negative, with lasting effects on Korean society. While the tax burden of the commoner peasants was lightened by shifting the tax base to the land, the peasants could not hold onto their tillable lands which were becoming scarce. On the other hand, this new arrangement helped the government-appointed agents, called “tribute men” (公人), to act abusively as “purchasing agents.”⁹⁰ These men got wealthy with commercial capital gains while the peasants became poorer with no land to till, often leading to nonpayment of taxes.

In the system of “skeleton levies” of “keeping the names of dead men on the tax rosters” when a peasant fled to avoid paying taxes, his unpaid taxes could be collected from his family members or even his neighbors.⁹¹ This practice of corporate punishment by taxing, which could be traced as far back to 1665 in the reign of King Hyunjong, explains why entire villages, not just individual families, moved together to find new opportunities elsewhere.⁹² A similar practice of obligating military service to families and neighbors when one fled can also be seen in a 1507 proceeding in Yijo Sillok.⁹³

Prime Minister Song Joon-gil was recorded on November 29, 1665 to have reported to King Hyunjong a story about a woman whose husband had died three years earlier. Still being assessed for and paying the taxes which her husband owed, she was found weeping uncontrollably at his gravesite. She was giving a final farewell at the end of the traditional three-

⁹⁰ Yijo Sillok, *Kwanghaegun Ilki*, “사간원이 탐욕을 일삼은 평안병사 성우길, 군관, 창고지기 등을 탄핵하다 [Saganwon impeached the Pyungan military magistrate Sung Woo-gil, the officers, and warehouse guards for their greedy actions],” vol. 120 (Kwanghae 9), 1617. 10. 6.; Lee, *A New History*, 225; Deuchler, *Under the Ancestors’ Eyes*, 348.

⁹¹ Lee, *A New History*, 226.

⁹² Hyunjong Sillok, “사직을 청하고 시사를 논한 부교리 신익상의 상소문 [Resignation and petition from Shin Ik-sang...],” Vol. 21 (December 18, 1673), No. 3.

⁹³ Yijo Sillok, “시독관 김철문이 직간 받아 들이는 일과 군역, 순검사 들의 일을 논하다 [Supervisor Kim Chul-moon discussed the works by military personnel and prosecutors],” Joongjong vol. 4, 1507. 11. 22.

year mourning period to her deceased husband with two little children on her back, as she had no other choice but to move away.⁹⁴

Minister Song implored the King for his leniency and solution to such a problem.

아, 오늘날 백성들의 고달픈 일이 진실로 한두 가지가 아니지만, 그 가운데 가장 극심한 것을 뽑아서 말한다면 신역(身役)에 대한 징포(徵布)와 조적(雕籍)에 대한 포흠(逋欠)이 두 가지에 불과합니다. 몇명의 식구가 단출하게 사는 백성의 집에서 경작하는 전지(田地)가 얼마나 되겠습니까. 일년 내내 부지런히 힘써서 풍년을 만나더라도 빚을 갚고 부세를 내고 나면 곡식은 벌써 바닥이 나기 때문에 부득불 다시 田宅을 팔아서 身布를 바치고 있습니다.... 처자식을 이끌고 울부짖으면서 떠돌게 되는데도 친척은 감히 만류하지 못하고 이웃도 머물러 살게 할 수가 없게 됩니다.⁹⁵

Ah... among the many hardships the poor people of the kingdom have to endure these days, the most severe are the skeleton levies. How much farm lands would a small family of poor peasants have to work with? They have to work hard all year around only to have nothing left to feed themselves after paying taxes and other debts even in years of good harvests.... So, they are taking their wives and children on the road, crying out loud in sorrow, while their relatives and neighbors look on helplessly or join them on their ways. (Author's translation)

The terrible problems of heavy taxation and physical labor that poor farmers and peasants had to endure, even during the good-crop years, left them penniless and pushed them to wander away with wives and children from their homes while weeping in tears. Their relatives and neighbors had no way to help out, as they were not doing any better. Instead, they joined them on their journeys in many cases, as the minister Song Joon-gil reported to the King in the above quote. Finding numerous records regarding the same problem of skeleton levies dating from 1665 to 1875 across seven Kings' chronicles, it seems that a solution was never found nor implemented

⁹⁴ Hyungjong Gaesu Sillok, “신역에 대한 징포, 조적에 대한 포흠 등의 폐단을 언급한 우참판 송준길의 상소,” [Vice Minister Song Joon-gil petitioned to the King regarding the problems of skeleton levies, etc.],” Vol. 11 (November 29, 1665), no. 1.

⁹⁵ Hyungjong Gaesu Sillok, Vol. 11 (November 29, 1665), no. 1.

in the history of the Yi Dynasty. Desperate farmers crossed the border although it was “against Korean law for peasants to leave” and “punishable by death” as traitors.⁹⁶

Upon hearing of the mass migrations from six villages in Hamgyongdo Province, Korea, by way of a Japanese official, Miyamoto Shoichi (宮本小一), King Gojong convened a meeting of his chief ministers and demanded an explanation on July 13, 1876:

함경도 (咸鏡道) 6 진 (鎭)의 백성들이 국경을 몰래 넘어가는 폐단이 갈수록 더욱 심해지니 심지어 이번에 일본의 이사관 (理事官) 미야모토 쇼이치 (宮本小一)의 말까지 있었다. 이것은 무슨 까닭에서 그런 것인가? 필시 도신이나 수재 (守宰)들이 잘 살피지 않아서 이렇게 되었을 것이니 잘 상의하여 조치하지 않을 수 없다. 그래서 경들을 부른 것이다.⁹⁷

I have heard through a Japanese official, Miyamoto Shoiichi, that people from six counties in Hamgyongdo are crossing the borders secretly. Why are they doing that? Is it happening because the local magistrates are not taking care of their people’s needs properly? If so, they should. And that is why I have called this meeting with you ministers to urge you to find a solution. (Author’s translation)

Various ministers reported and confirmed that people had been packing up and leaving from Hamgyong and other northern provinces, such as Pyongan, Hwanghae, and Kangwon during the past ten or so years due to repeated famines and that “nine out of ten houses had been vacated” with no way of collecting unpaid taxes.⁹⁸ The King spoke in sympathy of the people:

백성들이 국경을 넘어가는 것이 어찌 즐거워서 그러겠는가? 친척이 있는 고향을 떠나고 부모의 나라를 버리면서까지 법을 어기고 몰래 달아나는 것은 상정으로 헤아려보면 이치에 맞지 않는다. 허지만 백성들이 가지고 있는 억울함과 괴로움을 호소할 곳이 없어서 그랬을 것이다.⁹⁹

Why and how would anyone enjoy crossing the borders? It does not make sense for anyone to leave their home town, where their parents have lived happily, and abandon

⁹⁶ Jon K. Chang, *Burnt by the Sun: The Koreans of the Russian Far East* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2016), 12.

⁹⁷ Gojong Sillok [高宗實錄], “함경도의 백성들이 국경을 몰래 넘어가는 폐단을 방지하도록 하다. [Gojong instructed his Ministers to find a solution to the people of Hamgyongdo crossing the borders illegally],” Vol. 13 (July 13, 1876), no. 1.

⁹⁸ Gojong Sillok, “함경도,” 1.

⁹⁹ Gojong Sillok, “함경도,” 1.

their loved ones secretly overnight. They must have had serious chagrins for unfair treatment with no one to resolve for them. (Author's translation)

The King expressed his understanding of his poor people not wishing to leave their homeland illegally unless they were in extremely dire situations with no one to appeal to and urged his ministers to provide solutions for the situation.

One of the ministers, Yi Yoo-won, replied:

어리석은 백성들의 심정으로는 조그마한 이익이라도 보이면 범법 (犯法) 이라는 사실은 깨닫지 못하고 점차 국경을 몰래 넘는데, 한 번 넘어가면 그의 친척들이 그가 떠난 것을 보고는 뒤따라 또 떠나서 돌아오지 않게 때문에 이처럼 많아진 것입니다.¹⁰⁰

These foolish peasants must have left without fully understanding the consequences of their illegal border crossings when they saw the opportunities for small gains. But once they leave, their relatives follow them never to return, making the situation so grave and much worse. (Author's translation)

All the ministers agreed that the problem was worse in remote villages in Hamgyong Province due to their distant locations, thousands of *li* removed from Seoul as well as from the capital city of the Province, Hamheung, making it difficult to manage centrally. The local magistrates in Hamheung were only anxious to serve out their terms of appointment and eager to return home rather than extend King's benevolence to the locals, as quoted below:

함경도 수령들은 임기가 차기 만을 학수고대하다가 임기가 차면 즉시 교대하고 오기 때문에 임금의 교화를 선포하는 데에는 뜻이 없다.¹⁰¹

Local magistrates in Hamgyongdo are only anxious for their terms to end so that they could return to Seoul and are not interested in spreading the benevolence of the King to their people. (Author's translation)

The King was distraught to hear there was nothing he could do to help his people in their times of great difficulty and asked his ministers to continue to monitor the situation. Governor Yi Hoe-

¹⁰⁰ Gojong Sillok, “함경도,” 1.

¹⁰¹ Gojong Sillok, “함경도,” 1.

jung (李會正) of Hamgyong Province reported that towns, such as Buryung (富寧) and six other villages, had been flooded out and none of the migrants had returned, leaving no way to collect past taxes.

King Gojong was extremely disturbed about the economic difficulties his people were facing and asked his ministers to be lenient toward their people. In 1869, the King even ordered to transport 10,000 sacks of rice, harvested in the southern province of Youngnam (嶺南), to the north to feed the starving people in Hamgyong Province.¹⁰² The King also instructed the ministers to punish the corrupt magistrates firmly and repair the damages as soon as possible. The King's heartfelt concerns and instructions to help his people of Hamgyongdo, as recorded 14 times in Gojong's reign alone, were not necessarily followed through due to the factionalism among his ministers and the bureaucratic incompetence of his own court. These economic hardships felt by the Korean people further contributed to dissatisfaction with their lives in Korea and pushed them on their exodus in subsequent years.

b. Corruption in the Yangban Society of Korea

Another problem that plagued the Korean peasants was the administrative abuses by the local magistrates who customarily pocketed 70 percent of any income the peasants earned. As seen in the above report by Prime Minister (鈴議政) Yi Choe-eung (李最應), many of the local magistrates and *yangbans* were committing terribly abusive acts of retribution instead of understanding and trying to improve the situation for the poor people. The dysfunctional Korean *yangban* society yielded to the increasing abuses by local magistrates who acted as state representatives.

¹⁰² Gojong Sillok, “嶺南에 있는 還穀米 1 만 石을 옮겨다가 함경도의 굶주리고 있는 백성들을 구제하라고 명하였다 [The King ordered 10,000 bushels of rice to be moved from Youngnam Province to feed the hungry peasants in Hamgyong Province],” Gojong Vol. 6 (1869.12.22), 1.

The social inequality based on the family background (門閥=*munbol*) and the “ancestral entitlement” of “the landed *sajok*” (士族=*sajok*) intensified in the eighteenth century, contributing to social unrest among the oppressed populace.¹⁰³ Secondary sons (次子=*chaja* or 庶子=*sōja*) were second sons or sons born to second wives or concubines other than the “primary wife (*ch’ō*=妻) capable of conferring *bona fide* elite status upon her offspring.”¹⁰⁴ Secondary sons were discriminated against and ineligible to even sit for the royal examinations in aspiration for an office or a career.

For an instance, Choe Che-u, born in 1824 and executed in 1864, was the founder of Tonghaks and leader of the populace uprising. He was ineligible to take the civil service exams. Even though he was born to a father who was a Confucian scholar of *yangban* class, he could not secure a government position because his mother had been widowed from her previous marriage. Due to this situation, Choe was considered illegitimate and had no way of advancing himself in the Korean society.¹⁰⁵ As the government was “monopolized by the aristocracy, the *yangban* elite,” the common people had “no understanding” of how politics worked nor could they be involved.¹⁰⁶ The practice of “placing officials above the people (官先民卑) was so prevalent and so intense” that “toadyism” or “worship of the powerful” became the main characteristics of the Koreans’ social and political lives.¹⁰⁷

Accounts on such abusive practices of putting government, central or local, officials above ordinary people were shared by Lady Bishop—an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society who traveled extensively in Asia in 1894-1897— and American novelist

¹⁰³ Deuchler, *Under the Ancestors’ Eyes*, 341.

¹⁰⁴ Deuchler, *Under the Ancestor’s Eyes*, 7.

¹⁰⁵ A. Park, *Building*, 25.

¹⁰⁶ Duus, *The Abacus*, 409.

¹⁰⁷ Duus, *The Abacus*, 411; Yamaguchi Toyomasa, *Chosen no kenkyu* (Tōkyō : Ganshōdō Shoten, Meiji 44 [1911], 64-66; Arakawa Goro, *Saikin Chosen jijo* [最近 朝鮮事情] (Tokyo: Shimizu Shoten, 1908), 74.

Jack London—who was commissioned to cover the Russo-Japanese War as war correspondent by the San Francisco Examiner in 1904—in their travel reports of Korea. During her four visits to Korea from 1894 to 1897, Lady Bishop acquired a deep understanding of the country and its people’s characteristics. She enjoyed the “confidence and friendship” of King Gojong and Queen Min as no other foreign traveler had.¹⁰⁸ A female of independent wealth with upper-class standing, Lady Bishop was accepted more readily by Queen Min than any other male foreign travelers or wives of missionaries or diplomats. Lady Bishop observed, “The Korean official is the vampire which sucks the life-blood of the people,” having seen the effects of such abuses during her travels in many parts of Korea, as will be presented further in later sections of this dissertation.¹⁰⁹

On one occasion in 1904, Jack London, who was a card-carrying socialist from California and known for his strong affinity to poor laborers as he had been one in his youth, had a face-to-face encounter with a local magistrate, called Pak Choon-Song, a *yangban* nobleman, whom London’s horse-groomer and guide, Manyong-i, called the “Number One Man.”¹¹⁰ London gave a detailed description of his debate with Pak on his practice of making “a squeeze of seventy per cent” from the poor peasants in Kunsan.

Pak-Choon-Song was very sorry for the poor people. I asked for some more substantial expression of his sorrow than mere words....I hastened to cut off Pak-Choon-Song’s retreat. I looked very severe, and Pak-Choon-Song looked at me, while I explained very minutely every detail of the process of giving back to the people the seventy-per-cent squeeze. He said he understood, and he promised faithfully that every cent of it would be returned....The mission was accomplished....But so far as concerned the return of the seventy-per-cent squeeze, I knew, and Manyong-i knew, and Pak-Choon-Song knew and we all knew one another knew, that Pak-Choon-Song intended nothing of the sort.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Walter C. Hillier, “Preface” in *Korea & Her Neighbours: A Narrative of Travel, with an Account of the Recent Vicissitudes and Present Position of the Country*, by Isabella L. Bird, (London: John Murray, 1898), II, , v.

¹⁰⁹ Bird, *Korea*, II, 103.

¹¹⁰ Jack London, *Jack London Reports: War Correspondence, Sports Articles, and Miscellaneous Writings* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), 89.

¹¹¹ *Jack London Reports*, 89.

London's confrontation with Pak showed his strong affinity with the working people's pain and the unfair treatment they received with no prospect of deliverance but empty promises, as he had seen among the poor people in Oakland, California, and the East End district in London.¹¹² Deep in his heart, London, who was at the prime of his highly successful and visible career as an American novelist, journalist and social activist, may have thought he could make some fundamental changes in the way the local customs work in Korea. But, as he admitted, London knew things would remain unchanged and the unfair squeezing would continue long after he left Park's home.

Bishop's account of her encounter with a local magistrate was very much similar but showed even more visible social hierarchical stress between the classes of yangban elites and local magistrates.

We were told that there are many "high *yang-bans*" in Yö Ju, and it seemed natural that the magistrate of a town of only 700 houses should not be a man of high rank. The story goes that when he came they used "low talk" to him and ordered him about as their inferior. So he lives chiefly in Seoul, and the man who sat in sordid state amidst the ruins of the spacious and elaborately-decorated yamen does his work and divides the spoils, and the yangbans are left to whatever their devices may be. But this is not an isolated case. Nearly all the river magistrates are mainly absentees, and spend their time, salaries, and squeezings in the capital. I had similar interviews with three other magistrates.¹¹³

This statement exemplifies the existence of layers of classes within the upper class, causing further stratification and abuses that would have intensified the pains suffered by the populace at the bottom of the hierarchical rung in the society.

Homer B. Hulbert, the American editor of *The Korea Review*, a monthly journal published on general news and affairs of Korea from 1901 to 1906 by the Methodist Publishing

¹¹² Daniel A. Métraux, *The Asian Writings of Jack London: Essays, Letters, Newspaper Dispatches, and Short Fiction by Jack London* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009), 94.

¹¹³ Bishop, *Korea*, I, 96.

House in Seoul, described these local officials as *Ajuns* (衙前) in 1904.¹¹⁴ *Ajun*, Hulbert wrote, was “one of the most important social and governmental factors in Korea. He is the man who brings the administration of the Government into direct contact with the populace, the individual, the political unit.”¹¹⁵ However, *Ajun* “failed to acquire the dignity of an official rank of *p’yu-sal*” (벼슬=rank) when the *yangban* structure came into place around 1392 A.D.¹¹⁶ Therefore, an *Ajun* was conducting Government business without an official rank as a native of the prefecture where his clan resided for generations. Not having a secure footing in the upper class, the *Ajun* “dared not oppress the people beyond a ‘reasonable’ limit” but tried to “squeeze them to the limit of their endurance.”¹¹⁷ Even the customary cut of 70 percent these *ajuns* squeezed out of poor people was too much and resented by the squeezed.

Yun Chi-ho (1864-1945), born a *yangban* and educated at Vanderbilt and Emory Universities in the United States, was active in the progressive and independence movements before turning to pro-Japanese stance of pan-Asianism. He kept a daily journal in English from 1883 to 1906. On May 7, 1902, Yun wrote in his diary, “A-juns in Korea are notorious for their unscrupulous corruption...servile as dogs to superiors but as ravenous as wolves and cunning as foxes toward the people...As a class they are detestable,” expressing his condemnation of beaurocratic abuses from top to bottom in Korea.¹¹⁸ In summary, the poor peasants of Korea were the objects of deep-seated discrimination and maltreatment by the many layers of government beaurocracy as well as the unjust laws from which they could not escape except to pack up and leave by the night.

¹¹⁴ Homer B. Hulbert, *The Korea Review*, Vol. 4 (1904), No. 2 (February), 63.

¹¹⁵ Hulbert, *The Korea Review*, 63.

¹¹⁶ Hulbert, *The Korea Review*, 64.

¹¹⁷ Hulbert, *The Korea Review*, 65.

¹¹⁸ *Yun Chi-ho's Diary: 1897-1902*, Volume 5 (Seoul: National History Compilation Committee, 1975), 329.

c. Devastating Effects of the Sino-Japanese War on the Poor

Another factor that pushed Koreans to leave their homeland was the damaging effects of the Sino-Japanese War which was fanned by the unrests of the Tonghak Peasants Uprisings against the wrong-doings of the upper class of Korea. This war was fought entirely on Korean soil and ended in Japan's victory in 1895. Arthur Judson Brown, a missionary who toured Korea in 1901, wrote: "The war of 1894 between China and Japan powerfully influenced the work. Korea became the battle-ground of the contending forces. Soon it became evident that the decisive battle of the war would be fought in the vicinity of Pengyang.... In the crash Korean property was destroyed, fields were ravaged, and many of the unhappy people, caught between the upper and nether millstones, suffered from wounds as well as fear."¹¹⁹ This statement painted a tragic picture of the country being ravaged in a war of foreign nations, which affected the lives of the poor who were already caught between abuse from magistrates and *yangbans*, as well as poverty.

Brown continued, "The poverty of the people was bitter, and the introduction of foreign goods made it worse for a time.... Concessions for the mines and forests were granted by the old Emperor to foreign companies, and the price of the concession was squandered by corrupt officials, so that the people derived no benefit. Thus Korea was drained of her money. It was all outgo and no income."¹²⁰ Robert Speer, an American missionary, provided a similar description of the widespread "dissatisfaction with the old life, its failures, miseries, disaffection" among the Korean people in his reports to the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. in 1897.¹²¹

Historian Peter Duus stated:

During the Sino-Japanese War some venturesome small merchants began to move into the interior. The presence of the Japanese military forces made travel safer than it

¹¹⁹ Arthur Judson Brown, *The Mastery of the Far East: the Story of Korea's Transformation* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1919), 507-508.

¹²⁰ Brown, *The Mastery*, 48-49.

¹²¹ Arthur Judson Brown and Robert Speer, quoted in Albert Park, *Building*, 42.

normally was. As a result of the fighting in P'yongyang, for example, much of the city had been vacated by its inhabitants, and a number of Japanese traders simply moved into empty houses to set up shop selling sake, tobacco, sugar, and other goods to the Japanese soldiers. When the Koreans returned to find Japanese occupying their homes, nasty confrontations occurred, but even after the war ended the Japanese managed to maintain a foothold in the city.¹²²

These effects of the Sino-Japanese War on the trade between Korea and Japan as well as on the everyday lives of Koreans, as described by Duus and other historians, were felt in the most devastating degree by all—*yangbans* or commoners.

With these factors working against the poor peasants of Korea there was no other way for them to cope with their problems but to find new homes on the other side of the borders. The poor of Korea chose to leave their homeland as their government could not provide them with the “freedom from want” for the basic necessities of life.¹²³ This dissertation will follow their footsteps as they found new homes in transnational diasporas, following the structure described in the next section of chapter summaries.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter I will present the Korean transnational migration across the northern borders to the Russian Far East in the northeast and Manchuria in the northwest in the late 1860s. The patterns of Korean migration and formation of transnational diasporas in these two regions, as well as the treatment and reception of their arrivals by the two nations, the Russian Empire and the Qing China—with commonalities and differences—will be discussed.

Chapter II will describe how Koreans, either at home or in their new transnational diasporas, responded to the threat of losing their homeland to the hands of Russian or Japanese imperialism. The chapter will also examine how Koreans fared in the Russo-Japanese War as it

¹²² *Nikkon tsusho kyokai hokoku* (Sept. 1895), 99, cited in Duus, *The Abacus*, 267.

¹²³ “Four Freedoms Speech,” [United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt](#), January 6, 1941.

erupted in 1904 and ended in 1905 by the signing of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty. The splitting allegiance of transnational Koreans, which manifested into a division between the anti-Japanese patriots and pro-Russian nationalists in one camp and the pro-Japanese colonial collaborators in the other, will be investigated. The involvement of Koreans in reconnaissance and militant activities through the Russian Shanghai Service and the anti-Japanese Righteous Armies clashing against the pro-Japanese *Ilchinhoe* will also be discussed.

Chapter III will focus on the tenuous positioning of Korean transnationals as the colonized and stateless with the establishment of the Korea-Japan Protectorate Treaty of 1905, followed by the 1910 Treaty of Annexation, which made Korea Japan's first colony and to serve as a bridge to China and the continent beyond. After Japanese annexation of Korea was firmly instituted by 1910, the migration of Koreans over the northern borders escalated for a number of reasons, which will be examined in this final chapter: some in their desperate move to escape Japanese colonialization, others to strengthen the independence movements by joining forces with the militants in the Righteous Armies in Manchuria and the Russian Far East. Korean peoples' desperate plight to organize the independence movements nationwide and abroad, culminating in the March 1, 1919 Declaration of Independence, caused the colonial grip of Japan to tighten further. The transnational migration of Koreans, which started for economic reasons in the 1860s, became one of political nature, pushing more intellectuals and *yangbans* to flee north into Manchuria and Russia in this period.

The Conclusion will take a glimpse at the continuing developments and the fate of Korean transnational migrants as the Qing Dynasty of China collapsed into the People's Republic of China in 1912 and the Russian Empire under the last Tsar, Nicholas II, gave way to

the Soviet Union in 1917. The legacy of Korean migrants on their journey to the *Arirang* diasporas and their long-term consequences will also be discussed in Conclusion.

CHAPTER I. KOREANS IN THE RUSSIAN FAR EAST AND MANCHURIA

*A-ri-rang A-ri-rang A-ra-rio,
You are going over the peak of A-ri-rang,
My love, you are leaving me behind, and
Your feet will get sore before you reach ten li.*

This first stanza of the song *Arirang* expresses the tender sadness one feels to see a loved one go away, being left behind and wishing he or she would not get too far. As thousands of Korean peasants packed up and crossed over the northern hills and rivers in search of better lives, thousands stayed behind in tearful sorrow, wishing them good journeys. Many heartaches and struggles awaited the poor folks of Korea when they made their way to the other side in the Russian Far East (RFE) and Manchuria—they did get sore feet.

In this first chapter, commonalities and differences of these migrations, taken on parallel tracks, will be analyzed in the way the migrants settled in their new homes and were treated by the respective governments of Russia and China in the course of the late nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, leading up to the Russo-Japanese War. The formation of Korean transnational diasporas in the Russian Far East and Manchuria began almost simultaneously and evolved synchronously in the final decades of Yi Dynasty of Korea, more specifically from the 1860s to the early 1900s. Korean transnational migrants sought a new home away from home and a better life while maintaining aspects of their Korean identities and allegiance to Korea.

Early Korean migrants to both the RFE and Manchuria began with farming by daily commute (早耕暮歸)—leaving at sunrise and coming home by sunset. Also known as seasonal farming (春耕秋歸), this practice meant farming in the spring and harvesting and home-coming

in the fall. Such temporary migration occurred more for economic than political reasons.¹²⁴ As the seasonal farming by Koreans with excellent wet rice-growing skills yielded great harvests from the wild, abandoned, weed-infested lands of the Russian Far East and Manchuria, some started to form and settle in clusters of transnational communities. Thus began Korean migrations to the Russian Far East and Manchuria simultaneously by starving farmers and peasants in 1869-1870. The former crossed the Tumen River (豆滿江) toward the northeast while the latter went over the Yalu River (鴨綠江) to the northwest.

Koreans tended to migrate in large groups—many with families, friends, and entire villages—primarily to avoid the assessment of skeleton levies, as discussed in Introduction. These individuals took huge risks as migration was prohibited and punishable by death if caught, according to Korean law. The earliest account of such a law being enforced appears in *Yijo Sillok*, the Annals of the Yi Dynasty, on February 1, 1395, during the fourth year of King Taejo, the first king of Yi Dynasty. On this date, seven men were publicly executed for having crossed the border.¹²⁵

국경을 넘어간 서북면의 김법화 등 7 인을 저자에서 목베다.
서북면 (西北面) 사람 김법화 (金法華)와 정대 (鄭大) 등 7 인을
기시(棄市)하였으니, 모두 국법을 어기고 국경을 넘어간 사람들이었다.

Seven men including Kim Bup-wha and Cheong Dae from Suhbook-myon who crossed the border against the nation's law were executed by decapitation in a public marketplace. (Author's translation)

This reference demonstrates the Korean practice of migrating in groups as these seven men were all from one town.

¹²⁴ [Kyung-il Kim, et al.] 김경일, 윤휘작, 이동진, 임성모, eds., *동아시아의 민족이산과 도시: 20 세기 전반 만주의 조선인 [Korean Diaspora in Manchurian Cities in the Early Twentieth Century]* (서울: 한국정신문화연구원 [Academy of Korean Studies], 2004), 29.

¹²⁵ *Yijo Sillok*, “국경을 넘어간 서북면의 김법화 등 7 인을 저자에서 목베다 [Seven people including Kim Bup-wha from Subook-myon were publicly beheaded in a marketplace],” Taejo 4, February 1, 1395.

The *Yijo Sillok* shows how both Chinese and Korean governments enforced restrictions on border/river crossings in the mid-sixteenth century. One such record mentioned that Chinese people had a habit of crossing the river and farming on the Chosun's side during the reign of King Choongjong (中宗) in 1542, as well as Koreans being caught doing the same on the Chinese side, violating the restrictive ordinances on border crossings of either country.¹²⁶ The Chinese policy was called *bong-gum* policy (封禁政策), similar to the Korean *byun-gum* policy (邊禁政策). Both were designed to enforce restrictions on border crossings from either side.

Those who crossed the borders formed new diasporas in Korean-style with the usual amenities as little, or much, as they could afford. They built homes of Korean-style huts with thatched or tiled roofs and *ondol*—the Korean way of heating the floors of living quarters with flues running underneath from the kitchen to the bedrooms. They cooked and ate Korean foods, dressed in the traditional Korean way of white cotton, and educated their children in the Korean way while adopting the new. They also observed Korean customs for milestones of births and deaths, as well as marriages and holidays.

This chapter describes the painful journeys taken, the physical and mental toils endured, and the efforts made by these Korean migrants to fit into their new surroundings as Tsarist or Manchurian/Chinese subjects while their homeland was rapidly declining into the hands of the colonial regime of Japan. However, these transnational migrants kept up their sense of loyalty towards Korea. The Korean monarch, King Gojong, later called Emperor Gojong (高宗皇帝) after 1897, also continued to express his benevolent affections and sympathy towards his former

¹²⁶ *Yijo Sillok*, “중국인의 협강 불법거주와 대마도주의 서계에 대해 대신들이 아뢰다 [King's Ministers reported on the illegal river crossing and residence by the Chinese and the Japanese violation of fishing restrictions on Tsushima Island], Chungjong 37, May 11, 1542.

subjects, whom he called *na ui baiksung* (my subjects), even through his final days and months as a powerless figurehead under Japanese imperial aggression in 1905.

The pattern of Korean migration to the RFE will be examined first in this chapter, broken down by the period of their initial migration: early arrivals in 1863, later arrivals from 1884 on, and the three categories by which the Russian government classified the Korean migrants in terms of their periods of arrival, which in effect worked as a quota system of exclusion rather than of inclusion. The second part of this chapter will discuss Korean migration to Manchuria, prefaced by the description of the region which was already occupied by various transnational ethnicities and also broken down by the period of their initial migration: early arrivals in the 1860s followed by later arrivals in the 1890s.

Koreans as Tsarist Subjects in the Russian Far East

a. Early Arrivals of Migrants from Korea, 1863-

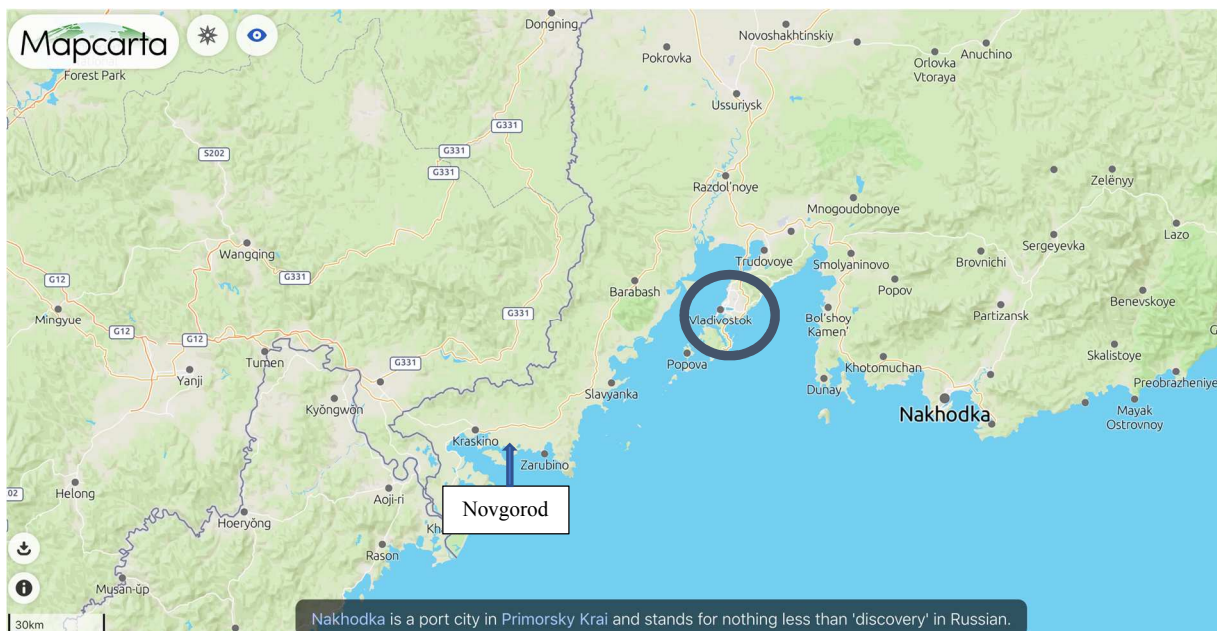
The Russian Far East, the largest of Russia's eight administrative federal districts occupying approximately 40 percent of the national territory, shares borders with China and Korea by land and with Japan by sea.¹²⁷ The District constituted a large empty stretch of "arable and uncontaminated land, huge reserves of clean water, and biological resources in the forests and seas—assets in short supply among the RFE's Asian neighbors" even in the late nineteenth century standards.¹²⁸ This vast, vacant region seemed beckoning to poor Korean farmers as a haven to escape starvation and heavy taxation in their own home country in the 1860s.

¹²⁷ "Far Eastern Federal District, Russia," RussiaTrek.org.

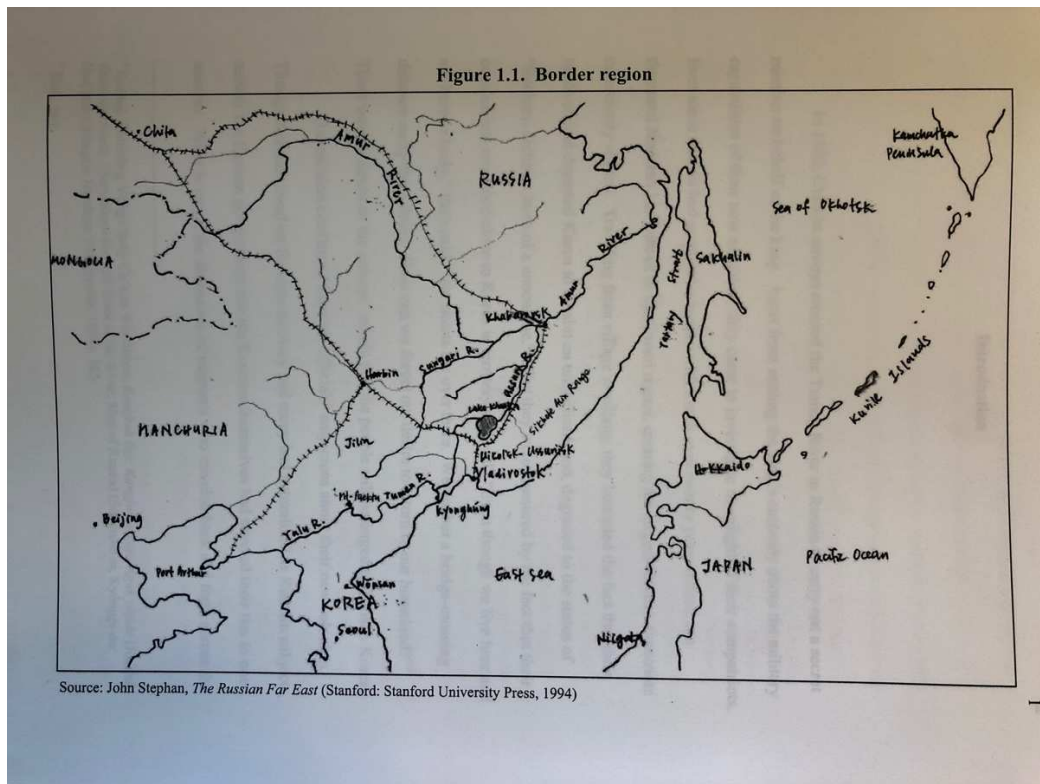
¹²⁸ Rensselaer Lee and Artyom Lukin, *Russia's Far East: New Dynamics in Asia Pacific and Beyond* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2016), 1.



(Figure 6. Map of Russia with Russian Far East marked in red, courtesy of Far Eastern Federal District of Russia)



(Figure 7. Russian Far East, adjoining China and Korea by land, and Japan by sea)



(Figure 8: Map of the border region with demarcation by rivers by John Stephan. Author's highlighting of the Yalu, Tumen, Sungari, Amur, and Heilung Rivers)¹²⁹

Although some Russian Korean historians, such as Svetlana G. Nam and Boris D. Pak, have dated the first arrival of Koreans in the RFE to 1849 or 1857, well before the Peking Treaty was established in 1860, the year of 1863 has been accepted and celebrated officially as the first year of Korean migration.¹³⁰ The Peking Treaty, also known as the Convention of Peking, comprised three distinct treaties which Qing China signed with Britain on October 18, immediately followed by others with France and Russia which were signed separately on October 24, 1860. It was by this Treaty Hong Kong was ceded to Britain. Also ceded to Russia by this Treaty were parts of Manchuria—Ussuri krai of Primory, east of Ussuri River, where

¹²⁹ Alyssa Park, *Borderland Beyond*, 1.

¹³⁰ Hyun Gwi Park, *The Displacement of Borders among Russian Koreans in Northeast Asia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 56.

many Koreans migrated to and settled in the coming decades. In other words, the areas where Koreans settled in the RFE used to belong to Manchuria until 1860.

While thousands of Koreans facing devastating natural disasters and unfair taxation duties in Korea crossed the border, the Russian government also attempted to populate the vast, deserted land in the Amour and Primorski regions which came into Russia's possession by the Peking Treaty. Emperor Alexandre II of Russia promulgated a new Immigration Law—"On the Administration of Russian and Foreign Settlement in the Amur and Primorski Oblasts of Eastern Siberia"—which offered incentives to migrants as of April 27, 1861.¹³¹ Based on this law, new immigrants with emigration certificates from their home countries were permitted to settle down and own 100 *desiatina* (approximately 270 acres) of lands per household, exempted from taxation and military duties for ten years and even received travel and food expenses, as well as initial seedlings and farming tools.¹³² Since this was before the establishment of diplomatic relations between Korea and Russia, however, Koreans were not able or required to show emigration certificates. Consequently, many Koreans simply crossed the borders to conduct business, such as transporting and selling cows illegally. During the winter months when the Tumen River and Posiet sounds froze solidly enough to be crossed on foot, some Koreans walked or swam into the RFE over water, bypassing the border sentry station at Novgorod (See Figure 7).¹³³

It was in the winter of 1863, following the 1861 promulgation of the aforementioned law by Alexander II, that the entire villages, thirteen families in total, of Pegan and Samdonsa in the Province of Hamgyongdo (咸鏡道) at the northern tip of the Korean peninsula packed up and

¹³¹ Chang, *Burnt by the Sun*, 11.

¹³² Chong Hyo Park, 러시아 연방의 高麗人 歷史 [*Rosia Yonbang ui Koryoin yoksa=Korean History in Russia*] (Seoul: Sunin, 2018), 20; Chang, *Burnt*, 12.

¹³³ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 21.

crossed the border over the Tumen River in search of new lives in Russia. A report about these Koreans, having formed the village of Tizinhe with “little or no changes in lifestyle and farming techniques,” was submitted by an officer named Razianov (Рязанов) in charge of the border patrol station in Novgorod in 1863.¹³⁴

In Report No. 205 Razianov wrote to P. K. Kazakevich, the Military Governor of the Primore Region, about the Koreans who had built traditional Korean houses of thatched roofs, making pleas to be allowed to live in the area and be protected from the Chinese *majokdan* (馬賊團=horseback bandits) or huntsus (紅巾賊) on November 30, 1863.¹³⁵ As historian Owen Lattimore wrote later in 1932, “The soldier, like the bandit, is a professional. The bandit wants to take villages and loot them; the soldier waits for his chance in a civil war to take towns and get either loot or promotion and power.”¹³⁶ Such a comment reveals the contemporary environment of abuses and threats which the poor Korean migrants were subjected to either by the rampant bandits or soldiers alike.

Razianov’s letter was received on February 8, 1864, by Kazakevich who responded positively on May 4 with an instruction to provide not only security protection for the Koreans but also financial assistance to help them settle in the area. Kazakevich considered Koreans “excellent farmers” who will become “economically worthy colonizing element within two years of their arrival” to produce food supplies, such as corn, grains, and cereals for the Russian army.¹³⁷ Razianov’s report was also forwarded to Russian Emperor Alexandre II by Governor General M. C. Korsakov.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ Chang, *Burnt*, 12; C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 27.

¹³⁵ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 27.

¹³⁶ Owen Lattimore, *Manchuria: Cradle of Conflict* (New York: MacMillan, 1932), 235.

¹³⁷ Chang, *Burnt*, 13.

¹³⁸ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 24.

Governor Kazakevich stressed the importance of Koreans with their potential to become “economically worthy colonizing element within two years of arrival” in his report to Captain E.F. Cherkavskii in 1865:

Bearing in mind that there are no treaties with the Korean government and becoming a Russian subject is independent of any government [except Russia’s], it would be advantageous, in view of the large barriers that were required for the emigrating Koreans without blaming the Korean or Chinese governments, to add them to our [list] of state peasants [foregoing the subject of citizenship until a later time].¹³⁹

The above statement indicates Russia’s need to accept hardworking immigrants who would till their difficult soils and produce grains and cattle meats for Russian population and army in a short time frame. But the Russian government was also reluctant and mindful not to ruffle the feathers of China and Japan in the contemporary geopolitical atmosphere of the region. This report by Kazakevich was the first officially-recorded evidence of the Korean emigration to the RFE.¹⁴⁰ Many other reports regarding Korean migrant settlements in the context of Russia’s military and political relations with China and Japan have been found in the Russian National Archives and reported by historian Chong-Hyo Park.¹⁴¹

Devastated by years of repeated famines and bad crops, another 500 came from other towns in Hamgyongdo on the same trail in 1867.¹⁴² The route was so desolate and lawless that many of these migrants arrived in Russia "with just the clothes on their backs," having been robbed by "bandits and various border guards" and women sexually assaulted on their way, making them even poorer and more miserable with nothing but their bare hands.¹⁴³ This sense of

¹³⁹ A. A. Toropov, *Koreitsy na Rossiiskom Dalnem Vostoke* (Vladivostok: Alnevostochnyi Gos. Universitet, 2001), 18, quoted in Chang, *Burnt*, 13.

¹⁴⁰ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 24.

¹⁴¹ Chong Hyo Pak, *PTBHA: 러시아 국립문서보관소 소장 한러 군사 관계 자료집 [Rosia Kungnip Munso Pogwanso sojang Han-Ru kunsu kwangye jaryochip=Anthology of Military Documents in Korean-Russian Relations in the Russian National Archive]* (Seoul: Korea Foundation, 2015), 82-86.

¹⁴² Chang, *Burnt*, 12.

¹⁴³ Chang, *Burnt*, 12; C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 43; Ban Byung-yul, “한국인의 러시아 이주사,” in [*Koreans in Russia*], 158.

dilemma can be detected in reports exchanged between the officials of Russia, Governor of Eastern Siberia M.C. Korsakov and Asian Director of Foreign Ministry P.S. Stremoukov, on January 9, 1870, as well as Colonel Dyachenko in charge of the border security in Novgorod in the same year.¹⁴⁴



(Figure 9: Korean migrants, adults and children, roaming the streets of Vladivostok, 1869-1870)¹⁴⁵

Such a trail of migrants increased exponentially in 1869—the year of “Great Disasters” (大災害) or “Great Famine”— due to the disastrous flooding that wiped out the crops and farmlands in Hamgyongdo— with over 6,500 people crossing the northern borders between July and December.¹⁴⁶ Count Trubetskoi, a temporary border commissar of the South Ussuri district,

¹⁴⁴ РГИА ИО, Vol. 24, No. 10, Единица Хранения 202, К. 2107 Т. 1, Лист 26 and Лист 20, cited in С. Н. Пак, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 38-39.

¹⁴⁵ С. Н. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 46.

¹⁴⁶ С. Н. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 38.

was reported to have written that the Russian government must “put a stop to this evil.”¹⁴⁷ As captured in the photo above in Figure 9, many of the Korean migrants and their families were seen roaming the streets of Vladivostok looking for work and food, with some dying of starvation after crossing the borders empty-handed in the freezing winter of December 1869.¹⁴⁸

Historian Hyun Gwi Park wrote that the Koreans who formed their own villages near the Tumen River were treated as “*krestianskoe obshchestvo* (peasant society)” and were issued identity documents called, *Russkii bilet*, which allowed them to live on the Russian soil.¹⁴⁹ To Koreans who converted to Russian Orthodox Christianity, the status of “*poddanstvo* (subject-hood)” was granted instead of “*grazhdanstvo* (citizenship)” in the late 1860s.¹⁵⁰

In the meantime, 140 Koreans settled in the area by 1864, built their homes, and started farming, selling “grains, cereals and millets” and raising cattle stocks shortly after that.¹⁵¹ Seven additional villages in the area of Posyet Bay—Tizinhe, Yanchihe, Sidimi, Adimi, Chapigoi, Krabbe, and Fudubai—were formed by the migrant Koreans, three of whom were baptized in Russian Orthodox Church in January of 1865.¹⁵² Five hundred Korean families who relocated from Posyet to Priamur in 1871 and to Blagoveshchensk in Amur Oblast, forming a village called Blagoslovenie, meaning “Blessed” in Russian, received 100 desiatinas per household and were “treated equally as Russian subjects.”¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷ Alyssa Park, *Borderland beyond*, 30.

¹⁴⁸ Ban, “Koreans,” 158.

¹⁴⁹ H. G. Park, *The Displacement*, 57.

¹⁵⁰ H. G. Park, *The Displacement*, 51.

¹⁵¹ Chang, *Burnt*, 12.

¹⁵² C. H. Park, [Rosia Yonbang], 24-27.

¹⁵³ H. G. Park, *The Displacement*, 51.



(Figure 10: Korean village with thatched-roof huts in Ussuri area, circa. 1867)¹⁵⁵ (Figure 11: “Some of our outfit” by JL)¹⁵⁴

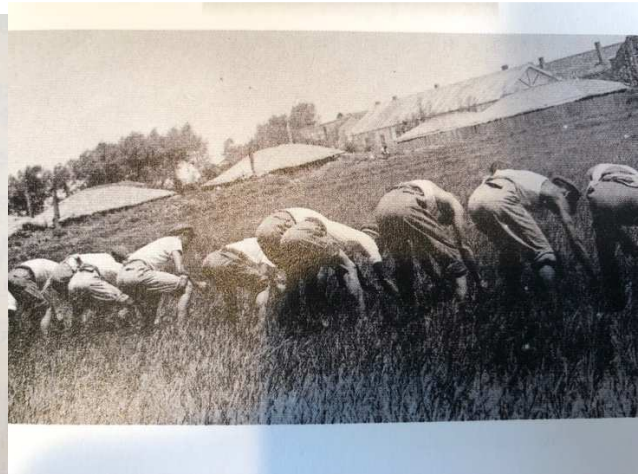
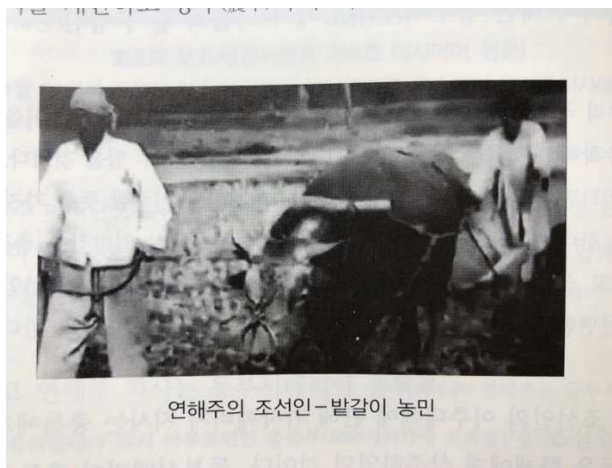
In their new diaspora, most Koreans were living and farming in typical Korean fashion, as seen in the above Figure 10 on the left. The villages they formed were filled with thatched roof houses (*chogajip*) with mud walls, which was the way Korean peasants’ domiciles were built until at a later time when they could afford to build more sturdy structures with tiled roofs (*kiwajip*). Compared side by side with the photograph on the right, taken by Jack London as he traveled in Korea in 1904, the two villages look very similar in their formation with the same type of huts clustered together in valleys surrounded by the farmlands.

Korean farmers also used ox-pulled carts to irrigate the fields as they did in Korea (Figure 12). They wore Korean outfits of bulky white shirts and pants even while they worked in the fields. In the photograph on the right (Figure 13), Korean farmers in 1920s Manchuria engaged in wet-rice farming, the typical method used by Korean farmers at home, squatting down in a row in knee-deep water-filled rows of rice paddy. By then, the farmers seemed to have shed their Korean outfits which were not practical for working in the fields, and wore western

¹⁵⁴ JLP Album 1, No. 93.

¹⁵⁵ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 36.

work clothes. However, they farmed using the same Korean methods and working in groups in their transnational diasporas in the RFE and Manchuria as they did in Korea.



(Figure 12: Korean farmer, tilling the land by ox-pulled methods in the RFE)¹⁵⁶

(Figure 13: Korean farmers in wet-rice farming, The Memorial Center of Kyu-Am Kim Yak-yun)

Between 1890 and 1900, Chinese and Korean workforces were in higher demand due to Russia's new plan to construct railways and vitalize the economy in the Russian Far East, in spite of the frequent eruption of violence due to xenophobia among the Russian residents.¹⁵⁷ The worse incident of violence took place in July 1900 when the city of Blagoveshchensk was bombarded on the Chinese side, and the local Russian authorities rounded up 3,500 Chinese including men, women, and children and "drove them into the river" at which less than 100 reached the Manchurian shore alive.¹⁵⁸

On the other hand, the first stream of early Russian settlers came from Odessa, Ukraine, in 1883 and "travelled more than half the globe for forty-six days—through the Black Sea, Constantinople, Suez Canal, Red Sea, Indian Ocean, South Seas, Singapore, Nagasaki, and

¹⁵⁶ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 26.

¹⁵⁷ Lee and Lukin, *Russia's*, 31.

¹⁵⁸ Lee and Lukin, *Russia's*, 31.

finally Vladivostok,” according to a letter written by a Russian who made the journey.¹⁵⁹ Based on the 1882 South Ussuri Resettlement Law, these settlers received land allotments of 100 desiatina per household, tax exemption, 18 months’ worth of food supplies, and free transportation for the long journey offered twice per year. During the next fifteen years, only 31,217 were settled in Ussuri region.¹⁶⁰ These settlers who came to the RFE at the promise of large land tracts, “twenty to thirty times bigger than allotments in western Russia,” complained about the lack of usable lands after they arrived. “They promised 100 desiatinas of plains, but have given us rocks, hills, which don’t amount to 10 desiatinas of sensible land.”¹⁶¹ The Russian government attempted to relocate 6,266 Russian farmers to the Ussury region between 1863 and 1870.

However, the Russian native farmers—the “Cossacks, Estonians, Finns, Old Believers, and Molokans”—failed to make it work in the damp climate with heavy fog of the Russian Far East and returned home, only 632 remaining by 1871-1882.¹⁶² In contrast, Koreans succeeded to yield good harvests through hard work and excellent farming skills. The Russian migrants who stayed resorted to hiring or leasing the land to Korean and Chinese farmers to till their lands as their source of income.¹⁶³ Therefore, the Ussuri local government had no other choice but to welcome destitute Koreans who were seeking shelter and new life to work as productive farmers, of which the Russian government was in great need, and encouraged their migration by supplying them with land and food.

¹⁵⁹ Alyssa Park, *Borderland Beyond*, 64.

¹⁶⁰ C. H. Park, [Rosia Yonbang], 72; Alyssa Park, *Borderland Beyond*, 65.

¹⁶¹ Alyssa Park, *Borderland Beyond*, 72.

¹⁶² C. H. Park, [Rosia Yonbang], 34.

¹⁶³ Alyssa Park, *Borderland Beyond*, 73.

As of January of 1871, 3,750 Korean refugees were forcibly resettled in Southern Ussuri region—1,200 in Rezanovo, 1,200 in Suyfun River area, and 1,350 in other areas.¹⁶⁴ Despite these circumstances, poor Korean peasants who had escaped brutal discrimination of the feudal *yangban* society were determined to endure the hardship in their new-found home of the RFE, engaging themselves in hard labor in the construction of roads and bridges. During this period of resettlement and persecution, over 4,000 Koreans, many of whom had been resettled in 1871, plus newcomers from Korea, had no other choice but to go back to Korea or leave for Manchuria in 1874. About 400 of them died of starvation and illness on the way.¹⁶⁵ The Russian government provided no relief assistance towards these Koreans except for rotten, moldy bread, if that.¹⁶⁶

The reluctant but cautious acquiescence of the Russian central government in accepting Korean migrants for fear of ruffling the feathers of Japan and other nations, and possibly jeopardizing Russia's commercial opportunities in Korea, was referenced in over 100 official reports between 1860s and 1910, specifically regarding commercial rights, open ports with extraterritorial rights, concessions of trading, mining, and railways, etc., exchanged between the Minister Serge Witte in St. Petersburg, the Russian Minister K. I. Waeber in Seoul, and the RFE Governor M. C. Korsakov in Ussuri, as referenced by Chong Hyo Pak.¹⁶⁷

In this type of natural and political environment, Korean peasants continued to migrate and settled in the RFE in the coming years, which coincided with the migration of white Russians into the same area, facilitated by the Russian government's desire to populate the region with Russians. Ramifications of such an infusion of migrants brought more difficulties to

¹⁶⁴ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 45.

¹⁶⁵ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 46.

¹⁶⁶ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 57.

¹⁶⁷ C. H. Park, *PGBIA* [*Rosia Kungnip ... charyojip*], 191-220.

the Korean migrants who had to prove their worthiness to become Russian subjects with legal rights as well as duties to the Russian Empire, which will be examined in the next section.

b. Later Arrivals of Migrants from Korea, 1884-

This is the curious fact that for the past thirty years a respectable Korean population, scattered here and there, has been thriving so exceedingly by all manner of farming that more Korean immigrants are constantly arriving. — B.L. Putnam Weale¹⁶⁸

With such a favorable and welcome treatment of Korean migrants by the Russian government, the number of peasant migrations from Korea kept growing as Sakhalin Islands became “a territory of imprisonment and exile—Russia’s Australia” which brought more mouths of prisoners, guards, and troops to be fed in the region.¹⁶⁹ At the same time the increase of migrants from the Russian part of Europe continued to grow by ten-fold after the sea route between Odessa and Vladivostok opened in 1880 until the Trans-Siberian Railway was completed in 1903.¹⁷⁰ Not only were these migrants granted their own large pieces of land with transportation expenses covered but also were exempted from taxes in their newly-found homes in the Russian Far East, as Russia needed farmers to feed the growing population and workers for the construction of railways in the region.¹⁷¹

Over 16,000 Koreans were living in 30 village communities they had formed in Maritime and Amur Provinces by 1884 when the first Treaty of Amity and Commerce was signed and ratified between Korea and Russia.¹⁷² Koreans who had migrated before the 1884 Treaty were given “the right to acquire Russian citizenship and own fifteen-*desiatina* (forty-acres) parcels of land” by the supplementary treaty of 1888, as was the practice by the Russian government to

¹⁶⁸ Weale, B.L. Putnam (pseud. for Simpson, Bertram Lenox), *The Coming Struggle in Eastern Asia* (London: MacMillan, 1908), 76.

¹⁶⁹ Lee and Lukin, *Russia’s Far East*, 30.

¹⁷⁰ Lee and Lukin, *Russia’s Far East*, 30.

¹⁷¹ Lee and Lukin, *Russia’s Far East*, 30.

¹⁷² FRUS: Foreign Relations of the United States, “Mr. Foulk to Mr. Bayard,” October 21, 1885. No. 245.

attract immigrants into the area.¹⁷³ Pierre Leroy-Beaulieu, a French writer who traveled in the region and provided eyewitness accounts in 1900, observed the surge of Koreans who settled in Russia since the Sino-Japanese War ended in 1895.¹⁷⁴

This was a period when waves of transnational migration started to ripple across the region, if not globally, as seen in the historiography. The Japanese population in Korea grew by ten-fold between 1880 (835) and 1890 (7,245) and doubled by 1900 (15,829).¹⁷⁵ Over 63,000 people arrived in Siberia across the Urals in 1894, and 17,000 of these European-migrants continued onto the Amur region.¹⁷⁶ Korean migration to Manchuria, as will be more closely investigated in the next section, also reached 200,000 after the Sino-Japanese War ended in Japan's victory.¹⁷⁷

The population of Vladivostok in 1895, as noted by Leroy-Beaulieu, substantiated the claim of more Chinese laborers (5,580 men, 58 women, 5,638 total) living in the city of Vladivostok than Koreans (642 men, 177 women, 819 total) who lived and farmed in the outskirts of the city.¹⁷⁸ The low rate (1 percent) of women being in the Chinese group, compared to the high count of Korean women who represented 27 percent, was also captured by Adam McKeown in the cases of Chinese migration to Hawaii, the United States, and Peru.¹⁷⁹ This pattern of Koreans migrating with wives and families might have played a role in the preservation of Korean customs and lifestyle wherever they settled and put their roots down.

¹⁷³ Igor Saveliev, "Militant Diaspora: Korean Immigrants and Guerrillas in Early Twentieth Century Russia," *Forum of International Development Studies*, 26 (Mar. 2004), 148.

¹⁷⁴ Pierre Leroy-Beaulieu, *The Awakening of the East: Siberia-Japan-China* (New York: McClure, 1900), 50.

¹⁷⁵ Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empire: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea, 1876-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 65.

¹⁷⁶ Leroy-Beaulieu, *The Awakening*, 47.

¹⁷⁷ K. I. Kim, [Korean Diaspora], 30.

¹⁷⁸ Leroy-Beaulieu, *The Awakening*, 50.

¹⁷⁹ Adam McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change: Peru, Chicago, Hawaii, 1900-1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 31 and 36; see tables of Chinese population in the U.S., 1860-1940, on p. 31, in Hawaii, 1853-1940 with gender breakdowns on p. 36 and in Peru, 1876-1940 on p. 48.

As Bertram Lenox Simpson, a British author who wrote extensively about the Far East under the pen name of B. L. Putnam Weale noted in 1901, “Their womenfolk, too, are on excellent terms with the Russian peasant women,” the women’s touch in forming the communities of transnational diaspora could have made a difference.¹⁸⁰ On the other hand, this phenomenon may be attributed to the Korean men relying on their wives to share the burden of pioneering lifestyle of hard work in addition to cooking and washing their soiled clothes.

In the pattern of seasonal or circular migration noted by historians such as Alyssa Park and Dae-Sook Suh, Korean migrants tended to enter by land and settle in nearby farming areas, hoping to cultivate and acquire lands which they could not own in Korea.¹⁸¹ A series of reports, petitions, and memoranda exchanged between Korean migrants and officials of the Russian government in 1897-1898 exhibit the anxiousness of Koreans who formed farming villages in the Ussuri-Kazak region and wished to be allowed to stay and continue to farm.¹⁸²

Also seen are the positive responses from the Kazak commanding officers regarding the Korean migrants’ petition to continue to farm on the lands they had acquired, to protect their Korean-style homes from demolition, to have their military obligations waved for 15 years, as well as to invite their relatives from Korea.¹⁸³ On June 12, 1898, a response came from the Ussuri-Kazak Commander’s Office to Kozrovskii Kazak Commander who granted permission for the 70 Korean families to stay and apply for Russian citizenship. Their only requirement was to submit necessary paperwork, documenting their dates of initial entry, names, religion, occupation, financial statement, identification papers (if no papers available, the reasons to be

¹⁸⁰ Weale, *The Coming Struggle*, 77.

¹⁸¹ Alyssa Park, *Borderland Beyond*, 73-76; Dae-Sook Suh, 김약연: 간도 민족독립운동의 지도자 [Kim Yak-Yon: Leader of the Kando Independence Movement] (Seoul: Yuksa Gonggan, 2008), 40.

¹⁸² C. H. Park, [*Rosia Kungnip Munso...Han'guk kwallyon*], 602.

¹⁸³ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Kungnip Munso...Han'guk kwallyon*], 602.

specified), and preferred location of residency excluding the border towns, which the Russian government wanted to keep in tight control and disperse the population to other areas.¹⁸⁴

By the 1902 calculations, there were 15,000 Chinese, 2,400 Japanese, 2,300 Koreans, living in Vladivostok along with 11,500 Russians and “a garrison of 13,000 men.”¹⁸⁵ As historian Walter Kolarz quoted a German reporter who wrote, “When entering the waiting room of the Vladivostok railway station, one notices at once that one is in the East. One even thinks one is in China—so many Chinese! Yes, Vladivostok is very largely a Chinese city....”¹⁸⁶ While the city of Vladivostok had a prominent presence of Chinese labor population, Russian and Cossack farms in the vicinity of Vladivostok were highly dependent on Korean farmers and “the whole of Poset district” seemed to be cultivated by Koreans.¹⁸⁷ An explorer, named V. D. Pesotskii, observed that the “southern Maritime Province” was being fed “almost entirely by the hands of Korean foreigners...their role is enormous.”¹⁸⁸ Korean laborers also played a critical part in other industries, such as “gold and coal mining, lumberjacking, and fishing” and formed independent union-type groups, called “artels of brothers (*hyongnim*=big brother)” that served as support organizations to supply workers as well as control them to stay within the boundaries of the societies as legal subjects of Russia while remaining Korean in their hearts.¹⁸⁹

By 1900, Vladivostok was “the center of Russian influence” with the prospect of serving as the southeastern terminus of Trans-Siberian Railway.¹⁹⁰ With its two deep bays and a peninsula twelve miles long, Vladivostok could provide shelter for the Russian fleet, whereas its

¹⁸⁴ C. H. Park, *PTBII: 러시아 국립문서보관소 소장 한국 관련 문서 요약집* [Rosia Kungnip Munso Pogwanso sojang Han'guk kwallyon munso yoyakchip. Compiled by Chong Hyo Pak. Seoul: Korea Foundation, 2002., 602.

¹⁸⁵ Walter Kolarz, *The Peoples of the Soviet Far East* (n.p.: Archon Books, 1969), 45.

¹⁸⁶ Kolarz, *The Peoples*, 44-45.

¹⁸⁷ Alyssa Park, *Borderland Beyond*, 87.

¹⁸⁸ Alyssa Park, *Borderland Beyond*, 87.

¹⁸⁹ Alyssa Park, *Borderland Beyond*, 88.

¹⁹⁰ Leroy-Beaulieu, *The Awakening*, 49.

counterpart in the Western shore, Port Arthur, provided an ice-free port year around. Leroy-Beaulieu wrote: “The streets are crowded with pigtailed Chinese in blue, with Koreans in white, and Japanese in their national costumes. Among these Asiatics move soldiers and sailors....”¹⁹¹ Such a description of the city in 1900 presented Vladivostok as bustling with a Russian civilian population of a few thousand, 10,087 soldiers and families, living side by side with 5,638 Chinese, 1,232 Japanese, and 819 Koreans.¹⁹²

The Chinese were “engaged as workmen, domestic servants, boatmen, etc.” and the Japanese “in petty trade... not a few of them are spies,” wrote Leroy-Beaulieu.¹⁹³ As for the Koreans, he described, “being very strong, they are better adapted for hard work, and have supplied a number of hands on the railway... highly appreciated by their employers, the administration affording them small allotments on account of their industrious and peaceful habits.”¹⁹⁴ These Koreans were desperate to prove themselves worthy subjects of the Russian Empire as their counterparts who migrated to Manchuria were just as eager to prove themselves as respectable Chinese subjects.

By 1902, according to Yun Chi-ho’s Diary of May 7, Korean migrants were coming not only from the remote northern parts of Korea but also from the other central and southern provinces including Kyonggi Province near Kyongsung (京城, currently Seoul). “Owing to last year’s drought, eight of the thirteen provinces have been suffering dreadfully from famine. In many districts of Kyong Kui or Choong Chong Provinces, whole villages have disappeared either by death or by emigration or both,” Yun recorded in his diary.¹⁹⁵ The same pattern of mass

¹⁹¹ Leroy-Beaulieu, *The Awakening*, 50.

¹⁹² Leroy-Beaulieu, *The Awakening*, 50.

¹⁹³ Leroy-Beaulieu, *The Awakening*, 50.

¹⁹⁴ Leroy-Beaulieu, *The Awakening*, 51.

¹⁹⁵ *Yun Chi-ho’s Diary: 1897-1902*, Volume 5 (Seoul: National History Compilation Committee, 1975), 329.

migration by villages, as previously examined in the introduction, to avoid corporate punishment by “skeleton levies” (*packkol chingp’o* =白骨徵包) was still happening in 1902.¹⁹⁶

At the time of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, over 30,000 Koreans—more specifically, 32,410 in 1902 and 34,399 in 1906—were recorded as living in the RFE according to the report of the expedition sent by Russian Imperial Order to the Amur Region on “Chinese, Koreans and Japanese in the Amur Region.”¹⁹⁷ A legitimate and sizable Korean diaspora had formed in the RFE by the Russo-Japanese War with a majority of the residents engaged in agriculture, recognized as subjects of the Russian Tsar, and some settled in *Shinhanchon* (新韓村=New Korean village) in Vladivostok.¹⁹⁸

Approximately 5,000 Koreans were reported to be working in gold mines, “one-third of the total mining force” in the RFE in 1906-1907.¹⁹⁹ “Many mines could not do without them. The hard labor of the winter does not smile at Russian workers.... Only Korean travel to such work; and [because they endure] the opening of deep peats, work in dens of gold, [and] labor in damp, swampy places, they have no rivals in the mines of the Russian Far East.”²⁰⁰ Such a positive reputation that Koreans had earned by then speaks of their determination to make it work in their new-found homelands as they saw no way to return to Korea without having to deal with heavy taxation and bureaucratic nightmare. Their struggles were compounded by the looming threat of a war between Japan and Russia and the Japanese colonial aggression.

In his 1906 eyewitness travelog account of Koreans in Vladivostok, Bertram Weale referred to the large number of Koreans who migrated into the vicinity of Nicol'sk, initially in

¹⁹⁶ K. Lee, *The New History of Korea*, 226.

¹⁹⁷ Saveliev, “Militant,” 149; Chang, *Burnt*, 11.

¹⁹⁸ Saveliev, “Militant,” 148.

¹⁹⁹ Alyssa Park, *Borderland Beyond*, 88.

²⁰⁰ Alyssa Park, *Borderland Beyond*, 89.

seasonal migration to work during the harvest season but later settled down to engage in farming and cattle-raising in the southern region of the Russian Far East.²⁰¹ However, Weale noted “Here the Koreans are almost wealthy, and so different and so much more manly in general appearance than their stay-at-home brothers... They are also possessed of a confidence and a good humour.... Their womenfolk, too, are on excellent terms with the Russian peasant women.”²⁰² Scottish Lady Isabella Bird Bishop during her visit to the RFE in 1897 shared similar perceptions of Koreans in Russia, quite different from the Koreans she had seen down south, which will be reviewed in a later section of this chapter. What Weale and Bishop witnessed was the remarkable change in the people’s confident dispositions and positive outlooks when they were no longer abused by the systemic problems of the *yangban* society, even though they were engaged in hard work a long way from home.

On the taxation issue, Chinese and Korean laborers in Khabarovsk were taxed at half the rate of a tsarist subject. They were considered “half-persons” based on the assumption of their annual earnings of 425 rubles, rather than the Russian’s earnings of 850 rubles, due to their seasonal work.²⁰³ Most Asians in the region from Siberia to the RFE were “nomadic or seminomadic” and assessed tribute taxes, called *iasak*, as second-class citizens under the tsarism, but they did not quite fit the “tsarist models” being “diaspora nationalities” and were considered a “problematic and threatening” group.²⁰⁴ Deprived of equal status, even as *inorodtsy* (alien), to their white counterparts, Koreans remained “illegals or stateless squatters” with no prospects to own land, pay taxes, and become legitimate.²⁰⁵

²⁰¹ Weale, *The Coming*, 76.

²⁰² Weale, *The Coming*, 77.

²⁰³ Yanni Kotsonis, “Face-to-Face: The State, the Individual, and the Citizen in Russian Taxation, 1863-1917,” *Slavic Review*, v.63, n.2 (20040701): 243.

²⁰⁴ Chang, *Burnt*, 15.

²⁰⁵ Chang, *Burnt*, 15.

c. Three Categories of Korean Migrants in the RFE

The Treaty of Saint Petersburg had been established between Russia and Japan on May 7, 1875, fifteen years after the Primorsky Krai region was ceded by China to Russia in 1860. Through this 1875 Treaty Russia gained control of the Sakhalin region and ceded Kuril Islands with all the residents of Ainu tribe going to Japan. This agreement helped to settle the disputes over the islands and borders between the two countries until the Portsmouth Peace Treaty was signed at the end of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905.²⁰⁶

With the intention of recruiting productive Koreans to cultivate the barren lands and become tax-paying citizens, the first Governor-General of Amur Region Andrey Nikolayevich Baron von Korf (1884-1893) acknowledged the immigrants from China and Korea as being “indispensable” in the Russian economy in the region.²⁰⁷ Korf established a progressive policy on the legal status of Koreans in RFE in 1890 and directed General Paul (Pavel) Fridrikhovich Unterberger on July 21, 1891 to draw up specific regulations to be implemented.²⁰⁸ Hence the RFE immigration policy which categorized Koreans in three groups was instituted and adhered to by the next Governor S. M. Dukhovskoi (1893-1898). The three categories were as follow: first-category was for those who arrived and settled before June 25, 1884, the second- and third-categories were for the post-1884 arrivals.

The next Governor, S. M. Dukhovskoi who succeeded Andrey Korf allowed Koreans even in the second and third categories to become Russian subjects in 1891 until his progressive policy of accommodation was abandoned by P. F. Unterberger when he came into office after Dukhovskoi as Governor-General in 1906.²⁰⁹ Consequently, the 1884 Treaty between the Korean

²⁰⁶ C. H. Park, “[Study of Russian Kuril Islands]”, 175.

²⁰⁷ Lee and Lukin, *Russia's*, 31.

²⁰⁸ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 76.

²⁰⁹ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 76; Chang, *Burnt*, 15.

and Russian governments became an impediment to “restrict Korean immigration” as a quota system with “cutoff dates” by their original entry rather than a vehicle to accept them for their “skills or capital.”²¹⁰

Koreans in the first category were immediately “eligible for land grants of 15 *desiatinas* as Russian subjects”—albeit only fifteen percent of the 100 *desiatinas* granted to the Cossacks.²¹¹ Those in the second and third categories were treated as “guest workers without the right to citizenship” until the 1890s.²¹² The second category applied to Koreans who entered Russia after 1884 and were given five years' temporary residency as guest workers (serfs). They were also required to pay five rubles for annual processing of temporary work visas. The lands they had acquired during their stay were forfeited by the government when their visas expired. If they stayed on beyond their two-year period of allowance, they were responsible for land-use tax but exempt from military service. The third category applied to the wage-earning Korean workers who entered Russia after 1884 and were assigned to use the land as tenants with taxation duties.²¹³

From 1892-1893 some Koreans in the second and third categories were again evicted from their villages in Primorsk and Sinellikovo and started to depart the region, either headed back home to Korea or migrated to Manchuria, although the exact numbers could not be ascertained. As tabulated and presented later in Figure 21, the numbers of migrants in the RFE as well as in Manchuria continued to increase despite the many returnees in the 1930s.

²¹⁰ Chang, *Burnt*, 15; C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 77.

²¹¹ Chang, *Burnt*, 15.

²¹² Chang, *Burnt*, 15.

²¹³ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 78-79.

d. Korea-Russian Relations and Rusification of Korean Transnationals

In 1885, the first Treaty of Amity and Commerce was signed and ratified between Korea and Russia, fashioned after the Korean Treaties with England and Germany, as reported by George C. Foulk to the Secretary of State Thomas A. Bayard.²¹⁴ Upon his arrival, Serge Waeber, the first minister of Russia to Korea, in Seoul on October 14, 1885, proposed a treaty of “overland trade for Russia with Corea, to effect which the opening for trade with Russia of a trading post on the northeast border of Corea” on the Tumen River, “to be equivalent of the trading post of China and Corea at Ichow (Oichu, in Korean), on the Yalu River” was requested.²¹⁵

The trading post on the Chinese/Korean border in question was opened in May 1884 by the Treaty signed between China and Korea to lift border restrictions, as will be referenced in a section that follows on the Korean migrants in Manchuria.²¹⁶ The proposed placement of a trading post “a little to the southward of the mouth of the Tumen River, the nearest one to Possiette, the southernmost Russian town of Eastern Siberia” with a claim by Russia that “the boundary maintained by China is too far to the eastward” indicates the border disputes brewing between Russia and China in connection to Korea for trading purposes.²¹⁷ A week later, Foulk reported to Bayard that the request for a trading-post has been postponed to a later date.²¹⁸

For the time-being, however, the Russian government’s interest toward Korea and Koreans in the RFE turned favorable. Koreans who had migrated before the 1884 Treaty were

²¹⁴ FRUS, “Mr. Foulk to Mr. Bayard,” October 14, 1885. No. 238.

²¹⁵ FRUS, “Mr. Foulk to Mr. Bayard,” October 14, 1885. No. 238.

²¹⁶ Gojong Sillok, “중국 길림과 조선간의 무역규정을 체결하다 [A Treaty of Trade established between Jilin, China, and Chosun],” Gojong 21, May 26, 1884.

²¹⁷ FRUS, “Mr. Foulk to Mr. Bayard,” October 21, 1885. No. 245.

²¹⁸ This later negotiation never took place because the 1885 Treaty was annulled in 1905 by the signing of Russo-Japanese War Portsmouth Peace Treaty which, in fact, nullified all treaties Korea had established with foreign governments. As the victor in 1905, Japan reclaimed Southern Sakhalin, nullifying the 1875 Saint Petersburg Treaty as well. Chong Hyo Pak, “러시아 쿠릴열도에 관한 러/일 분쟁사 연구: 러/일이 체결한 영토조약을 중심으로” [Study of Russian Kuril Islands and Russo-Japanese Disputes], *軍史 [Military History]*, 제 80 호 (2011. 9), 202.

given "the right to acquire Russian citizenship and own fifteen-desiatina (forty-acres) parcels of land" by the supplementary treaty of 1888, as was the practice by the Russian government to attract immigrants into the area.²¹⁹ A total of 12,857 Korean farmers were reported to have resided in Ussuri region and eligible to apply for citizenship in 1891 with many more who became eligible to acquire Russian citizenship between 1893 and 1899. While 1,300 households of Koreans in Yanyanchi Volostov area wanted to acquire citizenship, however, 100 other households refused to apply, constituting about 700 households without Russian citizenships—either by choice or ineligibility.²²⁰ It could not be ascertained as to why these 100 families refused to apply for citizenship, other than, perhaps, by their wish to remain as Koreans and return home someday in the future.

Outreach efforts in response to the Korean people's desire for education were made by government officials in the RFE, such as Governor of Eastern Siberia M.C. Korsakov (1861-1870) who ordered two schools to be established for Korean children in the Ussury region and allocated 150 rubles each for construction expenses in 1870.²²¹ More schools were opened in the Korean community of Blagoslovennoe in 1872.

By 1889, many Koreans who were in the second category—post-1884 entry with 5 years of temporary residency—became eligible to be granted naturalization and received land allocations of fifteen desiatina as well as equal rights as Russian peasants. Some of them became wealthy and were referred to as "*wonhoin* ('settler Koreans/Koreans with Russian subject-hood')" or "*starozhil*" in Russian, while those who came later when the naturalization became more difficult were called "*yeohoin*" or "*novosel*" and were accepted as "*batraki* ('farmhands')

²¹⁹ Saveliev, "Militant Diaspora," 148.

²²⁰ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 79.

²²¹ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 58.

or tenant farmers for Russian or naturalized Korean peasant.”²²² These early settlers were extremely motivated to educate their children and sent them to Russian schools.

Parents who were interested in “Russification and ‘passing’ as Russian” of their children so that they could be considered “assimilable Russian subjects” sent their children to colleges of technical education as well as into Russian Orthodox schools away from home.²²³ However, living among the many white Russians who had come from Latvia, Estonia, and Armenia, Jews, and Baltic Germans who could easily assimilate, Koreans “did not have this luxury of blending in” due to their Asian features—yellow skin, dark hair, and narrow eyes.²²⁴ Such features of physiognomy could only be altered or erased by the mixing of blood, as much as they tried to Russify by education and productivity.

The growing nationalism of “Slavophiles, the Pan-Slavs” further demoted the status of Koreans as “yellow labor” under the administration of Governor Unterberger who strongly believed in “Russia and Russian industry for Russians,” supported by his ethnographer Vladimir V. Grave.²²⁵ Grave argued that Russians must fight against Chinese and Koreans laborers who were gaining influence in trade and industry in the region and strengthening their economic reins “while belittling the Russian authorities.”²²⁶ Lieutenant General Sergey Mikhailovich Dukhovskoy (1893-1898) showed a favorable policy toward Korean immigrants and supported their bids for citizenship when he took office in 1893. Dukhovskoy approved citizenship applications not only from the Koreans of the first category but also of the second category, recognizing Russia’s needs to be more accommodating of productive foreigners.²²⁷

²²² Byung Yool Ban, *Korean National Activities in the Russian Far East and North Chientao*, Ph.D. Thesis (Hawaii: University of Hawaii, 1996), 67-68; B.D. Pak, *Koreitsy*, 121, cited in H. G. Park, *The Displacement*, 60.

²²³ J. Chang, *Burnt*, 18.

²²⁴ J. Chang, *Burnt*, 19.

²²⁵ Chang, *Burnt*, 17.

²²⁶ Chang, *Burnt*, 18.

²²⁷ Chang, *Burnt*, 15.

The transnational migrant Koreans pushed on to have their off-spring become Russified as quickly as possible by education and strong initiative. Ko Young-Jun (Kogai Ewegenyi), for example, was sent as far as to St. Petersburg for Russian language education in 1866 and returned in 1871 to serve as an interpreter for the Southern Ussury Border Administration.²²⁸ Some of these Russified descendants of the early Korean migrants were to serve in the Russian military and intelligence activities during the Russo-Japanese War, as will be further investigated in Chapter II.

Lady Isabella Bird Bishop, a Scottish who visited Vladivostok in the Possiet Bay and Nowo Kiewsk areas in 1897, shared her observation of the lives of Koreans in their transnational diaspora in Russia. Having traveled extensively in the United States in the 1850s and Hawaii, India, China, as well as in the mainland Korea since 1875, Bird was known for her travelogues which were considered “progressive...by rejecting motherhood and domesticity” in the days of the Victorian society and not aligned to “advocate any special rites of dogmas” of any particular religious organizations despite her own “deep religious conviction and practice.”²²⁹

²²⁸ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 59.

²²⁹ Anna M. Stoddart, *The Life of Isabella Bird (Mrs. Bishop) Hon. Member of the Oriental Society of Peking* (London: John Murray, 1908), vi.; Precious McKenzie, *The Right Sort of Woman: Victorian Travel Writers and the Fitness of an Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), 31.



(Figure 14: Korean school children with Russian Orthodox Priests and teachers)²³⁰

During her four visits to Korea from 1894 to 1897, Lady Bishop acquired a good understanding of the country and its people's characters, traveling through the Korean peninsula on horseback and along the rivers in a houseboat she procured, since there were no lodging accommodations available to lone female travelers at the time. She was accompanied only by a Chinese cook, an interpreter, and other guides. Her first trip to Korea in 1894 was interrupted as she was "suddenly deported...ahead of the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War."²³¹ It was during her subsequent trip in 1897 that Bishop made her way to Vladivostok via Mukden, Manchuria to see Korea in the aftermath of the Sino-Japanese War but prior to the Russo-Japanese War. It was there she witnessed "by personal investigation the vexed question of the condition of those

²³⁰ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 60.

²³¹ Stuart Heaver, "Isabella Bird, Victorian pioneer who changed West's view of China," *Post Magazine*, 2015.

Koreans who have found shelter under the Russian flag, a number estimated in Seoul at 20,000.”²³²

Upon her disembarking in Vladivostok after a pleasant voyage from Nagasaki aboard *Higo maru*, Bishop was met “by a number of laughing, shouting, dirty Korean youths” soliciting her to hotels nearby, the situation of which she described as “an unspeakable Babel” as she heard shouts in many different languages, Russian, Korean, Chinese, Japanese, and English.²³³ Once welcomed by the Governor of Primorsk, General Unterberger and his wife, both of whom spoke English fluently, Bishop was cordially escorted outside of Vladivostok city into the Posiet Bay where large settlements of Koreans existed near a military post of Nowo Kiewsk with “1000 civilians, chiefly Koreans and Chinese,” populating the area.²³⁴

Bishop's description presented Korean villages near a large military complex of barracks and storehouses in a prosperous condition:

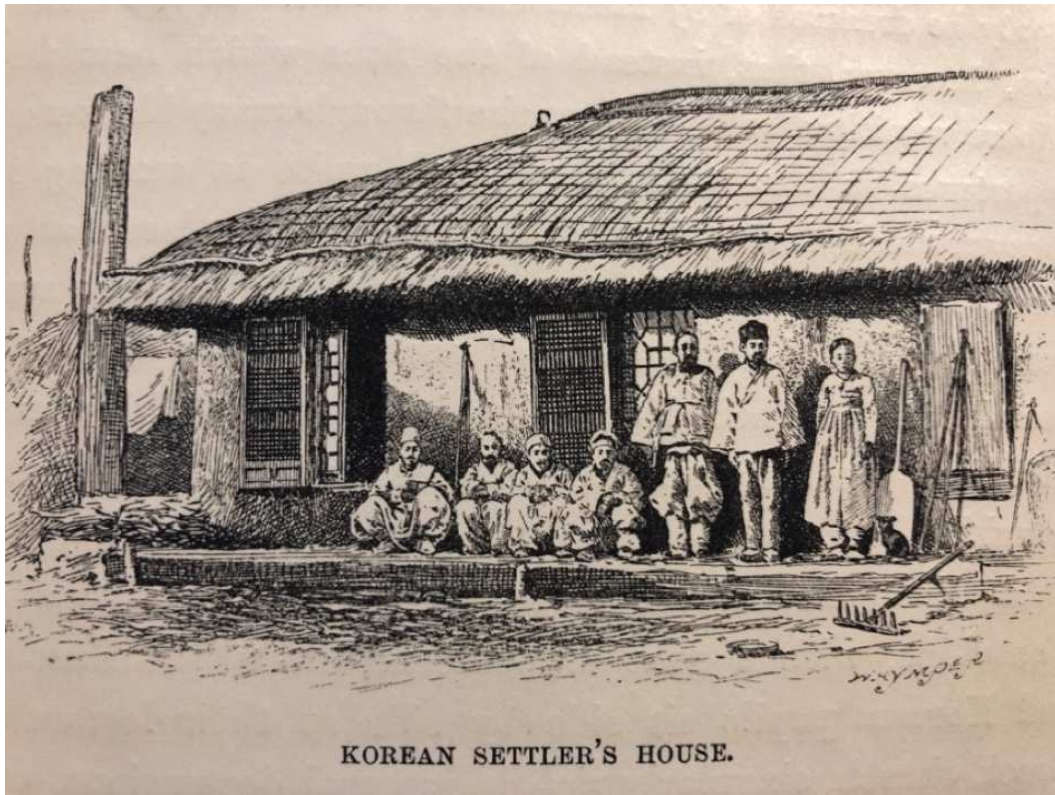
growing rich as contractors for the supply of meat and grain to the Russian forces. At this they have beaten their Chinese neighbours, and they actually go into Chinese Manchuria, buy up lean cattle, and fatten them for beef. To those who have only seen the Koreans in Korea, such as statement will be hardly credible.... I have it on the best authority that the Korean settlers near Khabaroffka have competed so successfully with the Chinese in market gardening that the supplying that city with vegetables is now entirely in their hands!²³⁵

²³² Isabella L. Bird, *Korea & Her Neighbours: A Narrative of Travel, with an Account of the Recent Vicissitudes and Present Position of the Country* (London: John Murray, 1898), II, 1.

²³³ Bird, *Korea*, I, 252.

²³⁴ Bird, *Korea*, II, 3.

²³⁵ Bird, *Korea*, II, 4.



(Figure 15: Korean Settler's House near Vladivostok by Lady Bishop)²³⁶

As shown in the above drawing of a substantial Korean settler's house by Bishop, the traditional Korean-style farmhouse of five or six rooms with thatched roof appears to be well built and neatly maintained by a household of family members and farm hands or tenants. Bishop found the “Korean hamlets with houses of a very superior class to those in Korea” scattered all over the countryside in RFE.²³⁷

Even the farmers themselves exuded “an air of frankness and manly independence” instead of the “timid, suspicious, or cringing manner” which was typically found in their counterparts in Korea.²³⁸ Knowing that these farmers had fled to escape the famine and bureaucratic abuse of the officials in Korea just a decade or so earlier, Bishop saw the possibility

²³⁶ Bishop, *Korea*, II, 5.

²³⁷ Bishop, *Korea*, II, 5.

²³⁸ Bishop, *Korea*, II, 5.

of the Koreans at home to “develop into men,” if they had an “honest administration and protection for their earnings”—very insightful perception of a sympathetic foreigner who saw the detrimental effects of a bad government on its populace.²³⁹

However, the above picture of a settler’s family shows several people who appear to be farm hands, tenants, or household help squatting next to a couple, husband and wife, who stood next to an older man who might have been a male member of the family. In this picture, one can see a pattern of a traditional Korean household comprising an extended family, living together and assisted by others who may be hired helpers or slaves, just like a household of a *yangban* society in Korea.

The Korean villages Bishop visited were within three to four miles apart from each other, “of which prosperity in greater or less degree is a characteristic” in her own words, where the houses were “large and well built... the people and children are well clothed, and the village lands carefully cultivated.”²⁴⁰ One of the Korean villages she visited was occupied by “140 families on 750 acres of rich land” living in houses of “strictly Korean architecture” where “farm-yards were clean and well swept, and the domestic animals were lodged in neat sheds” with people in their “clothing and dwellings...the same as in Korea, and the ‘top-knot’ flourishes.”²⁴¹ A ‘top-knot’ (*sangtoo*) was a long-observed Neo-Confucian-based Korean custom of preserving what has been given by birth. This practice required men’s hair to be kept long, tied into a knot at the top of their heads, therefore called a top-knot. Traditionally, Korean men’s hair was dressed “differently by single and married men,” explained American businessman

²³⁹ Bishop, *Korea*, II, 18.

²⁴⁰ Bishop, *Korea*, II, 9.

²⁴¹ Bishop, *Korea*, II, 6.

Angus Hamilton who traveled and lived in Korea.²⁴² “If unmarried, they adopt the queue; when married, they put up their hair and twist it into a conical mass upon their heads, keeping it in place by a woven horsehair band, which completely encircles the forehead and base of the skull” and top it off with a “high-crowned hat” with a broad brim in black, called *kaht* (갓). In other words, a top-knot was regarded as a sign of manhood, standing for the Korean male adulthood, even in a transnational diaspora of Koreans in the RFE.²⁴³

In addition to the Korean farmers in the area of Possiet Bay, Bishop saw the cattlemen of “strong, thriving-looking Koreans driving 60 fine fat cattle down to the steamer” bound for Vladivostok to transport their beef supply.²⁴⁴ The area between Possiet Bay and Nowo Kiewsk where these Korean villages had formed housed 10,000 infantry and artillery with the soldiers’ families living in “low mud houses of two rooms each, with windows consisting of a single small pane of glass” next to “an imposing” Greek church.²⁴⁵ In another village of Yantchihe where a schoolhouse in which Russian and Korean children sat side by side taking lessons, four hundred Koreans had converted to Christianity with baptism, wishing “more hope for the next generation.”²⁴⁶

In the above description of Lady Bishop, one can get a glimpse of the living in an ethnically-mixed community where white Russians and Korean migrant families with their children sit together, learning in schools and worshipping in churches of Russian Orthodox. In this picture, moreover, the white Russians living in low mud houses with single-pane windows

²⁴² Angus Hamilton, Herbert H. Austin and Masatake Terauchi, *Korea: Its History, Its People, and Its Commerce* (Boston: J.B. Millet, 1910), 32.

²⁴³ Lillias Horton Underwood, *Fifteen Years among the Top-knots or Life in Korea* (Boston: American Tract Society, 1904), 50.

²⁴⁴ Bishop, *Korea*, II, 2.

²⁴⁵ Bishop, *Korea*, II, 3.

²⁴⁶ Bishop, *Korea*, II, 7.

did not seem to be any more affluent than their Korean neighbors. Back in Korea, these Korean migrants could not have sat and worshipped or learned alongside the upper-class *Yangbans* and their families. At last, these Korean migrants in transnational diasporas were able to mix and mingle between classes and social standings, to a certain degree, in spite of their humble origins as some of them achieved Russification and economic prosperity of which they could never dream back in Korea.

As will be seen with the Korean diaspora in Manchuria, the Koreans in the RFE were wearing traditional Korean outfits, headdresses, and shoes, signifying the transnational lifestyle they were maintaining more than twenty to thirty years after their move. Such a positive portrayal of Korean settlers by Bishop confirmed the comfortable new-found life of some of the Korean transplants in the RFE in the late 1890s before the Russo-Japanese War.

Before leaving Vladivostok, on top of a hill “from which the mountainous frontiers of Russia, China, and Korea are seen,” Bishop presented “what is geographically and politically a striking view”— “the whole of the Russo-Korean frontier, 11 miles in length.... On a steep bluff above the river, a tall granite slab marks the spot where the Russian and Chinese frontiers meet.”²⁴⁷ This image Bishop left behind is symbolic of the geopolitical environment of three empires butting heads with the fourth, Japan, ready to erupt at any moment.

By the early 1900s, the Korean migration to the Russian Far East and Manchuria transformed from economic to political in nature as a large influx of “political exiles” escaped out of Korea against the increasing Japanese aggression and colonization attempts.²⁴⁸ As the Yi Dynasty started to collapse fast, the problem of Korean political exiles was compounded into a complicated question of acknowledging “Russia's sovereignty over Korean nationals fleeing

²⁴⁷ Bishop, *Korea*, II, 9-10.

²⁴⁸ H. G. Park, *The Displacement*, 62.

from Japan's threat to the crumbling Chosun Kingdom” in the new geopolitical atmosphere in which Japan emerged as the victor.²⁴⁹ While many of the newcomers were caught in the conflict between Russia and Japan, wishing to continue and carry out the anti-Japanese independence movement which they had started before migrating into the Russian Far East, the old immigrants with financial means felt ready to be of service to the Russian military as other Russian subjects did for the Russo-Japanese War.²⁵⁰ Regardless of the difference in push factors which brought the two groups to the RFE—economic or political—the diverse group of the Korean diasporas joined their forces together to help Russia fight the war against Japan in 1904. However, the disparate sense of loyalties the two groups felt, one to Russia as their new sovereignty and the other to Korea as their old homeland to hopefully return to soon—brought them together in arms on the face of imperialist aggression by Japan.

The same, if not more complex, question of sovereignty applied to the Koreans in Manchuria. The next section will focus on the migration of Koreans to Manchuria, a region already known as a transnational diasporic mix, which occurred in parallel and almost simultaneously to the Russian track. For the Koreans who migrated to Manchuria, the situation became much more complicated than in the RFE due to the Japanese imperial ambition to advance into China. Such moves put Koreans in the middle of the social hierarchy with ambivalent status as stateless or Japanese subjects in the coming decades.

Koreans in Manchuria: Transnational Sojourners or Patriotic Nationalists in Exile?

a. Koreans in Manchuria—Land of Transnational Diasporic Coexistence

Regarding the first presence of Koreans in Manchuria, historiography abounds with many answers. One dates as far back to the 37 B.C. when Koguryo of the Three Kingdoms Era of

²⁴⁹ H. G. Park, *The Displacement*, 57.

²⁵⁰ Savelieve, “Militant,” 155.

Korea was founded by Chumong with his followers from Puyo (or Parhae, 渤海) in a “region centered in the middle Yalu and the T’ung chia River basin.”²⁵¹ By the beginning of the first century A.D. Koguryo’s King T’aejo (52-146) engaged in a war to expand the territory “toward the basins of the Liao River to the southwest and the Taedong River to the south, to the Sungari River basin in the northwest and into the plains along the northeast coast of the Korean Peninsula.”²⁵²

King T’aejo’s ambition was fulfilled by King Kwanggaet’o (391-412 A.D.) who put “the Liaodong Peninsula and a considerable portion of Manchuria” under Koguryo’s rule during the kingdom’s peak period.²⁵³ This theory of nationalist historians was reinforced by the discovery of King Kwanggaet’o’s stele, dated 414 A.D. by inscription in Tonggou of current day Jilin Province by a Japanese lieutenant Sakawa Kageaki in 1883.²⁵⁴ Concomitantly, this anthropological discovery of the stele was accepted by Japanese nationalist historians, such as Yoshi S. Kuno, to predate Japan’s “imperial origins” as well as the theory of Koguryo’s rule in the Manchuria by four centuries.”²⁵⁵ With the fall of Parhae kingdom (698-926 A.D.), which had been established by people of Koguryo but conquered by the Khitans in 926, Manchuria ceased to be a part of Korea, either politically or culturally.²⁵⁶

In more recent history, after the Qing invasions of Korea, called *Jungmyo Horan* (丁卯胡亂) in 1627 and *Byungja Horan* (丙子胡亂) in 1636, the Crown Prince Soryun was taken captive with many nobles and courtesans to Shimyang, Manchuria, during the reign of King Injo. Over 13,000 Korean soldiers and their families were taken to Manchuria where they

²⁵¹ Eckert, et al., *Korea Old and New*, 15.

²⁵² Eckert, et al., *Korea Old and New*, 17.

²⁵³ “Koguryo: Ancient Kingdom, Korea,” Encyclopaedia Britannica.

²⁵⁴ Pai, *Constructing “Korean” Origins*, 26.

²⁵⁵ Yoshi S. Kuno, *Japanese Expansion on the Asiatic Continent*, cited in Pai, *Constructing*, 26.

²⁵⁶ Yi, *A New History*, 91.

were enslaved and sold in slave markets. Those who survived remained in Manchuria, married each other, and formed Korean villages while maintaining their language, diet, living style, and ceremonies according to the Korean customs.²⁵⁷ This group could be considered the first transnational diaspora of Koreans in Manchuria.

By the Treaty of Nerchinsk of 1689, a peace settlement was made between Russia and Qing China for control of Manchuria. The Russians “agreed to withdraw north of the Amur watershed” and the Manchus “kept well to the south of the Amur” with “a huge, virtually uninhabited and trackless forested waste” in between, serving to keep the two powers separate in their empire building in the next two centuries.²⁵⁸ (See Figure 16 and 17) Thereafter, nomadic tribes who traded scattered around the territories along the Sungari and Amur rivers and sent their customary tributes, “chiefly in the form of sable pelts,” to Peking as well as to the Russian Tsar.²⁵⁹

Manchuria, located in the northeastern region of China, remained vacant for centuries until the nineteenth century when migrants from China and Korea arrived. Occupying 365,000 square miles of area, Manchuria comprised the so-called “Three Eastern Provinces” of Heilunjiang (黑龍江省), Jilin (吉林省), and Fengtien (奉天省), with Harbin ((哈爾濱), Yanji (漣吉), and Shenyang (also called Muktien or Bongchun (奉天) by different people) serving as regional centers of political and commercial activities at the beginning of the twentieth century.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ 김영필 (Kim, Yong-p'il). *Manchuria Arirang of Korean-Chinese Diaspora*=조선족 디아스포라의 만주 아리랑 (Seoul: Somyong, 2013), 113.

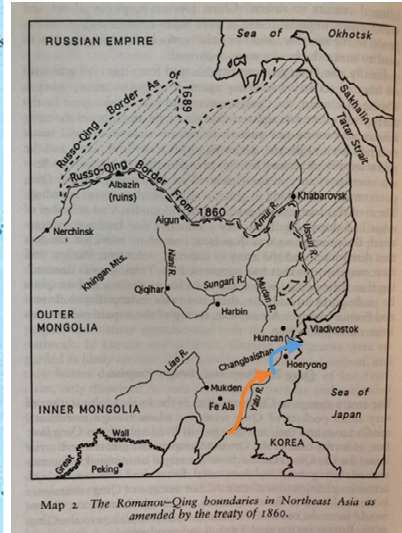
²⁵⁸ Lattimore, *Manchuria*, 108.

²⁵⁹ Lattimore, *Manchuria*, 111.

²⁶⁰ South Manchurian Railway Company [Minami Manshu Tetsudo Kabushiki Kaisha], *Manchuria: Land of Opportunities* (New York: South Manchuria Railway, 1922), 1; 김경일, 윤희작, 이동진, 임성모, eds. *동아시아의 민족이산과 도시: 20 세기 전반 만주의 조선인* [Korean Diaspora in Manchurian Cities in the Early Twentieth Century] (서울: 한국정신문화연구원 (Academy of Korean Studies), 2004), 18.



(Figure 16: Map of Manchuria and Southern RFE: CIA - The World Factbook)



(Figure 17: Yalu River (orange) and Tumen River (blue) bordering between Korea and China/Russia, 1860)²⁶¹

In Figure 17, one can see how the border between Russia and China changed from 1689 with Nerchensk Treaty to 1860 with the signing of Peking Treaty, yielding a large patch of territory to Russia after 1860, as a result of which Korea came to join borders with the Russian Far East.

Amur and Sungari Rivers provided a natural separation of the vast region between Manchuria in the south and Siberia in the north, the Eastern Inner Mongolia in the west, the Maritime Provinces of Russia in the east, and “Chosen (Korea)” in the southeast of the border, separated by the Yalu River (鴨綠江), and the Yellow Sea (黃海) in the south of Dairen (Dalien or Dalny=大連).²⁶² The climate of Manchuria, situated within the parallels of 39° and 53° 30’ north, was subject to extremes of temperature—long, severe winters and hot summers with monthly temperatures, fluctuating between 24° F. in January to 76° F. in August in Dairen, for

²⁶¹ “The Romanov-Qing boundaries in Northeast Asia as amended by the treaty of 1860” in Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Manchus* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997), 166.

²⁶² South Manchurian Railway, *Manchuria*, 1.

example, the southern-most city of Manchuria.²⁶³ In Harbin, the temperature ranged from zero in January to 72° F in July.

Manchuria (滿洲) has always been considered a “transnational phenomenon”—never viewed as an integral part of China as there is “no single Chinese name for Manchuria as a unit” with a clear distinction from China proper.²⁶⁴ Manchuria has also been recognized for its multi-ethnic diasporic coexistence of five different ethnicities—Hans (漢), Mans (滿), Mongols (蒙), Japanese (日), and Koreans (朝)—by some historians, while others counted Russians (露) as the sixth element of ethnicities in this geopolitical environment.²⁶⁵

Such an assessment gets even more complicated when considering Bishop’s account. On her way to Vladivostok via Mukden, Bishop found approximately 30,000 Korean families living in Newchwang, Manchuria amongst “a population of several distinct and mixed races, Manchus (Tartars), Gilyaks, Tungusi, Solons, Daur, and Chinese.”²⁶⁶ In this northern province of Manchuria which Bishop found as “unsettled at all times,” populated by “convicts, fugitive criminals, soldiers who have left the colours, and gold and ginseng hunters,” and hassled by “bands of mounted brigades,” many of the Koreans had *settled* themselves.²⁶⁷

During the reign of Empress Dowager Cixi of Qing China in the 1860s and 1870s much of government’s powers and responsibilities of taxation, legislation, and military command were decentralized and left up to provincial governors. While the central government was preoccupied

²⁶³ South Manchurian Railway, *Manchuria*, 2.

²⁶⁴ Prasenjit Duara, “Transnationalism and the Predicament of Sovereignty: China, 1900-1945,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 102, No. 4 (1997), 1043; Lattimore, *Manchuria*, 7.

²⁶⁵ 유선영 (Yoo Sun Young), “‘동아’ 트라우마, 제국의 지정학적 공간과 ‘이등신민’의 정치학 [East Asian Trauma: A Study of Politics of Geopolitical Space and Second-class Citizens,” *사회와 역사 (Society and History)*, v. 94 (20120601), 219; 김경일 [Kim Kyung-II], 윤취작, 이동진, 임성모, eds., *동아시아의 민족이산과 도시: 20세기 전반 [Transnational Diasporas and Cities of East Asia: The Early Twentieth Century]* (Seoul: Academy of Korean Studies [한국정신문화연구원], 2004), 278 and 302.

²⁶⁶ Bird, *Korea*, I, 218.

²⁶⁷ Bird, *Korea*, I, 219.

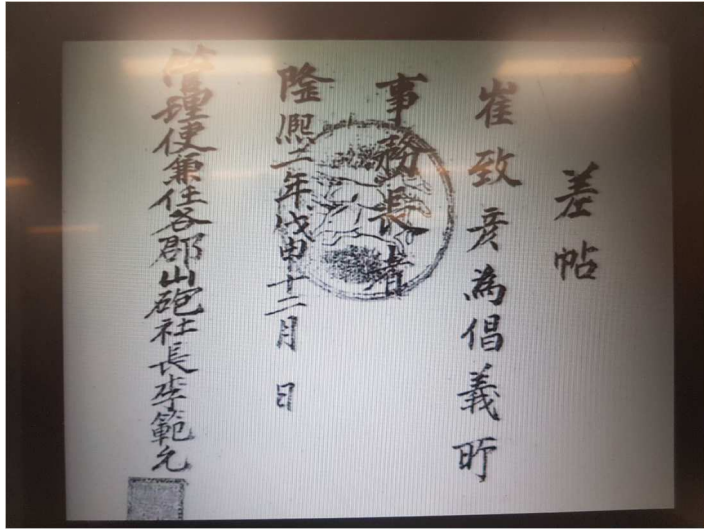
with a series of domestic uprisings, such as the Boxers Rebellion and the Taiping War, and foreign aggression of two Opium Wars, much of the internal affairs were at the discretion of local governments.²⁶⁸ When China legalized migration to Manchuria by lifting the border restrictions in 1884, not only Koreans but also many Chinese from Shandong Province migrated.

Local governments in Manchuria lacked government revenue or other income sources. They consequently started to privatize lands by selling them to the migrants without providing any security protection for the property owners, leaving it up to them to hire private armies to guard their estates.²⁶⁹ Yi Pom-yun who had been sent to survey the situation of Korean migrants in Kando by Emperor Gojong in 1903 came back with a report on the unsafe situation of 13,000 Korean households who were in urgent need of protection from the bandits and the local officials' abusive treatment. Kim Kyu-hong, an Uijongbu official, appealed to Gojong to appoint Yi as the resident inspector in charge of protecting the Koreans in the area. With Gojong's approval, Yi was officially designated as Manager of Kando (間島管理使) in charge of safeguarding Korean migrants in the region on August, 11, 1903.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ Boxers Rebellion (義和團運動), a popular uprising of anti-foreigners, anti-Christians, and anti-imperialists from 1897-1901, following the Taiping War of 1850-1864, and two Opium Wars of 1839-1860 between China and Britain weakened the Qing Dynasty to its collapse in 1912; Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Manchus* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997), 177-188; James L. Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 2.

²⁶⁹ Hyun Ok Park, *Two Dreams*, 17.

²⁷⁰ Gojong Sillok, “이범윤을 특별히 관리로 임명하여 북간도에 주재시키다,” Vol. 43, no. 1, 08.11.1903; *Seungjong-won Ilgi* (承政院日記), Vol. 3160, Gojong 40, 8.11.1903. *Seungjong-won Ilgi* is an archive of documented daily records of official activities of the government from 1623 (Injo 1) to 1910 (Soonjong 4).



(Figure 18: Letter of appointment for Choi Chi-un by Yi Pom-yun with a seal of *mapae*)

As seen in the above letter of appointment, stamped with a seal of *uhsa mapae* (御使馬牌) with images of horses, the carrier of this royal seal had the authority to procure and enlist all resources, human or material including horses, as needed to carry out his royal assignment of inspection and management of any localities within the realm. According to the information Bishop obtained from the Russian Diplomatic Mission in Peking, these Koreans had left Korea “since 1868 ... in consequences of political disturbance and official exactions,” as observed in the previous section on the RFE of this chapter.²⁷¹ The significance of the Korean Emperor giving such an assignment in protection of his former subjects who had migrated and left the confines of Korea is remarkable in the sense that not only their past offense, previously punishable by death, was being pardoned but also the Korean monarch was providing the safety and protection of the former subjects in their new transnational diasporas overseas.

Newchwang was one of the Treaty Ports opened under the 1858 Treaty of Tianjin, which explains the cosmopolitan nature of the city. People of various ethnic origins coexisted not by

²⁷¹ Bird, *Korea*, I, 218f.

assimilation (同和) but in relative harmony (協和), concentrated in diasporic communities of Dairen, Shenyang, and Harbin.²⁷² Harbin was the center of this borderland of the transnational and multicultural region—a “boom town” as the hub of Chinese Eastern Railway—with 50,000 to 60,000 inhabitants by 1903, growing to 75,000 of which 39,000 were Russians by 1912.²⁷³ Harbin provided the “contact zone of imperial encounters” between Chinese, Japanese, and Russians, as historian Mary Louise Pratt had termed, into which Korean migrants were thrown.²⁷⁴ Situated close to the Russian border on the Manchurian side, Harbin “occupied a border position not only because of its ethnic and cultural diversity, but also from a political-administrative” standpoint and served as the hub of information, counterintelligence, and intrigues.²⁷⁵

In his travels and residence in Manchuria for nine months in 1929-1930, funded by a fellowship from the Social Science Research Council of New York, American historian Owen Lattimore wrote that he found “an important Korean population” in Eastern Manchuria, concentrated in the *Chientao* (Kando=間島) district.²⁷⁶ Kando, incidentally, was a name Koreans gave to the area they migrated to and settled down to form their own community in Manchuria. The name Kando was also accepted by the Chinese and later the Japanese. The majority of Koreans whom Lattimore found in Manchuria, albeit a couple of decades later than the subjects of this dissertation, were indeed situated in a “cradle of conflict.” Many of the later migrants were “revolutionary and anti-Japanese, having for that reason migrated from Korea into Chinese

²⁷² K. I. Kim, et al., [Transnational Diasporas], 278.

²⁷³ Frank Grüner, “Russians in Manchuria: From Imperial to National Identity in a Colonial and Semi-colonial Space.” Chapter Nine in *Crossing Boundaries: Ethnicity, Race, and National Belonging in a Transnational World*, ed. by Brian D. Behnken and Simon Wendt (New York: Lexington Books, 2013), 112.

²⁷⁴ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2d ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), 8.

²⁷⁵ Grüner, “Russians in Manchuria,” 108; K.I. Kim, et al., [Transnational Diasporas], 302.

²⁷⁶ Lattimore, *Manchuria*, 239.

territory.”²⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the earlier-arrived Korean pioneer farmers constituted more than 90 percent of Korean transnationals in rural villages and still could not be matched for their northern rice farming techniques by other ethnic groups in Manchuria or in the Russian Far East.²⁷⁸

b. Early Arrivals of Korean Migrants to Manchuria

Around the time when the early migrants of thirteen families from Hamgyong Province crossed the border at Tumen River or by the coastline to the Russian Far East in 1863, other Korean families from the same province headed to Manchuria by crossing the border at the Yalu River region. These illegal crossings continued and escalated when the terrible flood and famine of 1869 wiped out the source of the main livelihood—the farmland—of many farmers and peasants in Korea. As many as 100,000 Koreans crossed over and cultivated 576,000 *mu* of lands in 1869. Between 1869 and 1894, 34,000 more Korean migrants settled in four districts in Yenbian alone in Manchuria.²⁷⁹

Earlier than these migrants came the desperately poor Koreans who were engaged in farming by daily commute or seasonal farming in the mid- to early seventeenth century. Pak Gae-son (朴凱孫) and twenty others crossed over in 1638 and lived in Nahan village, followed by Yi Man-Ji and nine others who crossed over to gather Ginseng roots and captured by the Chinese soldiers in 1710.²⁸⁰ At first, they would cross over at dawn, plant the seeds, and tend to their small patch of farmlands, before returning home at night. Or they would cross over and plant in the spring and return to harvest in the fall in their desperate plight to survive despite the

²⁷⁷ Lattimore, *Manchuria*, 239.

²⁷⁸ C. Walter Young, *Korean Problems in Manchuria As Factors in the Sino-Japanese Dispute: An Analytical and Interpretative Study* by C. Walter Young, Technical Counsellor to the Far Eastern Commission of Enquiry; Far Eastern Associate, Institute of Current World Affairs, New York City. Study No. 9. Supplementary Documents to the Report of the Commission of Enquiry [Geneva: League of Nations, 1932], 7.

²⁷⁹ 김영필 (Kim, Yong Phil), *조선족 디아스포라의 만주 아리랑* [Manchuria Arirang of Korean-Chinese Diaspora] (Seoul: Somyong, 2013), 63.

²⁸⁰ Kim, *Manchuria Arirang*, 118-119.

risk of deaths. The early migrants lived in Tonghwa, Jibahn, Jangbaik, Sinbin, Ryongjong, and Hwaryong between Yalu and Tumen rivers. Reportedly there were 28 clusters of Korean villages in the Yalu riverbeds in 1870. In 1880, there were over 1,000 households of Korean migrants living in Jibahn alone and by 1881 Koreans in Yanbian Province exceeded 10,000 in total.²⁸¹

In the meantime, the Chinese government's previous policy to curb Korean mass migration was relaxed to allow naturalization of Koreans in 1865. It seemed meaningless with so many crossing the border illegally despite the law. It was altogether lifted in 1881 for entry into the Dunhwa region.²⁸² With the 1883 trade agreement, established between China and Chosun, border restrictions were removed by both countries to allow Korean migrants to legally cross over and engage themselves in farming north of the Yalu border in Manchuria.

An official reference to the lifting of Korean restrictions can be found in *Gojong Sillok* on May 26, 1884, as part of an announcement of the 1884 Treaty of Commerce & Trade between Korea and China, more specifically in Jilin (吉林) Province.²⁸³ The Treaty with 16 Articles specifically mentions the previous tributary relationship between China and Korea being revised as that of trading partnership with respect for Chosun being no longer regarded as China's dependency. Tumen River (豆滿江) was to serve as the border between the two countries with all trading business transactions to be handled in the nearby City of Jilin on the side of China and Hoeryung (會寧) in Korea so that merchants with their merchandises can cross the river in the morning and return in the evening after their transactions were conducted with appropriate taxes paid.

²⁸¹ Kim, *Manchuria Arirang*, 119.

²⁸² K.I. Kim, [Transnational Diasporas], 30.

²⁸³ Gojong Sillok, “중국 길림과 조선간의 무역규정을 체결하다 [A Treaty of Trade established between Jilin, China, and Chosun],” Gojong 21, May 26, 1884.

By this same Treaty, outposts were established in Hoonchoon (琿春) on the Chinese side and Chongsung (鍾城) on the Korean side to facilitate the trading as well. By Article Twelve of the Treaty, trading of Ginseng (人蔘) for medicinal purposes with 15 percent taxes was specified while vegetables, ducks, fish, roof tiles, lumber, and other daily consumer products were to be allowed without taxes imposed. Trading of opiums (阿片) and arms (武器) was to be strictly prohibited. The Treaty was signed by Paeng Gwangye (彭光譽) and Uh Yoon-joong (魚允中), representing the Chinese and Korean governments respectively.²⁸⁴ A report of restrictions on crossing the rivers being lifted (越江禁地 制度 撤廢) in 1883 by the same Korean Northwestern Border official, named above, Uh Yoon Joong (魚允中), was also confirmed by Korean historian Kyung-Il Kim, based on Japanese sources.²⁸⁵

According to historian Yong-Phil Kim, China's Qing government made a strategic decision to welcome Koreans and have them settle in the vast empty land in order to create a buffer zone to keep the Russians from moving south. This strategy was called *imin silbyon* (移民實邊)—using migrants to fortify borders. Between 1881 and 1885, 1,133 households of Korean migrants settled and thrived in Yanbian area, using the Korean wet-rice farming techniques to cultivate the wasteland of 24,104 hectares which was granted them by the Qing government.²⁸⁶ Upon the nearly simultaneous lifting of border restrictions on both sides, migration of Koreans increased in the late-1880s and spread into a wider area far north to Harbin

²⁸⁴ Gojong Sillok, “중국 길림 [A Treaty],” Ibid.

²⁸⁵ K.I. Kim, et al., [Transnational Diaspora], 30.

²⁸⁶ Kim, [Manchuria Arirang], 87.

in 1892.²⁸⁷ Reports of Chinese officials at *Hwa-ryong-nak-wall kanguk* [和龍烙越墾局], urging Koreans to cross over and emigrate in 1890 have been noted as well.²⁸⁸

Since the end of the Sino-Japanese War, however, the Qing government toughened its policy to force Koreans to assimilate and adopt the Chinese way of living and dressing. For those who had already crossed over but refused to apply for Chinese citizenship, the Chinese government confiscated their lands and forced them out. If they wanted to stay, they were mandated to become Chinese subjects, dress in Chinese costumes, and follow the Chinese customs.²⁸⁹ Some of the oppressive local Chinese government officials closed down Korean schools and “ordered that all Koreans must go to Chinese schools.”²⁹⁰ Some Koreans were naturalized as Chinese subjects just as their counterparts were in the Russian Far East, but they lived among themselves in such a closed community that made them “practically immune to Chinese [or Russian] linguistic and cultural influences” as well as from discrimination and persecution as foreign-born migrants.²⁹¹ In other words, Korean settlers could maintain their own language and cultural customs in Manchuria more than in RFE, because they lived in tightly-knit clusters of a community of transnational diasporas.

In 1892 the first sighting of Korean migrants in Harbin was reported in a publication by the South Manchurian Railway Company.²⁹² By 1894, 20,846 Koreans in 4,308 households were reported to be living in Yanbian, and 37,000 Korean migrants in 8,700 households were

²⁸⁷ K.I. Kim, et al., [Transnational Diaspora], 30; Barbara J. Brooks, “Peopling the Japanese Empire: The Koreans in Manchuria and the Rhetoric of Inclusion,” Ch. 1 in Sharon Minichiello, *Japan’s Competing Modernities: Issues in Culture and Democracy, 1900-1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 29.

²⁸⁸ K.I. Kim, et al., [Transnational Diaspora], 31.

²⁸⁹ Kim, [Manchuria Arirang], 87.

²⁹⁰ Kim San and Nym Wales, *Song of Ariran: The Life Story of a Korean Rebel* (New York: John Day, 1941), 41.

²⁹¹ Lattimore, *Manchuria*, 239.

²⁹² 滿鐵産業部, [在滿朝鮮人ノ實情], 1937, 8, cited in K.I. Kim, [Transnational Diasporas], 30.

found north of Yalu river by 1897.²⁹³ When the Shimonoseki Treaty was signed in 1898 after the Sino-Japanese War ended in Japan's victory in 1895, China was forced to concede Korea from their long tributary relationship and to forfeit the Liaodong Peninsula of Manchuria and Taiwan to Japan along with the privileges of extraterritoriality in China. The Treaty also yielded foreign rights to navigate the Yangzi and to manufacture in treaty port cities to Japan. For fear of Japanese interference in further territorial disputes, China's Qing Government started to pressure Korean migrants to become naturalized as Chinese citizens and adopt Manchu customs of clothing in black and hairstyles with long ponytails, known as "hukpok pyonbal" [黑服弁髮], in place of Korean's traditional attire of white clothes and topknots.²⁹⁴

Nonetheless, Koreans adhered to their traditional customs and lifestyle in the way they farmed, lived in Korean-style houses—peasant huts built with walls of mud and thatched roofs or well-built houses with tiled roofs by the more affluent farmers—and celebrated family rituals, milestones, and holidays as they did in Korea.²⁹⁵ For this reason, many Koreans tended to live in remote areas of Manchuria where they could avoid the strict oversight of Chinese officials or Japanese *Kempeitai* (憲兵隊), for that matter, after 1905. The situation changed drastically after 1905 when Korea became a protectorate of Japan. More on this change will be examined in Chapter III.

Korean migrants' strong desire to own land motivated them to seek Chinese citizenship as they did in the Russian Far East. Their experience with land ownership in Manchuria differed from that in the Russian Far East because the notion of private property ownership was not recognized in Manchuria until 1884 when the Qing China lifted *bong-gum* policy (封禁政策) and

²⁹³ Dae-Sook Suh and Edward J. Shultz, *Koreans in China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, Center for Korean Studies, 1990), 49.

²⁹⁴ Hyun Ok Park, *Two Dreams*, 28.

²⁹⁵ Kim, [Manchuria Arirang,] 64.

legalized migration into Manchuria. Once peasant migrants from China and Korea entered Manchuria legally, their desire to own land seemed to have been answered. Local Chinese officials with no administrative funding or power from the central government were incentivized to sell lands as private property as a source of local “government revenue and private income.”²⁹⁶

News about shortage of labor to work with tough terrain of the virgin land, which was rumored to be plenty but in much need of cultivation, attracted more migrants to cross the borders. Some Koreans became property owners and others simply wanted to work for a living to feed their families, neither of which was possible for them in Korea at the time. However, the local government offices in Manchuria lacked any real power or funding to provide protections for private property. Therefore, it was up to the property owners or landlords, whether Korean or Chinese, to protect their own property by hiring “private armies” to keep the bandits away.²⁹⁷

In Kando Koreans constituted over two-thirds of the total population since the 1900s because they were granted “customary rights to farming and residence” by the Chinese government in hopes that the Korean diaspora will create “a buffer from the threat of Russian imperialism.”²⁹⁸ The chief occupation of Koreans in the area was “rice cultivation” to work with 26 percent (151,238 acres) of the land used as wet paddy fields and 74 percent (492,541 acres) as dry fields.²⁹⁹

As the Japanese imperial ambition in Korea became more pronounced in the early 1900s, the Qing government was caught in a dilemma between its policy of continuing to utilize the Korean migrants as rice producers and of preventing Korean migration which was seen as “a

²⁹⁶ Park, *Two Dreams*, 17.

²⁹⁷ Park, *Two Dreams*, 17.

²⁹⁸ Park, *Two Dreams*, 43.

²⁹⁹ Hoon K. Lee, “Korean Migrants in Manchuria,” *Geographical Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (April, 1932), 202.

transnational mode of Japanese empire building.”³⁰⁰ Should they accept and utilize Korean migrants for their productive assets or reject them as the front guard of Japanese imperialism? Historian Barbara Brooks pinpointed this dilemma—the “Jiandao problem (*Kando mondai*)” (間島問題)—as “the most outstanding diplomatic issue between China and Japan” due to “Korea’s importance as a nonstate actor while under Japanese occupation.”³⁰¹ The problem of “recalcitrant Koreans” or “Korean malcontents” who occupied the region “from periphery to metropole” of Manchuria could not be resolved despite the various Sino-Japanese treaties, as long as Korea remained stateless and its people, the Koreans, remained loyal to their old country and difficult to be managed.³⁰²

The nationalist government of China enforced restrictions, such as limiting the exchange of land to its nationals as well as the number of years non-nationals could be employed and the maximum wages they could be paid. The tug of war over land ownership based on national membership—citizenship—became the central issue in the “interplay of Japanese colonialism, Chinese nationalism, and capitalism” as the Japanese grip on Korea’s independence tightened.³⁰³ Nation-forming in Manchuria “enabled migrants from North China to become landowners while preventing their Korean counterparts from doing so” because domestic migration and settlement of Chinese people to Manchuria was preferred to those by Koreans.³⁰⁴ Indeed, in the vicious cycle of “migration, cultivation, eviction, and re-emigration” the “rice-farming skills” were the most important assets of Korean migrants.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁰ Park, *Two Dreams*, 42.

³⁰¹ Brooks, “Peopling,” 30.

³⁰² Brooks, “Peopling,” 30.

³⁰³ Park, *Two Dreams*, 19.

³⁰⁴ Park, *Two Dreams*, 19.

³⁰⁵ Park, *Two Dreams*, 41.

Chinese farmers were mainly engaged in farming grains and vegetables in dry land (旱田) methods, whereas Korean farmers were known to produce rice using wet-rice field (水田) methods with much success. Comparison of rice production by farmers in ethnic groups of Korea, China, and Japan in 1939 was presented by historian Kim Young, as shown below:

Nationality	Wet-rice Farmland used (Total square footage)	Rice Produced (Total number of bushels (石))	Rice Production per square feet (町)
Koreans	244,003 (85%)	6,752,004	27.67
Chinese	34,223 (12%)	689,231	20.13
Japanese	7,353 (3%)	146,246	19.88

(Figure 19 : Comparison of rice production by ethnicity in Manchuria, 1939)³⁰⁶

The Koreans in Manchuria built Korean-style homes like their counterparts in the RFE—huts with thatched roofs or houses with tile roofs and *ondol*-heated floors, as soon as they could afford. Some of the more successful ones with financial means were allowed to purchase and own pieces of land in their new surroundings as the local Chinese governments needed revenues from these sales with which to operate. The Koreans dressed in Korean traditional clothing in white, so much so that the Russian nationalists called them the “white swans,” referring to the wide bulky white coats and pants Koreans wore.³⁰⁷ They built schools to educate their young and mold them into Koreans in the exiled community of diaspora in Manchuria, as will be discussed in the next section.

c. Later Arrivals to Manchuria from Korea, 1899-

It was on February 18, 1899, when a group of five families of scholarly reputation from Chongsung in Hamgyong Province, the northern-most province of Korea, decided to make a

³⁰⁶ Kim Young, “근대 만주 벼농사 발달과 이주 조선인,” 국학자료원, 2004, 207, in Kim, [*Manchuria Arirang*], 146. (Author’s translation)

³⁰⁷ Chang, *Burnt*, 26-27.

move north to Manchuria.³⁰⁸ They purchased 6,000,000 *pyung* (坪) of lands, and formed a new village which they called Jangjae-chon (長財村) in the district of Myungdong (明東, Bright East), approximately 100 *li* (equivalent to 24.4 miles) away from Hoeryung in Hamgyong Province in Korea.³⁰⁹

The leader of this community, Kim Yak-yun (金躍淵), was the first-born in a family of fifteen generations in military service. Due to the discriminatory practice of putting civil service above the military, coupled with geographic discrimination in Korea, Kim's ancestors were not able to advance in Korean society despite their being from the *yangban* class and their successful passage in the government examination. Kim, lamenting that the country was riddled with social injustice and offered no prospect of social mobility to people, even through education in remote regions such as Hamgyungdo, decided to take his household and emigrate to Kando in search of a new life.³¹⁰

The Kim family of 94 members from two branches, along with the Moon family of 40, and the Nam family of 7 with guides and interpreters crossed the still-frozen Tumen River on February 18, 1899.³¹¹ The group comprising 142 people of 25 different households formed a transnational diaspora of Koreans on a significant scale. This community served as one of the main hubs of Korean education, culture and customs, and military training in Manchuria in the coming decades throughout the period of Japanese colonial occupation. Out of this community came one of Korea's most famous poets, Yoon Dong-Ju, and Christian leader Moon Ik-Hwan,

³⁰⁸ 서대숙 (Suh, Dae-sook), 김약연: 간도 민족독립운동의 지도자 [Kim Yak-Yun: The Leader of Kando Independence Movement] (Seoul: Yuksa Gonggan, 2008), 28.

³⁰⁹ Suh, [Kim Yak-Yun], 29.

³¹⁰ Suh, [Kim Yak-Yun], 9.

³¹¹ Suh, [Kim Yak-Yun], 28.

among others. Heads of these five families were revered as ‘Five Wise Men (五賢)’ among the Koreans in Manchuria.³¹²

Of the massive property, approximately 6,000,000 *pyong* (2,000 hectares), as shown in Figure 83 in Conclusion, the five families purchased together at arrival in 1899, one percent was set aside to build and support a school later, while irrigating and cultivating the rest in agricultural activities which helped the community prosper rapidly.³¹³ The scale of their property was equivalent to *chun-il-gyung* (千日耕), i.e. an expanse of farmland that would take one cow one thousand days to irrigate, in the Korean farmers way of measuring farmlands.³¹⁴ Since the majority of the Koreans who migrated to Kando were “landless peasants who wanted to escape poverty and debt,” such a remarkable piece of land in Myungdong-chon provided a rich base of agricultural development and welfare of the community.³¹⁵ Even before the community was able to build and open a school, called Myungdon Suhsook (明東書塾), in 1908, informal classrooms called sudang (書堂) were set up to teach the children of the community the Korean and Chinese languages and classics as early as in 1901.

³¹² Suh, [Kim Yak-Yun], 33.

³¹³ Suh, [Kim Yak-Yun], 44.

³¹⁴ Suh, [Kim Yak-Yun], 27.

³¹⁵ Park, *Two Dreams*, 43.



(Figure 20: Korean children in *Su-dang* learning to read, circa 1901. Courtesy of The Memorial Center of Kyu-Am Kim Yak-yun)³¹⁶

In 1901, shortly upon arrival, a traditional Korean school, *sudang* (書堂), was opened by Kim Yak-yun, the patriarch and leader of the group. In figure 20, one sees how children were taught to read and write, kneeling on their knees, which is the traditional Korean way of sitting down and showing respect for the elders. There was a teaching scholar in full Korean attire, headgear of a top knot and a tall black hat. Within two years of his arrival, Kim had a house built with a tiled roof, not a thatched roof, around which the original five families built their homes and lived in clusters.³¹⁷

Kim opened a school, called Kyu-Am Jae (圭巖齋) after his own pen name, Kyu-Am, in 1901, as So-Am Kim Ha-gyu opened So-Am Jae (素岩齋) and Nam Wi-un opened Oh-Ryong Jae (五龍齋).³¹⁸ Kyu-Am Jae also housed a library of several hundred titles of Chinese classics. There were 42 students enrolled in the school by the time Kyu-Am Jae changed its name to

³¹⁶ Suh, [Kim Yak-Yun], 55.

³¹⁷ Suh, [Kim Yak-Yun], 32.

³¹⁸ Suh, [Kim Yak-Yun], 54.

Myungdong-Suhsook in 1908.³¹⁹ Chapter III will discuss how these Korean-established schools and their efforts to breathe patriotic nationalism into the younger generation in Manchuria and the RFE.

The patterns of Koreans transnational migrants to Manchuria changed somewhat from the earlier period to later. Whereas the early migrants went to Manchuria mainly for economic reasons—in need of food for their families who were hungry—the later arrivals were motivated more for social advancement and land ownership at the promise of vast empty lands in need of cultivation as well as for political reasons. The increasing level of Korean population in Manchuria, Kando in particular, signaled such a change to come in the political environment in Korea as the Japanese-Russian relationship worsened.

Conclusion

Although it is extremely challenging to obtain accurate statistical data on the population of Koreans in the RFE and Manchuria from the 1860s to 1940, a comparative table of the Korean population in the RFE and Manchuria, has been compiled from a number of sources and provided in Figure 21 below:

Year	Koreans (RFE)	Koreans (Manchuria)
1863	13 (families)	-
1867	1,801	-
1869	3,321	(100,000?)
1881/2	10,137	10,000
1892/4	16,564	34,000
1897	23,000	37,000
1904	32,410	78,000
1906/7	34,399	71,000
1910	54,076	200,000
1916/7	81,825	337,461
1920	106,000	456,983

³¹⁹ 서굉일, 김재홍. (Suh Gweng-il and Kim Jae-hong). 북간도민족운동의 선구자 규암 김약연 선생 [Kyuam Kim Yak-yun: the Pioneer of Buk-Kando Korean Nationalist Movement] (서울: 고려글방 [Seoul: Koryo Gul-bang], 1997), 132.

1930	150,895	607,119
1936	172,000	888,181
1945	-	1,600,000

(Figure 21: Korean Population in the RFE and Manchuria by Year)³²⁰

As will be discussed in Chapter II, rifts of allegiance started to set in between the early pioneers who achieved financial security after decades of hard work and the new arrivals from a declining nation of Korea. Regardless of these divides, Koreans, rich or poor, *yangban* or *sangnom*, educated or uneducated, the haves or the have-nots, the subjects of Russia or China or the stateless, all of whom have taken their difficult journeys from the land of ‘known deaths’ to the land of ‘unknown deaths’—*giji ui saji ro buto miji ui saji ro*—were in search of opportunity.³²¹

As much as they shared commonalities between the Korean migration to Manchuria and the RFE—in the way they packed up and crossed the borders in large groups—those in Manchuria showed closer connections to their compatriots back home in Korea. They seemed to preserve their Koreanness and the Korean ways of living more than their counterparts in the RFE. Perhaps, it was due to the higher racial tensions felt more in the RFE than in Manchuria.

In the upcoming colonial undertakings of Japanese imperialistic endeavors—the Russo-Japanese War and the annexation of Korea—the Korean migrant population in the Russian Far East and Manchuria felt obligated to choose between the role of opponents and proponents for their survival as a transnational people. At this juncture, the Korean transnational migration to

³²⁰ The RFE numbers are based on Grave, Kitaitsev, 129-130 and 1929 Census data, quoted in J.Chang, *Burnt*, 11, 87 and C.H. Pak, [Rosia Yonbang], 100 and Saveliev, “Militant Diaspora,” 149, 154; The Manchurian numbers are based on Wada, “Koreans in the Soviet Far East, 1917-1938, 30, quoted in J. Chang, *Burnt*, 11 and Manchurian Railway Co. data in K.I. Kim, et al., [*Korean Diaspora*], 30, 41, and 49. The number of “100,000” for 1869, cited in Kim, [Manchurian Arirang], 63, cannot be confirmed for accuracy. Nor can the Korean population in the RFE in 1945 be ascertained.

³²¹ K. I. Kim, et al., [*Korean Diaspora*], 24.

the Russian Far East and Manchuria transformed from economic to political in nature. In the next chapter, the focus will be placed on the participation of Korean transnationals in the Russian and the Japanese militaries, either as intelligence and counterintelligence agents or militant gun-carrying soldiers on either side of the War.

CHAPTER II. KOREANS IN THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR, 1904-1905

*A-ri-rang A-ri-rang A-ra-rio,
You are going over the peak of A-ri-rang,
As many are the stars in the sky,
So are the many dreams in my heart.*

The second stanza of the Song of Arirang continues to express the sorrowful yearning for as many dreams as there are stars in the sky. Those who left home and found new lands to call home were filled with many hopes for the future. These members of the diaspora also missed their loved ones back home. Some hoped to stay connected with them by looking at the same sky thousands of *li* apart. As Korean transnationals faced a war of conflicts between their old and new-found homelands, the Russo-Japanese War, they became torn between many sorrowful thoughts and hopeful dreams for the future in Korea and abroad.

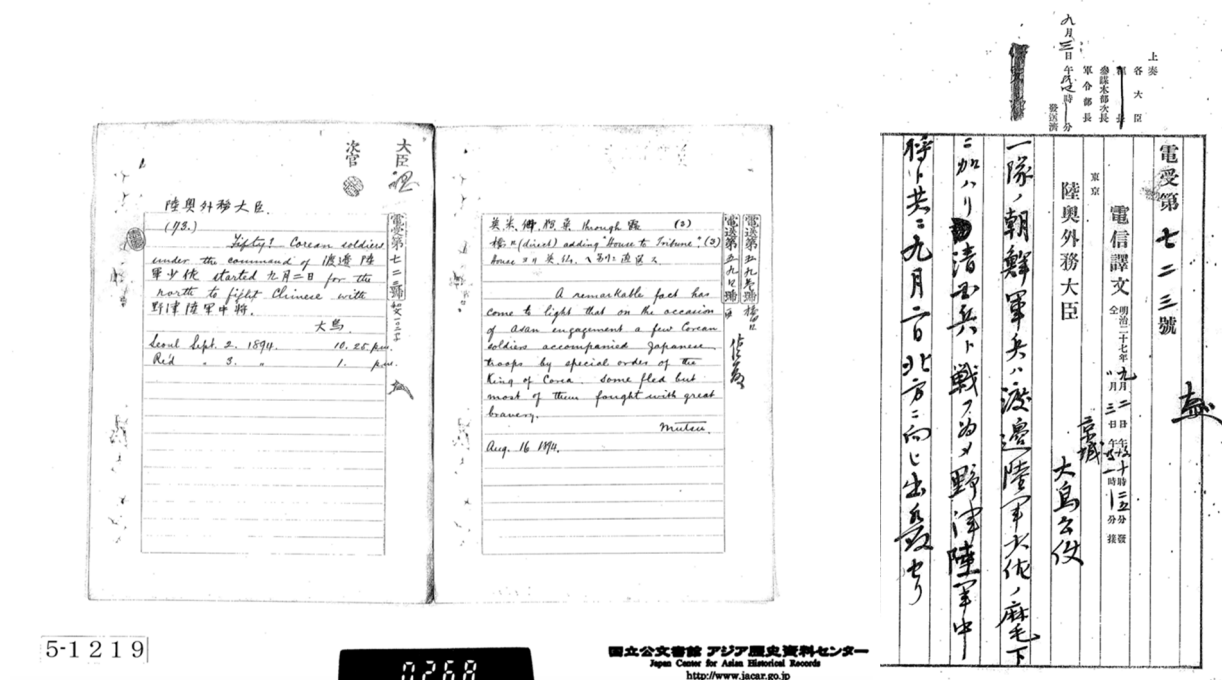
One key event that led to the Russo-Japanese War involved the Korean Declaration of Neutrality by Korean Emperor Gojong of *Taehan Cheguk* (大韓帝國 = Great Korean Empire). Emperor Gojong's declaration of the country's neutrality in foreign relations on January 21, 1904 has not been studied much, as this policy failed to garner recognition by other nations. However, the document contributed to the eruption of a war between Russia and Japan.³²²

After discussing this declaration, as well as the buildup to the war on both the Japanese and Russian sides, this chapter will discuss the hurriedly-established Korea-Japan Protocol by the Japanese Imperial government in 1904, then Korean involvement on both sides of this foreign war fought on their homeland. Korean transnationals rose up from their respective diasporas to guard their old homeland in a number of ways.

³²² 김윤희 (Yun Hee Kim), “러일전쟁기 일본군 협력 한인 연구 – 일본정부의 훈포상자를 중심으로 [A Study on Koreans to Cooperate for Japanese Army during Russia-Japan War],” *한국사학보* [*The Journal for the Studies of Korean History*], 35 권 0 호 (2009 년 5 월), 295.

Korean Declaration of Neutrality, 1904

Since the end of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, King Gojong had been contemplating the neutralization of Korea, which may explain the “Otori report of 1894” shown below.



(Figure 22: Telegram by Otori of Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated August 16 and September 2, 1894)³²³

This exchange of telegrams between Mutsu Munemitsu, Japan’s Foreign Minister, and Japanese Minister in Seoul Otori Keisuke (大鳥圭介) starts with the image on the right, dated August 16, 1894.

Telegram Sent No. 591-594 to Britain, America, France through Russia (3) and directly to “House to Tribune” (3)

A remarkable fact has come to light that on the occasion of Asan engagement a few Korean soldiers accompanied Japanese troops by special order of the King of Corea. Some fled but most of them fought with great bravery. [signed by] Mutsu, Aug. 16, 1894.

³²³ “Marching of Korean Soldiers following Japanese troops,” by Minister Otori, 1894.08.16, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prewar Diplomatic Records, Series 5: Military affairs, Category 2: War, Section 18: Miscellaneous, Miscellanea related to Japan, Qing and Korea negotiation incident Vol. 1, Ref. code: B08090003100, Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), National Archives of Japan.

This message was a response from Otori Keisuke, signed “大島”, to Mutsu as wired in Seoul at 10:25 p.m. on September 2, 1894 and received in Tokyo at 1:00 p.m. the following day.

Telegram Received No. 723 in Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo.
Fifty? Corean soldiers under the command of 渡邊 陸軍小仗 [Watanabe Ryukun Shoja] started [on September 2] for the north to fight Chinese with 野津 陸軍中將 (Lieutenant General). [signed by] 大島 [Otori]. Received Sept. 3, 1894, 1 p.m.

The telegram on the right, sent by Mutsu to Otori, stated that the Korean soldiers were ordered to march with the Japanese by King Gojong. The message was wired to the governments of England, the U.S., France, and Russia in a separate direct transmission.³²⁴ The existence of such documents regarding fifty or so Korean soldiers marching up north with Japanese troops under the command of a Japanese Lieutenant General Watanabe in the heat of the Sino-Japanese War in August 1894, ten years earlier than 1904, is quite remarkable in the context of the thesis of this dissertation—Korean soldiers in the Japanese military prior to World War II.

In the 2000s and the 2010s, historians such as Sang Pil Jin, Peter Duus, and Park Chong-hyo shed light on the diplomatic maneuvering by Russia and Japan on the issues of Korea’s neutrality to secure their commercial interests in Korea and Manchuria respectively.³²⁵ This section will focus on the Declaration’s ramifications on the Japanese deployment of Korean nationals in the Russo-Japanese War and Japan’s annexation of Korea. Primary sources, such as *Japan Gaiko Bunsho* [日本外交文書], the official records of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, provide valuable insights on the subject, more specifically in the 37th year of Meiji era in 1904.

³²⁴ “Marching of Korean Soldiers following Japanese troops,” by Minister Otori, 1894.08.16, B08090003100.

³²⁵ Sang Pil Jin, *Korean Neutralisation Attempts (1882-1907): Retracing the Struggle for Survival and Imperial Intrigues*. Ph. D. Dissertation in Korean Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London, 2016), 193-198; Duus, *The Abacus*, 173-175; Park Chong Hyo, 격변기의 한러 관계사 [*Historia Korenisko-Rossiiskis Othopenii*] (Seoul: 선인, 2015), 540-544.

Gojong was well aware that the Korean military force of 25,200 could be of no comparison to the 180,000-men-strong Japanese army and the Russian army of over one million men with the navy ranking fourth in total tonnage in the world in 1904.³²⁶ And Gojong believed he might be able to protect his country's independence by declaring neutrality and staying out of the military conflicts between Japan, Russia, and the U.S. in their competition over commercial interests in Manchuria. The development and implementation of Gojong's neutralization plan was aided by several of his confidants, of whom an American William F. Sands was selected and put in charge to push forward.³²⁷

Emperor Gojong dispatched a personal letter to Russian Emperor Nikolai II asking for his consent for neutralization via Colonel Hyun Sang-keun (玄尙建) in November 1903. Colonel Hyun was given a chance to deliver Gojong's letter to Nikolai II in person and received the Tsar's confirmation of Russia's support for Korea's bid for neutralization on the spot.³²⁸ Hyun delivered Nikolai II's letter of support to Gojong upon his return to Seoul on January 12, 1904. Nikolai II, under the advisement of his ministers, Sergei Witte, A. I. Pavlov, and Foreign Minister B. H. Ramzdorf, believed that Korea's neutralization under the joint guarantee of Japan, Russia, and the U.S. would help protect Russia's concessions secured in Korea without military involvement.

Over 20 memoranda were exchanged between Russia's Commander-in-Chief General Aleksei Nikolaevich Kuropatkin, Minister Pavlov, General Alekseev, Russia's Minister in Japan R. R. Rosen, Foreign Minister V. Ramsdorff, and Emperor Nikolai II in 1903-1904, as found in

³²⁶ Jin, *Korean Neutralisation*, 222.

³²⁷ Sands had gained Gojong's trust as an American diplomat, having served in the U.S. Legation in Tokyo earlier and in Seoul in 1898. He served as Gojong's advisor in the Imperial Household Department from November of 1899 to January 1904. Jin, *Korean Neutralisation*, 157.

³²⁸ Chong Hyo Park, *격변기의 한러 관계사* [Historia Korenisko-Rossiiskis Othopenii] (Seoul: 선인, 2015), 540.

Russian National Archive of Military Documents (РГВИА, No. 165).³²⁹ These internal memos exhibited the serious intentions of Russia to maintain, if not acquire more commercial interests on railway concessions, forestry rights in the Yalu river region, and military defense capabilities in the border regions in Korea and Manchuria. The urgency felt by Russia on the situation brewing on Korean Peninsula was tantamount, as expressed by Commander Alexei Nikolaievich Kuropatkin who warned of Russia's defeat and opposed the military option.³³⁰ Kuropatkin shared this recollection in his memoir:

Our final border meets Chosun which has 80,000 square miles of land, populated with 11 million people, of which are 2,000-10,000 Chinese, 45-55,000 Japanese, and 300 Europeans.... We (Russia) may not need to absorb Chosun ourselves but must make sure Chosun remains sovereign and independent of Japan or any other powers.³³¹ (Author's translation)

Being well aware of Japan's military power, however, Kuropatkin had hoped to avoid military conflicts with Japan over Korea as one of the "nine countries" that shared 11,000 miles of borders with Russia.

Gojong then reached out to the Russian Minister in Seoul, Aleksandr Ivanovich Pavlov, for assistance in finding refuge or exile for himself, if needed.³³² However, this plea by Gojong was simply ignored, as Russia was neither about to give up Manchuria in exchange of Korea—"Man-Kan kokan" (滿韓交換)—nor willing to repeat the previous incident of offering a refuge to Gojong in the Russian legation, known as *Agwan pachon* (俄館播遷), in 1896-1897.³³³ This incident of *Agwan pachon* had occurred then due to Gojong feeling threatened in his own palace

³²⁹ Chong Hyo Park, *PTBIA*. 러시아 국립문서 보관소 소장 한러 군사관계 자료집 [Rosia Kungnip Munso Pogwanso sojang Han Ro kunsu kwan'gye charyojip] (Seoul: Northeast Asian History Foundation, 2015), 128-135.

³³⁰ C. H. Park, [Rosia Kungnip...Han-Ro Kunsu], 132-134.

³³¹ Alexei Nikolaievich Kuropatkin, *Guerra Ruso-Japonesa, 1904-1905: Memorias del General Kuropatkin*. [러시아 군사령관 쿠로파트킨 장군 회고록], Tr. from the Spanish version published in Barcelona, Spain, 1909, by Shim Guk-wung (심국웅) (Seoul: Korea University of Foreign Languages, 2007), 39.

³³² C. H. Park, [Historia Korenisko], 541.

³³³ Duus, *The Abacus*, 173.

where his Queen Min was recently brutally murdered and burnt beyond recognition, suspectedly by a group of thirty Japanese swordsmen at 3 a.m. on October 8, 1895.³³⁴

Queen Min, the “one powerful piece that still remained on the chessboard,” was being counseled by General Charles Legendre, the Russian Minister Karl Ivanovich Waeber, and Prime Minister Pak Yông-hyo. She tried to maintain good relationships with Russia and America and had been seen as threatening to the Japanese monopoly over Korea. Threatened by the Queen’s move, Japan appointed a new minister, Miura Goro, a hard-liner, who was suspected to have come on “if not specific orders to get rid of the Queen, a mandate for decisive action” to “deal with the fox.”³³⁵ The fox was the Queen. The controversy over the event continues today for lack of evidence.

A long chain of Diplomatic Dispatch Nos. 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, and 161 was exchanged regarding the death of Queen Min. Horace Allen, Secretary to the U.S. Minister Sill in Korea made a plea to investigate the matter. The State Department instructed Allen and Sill to stay out of it. The exchange demonstrated Korea’s importance, or lack-there-of, in the U.S. foreign relationship with Korea versus Japan at the time.³³⁶ While the local officials of foreign governments felt the urge to help out, the U.S. government was not about to disrupt its diplomatic relationship with Japan over a controversial death of a queen of an insignificant nation. The disjointed nature of responses among the U.S. officials in Korea versus the State Department can be detected from these pieces of communication as well as confirmed in the execution of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty at the end of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905.

³³⁴ *The Independent*, Vol. 1, No. 114 (1896.02.26).

³³⁵ Tennant, *History*, 228.

³³⁶ FRUS, “Mr. Olney to Mr. Sill.” [Telegram], Washington, November 20, 1895; FRUS. “Korea” Mr. Olney to Mr. Sill. No. 125. November 21, 1895.

Since all of telegram communication channels in and out of Korea were under Japanese control and censorship by then, Gojong decided to make the announcement of neutralization by way of the French Consulate in Shanghai. Minister Pavlov helped by relaying the Declaration document to G. A. Plençon at the French Consulate in Chefoo, China, whereby it was dispatched to all foreign governments on January 12, 1904. This Franco-Russian cooperation in disseminating the Declaration with no possibility of military backing by France in counter to the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, secured by British military assistance, was seen as “little more than words on paper” by historians such as Chong Hyo Park.³³⁷

In reaction, the U.S. Minister to Korea Horace Allen conjectured that the U.S. would be “highly likely” to respond to the proposal “unfavorably” and would choose to adhere to the Monroe Doctrine of “national autonomy and self-determination of peoples” and maintain neutrality on the subject.³³⁸ Russian Japanese Foreign Minister Komura Jutaro instructed Minister Hayashi Gonsuke in London to “inform British Government under strict confidence” as to the opinion of Japanese Government that

The neutralization of such a state as Corea which has neither the power for self protection nor the organization for proper administration[,] cannot be guaranteed without a previous understanding....³³⁹

In the eyes of all parties involved, Korea was seen too powerless to defend itself either militarily or politically. Such a declaration of neutralization would have little impact or influence on international relations. Hence, the message was ignored. Only Gojong’s personal letter sent to the Italian King Victor Emmanuel III was responded to favorably on February 28. The Italian

³³⁷ C. H. Park, [Rosia Kungnip... yoyakjip], 274; Jin, *Korean Neutralisation*, 198.

³³⁸ Jin, *Korean Neutralisation*, 197; Eckert, et al., *Korea Old and New*, 276.

³³⁹ JACAR, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Telegram 1179, Komura to Hayashi,” 9. 22. 1902, B03041191400.

message came too late. The Japanese Army entered Korea on February 8 and the Korea-Japan Protocol took effect on February 23, 1904.³⁴⁰

In the announcement of the Declaration of Neutralization, Gojong was recorded to have declared to “all nations” that Korea will take the position of neutrality in case of war between Japan and Russia:

각 국에 선언하기를, ‘장차 일본과 러시아가 전쟁을 할 때 우리 나라는 관계하지 않고 중립을 지킨다’고 하였다.³⁴¹

I hereby declare to all nations that Korea will maintain neutrality in the event of war between Japan and Russia. (Author’s translation)

This is how Gojong declared the wartime neutrality on January 21, 1904, in Chefoo, China (current day Yantai), in the name of Yi Jiyong, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Korea. Japan and other foreign governments were nearly simultaneously notified—after the fact—by a telegram which read:

In view of the complications which have sprung up between Russia and Japan and in view of the difficulties which negotiations seem to encounter in bringing about a pacific solution, the Korean Govt. by order of H.M. the Emperor, declares that it has taken the firm resolution of observing the most strict neutrality whatever may be the result of the pourparlers actually engaged between the two powers.³⁴²

This defensive attempt of Emperor Gojong was met with mixed reactions. The Declaration took Japan by surprise and blindsided, not having been consulted before the announcement was made by the Korean Emperor Gojong. Japan chose to ignore this message and not respond to it. The plan was accepted by Russia but refused by Britain, who was Japan’s ally at the time and bound by the Anglo-Japanese Treaty with reciprocal assistance to be provided in case of military conflict on either country.³⁴³

³⁴⁰ Jin, *Korean Neutralisation*, 200.

³⁴¹ Gojong Sillok, “일본과 러시아가 전쟁을 할 때에는 중립을 지킬 것을 선언하다,” Vol. 43, No.1, 1903.11.23.

³⁴² Nihon Gaikyo Bunsho (NGB), 37(1), No. 334, 311-312.

³⁴³ C. H. Park, [Rosia Kungnip... yoyakjip], 430.

The Declaration, however, was entirely ignored by the U.S.—Korea’s ally—despite being bound by the U.S.-Korean Treaty which also came with a good offices clause to act in case of foreign invasion on either country.³⁴⁴ The U.S., given the “pro-Japan sentiments” and strong interest in the Philippines of President Roosevelt, never responded to the Korean neutrality announcement.³⁴⁵

In the meantime, China declared its neutrality to keep its doors open to the U.S. in the event of a conflict between Russia and Japan over Korea, as confirmed and accepted by the U.S.:

Mr. Griscom to Baron Komura, Tokyo, March 16, 1904.

Mr. Minister: I have the honor to inform your excellency that Mr. Conger, minister of the United States at Peking, has informed the Department of State at Washington that the Chinese Government...is resolved to maintain an attitude of strict neutrality, and that provocation will not be offered either belligerent. Lloyd Griscom.³⁴⁶

Thereby, Japan became the only other country willing and poised to fight Russia for the control of Korea. Assurances from China, the United States, and other major powers not to interfere in the matter also demonstrated the geo-political environment which favored Japan over Korea in the international arena.

Historian Tyler Bennett argued, “From the outset President Roosevelt’s sympathies were with Japan” in respecting China’s neutrality to prevent “undue excitement and disturbance of the Chinese people.”³⁴⁷ By sending copies of Secretary Hay’s memo addressed to “the belligerents and to China February 20th” on the above point, “the American Government showed its concern for China and at the same time made no mention of Korea,” wrote Dennett.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁴ Jin, *Korean Neutralisation*, 220.

³⁴⁵ Jin, *Korean Neutralisation*, 220.

³⁴⁶ FRUS, “Mr. Griscom to Baron Komura,” March 16, 1904, 423.

³⁴⁷ Tyler Dennett, *Roosevelt and the Russo-Japanese War: A Critical Study of American Policy in Eastern Asia in 1902-5, Based upon the Private Papers of Theodore Roosevelt* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1925), 27.

³⁴⁸ Dennett, *Roosevelt*, 28.

While other nations looked on, unpredictable but fierce jockeying escalated between Russia and Japan for hegemony over Korea and Manchuria. With the issues of neutrality out of the way, Japan proceeded with its preparation for a war with Russia in full speed while the Korean government was preoccupied with its usual factional chasms. Koreans in the transnational diasporas were uninformed of the impending war which was to affect their lives directly.

Buildup to the Russo-Japanese War

Until 1904, Korea was a distant frontier that had remained mostly invisible to the Russian public. Known to Russians simply as a “strange country” in the Far Eastern corner, Russia had “ill-considered and inconsistent relations with the local population” of Korea, meaning Russians had no particular interest in the small country at the far-east corner of Asia.³⁴⁹

Only in 1900 when the Ministry of Finance published a 1,250-page tome, “Description of Korea” in three parts, was the distant small country of Korea introduced as “an object of common interest for the mass reader,” supplemented by sporadic reports in the news media and travelogues of occasional eyewitnesses.³⁵⁰ Korea emerged as a land of strategic importance for military operations “from a purely utilitarian perspective” for “troop lodging” and “resource collecting” at the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War.³⁵¹

In fact, before the war Russia was ready to concede Korea in exchange for Manchuria, a position favored by Russian Foreign Minister Ramzdorf (В. Н. Ламэдорф), as seen in secret

³⁴⁹ Igor Ermachenko, “Korea and the Koreans in the Russian Press of 1904-1905,” *International Journal of Korean History*, Vol. 8 (August 2005), 226.

³⁵⁰ Ermachenko, “Korea,” 223.

³⁵¹ Ermachenko, “Korea,” 224.

correspondences from Ramzdorf to the Russian Emperor on January 18, 1904.³⁵² Ramzdorf maintained the position of keeping “Manchuria in exchange of Korea” repeatedly in his memos and advocated the neutralization of Korea.³⁵³

Earlier in 1900, Russia invaded and forced the Chinese government to lease part of Liaodong Peninsula so that the new Trans-Siberian Railway could be extended from Harbin through Mukden to Port Arthur in three northeastern provinces of Manchuria: Heilunjiang (黑龍江省), Jilin (吉林省), and Fengtien (奉天省), with Harbin ((哈爾濱), Yanji (漣吉), and Shenyang or Muktien (奉天) serving as regional centers.³⁵⁴ The Trans-Siberian Railway was constructed between 1891 and 1903 by Russia.³⁵⁵ Through these railway extensions as illustrated in Figure 23 (below), Russia came to own the world’s longest railway system connecting St. Petersburg and Moscow on the western end to Vladivostok on the east end at the Pacific Ocean. Russia did not want to lose Manchuria in exchange for Korea in 1904. However, Russia lost its rights over Manchuria to Japan after the Russo-Japanese War in 1904 and Japan swiftly established the South Manchurian Railway (SMR) Company in 1906.³⁵⁶

³⁵² ГАРФ. Ф.568, оп.1, д.181, лл.18-21об and лл.22-24об, copies of the documents, collected by C. H. Pak, preserved, and retrieved at The 100th Year Memorial Center, Korean War Archives at Korea University, Seoul, Korea.

³⁵³ ГАРФ. Ф.568, оп.1, д.181, лл.18-21об.

³⁵⁴ South Manchurian Railway Company [Minami Manshu Tetsudo Kabushiki Kaisha], *Manchuria: Land of Opportunities* (New York: South Manchuria Railway, 1922), 1; K. I. Kim, [Korean Diaspora], 18.

³⁵⁵ Duus, *The Abacus*, 137.

³⁵⁶ John Young, *The Research Activities of the South Manchurian Railway Company, 1907-1945: A History and Bibliography* (New York: Columbia University, 1966), 3.



(Figure 23: Map of Trans-Siberian Railway. Courtesy of Frontiers of Travel, 1956)

As discussed in the Introduction, the 1895 Triple Intervention pressed Japan into relinquishing its claims to the Liaodong Peninsula and Port Arthur to Russia. This event enraged Japan and provided the foundations for the country to engage in the Russo-Japanese War.³⁵⁷ On February 8, 1904, two weeks after Korea’s Declaration of Neutrality, Japan raised a surprise attack on the Russian fleet in Port Arthur (Dalien) without any advance announcement and declared the Russo-Japanese War belatedly on February 10—two days after the attack. On February 9, the Japanese Navy won another victory in the harbors of Chemulpo (Incheon) and its Army marched right into Seoul, prompting the Russian Minister Aleksandr Ivanovich Pavlov (A. И. Павлов) to evacuate from Seoul and flee the country in a hurry.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁷ Daniel A. Métraux, *The Asian Writings of Jack London: Essays, Letters, Newspaper Dispatches, and Short Fiction by Jack London* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009), 11.

³⁵⁸ 심헌용 (Heonyong Sim), 한반도에서 전개된 러일전쟁 연구 [A Study of the Russo-Japanese War on the Korean Peninsula] (서울: 국방부 군사편찬연구소 [Seoul: Ministry of National Defense], 2011), 74-75.

a. War Preparedness

In the courtyard of the palace of Korean Emperor Gojong in the early days of 1904, Yi Yong Ik, the Supreme Minister of Korea, exclaimed to British journalist Frederick A. McKenzie during an interview just a few days before the war broke out: “We believe there will be peace....There will be no war!”³⁵⁹ All the while Japanese ships, loaded fully with armed men, were gathering up from Tsushima and Russian soldiers were assembled at Port Arthur.

Yi and other Korean ministers trusted Russia would protect Korea and Gojong’s court, even as the British and American businessmen were fleeing the peninsula and setting up businesses in Shanghai from 1900 to 1904. Such a misguided belief in their trusted allies to stand by Korea among the Korean leaders kept the country in the dark until the end and doomed for the colossal disaster. From top officials to poor commoners, the nation of Korea was utterly unprepared for the upcoming war, which eventually led to the final collapse of the Yi Dynasty.

The striking differences between the Japanese, the Russians, and the Koreans in their anticipation and preparation of the upcoming turmoil, or lack-there-of, can be seen in McKenzie’s report below regarding the Japanese military whom he accompanied as the troops marched up to the north to face the Russians in May 1904.

The Japanese knew not merely every road, but apparently every person...The Japanese knew the land. Each officer had in his pouch an accurate and minute map of the part he was working in. When a battalion marched into a village it found on the borders a clean hoarding, with a map on it showing every house, every pathway, and bivouacs for all the soldiers. Doctors went ahead of the troops and tested each well and stream, marking them.... Even before the landing at Chemulpho, a number of quiet men had gone in civilian clothes to the villages and taken up their places there. The Japanese living nearby, dressed as coolies but armed with regulation rifles and bayonets, suddenly appeared on the streets. Their leader now put on his officer’s war uniform...and took the possession of a temple or a palace.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁹ Fred A. McKenzie, *From Tokyo to Tiflis: Uncensored Letters from the War* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1905), 34.

³⁶⁰ McKenzie, *From Tokyo*, 77.

As McKenzie noted and as seen in the images below, a folded map of the Korean peninsula was supposedly carried in every officer's pouch, showing every little town and regional terrain to guide the Japanese troops. The map, accompanied by *A Catalogue of the Romanized Geographical Names of Korea*, had been compiled by Dr. B. Soto and S. Kanazawa, published by the University of Tokyo in 1903.



(Figure 24. Dr. Koto's General Map of Korea)³⁶¹ (Figure 25. The Map, unfolded)

American diplomat C.A.W. Pownall pointed out “the existence of a detailed map covering the whole region of Korea, Manchuria...with the roads all marked, the contours of the hills” given to him that “furnishes evidence of the long-cherished design to invade China...a

³⁶¹ Jack London Collection at the Huntington Library, Ephemera – Pamphlets, JLE2099. B. Koto. General Map of Korea, 1903.

deliberate and carefully planned invasion” of Japan.³⁶² This statement reaffirms McKenzie’s report of “Each officer” carrying “in his pouch an accurate and minute map” of every village, “showing every house, every pathway, and bivouacs” while the troops advanced to the north in 1904.³⁶³ This level of preparedness of Japanese military officers, as noticed by McKenzie and other western observers, was the result of a Japanese military that had been busily engaged in researching and producing geological surveys of Korean peninsula in great detail for decades before the Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese Wars.

There had been clandestine Japanese reconnaissance geographic surveys on Korea performed by members of the General Staff Office (GSO) of the Japanese Army on secret missions to collect geographic and military information and to infiltrate through the southern ports of Korea in the 1870s.³⁶⁴ One such activity was carried out in September 1872 by members of diplomat Hanabusa’s entourage, Kitamura and Beppu, as the “first intelligence operation on record undertaken by the Japanese military in Korea” as cited by historian Young-woo Nam.³⁶⁵ Nam noted of “about ten military officers to Korea for language training as a way of establishing an intelligence network to collect secret information.”³⁶⁶

Another publication which exemplified copiously-taken research findings and cartographical studies the Japanese military government had conducted and produced is that of “秘韓國地圖二十万分一[Top Secret Map of Korea 20,000:1]” authorized by the Minister of

³⁶² C. A. W. Pownall, “Russia, Japan, and Ourselves,” *Nineteenth Century and After*, March, 1904, quoted in Tyler Dennett, *Roosevelt and the Russo-Japanese War: A Critical Study of American Policy in Eastern Asia in 1902-5, Based upon the Private Papers of Theodore Roosevelt* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1925), 147.

³⁶³ McKenzie, *From Tokyo*, 77.

³⁶⁴ Young-woo Nam, “Japanese Military Surveys of the Korean Peninsula in the Meiji Era,” in Helen Hardacre and Adam L. Kern, *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 335-336.

³⁶⁵ Nam, “Japanese Military Surveys,” 336.

³⁶⁶ Nam, “Japanese Military Surveys,” 336.

Japanese Army in Meiji 37, 1904.³⁶⁷ According to the archive of the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR), the Ministry of War *Kobun Roku* (公文録) contains 40+ official documents transferred between Dajokan and the Ministry of War between 1872 and 1875, regarding the subject of dispatching personnel to Korea.³⁶⁸

The role of Koreans in this type of mapping and documenting by reconnaissance and field work can also be seen in official reports, archived in the National Archives of Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One such report, A01100103500, entitled “Report on former Korean national Kim Rin-sung (the Japanese pronunciation of 金麟昇) of the ministry on dispatch to Korea to accompany Minister Resident extraordinary and plenipotentiary Kuroda on trip to Korea” substantiates this claim.³⁶⁹

Report A01100100700 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shows an initial inquiry about hiring a “Russian national and former Korean national Kim Rin-sung” submitted on July 13, 1875.³⁷⁰ The subsequent report, A01100103500, shows the approval by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to hire Kim In-sung, a native of Hamheung, Hamgyongdo, for three months at “one yen per day (一日 金一圓)” on December 15, 1875. (See Figure 26 below.) Given the fact that this was shortly before the Kanghwa Treaty was established in 1876, one can see the purpose of hiring a Korean in preparation of the negotiation. The Kanghwa Treaty was “Korea’s first

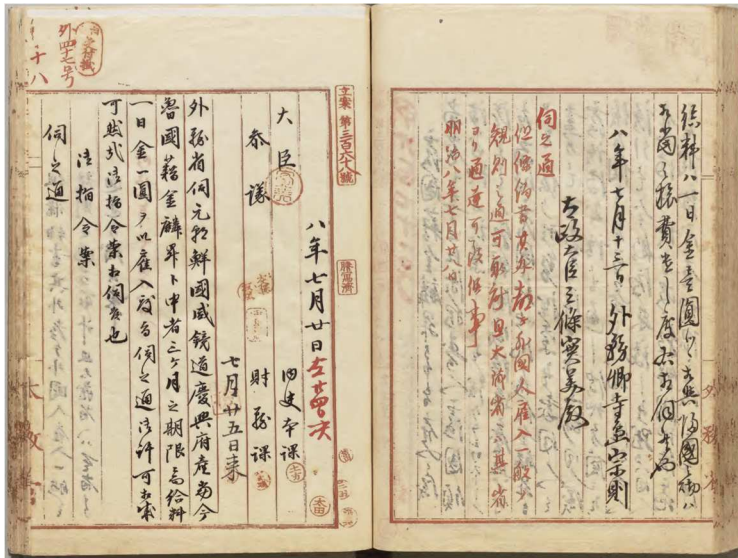
³⁶⁷ “Sending 1/200,000 map of Korea to Headquarters of Fortification Department,” *Kobun Roku: Compiled Records of the Great Council of State (Daijokan)*. National Archives of Japan. Japan Center for Asian Historical Records. The National Institute for Defense Studies, Ministry of Defense, Rikugunsho Dainikki (Document Files of the Ministry of the Army), C07060341100. Prepared by Fukuhara Shinzo, Chief, Headquarters of Fortification Department // Iguchi Shogo, Chief, General Affairs Department, Army General Staff Office, 1904.02.29.

³⁶⁸ “Presentation of complete map of Korea, appendices to map and recent situations in Korea (Compilation of roster ...) *Kobun Roku*. A01100105700, 公 01428100, 1875.12.28.

³⁶⁹ “Report on former Korean national Kim Rin-sung of the ministry on dispatch to Korea to accompany Minister Resident extraordinary and plenipotentiary Kuroda on trip to Korea,” National Archives of Japan, A01100103500, Meiji 8. 7. 13 (July 13, 1875).

³⁷⁰ “魯國籍元朝鮮國産金麟昇傭入何 [Inquiry about employment of a Russian national and a former Korean native, Kim Rin-sung],” National Archives of Japan, A01100100700, Meiji 8. 7. 13. (July 13, 1875).

modern treaty” of coming out of long seclusion into the international stage, engineered by Japan to seize the opportunity to open Pusan and two other ports for trading with exclusive privileges to Japanese merchants.³⁷¹



(Figure 26: Inquiry and approval to hire Kim Rin-sung at one yen per day for three months.)

Using Koreans in such a mapping expedition to survey the peninsula and borderland is significant due to their familiarity in the local geography and customs, as well as in the use of Korean and Russian languages. Moreover, in the case of Kim In-sung who was born in Korea, migrated to Russia, and was naturalized as a Russian citizen, he would have met all the qualifications to pass as a Korean without raising any suspicion of the locals. He was a transnational who looked like a Korean, understood the local Korean and Russian customs and lifestyles, and could communicate in both Korean and Russian languages. With Kim’s assistance and perhaps many others on these mapping expeditions, Japanese military was well-prepared to fight a war against Russia to claim Japan’s monopoly over the Korean peninsula as it did by the Sino-Japanese War a decade earlier.

³⁷¹ Eckhert, et al., *Korea Old and New*, 200.

b. Japanese Interests in the Korean Physique

The Japanese military also spent time researching the physical attributes of Korean men in the 1880s, 1890s, and 1900s—long before the Japanese annexation of Korea—to evaluate the suitability of deploying Korean men in their military activities. Several such studies have been quoted and further analyzed by anthropologists, medical professionals, and historians, such as Gill In-sung in the late 1990s, as well as Soon-yung Park and Cho Young-Jun in the 2010s.³⁷²

One of the earlier documented physical examinations was performed by a Japanese military medical officer, Koike Masanao (小池正直), Surgeon General of Japanese Army, who worked in Che-saing Medical Clinic (濟生醫院) in Busan from 1883 to 1885. In his findings published in a 1887 book titled *Gyerim uisa* [鷄林醫事], Koike reported that his 75 Korean male subjects, between the ages of 20 and 60 (average age of 31), were of an average height of 179.947 cm, weight of 60.73 kg, chest girth of 83 cm, lung capacity of 3,373,467, and grasping power of 170:162 (right:left).³⁷³ Another set of measurements of 140 Koreans taken by Japanese Army surgeons stationed in Korea, Mikita (右田軍太郎) and Ôtska (大蒙陸太郎), were tabulated and presented in their “Summarized Report on the Physical Examination of Koreans [朝鮮人體格測定一覽表]” in 1895 and submitted to Ishiguro Tadanori (石黒忠直) who served as Minister of Field Hygiene during the Sino-Japanese War.³⁷⁴ They reported the heights of

³⁷² 조영준 (Young-Jun Cho), “조선시대 문헌의 身長 정보와 尺度 문제: 軍籍과 檢案을 중심으로 [Stature Data and Measurement Unit in Chosun Korea: Study of Physical Attributes and Heights of Korean Men],” [古文書研究] no. 41 (2012. 8): 125-159; 조영준 (Young-Jun Cho), “한일병합 이전 일본 군의관의 조선인 체격 검사: 신장 특정 자료의 비판적 재검토 [Japanese Army Surgeons’ Physical Examination on Koreans: Focusing on the Stature Data before 1910],” 경제사학 [Economic History], Vol 40, No. 3 (2016. 12): 457-485; 박순영 (Sun Young Pak), “The ‘Anthropological’ Gaze at the Korean Bodies under Japanese Colonialism = 연구논문: 일제 식민주의와 조선인의 몸에 대한 “인류학적” 시선: 조선인에 대한 일제 체질인류학자들의 작업을 중심으로,” 비교문화연구 [Comparative Cultural Studies], 12 권 2 호 (2006): 57-92.

³⁷³ Koike Masanao’s report cited in Y. Cho, [Japanese Army Surgeons], 461.

³⁷⁴ Y. Cho, [Japanese Army Surgeons], 463.

1,645 mm (20-25 years of age), 1,609 mm (26-30), 1,609 mm (31-40), and 1,636 mm (41-55).³⁷⁵ Compared to the relatively small sampling size of 75 and 140 Koreans in reports produced in the 1880s and 1890s, the next set of examinations by Iijima Shigeru (飯島茂), who served as Japanese Army Surgeon General and Director of Army Medical School, in 1901 included measurements of 3,051 men and 101 women, of which only the attributes of men were recorded.³⁷⁶

The difference in the scale of sample sizes in the earlier studies prior to 1890, before the Sino-Japanese War, and the markedly larger scope of studies performed in 1895 and the 1900s, may be attributed to the presence of Japanese Army surgeons in Korea after the Sino-Japanese War and the increased interest of the Japanese military in Korean men's physical fitness. Koike and Iijima compared the measurements of Koreans with those of Japanese and Westerners and concluded that the Koreans were taller and stronger than the Japanese due to their carnivorous Korean diet.³⁷⁷ Concluding that Koreans showed much healthier and stronger physical attributes than the Japanese men in the "age group of 16 to 60," Iijima recommended changes in the Japanese diet.³⁷⁸

The significance of these research findings and observations of the physical and mental attributes of Korean men for this dissertation lies *not* in the actual comparative figures or characteristics resulting from the research *but* in the Japanese military officials' motivation to conduct such studies. Based on the findings and continual research of historians such as Young-Jun Cho and Sun Young Pak conducted on the subject, one can safely suspect the Japanese

³⁷⁵ Y. Cho, [Japanese Army Surgeons], 463.

³⁷⁶ Y. Cho, [Japanese Army Surgeons], 466.

³⁷⁷ Y. Cho, [Japanese Army Surgeons], 473.

³⁷⁸ Y. Cho, [Japanese Army Surgeons], 474.

interest in Korean men's physical fitness and abilities to serve as part of the Japanese military forces, either as reserve or regular soldiers.³⁷⁹

The next section will investigate how effectively Japan utilized these research findings and geological information to help win the Russo-Japanese War as efficiently as it won the Sino-Japanese War ten years earlier. Also examined will be how effectively Japan's political system helped to bring Korea into Japan's imperial sphere of interest through its military success.

How the War Was Won

Ironically, Gojong's Declaration of Neutrality helped to launch the Russo-Japanese War. The Japanese military government was ready with meticulously-prepared surveys of Korean lands and human resources to land and occupy the Korean peninsula swiftly at a moment's notice. In fact, Japan had left a few hundred troops to guard the Japanese legation, which was set on fire during the Soldier's Riot of 1882 (*Imo Kullan*=壬午軍亂). This incident erupted from a dispute over the unpaid salaries and unequal treatment of the old traditional army, supported by the Regent Taewongun, the father of Emperor Gojong, in favor of the new elite force, favored by King Gojong.³⁸⁰ An explanation of Taewongun's role in Emperor's reign will follow later in the chapter. Japanese troops were left intact after the riot ended, if not increased in numbers, throughout the Tonghak uprisings of 1894 and the murder of Queen Min in 1895, and reactivated as Hanguk Chuchagun (韓國駐劄軍) in 1904. These soldiers were ready to serve as the Japanese vehicle for an all-out war against Russia.

In contrast to the determined preparedness of the Japanese Empire and its military administration, the Russian military and its commanders neither were ready nor knew how to

³⁷⁹ Cho, [Stature Data], 125-159; Pak, "The 'Anthropological' Gaze," 57-92.

³⁸⁰ Kim and Kim, *Korea*, 36; Eckert, et al., *Korea*, 207.

utilize their available resources, human or material. The Russian commanders could not effectively engage in a war with Japan at the time, as admitted by Russia's Commanding General Alexei Nikolaievich Kuropatkin in his 1908 memoir on the Russo-Japanese War.³⁸¹ Although Emperor Nicolas II wished to avoid a war with Japan, the negotiations involving his Foreign Minister V.N. Ramsdorf and Russian Ambassador to Japan R. R. Rosen, led by the Far East Commander Admiral E. I. Alexeieff on the Russian side, and Prime Minister Katsura Taro, elder statesmen Inoue Kaoru, and Foreign Minister Komura Jutaro on the Japanese side from 1900 to January 1904, failed to bring a peaceful resolution between the two nations with mutually-conflicting ambitions.³⁸²

The three options on the table for negotiation between Japan and Russia were: 1) partitioning of the Korean peninsula at the 39° line from Wonsan to Daedong River in Pyongyang, 2) neutralization of Korea, and 3) “exchange of Manchuria for Korea” (*mankan kokan*, 滿韓交還).³⁸³ Japan had been angered by the Russian occupation of Port Arthur in 1900 and demanded Russia to return the region as well as sell the rights for the southern portion of the Eastern Railway. However, as discussed earlier, Russia was reluctant to give up Manchuria.³⁸⁴ Unable to come to a resolution, the negotiations failed mostly due to the ignorance of Alexeieff who did not understand how well-prepared Japan was to go to war against Russia.³⁸⁵

On February 8, 1904, one day before the Russian fleet was destroyed and two days before the Russo-Japanese War was declared, the Japanese Army landed two brigades at Chumulpo and

³⁸¹ Alexei Nikolaievich Kuropatkin, *Guerra Ruso-Japonesa, 1904-1905: Memorias del General Kuropatkin* [러시아 군사령관 쿠로파트킨 장군 회고록] translated from the Spanish version published in Barcelona, Spain, 1909, by Shim Guk-wung (심국웅) (Seoul: Korea University of Foreign Languages, 2007), 13 and 79.

³⁸² Kuropatkin, *Guerra*, 79.

³⁸³ Duus, *The Abacus*, 173.

³⁸⁴ C. H. Park, 激變期の 한러 關係史 [History of Korea-Russia Relationship in a Volatile Period] (Seoul: Sunin, 2015), 523.

³⁸⁵ Kuropatkin, *Guerra*, 79.

entered Seoul. At seven o'clock on February 9, 1904, McKenzie, who was among the few correspondents who had made their way to Korea, reported that the Japanese Commander Mori Gitaro had sent as the announcement and declaration of war to the Russian commanders aboard the *Variag* (Варяг) and the *Korietz* (Корейцы=Korean). Within forty minutes, the battle was over. *Variag*, a 6,500-ton boat, suffered heavy damage and casualties among the 107 men on board. The *Korietz* was blown up by four o'clock in the afternoon.³⁸⁶

One day later, on February 10, 1904, the Japanese *Imperial Proclamation of War* (宣戦布告) against Russia was issued and transmitted to London, Washington, Bangkok, Peking, Seoul, and all other consulates with diplomatic relations with Japan. The following message was sent out from 10:45 p.m. through midnight:

WE, by the grace of Heaven, Emperor of Japan, seated on the Throne occupied by the same Dynasty from time immemorial, do hereby make proclamation to all Our loyal and brave subjects as follows: WE hereby declare war against Russia, and WE command Our Army and Navy to carry on hostilities against that Empire with all their strength, and WE also command all Our competent authorities to make every effort, in pursuance of their duties and in accordance with their powers, to attain the national aim with all the means within the limits of the law of nations....³⁸⁷

This Rescript of 1904 used the same verbiage as was used in the Declaration of War against China in 1894, only replacing the word 'China' with 'Russia'. The Rescript declared an all-out total war with a national resolution to fight Russia who allegedly provoked Japan against their will with open hostilities.

Upon the Japanese announcement of the Declaration of War against Russia, a mixed bag of reactions came out in publications worldwide.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁶ McKenzie, *From Tokyo*, 47.

³⁸⁷ Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Nihon Gaiko Bunsho* [日本外交文書 = Japanese Diplomatic Documents], XXXVII and XXXVIII, 日露戦争 I. [Russo-Japanese War I], Text of the Imperial Proclamation, Issued on the 10th of February, Meiji 37 (1904), 143.

³⁸⁸ Dennett, *Roosevelt*, 147-149.

Sidney Low wrote “President Roosevelt Roosevelt’s Opportunities” in *Nineteenth Century and After*, in December 1904: “...much more surprising things might happen than that the foundations should be laid for a League of Peace, based on a genuine and effective Anglo-Saxon Alliance, before it is time for him [Roosevelt] to quit the Executive Mansion,” urging Roosevelt to finish the job of expanding into Asia.³⁸⁹

An article in *The National Review* professed that “America is therefore bound to do everything in her power to maintain the principles of the integrity of China and the Open Door” policy of the U.S., and that “These three states are bound together by the force of circumstances....”³⁹⁰ Although the article seemed to point to China, Japan, and Russia by “These three states,” there were multiple states’ interests, commercial and political, conflicting with each other over the fate of one small country—Korea. The stage was all set for Japan’s escalation to war to accomplish its long ambition to claim Korea as its stepping stone toward China and the continent of Asia as well as into Russia.

Korea-Japan Protocol [韓日議定書] and Russia’s Stance on the War with Japan

Invoking Article Four of the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1904 (quoted below), Japan demanded the Imperial Government of Korea to “give full facilities to promote the action of the Imperial Japanese Government” and started to requisition all necessary resources, human or material or land, as the “circumstances require it... from strategical points of view.”³⁹¹ To this end, Japan announced that all railways connecting Seoul to Wonsan, Busan, Incheon, and Pyong-yang were to be under the military jurisdiction of Hangoon Chuchagun and any violators would be executed

³⁸⁹ Dennett, *Roosevelt*, 147.

³⁹⁰ “The Overlord of the Pacific and the Admiral of the Atlantic,” *The National Review*, v.45 (1905), 307.

³⁹¹ NGB 37 (1), No. 382, February 25, 1904, 343-344.

at the discretion of the Japanese Commander.³⁹² Requisitioning of lands started immediately as well. With the war well underway, the Japanese government took next steps to engineer the Korea-Japan Protocol and lay the foundation to make Korea its protectorate, a step closer to the annexation.

By a telegram sent to Durham White Stevens, a former American employee at the Foreign Ministry of Japan, Japanese Minister Komura made an offer on August 21 which was accepted by Stevens on August 22, 1904 to serve as a diplomatic adviser for all “matters affecting foreign relations” in Emperor Gojong’s government.³⁹³ The Korean Emperor was to pay Stevens all expenses including the salary of “800 yen in gold per month” and “a suitable official residence” or “the sum of 100 yen in gold per month” for housing allowance for “an indefinite period.”³⁹⁴

Along with Stevens as a diplomatic adviser to Korean Emperor Gojong, the Japanese government appointed its own people in various advisory roles in Gojong’s court: Megata Jutaro as police adviser, Kato Masuo an adviser to the Korean court, and Nozu Shigetake military adviser—all with “powers...quite sweeping” that “widened Japanese influence over the central government” of Korea long before the Russo-Japanese War ended.³⁹⁵ This way, Japan was deep in control of Korean affairs in nearly every aspect. Emperor Gojong was reduced to a puppet monarch five years before the official annexation of his country by Japan in 1910.

Hayashi Gonsuke (林權助), the Japanese Minister Plenipotentiary to Korea under the direction of Minister of Foreign Affairs Komura Jutaro, took quick action to engineer the Korea-

³⁹² Sim Heonyong, 한반도에서 전개된 러일전쟁 연구 [A Study of the Russo-Japanese War on Korean Peninsula] (Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, Military History Institute, 2011), 89.

³⁹³ NGB 37(1), No. 411 (August 21, 1904), 365-366,

³⁹⁴ NGB 37(1), No. 432 (December 28, 1904), 378-379.

³⁹⁵ Duus, *Abacus*, 187.

Japan Protocol (日韓協約, as Japan called it) with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Korea Yi Jiyong's signature on February 23.³⁹⁶ The Protocol with six Articles “looked like a ‘protectorate treaty’ to Horace N. Allen, Peter Duus, and other scholars.³⁹⁷ The policy was written in such a way to give Japan “the right to intervene in Korean foreign policy” and the “permission for the Japanese military to seize Korean land” as deemed strategically necessary with a plan of sweeping military intrusion and comprehensive control of Korea.³⁹⁸ The text of the Protocol stated:

Article I. For the purpose of maintaining a permanent and solid friendship between Japan and Korea and firmly establishing peace in the Far East, the Imperial Government of Korea shall place full confidence in the Imperial Government of Japan and adopt the advice of the latter in regard to improvements in administration.

....

Article IV. In case the welfare of the Imperial House of Korea or the territorial integrity of Korea is endangered by aggression of a third Power or internal disturbances, the Imperial Government of Japan shall immediately take such necessary measures as the circumstances require, and in such cases the Imperial Government of Korea shall give full facilities to promote the action of the Imperial Japanese Government. The Imperial Government of Japan may, for the attainment of the above-mentioned object, occupy, when the circumstances require it, such places as may be necessary from strategical points of view.³⁹⁹

In the name of peace-keeping and friendship between Japan and Korea, the Japanese Government secured a complete control of the Korean affairs, internal and external, as laid out in the six articles of this Protocol.

Based on the Guidelines (對韓方針) established by the Japanese Diet in 1904 and based on the Article IV of the Japan-Korea Treaty quoted above, the Chuchagun occupied major districts of Seoul, Pyong-yang and Uiju, a total of 9,750,000 *pyung* (坪) (approximately 800

³⁹⁶ Sands, *Undiplomatic Memories*, 215; NGB, 37 (1), No. 382, February 25, 1904, 343-344.

³⁹⁷ Duus, *Abacus*, 182; Jin, *Korean Neutralization*, 226.

³⁹⁸ Duus, *Abacus*, 182; Jin, *Korean Neutralization*, 226.

³⁹⁹ NGB 37 (1), No. 382, February 25, 1904, 343-344.

acres) of land for their military use.⁴⁰⁰ The Guidelines also required Emperor Gojong to appoint high officials to serve on the Welcome Committee (接待委員), as well as in military actions, intelligence work, and civil matters to assist the Japanese military.

By this Protocol, Gojong not only agreed to let Japan use the peninsula as the battle zone for the Russo-Japanese War but also inadvertently violated his own declaration of wartime neutrality which forbid “the use of a neutral state’s territory as a military base for a belligerent—and thus its neutrality declaration ran aground.”⁴⁰¹ The Protocol granted the Japanese Government the right to requisition the use of Korean land, military horses and personnel to transport army supplies, as well as “engage as many Korean officials and employees as possible” during the Russo-Japanese War.⁴⁰² This last clause on the possible engagement of “as many Korean officials and employees” left it open for the Japanese military to deploy Korean soldiers as well as laborers in their military activities during the War.⁴⁰³

The Korea-Japan Protocol, a de-facto treaty of annexation, was adopted by the Katsura cabinet of Japan and formulated into the “Japanese Policy Toward Korea [對韓方針並二對韓施設綱領決定件]” by the *genro* [元老會]—unofficial but extraconstitutional council of Japanese elderly statesmen serving as advisors to the Emperor—on May 31, 1904.⁴⁰⁴ The Policy was declared as the Japanese Empire’s official Guidelines toward Korea—“帝國/對韓施設綱領”—in the name of peace-keeping in Asia on the pretext that the “security of

⁴⁰⁰ Sim, [A Study], 91.

⁴⁰¹ Jin, *Korean Neutralization*, 226.

⁴⁰² Yun Hee Kim, “A Study of Koreans,” 295.

⁴⁰³ FRUS, “Japanese Supervision over Korean Foreign and Administrative Affairs,” Minister Allen to the Secretary of State, No. 902, May 30, 1905.

⁴⁰⁴ NGB 37 (1), No. 390, May 31, 1904, 351; Duus, *Abacus*, 182; Moon, *Populist*, 246.

Korea [韓國/存亡]” was tantamount to the security of the Japanese Empire and other nations in the region.⁴⁰⁵

The Guidelines firmly established Japan’s official policies in six areas: 1) Japanese military and naval bases to be established in Korea, 2) Japanese Government to oversee all matters of foreign affairs and 3) government finances of Korea, 4) Japanese control of Korean railway transportation systems to be completed for the Seoul-Pusan, Seoul-Incheon, Seoul-Wonsan, and Seoul-Masan lines, 5) as well as the communication systems of telegraph, telephone, and postal services, and 6) the economic development of agriculture, timber, and forestry in the Tumen and Yalu River regions of northern Korea. The Guidelines also called for exploration of high-quality mines and new land for cultivation with rights of Japanese settlers to own or lease properties, publicly- or privately-held, beyond the treaty zones, as well as take control over the fishery business, the second largest asset in Korea to farming.⁴⁰⁶

Based on the 1904 Japan-Korea Protocol, as described above, a second Japan-Korea Protocol was signed on November 15, 1905, which Japan was accused of having forced on the Korean Emperor Gojong. This Protocol, referred to by Koreans as *Ulsa Nukyak* (乙巳勒約, meaning a Forced Agreement of the Year of *Ulsa*), was allegedly engineered by “five traitors” including Yi Wan-yong who gave their consent to the agreement, which gave away Korea as a protectorate of Japan.⁴⁰⁷ In such an environment of geopolitical conflicts and national turmoil the Korean transnationals in the RFE and Manchuria soon had to decide with which nationalist entities to direct their allegiance when the Russo-Japanese War erupted in 1904. The next few

⁴⁰⁵ NGB 37 (1), No. 390, May 31, 1904, 351.

⁴⁰⁶ NGB 37(1), No. 390, 351-356 (May 31, 1904); Duus, *Abacus*, 184-186.

⁴⁰⁷ Duus, *Abacus*, 192.

sections in this chapter will demonstrate how these transnationals chose their camps and what they did to direct their loyalties in various roles they played.

Koreans in the Japanese Army—Seen by Western Observers

During his five months' stay in Korea, American novelist Jack London (1876-1916), who was dispatched to Korea as a war correspondent by *The San Francisco Examiner*, left many intriguing narratives of his time in the northern region of Korea as he accompanied the Japanese army. London's newspaper reports, personal letters to Charmian Kittredge, his fiancée at the time, and other articles, along with hundreds of photographs he personally took during his trip provided rare glimpses of the scenes and sights of pre-modern Korea and its people as seen through London's American eyes.

Through the words of sympathy and disdain sprinkled with humor and wit, London wrote about the low-class Korean laborers, peasants, and their children whom he met as he traveled with an entourage of hired hands—the *coolies* as London called them—and onlookers who marveled over the first white man seen in remote villages in 1904. Some of the observations London made regarding the Japanese military soldiers and their war strategies raised poignant questions on the nature of the Russo-Japanese War being fought in Korea and the identity of people deployed in the Japanese army.

Firstly, London's article in the *San Francisco Examiner* on April 18, 1904, with headlines of "How the Japanese 'sore feets' got along" and "Footsore. Dazed and Frozen. The Japanese Trudge through Korea" revealed the conditions of the Japanese soldiers, many of whom were in dire need of medical care for their sore feet. "But the sore feet! Fully 90 per cent of the cases were of that nature," wrote London.⁴⁰⁸ The Japanese army doctors attributed the problem to

⁴⁰⁸ *Jack London Collection*. MSS JLB60. "Footsore, Dazed and Frozen, the Japanese Trudge Thru Korea," a Newspaper article in *San Francisco Examiner*, April 18, 1904; *Jack London Reports*, 80.

the soldiers having had to march in the “harsh leather boot of the West” when they had been used to the straw-woven sandals all their lives. The doctors told the soldiers: “Before you were merely a reserve, now you are a soldier.”⁴⁰⁹ London continued to report, “These men, used to the straw sandal all their lives, had been summoned to join their colors to incase their feet in the harsh leather boot of the West.”⁴¹⁰ And London noticed, “Many of them discarded the army shoe of stiff leather and went back to their native gear, the soft straw sandal.”⁴¹¹ These statements validate that some of these soldiers of *reserve* status were in fact Koreans, not Japanese. Japanese people traditionally wore wooden clogs or open-toe sandals called *geda*, with insoles made of straw material in some cases. Korean commoners wore straw-woven shoes, called *jipsin*.

The use of straw shoes by Koreans was validated by Scottish Lady Isabella Bird Bishop who wrote about the essential items for her preparation for cross-country travels in Korea, she listed “[w]arm winter clothing, a Japanese kurumaya’s hat (the best of all travelling hats) and Korean string shoes completed my outfit and I never needed anything I had not got!”⁴¹² *Jipsin* was well known even among the Westerners as being one of the most essential items of foot gears worn by commoners in Korea.

⁴⁰⁹ *Jack London Reports*, 80.

⁴¹⁰ *Jack London Reports*, 80.

⁴¹¹ *Jack London Reports*, 57.

⁴¹² Bishop, *Korea*, II, 79.



(Figure 26: Korean straw-woven shoes: *jipsin*)⁴¹³



MRS. BISHOP'S TRAVELING PARTY.

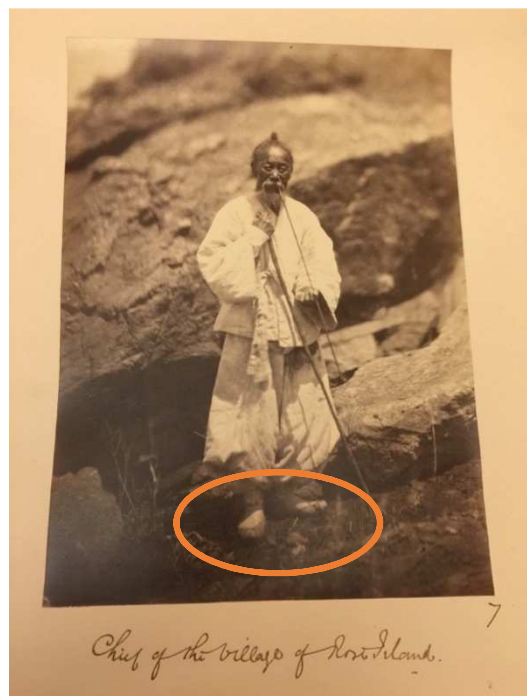
(Figure 27: Lady Bishop's Traveling Party – Bishop dressed in a Korean outfit with *jipsin*.)⁴¹⁴

Another source of information in support of this argument that Koreans fought in the Japanese army is the introductory report of Lucius H. Foote. As the first minister of the U.S. to Korea, Foote compiled a document that he sent to the Secretary of State Department Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, after his arrival in Korea on August 21, 1883. In his initial report of assessing

⁴¹³ “Jipsin,” Wikipedia.

⁴¹⁴ Bishop, *Korea*, II, 78.

Korea and its people, Foote wrote to Frelinghuysen: “The clothing of the common people is made invariably of cotton or linen cloth, and in winter is wadded. They wear upon their feet straw or twine sandals with soles of rawhide, and upon their heads conical-shaped hats made of horse-hair” called top-knots.⁴¹⁵



(Figure 28: A village chief in jipsin)⁴¹⁶



(Figure 29: An official in silk/leather shoes)⁴¹⁷

Figure 28 shows a photograph of “Chief of the village of Rose Island”—a Korean man with a top-knot hairdo wearing jipsin on his feet, whereas Figure 29 is a photograph of “Yun-Jung-Yul, Present Minister of War,” a nobleman in his official Korean court regalia and shoes made of silk and leather, in Jack London Photograph Albums collection. All these observations regarding jipsin being worn by soldiers in the Japanese military demonstrate the presence of Koreans on the Japanese side of the war.

⁴¹⁵ FRUS, No. 113. Mr. Foote to Mr. Frelinghuysen. Legation of the United States, Seoul, August 21, 1883, 247.

⁴¹⁶ “Chief of the village of Ron [sic.] Island” in Album of Photographs Made During the Expedition of the American Asiatic Fleet into Korea, May and June, 1871 [graphic] Felice Beato b. ca. 1825 photographer. Available in the New York Historical Society Print Room. PR-002-406 Non-circulating.

⁴¹⁷ “Yun-Jung-Yul, Present Minister of War,” with London’s handwritten inscription, Jack London Photographs, Box JLP 447, Album 9, p. 7. #00959.

Another way London provided clues about Korean involvement on the Japanese side in the war involved his inscription on a photograph titled “Jap soldiers wrestling.” He wrote “Views from above of a crowd of Korean soldiers standing in a semicircle watching a wrestling match,” clearly noting the presence of Korean soldiers amid Japanese troops.⁴¹⁸

London’s final set of clues about Korean involvement on the Japanese side of the war involved his description of the battle of April 29 in Wiju on the southern shore of Yalu River on the Korean side where he observed direct fighting between the Russian and Japanese armies across the river.⁴¹⁹ According to his article printed in the *San Francisco Examiner* on Sunday, June 5, 1904, the Russians, positioned atop and behind Tiger Hill, bombarded with batteries towards the Japanese who were swarming up the conical hill on the right and left of the Russians.⁴²⁰ Once the battle was over, after several hours of shelling and bombarding, the Japanese victoriously claimed the Tiger Hill and the Russians began to withdraw, while the “Russian dead were being buried in their trenches and in the shell holes made by the Japanese” on May 1, 1904.⁴²¹

London questioned “Why did the Japanese make this frontal attack?” in his report from Antung, Manchuria, next day on the north side of Yalu River.⁴²² This battle cost 1,000 soldiers’ lives on the Japanese side in a massive “slaughter of a needless frontal attack” and left 2,324 soldiers and 73 officers dead with 635 captured on the Russian side.⁴²³ It did not make sense to London for the Japanese Army to have launched such an attack to lose 1,000 men, when they could have easily “streamed over the hills away from the river” along with the East Division, that

⁴¹⁸ JLP449, Album #11, #01351/2. “Jap Soldiers wrestling.”

⁴¹⁹ *Jack London Reports*, “The Yellow Peril”, pp. 341-342.

⁴²⁰ *The San Francisco Examiner*, Sunday, June 5, 1904.

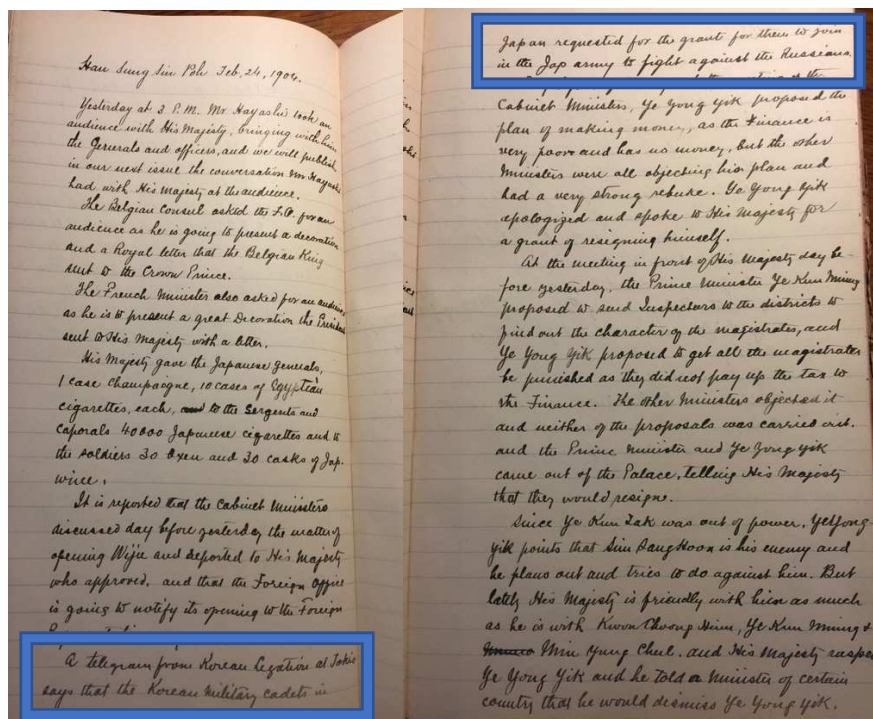
⁴²¹ London, “The Yellow Peril,” 342.

⁴²² *Jack London Reports*, 106.

⁴²³ *Jack London Reports*, 104; 심헌용(Sim), [A Study of the Russo-Japanese War], 201, 115.

“effected a lodgement on the Manchurian shore” with no opposition on the night before, April 30, or even earlier at dawn of May 1, as the “Russians were withdrawing” already by then.⁴²⁴

Such loss of lives left London searching for justification “for a white commander to hurl his troops forward on such a frontal attack” just to “prove themselves fit from the white man’s point of view by facing white men” and “make Russia ‘lose face’ in the eyes of other Asiatic peoples.”⁴²⁵ He added, “I am confident that a white commander who did so would not find justification for the act in the eyes of his people at home,” not understanding why any general would want to kill so many of his own—if they were his own.⁴²⁶ Were they indeed his own soldiers, Japanese, or not? As the following sections will show, some of the soldiers were in fact Korean.



(Figure 30: Han Sung Sin Poh. Feb. 24, 1904. – NYPL Allen Archives)

⁴²⁴ Jack London Reports, 104.

⁴²⁵ Jack London Reports, 105-106.

⁴²⁶ Jack London Reports, 106.

Excerpts from other newspaper articles beyond London exhibit the presence or interests of Koreans in the war. In Figure 30 above: “A telegram from Korean Legation at Tokyo says that the Korean military cadets in Japan requested for the grant for them to join in the Japanese army to fight against the Russians.”⁴²⁷ Another article, as recorded in *Korean Newspapers Translations*, reported of a telegram from Anju on March 6, 1904 which read:

Korean soldiers of the Militia fought against them and killed more than 30 Russians but many of the Koreans were also killed. Twenty Korean soldiers...chased after the Russians and the Korean soldiers to Pakchun district.⁴²⁸

This article reported a fierce fight between Korean militias and Russians with casualties on both sides. But, did it also report there were Koreans soldiers chasing after Koreans along with the Russian soldiers? It seems to paint a picture of Koreans on both sides of the battle.

The same journal reported the following incidents of Korean soldiers in the militia, although it was unclear on which side they were fighting, Japanese or Russian:

March 8, 1904 – Korean soldiers of the militia up there fired at them and drove them off the district. The men named Nah Yusuk, Wee Hong Suk, and Che Rak Choo were arrested in the police office and Kil Yung Soo ran away, they are trying very hard to arrest him.

March 13, 1904 – The three who were arrested as they had things to do in the bomb incident...Kil Yung Soo and Ye Kun Tak who were much to do in the bomb incident are now in the Palace and the placement cannot arrest them, although they are ordered to.

March 17, 1904 – Kil Yung Soo and Hien Sang Kun are hiding in the American Legation and asking... for them to go to America.⁴²⁹

These articles provide important evidence on the presence of Korean militia by specifically naming the individuals and the types of activities they were engaged in, such as bombing, and

⁴²⁷ Korean Newspapers Translations. Feb. 24, 1904. In Reel 8, In Horace N. Allen Papers, 1883-1923 (bulk 1883-1905), Box 5, Reel 8, Vol. 5, Nov. 23, 1903 – March 17, 1904.

⁴²⁸ Korean Newspapers Translations. March 6, 1904.

⁴²⁹ Korean Newspapers Translations. March 8, 13, and 17, 1904. In Reel 8, In Horace N. Allen Papers, 1883-1923 (bulk 1883-1905), Box 5, Reel 8, Vol. 5, Nov. 23, 1903 – March 17, 1904.

even hiding in the palace. The case of Korean laborers who were deployed in the Japanese military forces in a massive scale will be reviewed next.

a. Korean Laborers in the Japanese Army

In 2017, Japanese historian Yuki Fujioka presented his analysis of issues and rules on hiring military laborers by the Japanese imperial army during the Russo-Japanese War. Fujioka concluded that three rules were applied: “pursuit of profit, patriotism, and relief of the poor.”⁴³⁰ Since a large number of laborers was needed to be hired urgently at the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-1905, the previous restriction of military laborers to those with past experiences as laborers within the age group between 20 and 45 was not enforced to widen the pool of participants in the Russo-Japanese War.⁴³¹ While the Japanese government promoted “foreign emigration” of Japan’s own military laborers to go abroad and settle there, but failed to solicit enough quickly, the laborers in Korea appeared to have been motivated to volunteer to earn some money.⁴³² Whether they actually made a profit or not will be examined later.

According to the pay scale chart established by the Defense Ministry of Japan in Meiji 37, 1904, as presented by Fujioka, overseas military laborers in various job categories enjoyed 1.25:1 more than domestic laborers. Metal workers overseas earned per diem 900 vs. 720 yen earned by domestic workers, railroad workers 1,280 vs. 800, electrical workers 1,440 vs. 900, and even manual laborers 400 vs. 320 yen. Another document, “Establishing regulations for a post of employing wartime military worker [戦時軍役夫傭役規則設定の件]” issued by the Ministry of Defense in March 1904, stipulated specific terms of employing wartime contract

⁴³⁰ Yuki Fujioka, “日露戦争の軍役夫 [Laborers Hired by Military during the Russo-Japanese War: With Special Reference to Rules Regulating Military Laborers and their Enthusiasm],” 駿台史學 [Sundai Shigaku (Sundai Historical Review)], No. 161 (September 2017), 21.

⁴³¹ Fujioka, *Laborers*, 4 and 21.

⁴³² Fujioka, *Laborers*, 21.

workers by the length of their past experiences, broken down into various brackets by number of workers employed, such as 500-1,000, 1,000-3,000, 3,000-4,000, 4,000-5,000, all the way up to 10,000 in each of the companies, as well as their terms of tax payments.⁴³³

Despite the higher scale of pay offered to overseas workers by the Japanese government in 1904, the number of Japanese nationals employed in lower-level manual jobs such as transportation by foot or by cart and horse grooming, which amounted to 60% of all military labor, was much lower during the Russo-Japanese War compared to the large-scale employment during the Sino-Japanese War.⁴³⁴ This low rate of participation by Japanese nationals and their reluctance to leave home for laboring jobs would have necessitated the Japanese military to hire locally-available Korean laborers with relative ease, resulting in the abundance of Korean laborers seen by London and other Western reporters.

Jack London frequently wrote and took many photographs of the “coolies” as he called the Korean laborers who were hired by the Japanese army to transport military supplies alongside the troops in their march up north toward the China-Korea border into Manchuria.

London’s piercingly insensitive remarks on the poor peasants of Korea went thus:

Seoul, March 4. —To the Korean the Japanese occupation is a source of ineffable joy. The first war prices obtained increase day by day and the coolie, Mapu and merchant are equally busy amassing money which will later be squeezed from them by the master class, which is the official class. Just now the officials and nobles are anxious and frightened, while the poor, weak Emperor knows not where to turn.⁴³⁵

London’s critical depiction of the situation correctly pointed to the tragic nature of poor Koreans grabbing any opportunity to make a living, while the upper-class looked on to profit from their

⁴³³ “Establishing regulations for a post of employing wartime military worker. 戦時軍役夫備役規則設定の件. 満大日記 3 月” (防衛省防衛研究所, The National Institute for Defense Studies) JACAR Ref. C03025497500, 陸軍省- 陸滿普大日記-Meiji 37-8-29, 1904.03.01.

⁴³⁴ Fujioka, *Laborers*, 17.

⁴³⁵ *Jack London Reports*, 40.

customary seventy percent cut. According to this American, the powerless Korean Emperor dawdled at a loss of what to do.

The image below from the June 19, 1904 issue of *The San Francisco Examiner* under the headline of “Japanese Supplies Rushed to the Front by Man and Beast” shows three Korean laborers transporting a “wounded Japanese soldier” in a photograph taken by London.⁴³⁶

The image shows a page from the *San Francisco Examiner*, dated Sunday, June 19, 1904. The page is divided into two main sections. On the left, under the heading "WAR REPORTS GREATLY VARY", there is a sub-headline "Information Coming by Telegraph From Seat of Trouble Largely Incorrect." by Edwin H. Clough. The text discusses the reliability of telegraph reports from the Far East. On the right, the main headline reads "JAPANESE SUPPLIES RUSHED TO THE FRONT BY MAN AND BEAST" by Jack London. Below the headline is a photograph showing three Korean laborers carrying a wounded Japanese soldier on a litter. The caption below the photo reads: "PHOTOGRAPH OF A WOUNDED JAPANESE BEING CARRIED TO THE REAR ON A LITTER. TAKEN BY JACK LONDON, SPECIAL COMMISSIONER FOR 'THE EXAMINER' TO THE WAR IN THE FAR EAST."

(Figure 31: “Japanese Supplies Rushed to the Front by Man and Beast,” *The San Francisco Examiner*, June 19, 1904, JLB48)

In the same article London reported:

Wiju (Korea). April 21. —For days we had forced our horses along a road which swarmed with white-clad coolies. Their shoulders were stooped forward, their faces bent toward the ground, their backs burdened with rice and fish, soy and saki, and all the food supplies of an Oriental army. The villages were deserted. All doors and windows were missing and the houses appeared blank and sightless, mutely protesting against the general devastation. Here and there, along the road, old men and women and children sold food to the toiling coolies; and it was even possible, by proper skirmishing and fair purchase, to obtain beans for our pack-horses from the secret granaries among the hills.

⁴³⁶ OAC Online Archive of California, *Jack London Papers*, Broadside JLB48.



(Figure 32: “Ever North” by Jack London)⁴³⁷

“White-clad coolies” described by London were Korean laborers in traditional Korean clothes of white cotton whose bare shoulders were burdened with massive loads of Japanese military food supplies, as seen in the above photograph.⁴³⁸ London continued to describe the deserted villages along the way through the northern part of Korea up to Yalu River, showing the utter destruction of houses, while the remaining poor folks of “old men and women and children” were selling food for the laborers and horses.⁴³⁹

London also wrote: “On the left cheek of each coolie a scarlet or purple smear of paint advertised his employ with the Japanese army transport.... Possibly the strangest feature was the

⁴³⁷ JLP439, Album 1, #00108. “Ever North: A line of Korean laborers with large loads on their backs walk up a trail lined with patchy snow”

⁴³⁸ JLP439, Album 1, #00108.

⁴³⁹ OAC Online Archive of California, *Jack London Papers*, Broad sides JLB48..

incongruous white garments worn by these coolies, and, for that matter, by all Koreans. The effect was like so much ice drifting on the surface of a black river.”⁴⁴⁰ This notation by London indicates Koreans were deployed by the Japanese army to transport war supplies. Their faces were stamped by paint strokes on their cheeks as the mark of employment. Military historian Sim Heonyong at the Ministry of National Defense of Korea noted that the markings on the cheeks of Korean laborers indicated to which destinations the military supplies were to be transported.⁴⁴¹

According to Sim Hyunyong, those laborers were hardly compensated for their work as they were considered conscripted, contrary to London’s remarks on the “coolies... busy amassing money” as mentioned earlier.⁴⁴² Although they had been recruited by the Japanese Army to help transport military equipment and supplies as well as wounded soldiers at a much lower pay than the Japanese laborers, they did not make profit from the hard labor. They did not receive even what was owed them due to the delays in processing of the military scripts which never materialized in most cases and the nature of transient laborers who were constantly on the move during the wartime, reported *Hwangsung sinmun* on March 22, 1904.⁴⁴³ Such deployment of Korean laborers on a massive scale by the Japanese military during the Russo-Japanese War set the stage for Korean soldiers who were involved in military actions of fighting in actual battles will be examined in the next section.

b. Korean Soldiers in the Japanese Army

Several articles in *The Korea Review*’s June 1904 issue provided equally-corroborating accounts of Korean involvement in the war, assisting the Japanese Army. One eyewitness

⁴⁴⁰ Jack London Reports, 43.

⁴⁴¹ 심헌용 (Sim), [A Study of Russo-Japanese War], 95.

⁴⁴² OAC Online Archive of California, *Jack London Papers*, Broadside JLB48.

⁴⁴³ 황성신문 [*Hwangsung sinmun*] 1904. 3. 22; Sim, [A Study of Russo-Japanese War], 95.

account of a “foreigner passing through An-ju a few weeks ago” specifically reported about Koreans assisting the Japanese troops:

The Battle here two weeks ago must have been very interesting. There were only forty Japanese here then. The army went over into China long ago and left a few men in each county-seat to hold the main road. Four hundred Cossaks made a dash behind the lines to cut the main road and tried to capture An-ju. The forty Japanese were more than ready. They engaged a lot of Koreans to sit down behind a wall in a safe place and fire guns that the Japanese furnished them and a lot more were hired to yell whenever the Japanese yelled. . . . Every time the Japanese fired, the men detailed for that purpose would tell the Koreans to shoot like blazes and every time the Japanese yelled the Koreans followed suit, so that although the Russians knew to a dead certainty that there were only forty Japanese there, they began to doubt whether there were not 4,000.⁴⁴⁴

This particular article shows Koreans were being orchestrated to follow Japanese military tactics to scare the Russians by exaggeration as if there were more Japanese soldiers in the attack than actually were.

The soldiers in question appear in a much more aggressive mode in the next article, captioned “The Battle of Kang-gye.” This piece reported a battle in the town of Kang-gye between Russian troops and Korean tiger-hunters a few days after the battle at the Yalu on May 1, 1904:

Some days before this, 400 Russians had crossed the Yalu at Chosen and had marched to Kang-gye. There they took up their quarters and began to treat the people badly. They seized their grain and horses, violated women and committed other excesses, until the people could stand it no longer. So the prefect, Kim Cha-ok, summoned some 200 Korean soldiers enlisted from the tiger-hunters and attacked the Russians. Six Russians were killed. The people rose in revolt and aided the 200 soldiers and the Russians found the place too hot for them; so they dropped such part of their booty as they could not easily carry and decamped.⁴⁴⁵

The above articles indicate that Koreans, either enlisted or as militia groups, were fighting against Russians in the camp of Japanese Army. Given these accounts, it is very likely that there

⁴⁴⁴ *The Korea Review*, June 1904, Vol. 4, No. 6, 248.

⁴⁴⁵ *The Korea Review*, June 1904, Vol. 4, No. 6, 214.

were many Korean soldiers involved in the aggressive frontal attack to occupy the conical hill in Wiju on May 1, 1904.

Keeping in mind the question raised by Yumi Moon of what it would have meant for ‘the colonized’ to be ‘collaborative’ in the colonial period, this section will focus on the political environment of Korea that would have led some people to participate on the Japanese side of the Russo-Japanese War.⁴⁴⁶ The contemporary atmosphere was ripe with tensions and dilemmas among the Korean people who were divided by loyalty to their sovereign Emperor Gojong, patriotic nationalism, and colonial collaboration.

Prior to the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, a conflict intensified between the pro-Japanese and pro-Russian factions in the Korean government, centering on the reform plans of Emperor Gojong and the opposing powers of the Regent Taewongun—Gojong’s father, Yi Haung (李昰應, 1821-1898), known as the Heungson Taewongun (興宣大院君=Prince of the Great Court). When King Ch’ôljong died without an heir, Gojong was pulled out of obscurity and put on the reign at the young age of twelve in 1864.

Gojong’s father, Taewongun, appointed himself as the Regent of the young King Gojong (高宗) and hand-picked a young maiden from an obscure *yangban* family to marry his son King Gojong as Queen Min, hoping to put a stop to the factional “in-law politics” of the Kims, the Chos, and others in the royal court.⁴⁴⁷ This union, however, intensified the existing factionalism as the young Queen brought more of her own faction of the Min family at every level of the government and added to the existing problem.

⁴⁴⁶ Yumi Moon, *Populist Collaborators: The Ilchinhoe and the Japanese Colonization of Korea, 1896-1910* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 3-4.

⁴⁴⁷ Historian James B. Palais wrote that T’ae-wongun was regent *de facto* but never *de jure* in his review of *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism, 1876-1910*, by C. I. Eugene Kim and Kim Han-kyo (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), in *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Aug. 1, 1969), 863.

From King Injo (1623- 1649) to the end of the Yi Dynasty twenty queens came from the “highest-placed” Noron (老論=Old Doctrine) *literari* faction lines which represented “distinguished houses” including the Andong Kwon, Andong Kim, Chunju Yi, and a few other powerful clans.⁴⁴⁸ Kings became hostages of their powerful royal fathers-in-law who occupied the highest positions in royal courts. The royal in-laws placed their kin in top central government offices as well as in lower offices of local government, creating a powerful web of factions at every level. These practices of factional control, called *Sedo* politics (世徒政治), became so widespread and abusive in Korea that the Taewongun tried to pick a queen for his son from outside of the entrenched power circle.

However, once the queen was chosen out of the Min family, her father, brothers, and nephews quickly became powerful, and many of her clansmen were put into important government posts. Some of the Mins were educated in western ways. These men played crucial roles as young elites in the modernization of the country, such as Min Yŏng-Ik. However, Min Yŏng-Jun, the chief of the clan, fled to Hong Kong after the first Kabo Reform failed but was brought back by Queen Min one day before she was murdered. He had allegedly acquired “an enormous fortune by illicit means” and had “more wealth than the royal family itself.”⁴⁴⁹ These abusive practices continued until Yi Dynasty collapsed with Sunjong (純宗), the son of Gojong, whose reign as the last king of Korea ended with the Japanese annexation of 1910.

A man of strong personality with chauvinistic convictions, Taewongun was known as a “great sage...uncompromising, honest, and dedicated” to create a society that “represented all

⁴⁴⁸ Deuchler, *Under the Ancestors' Eyes*, 241.

⁴⁴⁹ Kim and Kim, *Korea*, 75; Young Ick Lew, [*The Tonghak Peasant Uprising and the Kabo Reform Movement, 1894-1896: The Thoughts and Behavior of the Korean Leaders during the Sino-Japanese War*] (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1998), 70.

the virtues of the Confucian tradition.”⁴⁵⁰ Taewongun tried to strengthen the dynasty which he considered was “well on the road to decline and confronted by the twin perils of internal rebellion and foreign invasion” as seen in China.⁴⁵¹ Whereas Regent Taewongun took on policies of the extreme isolationism from external influences, persecuted and executed French missionaries and many of their Korean disciples, and rejected overtures of the United States and Japan by attacking the *USS Sherman* and the Meiji Japan’s warship *Unyo* (雲揚號), King Gojong saw the need to modernize his country.

Historian Andre Schmid characterized the conflict as structural dilemmas between Korean nationalist discourses and reform ideas which promoted “the nation’s progress but simultaneously legitimized Korea’s subordination to Japan, a country with an advanced civilization” under the popular banner of “civilization and enlightenment (*munmyong kaehwa*=文明改化).”⁴⁵² This phenomenon with *Ilchinhoe* (一進會=Advance in Unity Society) as the driving force for this *munmyong kaehwa* movement in 1904 has been recognized by many historians such as Hilary Conroy, Peter Duus, Alexis Dudden, Andre Schmid, and Yumi Moon.

Clandestine and violent activities of the Russian Shanghai Service, the anti-Japanese Righteous Armies, and other organizations in the independence movement clashed against the pro-Japanese *Ilchinhoe* during the Russo-Japanese War. Using the primary source materials and newspaper reports of the time, answers will be searched as to why and how these two camps of the same people—*tan’il minjok* (單一民族)— came to have split allegiance, resulting in a tragic situation of Koreans fighting against each other in someone else’s war of hegemony—caught between the two belligerent nations of Russia and Japan over their homeland of the Korean

⁴⁵⁰ Woo-keun Han, *The History of Korea*. Translated by Lee Kyung-shik and edited by Grafton K. Mintz (Seoul: Eul-Yoo Publishing, 1970), 362.

⁴⁵¹ Eckert, et al., *Korea Old and New*, 192.

⁴⁵² Andre Schmid, *Korea between Empires, 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 24.

peninsula. Korean migrants in their transnational diasporas in the RFE and Manchuria participated in these efforts, criss-crossing the borders as needed to serve their old homeland as well as their newly-adopted homeland. *Ilchinhoe* became very active in assisting the Japanese in their war efforts to push north in March of 1904. The next section will examine why and how *Ilchinhoe* members turned to cooperate with Japan during and after the Russo-Japanese War.

c. Pan-Asianism of ‘Dependence for Independence’ and Ilchinhoe

Pan-Asianism (凡亞細亞主義) or Asianism (亞細亞主義) appeared in Korea under various names: *asia yondaeron* (亞細亞連帶論 = Theory of Asian Solidarity), *tongyang chuui* (東洋主義 = Easternism), *tongyang pyunghwaron* (東洋平和論 = Theory of Eastern Peace), and *samguk tondmaengsul* (三國同盟設 = Thesis on Alliance among Three Nations), with *Hwangsung sinmun*, a newspaper as the official mouthpiece of Taehan Hyuphoe (the Great Korea Association).⁴⁵³

Kim Ok-kyun who led the failed Kapsin Coup of 1884 (also known as Three-day Coup or *kapsin jongbyun*, 甲申政變) and was executed in March, 1884, was one of the earliest adopters of Asianism in Korea. Yun Chi-ho was another influential advocate of the Civilization and Enlightenment Movement of Asianism, asserting “the common bond among East Asians”—China, Japan, and Korea—and the “unity against the ‘arrogant’ white race, particularly the Russians.”⁴⁵⁴

Yun Ch’iho (1865-1945) was a leader of the Progressive Party’s Independence Club (獨立協會) and kept his diary almost every day for 60 years from 1883 to 1943, first in Chinese

⁴⁵³ Gi-Wook Shin, “Asianism in Korea’s Politics of Identity,” *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*. Volume 6, Number 4 (2005), 618.

⁴⁵⁴ Shin, “Asianism,” 619.

vernacular in 1883 and English thereafter.⁴⁵⁵ Yun, educated in Japan and the U.S., was known for his pro-Japanese stance but not a member of *Ilchinhoe* which appeared in 1904. He served as a teacher, an interpreter for Commodore Lucius H. Foote, in various positions in the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1883-1885, 1895-1896, and 1904-1906) and the Methodist Christian Church, as well as succeeded Soh Jai-pil (Philip Jaison in American name) as the editor of *The Independence* newspaper in 1896-1898.

Although he was later engaged in underground patriotic activities and imprisoned on suspicion of murdering Terauchi Masatake, the Japanese Governor-General of Korea for four years in 1911-1915, Yun was one of the leading progressive elites who thought the Pan-Asianism, led by Japan, was the answer to Korea's problems. As he expressed in his diary on May 7, 1902:

7th (30th). Wednesday. Damp-cloudy, Tokwon.
The meanest Japanese would be a gentleman and scholar compared to a vodka-drunk, orthodox Russian. Between a Japanese and a Korean there is community of sentiment and of interest, based on the identity of race, of religion, and of written characters. Japan, China, and Korea must have one common aim, one common policy, one common ideal – to keep the Far East the permanent home of the yellow race, and to make that home as beautiful and happy as nature has meant it to be.⁴⁵⁶

This entry of Yun's diary appears to have been written while he was demoted and sent away to serve as a magistrate of Tokwon in the remote Wonsan area due to his political activism. Such a vision of Asian unity, affirming the common bond among the East Asian people during the Russo-Japanese war against the white race—the Russians in this case—was advocated by many Japanese, such as Okakura Kakuzo, a moderate, and Miyazaki Toten, an activist. This approach was also shared by Chinese intellectuals including Liang Qichao who wrote of “uniting yellow

⁴⁵⁵ Yun Ch'i-Ho, *Yun, Ch'i-ho Papers, 1883-1943*, Manuscript Collection No. 754, Emory University, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library.

⁴⁵⁶ *Yun Chi-Ho's Diary: 1897-1902* [尹致昊日記], Volume 5 (Seoul: National History Compilation Committee, 1975), 325-327.

people” extensively and Sun Yatsen who maintained “close ties with” Japanese Pan-Asianists, the Pan-Asianism also found “many advocates” in Korea.⁴⁵⁷

Historian Gi-wook Shin pointed out that Asianism had a divided following among Korean transnationals during the Russo-Japanese War. The division was between those who advocated “radical action” against Japan such as Ahn Chunggeun (安重根), a resident in the RFE, who assassinated Ito Hirobumi (伊藤博文), the first Resident-General in Korea, and others who “accepted and even supported Japanese colonial rule.”⁴⁵⁸ Yet another, third, group who “allied with Japanese Asianists to create their own utopian, anti-Western policy called the Koryo (Gaoli) nation” appeared later in 1920.⁴⁵⁹ Ahn was actively engaged in the Righteous Army in the Russian Far East, and the third group was mostly based in the Kando area in Manchuria.

Ilchinhoe (一進會=Advance in Unity Society) emerged “as a strong political force” during the Russo-Japanese War to counteract the anti-Japanese guerilla group of the Righteous Armies, “who opposed Japanese colonization.”⁴⁶⁰ Upon its announcement on August 18, 1904 (光武 8 年, the 8th year in Kwangmu Era of Emperor Gojong) of the group’s establishment by “Song Byung-joon and many others (宋秉峻外數十人),” *Ilchinhoe* appointed Yoon Shi-hyung as interim president and notified the Prime Minister Park Che-soon of Yoon’s appointment as the leader of *Ilchinhoe*.

The “*Ilchinhoe* Manifesto (一進會宣言書)” was declared on August 20, 1904 with a four-point platform on “people’s democratic rights (民權= *minkwon*), such as freedom of speech, press, and assembly...for a good government” in the discourse of ‘civilization and

⁴⁵⁷ Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, 88.

⁴⁵⁸ Shin, “Asianism,” 619.

⁴⁵⁹ Shin, “Asianism,” 628-f4.

⁴⁶⁰ Moon, *Populist Collaborators*, 17 and 3.

enlightenment’ (文明開化=*munmyong gaewha*) on which the group professed to be standing.⁴⁶¹

More specifically, the manifesto used the word ‘*inmin* (人民=people)’ repeatedly more than a dozen times, declaring that people have fundamental rights as well as duties as subjects of a nation .

夫國家는 人民으로써 成立한 者이오 人民은 社會로써 維持하는 者이라 苟人民이 其義務에 服從치 아니하면 國이 能히 國되지 못하고 社會가 團體로 組合치 아니하면 民이 能히 民 되지 못하나니 善人民의 義務는 兵力과 納稅만 在할뿐 아니오 國家의 治亂安危에 關하여 談論勸告하는 義務도 負擔한 故로 現世界強國은 特別히 人民으로써 言論著作과 集合及結社를 自由케하나니 大抵政府는 補強하는 責任으로 行政權을 直接負擔하는 者이오 人民은 協贊하는 義務로 立法權에 間接參論하는 者이오 君主는 此立行政에 大權을 統監하여 民國을 統治하는 無上第一尊重한 者이라....⁴⁶²

A fatherland (*bukukka*) or a state (*kukka*) comprises of people (*inmin*) who in turn sustains the society (*sahoe*). If people do not obey and fulfill their duties as members of the state, the state cannot function as a real nation. If people do not come together in their political association as members and perform their duties of military service and taxpayers, people cannot be good people. People also have their duties to deliberate freely and make recommendations for the security of their state. The monarch (*kunju*) is the sovereign who oversees all governmental affairs as the highest and most respected person with sovereignty in legislation and administration. (Author’s translation)

The above declaration emphasized the close relationships between the nation (*kukka*, 國家), the people (*inmin*, 人民), and the society (*sahoe*, 社會) working in harmony for people’s freedom of speech and assembly, as well as duties of military and taxation so that the sovereign monarch (*kunju*, 君主) with the utmost authority can rule the nation for the welfare of his people.

The Manifesto (宣言書), in this spirit, declared Japan as the most advanced and most enlightened nation (先進先覺國) that can bring about the ‘peace in Asia’ (東洋 平和克服), as the victor of the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War. It urged the whole nation of

⁴⁶¹ Moon, *Populist*, 282.

⁴⁶² 元韓國一進會歷史, “一進會趣旨書,” Vol. 1, 2. 1904.8.20.

Korea from the Emperor down to the 20 million people (二千萬同胞) to unite behind *Ilchinhoe* to keep the nation from perishing.⁴⁶³

These declarations of pro-Japanese statements were seen as the “most notorious” manifestations of Pan-Asianism by Hilary Conroy who viewed *Ilchinhoe* as “Uchida’s instrument” of the Black Dragon Society.⁴⁶⁴ This organization served as Japan’s vehicle to facilitate the annexation of Korea along with a “changed form of the Tonghak party” founded by Yi Yonggu, Son Pyongchun, and Son Pyonghui. The founder of the Black Dragon Society, Uchida Ryohei, acted as Japanese advisor for *Ilchinhoe* in 1904.⁴⁶⁵

Yumi Moon, on the other hand, interpreted *Ilchinhoe*’s reconciliation as a call for “independence through dependence” by “knowing one’s capability and limitations”—a call for accepting Japan as a nation capable and advanced to serve as “peacemaker” for East Asia of which Korea should be a part.⁴⁶⁶ Yu Kil-choon, another leader of the failed Kapsin Coup of 1884, asserted people’s rights and freedom to elect government officials who make the law.

This notion was advocated by *The Independent*, a bilingual newspaper published in English and Korean in 1896-1898. In its April 11, 1896 editorial, *The Independent* concluded that the “Korean people, ‘being ignorant, weak, and non-patriotic,’ should never emulate the enterprise of the French or even ‘dream’ of such a revolution” on their own, and warned the Tonghaks to refrain from turning into “*desperados*” with their rebellious acts of violence.⁴⁶⁷

The Tonghak Movement (東學運動), as discussed in the introduction, was a popular uprising in the late Chosun period, raised in defense of Eastern Learning (東學) against Western

⁴⁶³ 元韓國一進會歷史, “一進會宣言書,” Volume 2, 106-108. 1904.11.5.

⁴⁶⁴ Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure*, 415.

⁴⁶⁵ Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure*, 415; Yumi Moon, *Populist*, 10; Schmid, *Korea*, 88.

⁴⁶⁶ Yumi Moon, “Immoral Rights: Korean Populist Collaborators and the Japanese Colonization of Korea, 1904-1910.” *American Historical Review* (February 2013), 32.

⁴⁶⁷ *Independent*, April 11, 1896, in Moon, “Populist Collaborators,” 136.

Learning (西學)—the “old Eastern virtues against foreigner and foreign-poisoned government” with the steadfast backing of the Regent Taewongun (大院君), Emperor Gojong’s father.⁴⁶⁸ In Conroy’s analysis, the “Tonghak Revolution was the Korean version of the Satsuma Rebellion of Japan, the Boxer Movement in China, the Wahabi in Arabia, and perhaps the Mau Mau in Kenya.”⁴⁶⁹ Rather than a progressive uprising, this movement was a “reactionary...effort to reassert tradition in the face of change.”⁴⁷⁰ The Tonghak Movement was regarded as “a focal point of interest” in the modern Korean history by some historians—a catalyst of the Sino-Japanese War, Righteous Army risings after the Russo-Japanese War, and the March First movement in 1919.⁴⁷¹

The so-called “converted Tonghaks” had openly pledged their support for Japan in the Russo-Japanese War and reappeared throughout the peninsula by the spring of 1904.⁴⁷² By October, the Tonghaks organized themselves as the *Chinbohoe* (進歩會, Progressive Society) and merged with the *Ilchinhoe* under the latter’s name. With this merger, *Ilchinhoe*’s membership grew to more than 100,000, as some claimed, with 500,000 to one million members, as reported by the *Korea Daily News*.⁴⁷³ The Japanese military government identified 3,670 *Ilchinhoe* members, reportedly with 49 leaders, and 117,735 *Chinbohoe* members of whom 883 were leaders.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁶⁸ Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure*, 229.

⁴⁶⁹ Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure*, 229.

⁴⁷⁰ Lew, Young Ick. “The Conservative Character of the 1894 Tonghak Peasant Uprising: A Reappraisal with Emphasis on Chon Pong-Jun’s Background and Motivation.” *Journal of Korean Studies*, Volume 7, (1990), 149.

⁴⁷¹ Lew, “The Conservative,” 149.

⁴⁷² NGB 37 (1), “Converted Tonghaks” (October 21, 1904), No. 569475.

⁴⁷³ *Korea Daily News*, 01/12/1905, reported the *Ilchinhoe* membership reached 500,000—“*tohap I osibyoman myung.*”

⁴⁷⁴ *Chukan Nihon Koshikan* [The Japanese Legation in Korea], compiled by Kuksap’yonch’an Wiwonhoe (National Institute of Korean History), *Chukan Nihon Koshikan Kiroku* (thereafter CNKK) (Seoul: Kuksap’yonch’an Wiwonhoe, 1986), vol. 1: orig. published November 22, 1904; Moon, *Populist*, 38.

Japanese scholar Hayashi Yusuke cited 140,715 members just before *Ilchinhoe* was dissolved, based on the official Japanese investigation as of August 1910.⁴⁷⁵ Another Japanese military survey showed 49,850 *Chinbohoe* members in the 18 prefectures of Southern Pyongan and 19,560 in the 12 prefectures of Northern Pyongan province.⁴⁷⁶ These speculations of fluctuating counts of membership continued through the 1910s as *Ilchinhoe* gained and lost its followings as the Japanese colonial grip tightened.

Even though it is difficult to know exactly how many, registered or unregistered, members were in *Ilchinhoe* during this volatile period of Korean history, one may argue that their voices were heard loudly throughout the country and in transnational diasporas. More than 50 percent of their members were from the northern provinces of Pyongan and Hwanghae, and many others from Choongchung province in the south where disputes of land distribution had been ruled “in favor of Ilchinhoe tenants,” noted Moon.⁴⁷⁷

The 1904 Manifesto clearly expressed that, although the state is made up of people who form the society, the people have their obligation to obey and fulfill their duties, such as taxation and military obligation, to help strengthen the state’s administration to maintain the security and safety of the society.⁴⁷⁸ And *Ilchinhoe* founders did not believe the Korean people were ready for “a popular revolt (*minbyon*=民變) like the French Revolution.”⁴⁷⁹

Yun Chi-ho echoed the assessment in his diary on May 1, 1902 that:

The public treasury is being shamelessly plundered by His Majesty.... The people are now squeezed by governors, magistrates, royal inspectors, departmental inspectors, police and soldiers.... But to whom may we appeal, To the King? No!... the King is a bad

⁴⁷⁵ Hayashi Yusuke, “Undo dantai toshite no Isshinkai: Minshu tonno sesshoku yoso o chushin ni,” *Chosen gakuho* 172 (July 1999): 46-48, quoted in Moon, *Populist*, 38.

⁴⁷⁶ CNKK, vol. 1, November 22, 1904, cited in Moon, *Populist*, 38.

⁴⁷⁷ Moon, *Populist*, 19.

⁴⁷⁸ 一進會趣旨書 [Ilchinhoe Manifesto], *Wonhan'guk Ilchinhoe Yoksa*, Vol. 1 (1904), 2.

⁴⁷⁹ Moon, *Populist*, 137.

man utterly incapable of anything, noble or good, the people are ignorant, stupid and incapable of raising and maintaining respectable and orderly insurrection.”⁴⁸⁰

This position was based on the belief that Koreans could not accomplish the task of transforming their state into a “modern polity” on their own, due to the persistent practice of “toadyism” or “worship of the powerful” or “placing officials above the people (官先民卑).”⁴⁸¹ Only with the help of the Japanese who had created the *New Japan* out of the *Old Japan* through the Meiji Restoration this task could be achieved in Korea, feared *Ilchinhoe* leaders. Such a position had been taken earlier in 1898 in an article of *The Independent* which ruled out the “possibility of a democratic revolution in Korea on the grounds that the Korean people were not ready for it” and “do not deserve” it unless their “knowledge and experience (mun’gyon=文見)” were broadened through education.⁴⁸²

The editorial in *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* (大韓每日新報) on December 2, 1904 reported of the bloody meeting held on Thursday prior:

[논설]. 일진회. 지나간 목요일에 일진회에서 개회를 하였다가 류혈이 량자한지경에 이름이 여좌하니, 일진회에서 날마다 모혀 점점 더욱 요란하게 구는고로 대황제폐하게옵서 통촉하옵시고 ... 모든 회를 일절 해산케하라고 칙령을 나리셨는데 그 회원들은 일향 취집하는지라 파송하였든병정들은 회원들 모힌 곳에 잇셔서 온언순시로 간권하며 스스로 헤여지도록 하나 그러하나 종래 청종치 아니함으로 엇지 할수 업시 위력으로 함에 이르러서 회원중에 사오인이 약간상하였는데 맞춤 일본병정들이 일진회를 두둔하여 저희한 후 한 한국사관들을 포착하여 갖는지라....⁴⁸³

[Editorial]. *Ilchinhoe*. Last Thursday *Ilchinhoe* opened a meeting which turned into a bloody situation. As they meet every day and become so much more violent in their actions that the Emperor ordered their meetings to be canceled. The members in disregard continue with their disrupted meetings despite the efforts of the soldiers to disburse with kind words and guidance, only to be ignored. Finally, the soldiers resorted to using their forces to break up the meeting and resulted in the injuries sustained by four or five

⁴⁸⁰ *Yun Chi-ho Diary*, May 1, 1902, 154.

⁴⁸¹ Duus, *The Abacus*, 411-412.

⁴⁸² Moon, *Populist*, 137.

⁴⁸³ *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* (大韓每日新報) (1904, 12. 31), Vol. 1, no.138.

members. But the Japanese soldiers sided with *Ilchinhoe* and arrested Korean officers....
(Author's translation)

This editorial refuted the extremely violent, blood-letting (*ryuhyul i nangja hal jigyoung ui*) meeting of the *Ilchinhoe* members and expressed disappointment toward their disruptive behaviors, and implored Emperor Gojong to punish and dissolve *Ilchinhoe* as soon as possible. On December 5, 1909, another editorial of the same newspaper lamented: “Oh, how sad, are you *Ilchinhoe* not the people of Korea? (*Sulpuda, nohui Ilchinhoe-ya! Nuhui nun Taehan mingook inmin i aninga?*)”⁴⁸⁴

Based on several accounts on “*Ilchinhoe*” recorded in *Yijo Sillok* (4 in Gojong's and 2 in Sunjong's reigns), one can perceive the controversy around *Ilchinhoe*, mostly expressed in the voices of conservative top government officials who rebuked the disruptions caused by and toward them. Emperor's response to such criticisms was lukewarm at best and not decisive. Instead of giving his decision immediately, Emperor replied to an official's recommendation to take a strict measure of discipline toward *Ilchinhoe* by saying, “I will take your recommendation into advisement” or “I will mull it over during the night” without giving straight answers. When asked why he did not convey a verdict or a clear answer immediately, Gojong replied:

It is because of neighboring countries around us. In the past, I could condemn a bad act committed by my people without causing any lingering repercussion among us. But now, my court feels more like someone else's, and whatever action taken here gets conveyed to other countries, causing much disruption. Therefore, I can only give answers in a round-about way. (Author's translation)⁴⁸⁵

Such a predicament clearly shows that the Korean Emperor Gojong did not feel like a sovereign monarch of his country but was surrounded by ears and eyes of foreign governments. His hands were tied as a puppet king.

⁴⁸⁴ *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* (大韓每日新報) (1909. 12. 5), Vol. 3, no. 735.

⁴⁸⁵ *Gojong Sillok*, “조병세가 다섯 가지 차자를 올리고 정사에 대해 논의하다 (Cho Byung-se brought up five cases for discussion in the affairs of the court,” *Gojong* 42, March 7, 1905, No. 2.

The *Korea Daily News*, on December 31, 1904, again reported, “In North Pyeng Yang Province the Tong Haks (or Righteous Army) are reported to be assembling with the object of suppressing the Il-chin Hoi agitators. Many officials are said to have joined the movement.”⁴⁸⁶In the same issue, the paper reported, “A Japanese newspaper states that some 20 or 30 Russian soldiers at Kyeng-won are laying waste the country and violating the women.... The Police Department have a serious complaint to make against the Japanese gendarmes. A body of 6 Korean police were dispatched on the 6th inst., to the meeting place of the Il Chin Hoi to keep order.”⁴⁸⁷

On their arrival they were set upon by Japanese gendarmes and after being roughly handled were disarmed and placed under arrest. They had committed no offence or even attempted to arrest any of the Il Chin Hoi people—a proceeding to which they would have been perfectly entitled.

The above two reports illustrated the volatile nature of the conflicts between *Ilchinhoe* members and the Righteous Armies as they stood on the opposing sides of the situation: pro-Japanese and anti-Japanese affiliations of the group—the populous of Korea, split in two camps.

Ilchinhoe made another bombshell proclamation in 1905, shortly prior to the Japanese Protectorate Treaty was instituted, advocating “dependence in order to preserve independence” because “Japan was a capable country that was ‘advanced’ and ‘enlightened’ and that had been a ‘peace maker’ in East Asia between 1894 and 1905.”⁴⁸⁸ *Ilchinhoe* then criticized Gojong for having sent his three envoys secretly to the Hague Peace Conference in protest of the Japanese, forcing him to sign the Ulsa Protectorate Treaty. Although the envoys were not able to gain entrance to the conference, Gojong’s attempt gained wide publicity internationally and *Ilchinhoe*

⁴⁸⁶ *The Korea Daily News*, Vol. 1, No. 138, December 31, 1904.

⁴⁸⁷ *The Korea Daily News*, Vol. 1, No. 138, December 31, 1904.

⁴⁸⁸ Moon, *Populist*, 141.

denounced it as a “betrayal of an ally” and a “disaster for Korea’s security.”⁴⁸⁹ And *Ilchinhoe* sent a letter of apology to Protectorate General Ito Hirobumi on July 16, 1907, re-affirming their official pro-Japanese stance.

Historian Mark Caprio took the argument one step further and wrote: “Activist groups in contemporary Japan and Korea see the ‘million-member’ *Ilchinhoe* either as *enlightened*—a group that encouraged Japan’s annexation of Korea; or as *traitorous*—one that sold out its country to the Japanese invaders.”⁴⁹⁰ Yumi Moon came into defense for the *Ilchinhoe*’s unfortunate short-sightedness of serving as part of “pro-Japanese elements” which grew “among Korean anti-status-quo groups” in 1896-1904 in anticipation of Japan’s taking on the role of reforming Korea.⁴⁹¹

To the chagrin of the *Ilchinhoe* leaders who wanted to help reform Korea, Japanese Resident General Ito Hirobumi only used them in his strategy to depose Gojong. Those leaders who were appointed to official positions found themselves “in bed with a colonial regime”—Japan— which was more interested in maintaining “the local status quo” than helping to reform the collapsing Korean monarchy.⁴⁹² *Ilchinhoe* members’ willingness to sacrifice Korea’s sovereignty in pursuit of civil rights backfired, given the transnational environment of East Asia in which the Japanese imperialism was pre-occupied in its own struggles of reconciling with transnational communities of “fluid identities” and dealing with Manchurian nationalism as historian Prasenjit Duara suggested.⁴⁹³

⁴⁸⁹ Moon, *Populist*, 145.

⁴⁹⁰ Mark E. Caprio, “Book review: Yumi Moon, *Populist Collaborators*,” *American Historical Review* (June 2014): 877-878.

⁴⁹¹ Moon, *Populist*, 13.

⁴⁹² Moon, *Populist*, 286.

⁴⁹³ Duara, “Nationalists Among Transnationals,” 38.

On the rocky path Korea took to modernity as the 500-year old Yi dynasty came to collapse between 1896 and 1910, ironically, the subalterns—the primary victims of the yangban society of Korea—grieved violently at the funerals of Kojong and Sunjong, their last two kings of Korea.⁴⁹⁴ Emperor Gojong had been forced into abdication by the Japanese who enthroned Gojong’s Crown Prince as King, not Emperor, Sunjong in July 1907.



(Figure 33: Emperor’s coffin at the funeral procession of Emperor Gojong, March 3, 1919.)⁴⁹⁵

Historian of Korean philosophy Mark Setton called it “Confucian populism” in which the “the will of the people” is considered “the will of Heaven” and the ruler has the “authority to accomplish ‘the welfare of his subjects.’”⁴⁹⁶ Regardless of whether Gojong with his God-given authority and responsibility to guard the welfare of his subjects did fulfill that obligation or not,

⁴⁹⁴ Moon, *Populist*, 14.

⁴⁹⁵ Taylor, *Chain of Amber*, 160.

⁴⁹⁶ Mark Setton, “Confucian Populism and Egalitarian Tendencies in Tonghak Thought,” *East Asian History* 20 (December 2000): 121-144, cited in Moon, *Populist*, 17.

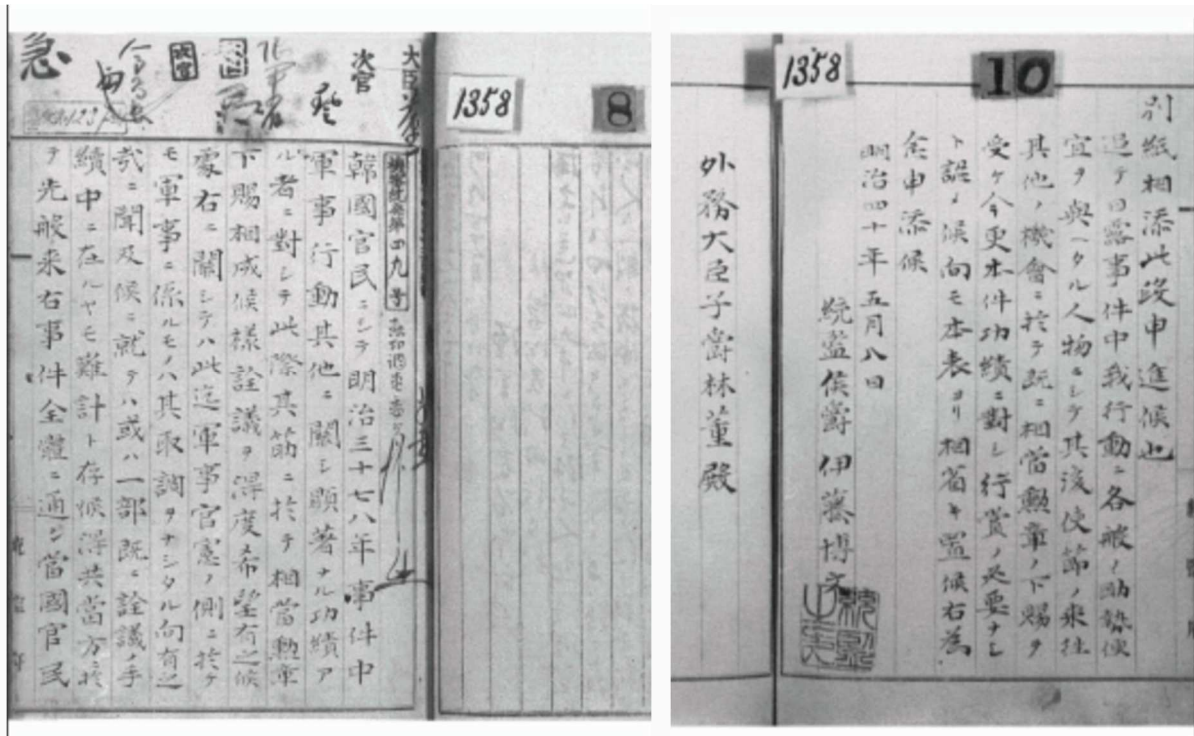
his loyal subjects could not stop the tears from flowing down their faces at the loss of their ruler. Every man and woman came to bid farewell to their fallen monarch in their mourning outfits in white and straw-woven jipsins on their feet.

Historian Alyssa Park wrote, in such a “collectivist view of the state (*kukka*=國家)” in which the “sovereign and people are one body (*kunmin ilch’ae* (君民一體),” a nation constituted “not just the royal family or government, but a collective entity of people, land, and government”—at least in theory.⁴⁹⁷ This way of thinking explains how the transnational migrants who left Korea long ago to settle down abroad in diasporas still adhered to the Korean customs and lifestyles and were eager to come together in defense of Korea as a sovereign nation. Equally importantly, the King of Korea lamented at the unfortunate situations his former subjects were in long after they left the realm of his protection.

A confidential dispatch of a memorandum written by Governor General Marquis Ito Hirobumi (統監 侯爵 伊藤博文) to Minister of Foreign Affairs Hayashi Dadas (林董), dated May 8, 1907, exists in *Chukan Nihon Koshikan Kiroku* [the Japanese Legation in Korea Records= 駐韓日本公使館記録 (hereafter CNKK)], as shown in Figure 34 below.⁴⁹⁸

⁴⁹⁷ Alyssa Park, *Borderland*, 51.

⁴⁹⁸ *Chukan Nihon Koshikan Kiroku* [駐韓日本公使館記録= The Japanese Legation in Korea Records (hereafter CNKK)], compiled by Kuksap’yonch’an Wiwonhoe (National Institute of Korean History) (Seoul: Kuksap’yonch’an Wiwonhoe, 1986), Vol. 25, 機密統發 [Confidential Dispatch] No. 49, p. 8 and 10, 05/08/1907.



(Figures 34: Left to right: Ito’s memo p.8 and p.10. in CNKK. 1907.05.08.)

In this memo Ito wrote to Hayashi Dadas (林董), recommending the listed Koreans (韓國 官民) to be “awarded (叙勳) for their splendid accomplishments (顯著ん 功績) in military actions (軍事行動 其他) taken in 1904-1905 (明治 四七八年)....”⁴⁹⁹

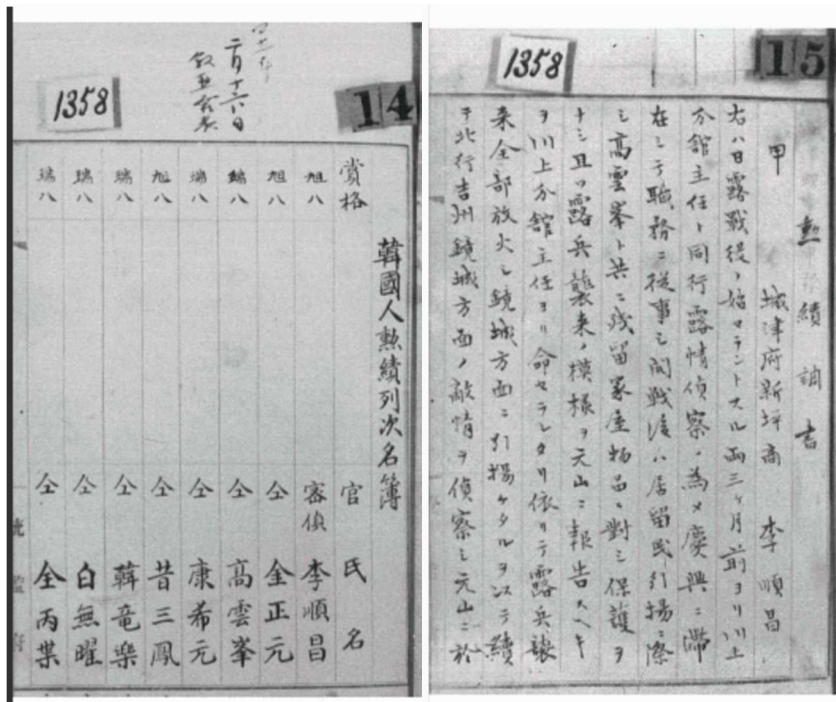
These lists of names of Koreans who were recommended to be awarded for their participation in various Japanese military actions during the Russo-Japanese War, accompanying Ito Hirobumi’s memorandum, tabulated below, can also be found in CNKK. Between 1907 and 1909, a total of 18 confidential memoranda with lists of 195 names were dispatched, according to the CNKK. An example of such lists including the persons’ names, ranks, roles served, and types of awards recommended are shown below in Figure 35.⁵⁰⁰

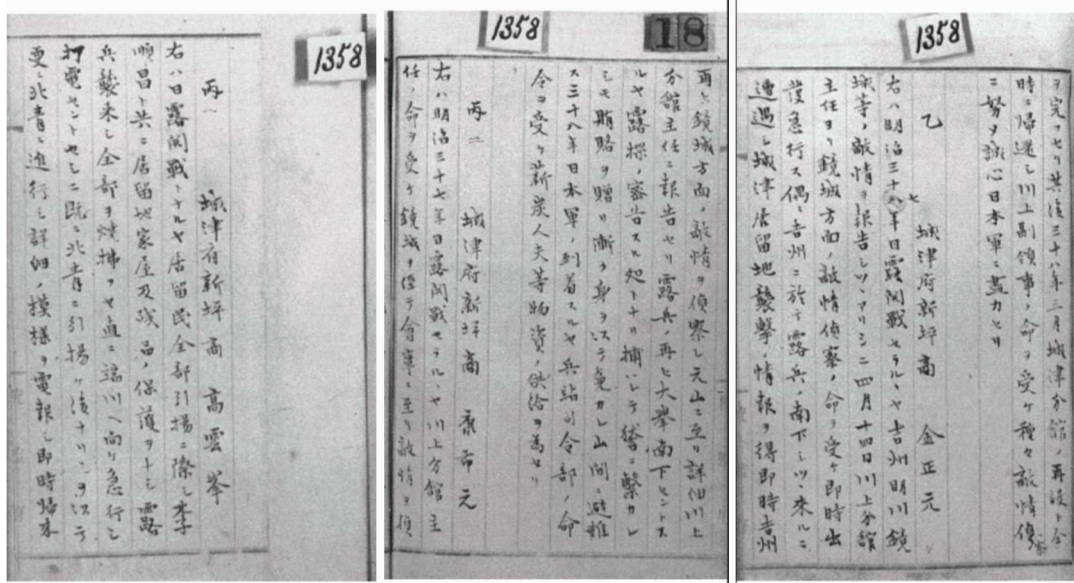
⁴⁹⁹ CNKK, “러일전쟁 중有功 한국 관민에 대한 포상의 건,” 機密統發 第 49 號 [Confidential Dispatch] No. 49, p. 8-10, 05/08/1907.

⁵⁰⁰ CNKK, [러일전쟁 중有功韓人 李順昌 외 8 명 叙勳上奉案], Vol. 25, No. 9, p. 15-18, 01/28/1908.

賞格(Award type)	Name	Roles & Ranks
旭日 8 等章	李順昌 (Yi Soon-chang)	密偵 甲 (Secret Agent A)
旭日 8 等章	金正元 (Kim Jung-won)	密偵 乙 (Secret Agent B)
瑞寶 8 等章	高雲峯 (Go Un-bong)	密偵 丙 (1) (Secret Agent C1)
瑞寶 8 等章	康希元 (Kang Hi-won)	密偵 丙 (2) (Secret Agent C2)
旭日 8 等章	昔三鳳 (Cha Sam-bong)	密偵 甲의甲 (Secret Agent A+)
瑞寶 8 等章	韓龍樂 (Han Yong-rak)	密偵 甲의乙 (Secret Agent A-)
瑞寶 8 等章	白無曜 (Baik Moo-yo)	密偵甲의丙 (Secret Agent A-)
瑞寶 8 等章	全丙葉 (Jeon Byung-chaе)	密偵 甲의丁 (Secret Agent A-)

(Figure 35: Names and ranks of Koreans recommended to be awarded)





(Figures 36: Lists of names with brief descriptions and rankings: left to right and clockwise)

The first page (1358: 14) shows a ‘straightforward list of names of Koreans’ (韓國人 敍勳列次名簿) with the recommended types of awards, followed by introductions of the individuals and their contributions to the Russo-Japanese War activities on behalf of the Japanese military. Their ranks are also indicated in alphabetic order in the Japanese vernacular as 甲, 乙, 丙, and 丁, equivalent to A, B, C, and D in English language.⁵⁰¹

Whereas the above list shows the persons who served as spies or informants for the Japanese military, another list, containing the names of Park Young-chul (朴榮喆) and 27 others, includes the names of high-ranking officials in the Korean court, officers who served in the Japanese infantry, artillery, equestrian, and engineering units, interpreters, Chief of Korean Railway Company, railroad inspectors, and county officials, showing people of wide-ranging occupations that were military-related, directly or indirectly.⁵⁰²

⁵⁰¹ CNKK, [러·일 전쟁 중有功韓人李順昌 외 7명 敍勳上奏案 이첩서 사본], Vol. 25, No. 675, 01/09/1908.

⁵⁰² CNKK, [1904-5 년 전역 한국인 훈적명부], Vol. 25, No. 236, 09/27/1907.

This list was entitled “1904~5 年 全域 韓國人 勳勳名簿” and sent to Governor General Ito by Minister Terauchi Masatake [陸軍大臣 子爵 寺內正毅] with a stamp of approval on September 27, 1907. Korean historian Yun Hee Kim, citing these records, provided an analysis on the status of 195 persons being awarded: 7 policemen, 27 in military, 8 in intelligent services, 6 central government officials, 37 local magistrates or ajuns, 22 interpreters, 9 technical engineers, 6 trade union members, 31 *Ilchinhoe* members, and 42 unspecified. 35 people were awarded *Wookiljang* (旭日章) or 140 *Subojang* (瑞寶章), i.e. types of honors, with cash awards, and 20 awarded in cash only.⁵⁰³ These were but a few examples of confidential documents located in the Japanese archives regarding the Koreans who helped the Japanese military one way or another, as in the cases below.

In a secret telegram sent to the Russian Command Headquarters on July 14, 1905, General K. H. Dessino (Дессино) reported that the Japanese Army formed Korean Empire National Army (大韓帝國軍) with 40,000 soldiers. 25,000 of them were sent to northern Korea to assist the Japanese Army, wearing the same Japanese military uniform, and the remaining 15,000 were placed in the southern Korea which was already under the Japanese occupation.⁵⁰⁴

These archival documents of classified materials in the Japanese government provide crucial evidence not only on the Korean presence but also on their being officially recognized and awarded by the Japanese Army for their participation during the Russo-Japanese War. This proves the thesis of this dissertation on the presence of Koreans in Japanese military forces three decades earlier than in 1930s to 1945, during the World War II, when Korea was under the Japanese colonial occupation.

⁵⁰³ Y. H. Kim, “A study on Koreans, 29-30.

⁵⁰⁴ C. H. Park, [Rosia Kungnip...yoyakchip], 615.

“Stripped of national sovereignty, Koreans had no political authority to form a transnational entity in East Asia that was separate from Japan,” historian Gi-wook Shin wrote of the Korean Asianists’ arguments which “not only abetted Japanese plans for the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere but also ended up justifying Korean collaboration with colonialists.”⁵⁰⁵ It is for this reason that these progressive elites, who contributed so much in Korea’s Independence Movement, such as Ch’oe Nam-sun, and drafted the Declaration of Independence for the March First Movement in 1919, ended up working with the Japanese and have been disgraced in the eyes of the postcolonial Korea.

In the next section the Korean participation in the Russian military forces either as individual soldiers as Tsarist subjects in the RFE or as part of the Righteous Army fighting alongside the Russian Imperial Army will be examined. In the end, there were Koreans fighting on both sides of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-1905.

Righteous Armies in Alliance with the Russian Army

Among the Koreans in the RFE and Manchuria, 27,000 newcomers of working-class, unskilled, cheap labor in Korean villages of transnational diasporas provided “the most fertile source” for the anti-Japanese resistance militant guerilla movement of Righteous Armies, so-called “Yi Pom-yun’s army” formed during the Russo-Japanese War, wrote historian Igor Saveliev.⁵⁰⁶ In 1902 Yi Pom-yun (李範允) had been dispatched as a royal surveyor (視察官) to assess the situation in Buk-Kando (North Kando) area where a large Korean population of close to 100,000 had settled but was reportedly being mistreated by the Chinese officials and hassled by bandits.

⁵⁰⁵ Shin, “Asianism in Korea’s,” 621.

⁵⁰⁶ Saveliev, *Militant*, 153.

Yi Pom-yun was given the royal assignment by Emperor Gojong with a *carte blanche* authority for the protection of Koreans in Kando and was able to organize a core group, called Choongui-dae (忠儀隊) or *Sapodae* (射砲隊) soldiers—“the first partisan detachment” of 1,000 rifles in Manchuria. Yi’s Choongui-dae entered into the RFE in the spring of 1904 at nearly the same time as Victor Kim’s reconnaissance team for the Shanghai Service was formed, which will be discussed below.⁵⁰⁷

Organized and supported initially by Confucian *literari* of the *yangban* class, the Righteous Armies became actively engaged in armed resistance against Japan at the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904. During the Russo-Japanese War, while many Korean soldiers, formerly of Tonghaks, sided with Japan, suspecting Russia’s imperial ambition toward Korea, militant guerrillas, anywhere between 1,000 to 4,000, led by Yi Pom-yun, joined the Second East Siberian Infantry Division under the command of Russian General A. Anisimov.⁵⁰⁸

Yi’s Righteous Army secured the financial support of Choi Jai-hyung (崔才亨), a rich Korean merchant, naturalized as Russian by the Russian name of Piotr Semenovitch Tsoi, who had fled from Korea to Russia at the age of ten, graduated from a Russian school, and became the chief of a town called Novoyevsk in 1893. Choi financed the recruitment of new fighters of guerilla detachments led by Yi Pom-yun during and after the Russo-Japanese War.⁵⁰⁹

Choi was later decorated with a medal from the Russian government for his patriotic contribution as a Tsarist subject. And he founded *Kwonuphoe* (勸業會) and served as its President, along with Victor Sergeievich (Hong Bum-do=洪範圖) as Vice President. Hong Bum-

⁵⁰⁷ Chong Hyo Park, Пак Чон Хё, *Русско-японская война 1904-1905 гг. и Корея* = 韓國과 露日戰爭 (1997), 211, cited in Sergeev, *The Russian MI*, 150; Saveliev, *Militant*, 149.

⁵⁰⁸ Saveliev, “Militant,” 149.

⁵⁰⁹ Saveliev, “Militant,” 149; C. H. Park, [*Rosia yonbang*], 93.

do was well known for his successful collaboration with the Russian military and launching of anti-Japanese warfare in the RFE.⁵¹⁰

By the November 3, 1904 plan, submitted by Baron Korf, the combined forces of three battalions were created with Yi Pom-yun's Righteous Armies, mountain rifle fighters, Korean soldiers from the recently-disbanded northern Chinese Army, and other anti-Japanese militant volunteers in Hamgyongdo— *Bobusangs* and tiger hunters of Pyungando as well as former Korean soldiers in the Japanese Army. These formidable, combined forces on the Russian side were supported by a corps of secret intelligent agents, trained by Captain Nikolai N. Biriukov, whose role will be discussed in the next section.⁵¹¹

Korf pointed to several reasons for Koreans harboring antagonism against Japan as good rationales for their incentive to fight on the Russian side: revenge for the brutal assassination of Queen Min, mandatory deployment of Koreans in the Russo-Japanese War, disrespectful treatment of Emperor Gojong, and revenge for the *Imjin Waeran* (壬辰倭亂) in 1592-1598 as discussed in the introduction.⁵¹²

The number of soldiers in Yi's Righteous Army sharply increased to 35,000 after the Protectorate Treaty was signed in 1905 and the Japanese occupation of Korea in 1906. It was nearly impossible to ascertain an accurate number due to the clandestine nature of Koreans involved in resistance movements which became even more aggressive in the years of 1906 to 1910.

⁵¹⁰ C. H. Park, [*Rosia yonbang*], 202; Suh, [Kim Yak-yun], 51.

⁵¹¹ C. H. Park, “구한말 최초의 러시아어학교와 교사: 비류코프 (Бирюков Н. Н.)에 대한 연구 [Kuhanmal choechoui rosia hakgyo wa gyusa: A Study on Biriukov]” 한국근현대사, (2009.3), 16; C.H. Pak, 한반도 分斷論의 起源과 러일戰爭: 1904-1905 [Hanbando bundanronui giwon kwa Roiljeonjaeng]. Seoul: Sunin, 2014.

⁵¹² C. H. Park, [*Rosia Kungnip...yoyakchip*], 641.

By the time the much-anticipated Russo-Japanese War erupted in February 1904, Yi's Righteous Army combined with Hong Bum-do's militias from the RFE and Manchuria, as well as *Bobusang* (裸負商) and more tiger hunters from southern Korea, surpassing 6,000 in total, according to the numerous reports in Record Group 846 in the Russian National Archives of Military History (РГВИА).⁵¹³ These combined Righteous Armies joined the East Siberian Infantry under the command of General A. Anisimov under the banner of the United Forces of Korean Empire (大韓帝國部隊) or Anti-Japanese Alliance Troop (抗日聯盟軍) from 1903-1905. On August 7, 1905, Yi's Army combined with the Russian cavalry, battled against the Japanese Army, and defeated them at the Chungchun Rock area.⁵¹⁴

Bobusangs in Korea consisted of two groups of merchants—*Bosangs* (裸商) who carried their merchandise in their arms and *Busangs* (負商) who carried their goods on their backs—traveling from town to town where open markets opened every six days in rotation throughout the country. During the Russo-Japanese War these *Bobusangs*, 60,000 in membership, made a considerable contribution with their nationwide network of communication, transportation of arms, and guerilla warfare. They were once known to be under the command of Taewongun. In 1903 Hansung Panyoon (漢城判尹), Chief Justice Ki Ryang-soo was in command of the group.⁵¹⁵

Russia's War Minister General Kuropatkin confessed in his memoir that Russian forces had never been as mighty and powerful as those that had been assembled in Manchuria in August of 1905. The combined forces were ready to push forward at the peak of their spirits when the

⁵¹³ C. H. Park, "Kuhanmal," 16; C. H. Park, [Rosia Kungnip ... Yoyakchip], 642.

⁵¹⁴ C. H. Park, "Kuhanmal," 17.

⁵¹⁵ C. H. Park, [Rosia Kungnip Munso...yoyakchip], 610.

news of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty already having been signed came in September 1905. “The war ended too soon,” lamented Kuropatkin.⁵¹⁶

Koreans in the Russian Army and the Shanghai Service of Intelligence

In the increasing atmosphere of Russian nationalism and Pan-Slavism since the 1890s as discussed in Chapter I, the regional government of the Russian Far East took up repressive measures to limit the economic and political powers of non-Slavic immigrants, such as Chinese and Koreans—the ‘yellow labor’.⁵¹⁷ Russian nationalists hunted down Chinese whom they considered “grouse” and Koreans as “white swans” in reference to the former group in colorful outfits with plump physique and the latter in their traditional white garments, both “unfit” to become Tsarist subjects.⁵¹⁸ Murdering and robbing of Chinese who the Russians thought “usually carried gold with them” and wealthy Korean immigrants became a lucrative mode of business to some Russians who felt justified for claiming “Russian resources for Russians,” if not out of jealousy and hatred.⁵¹⁹

Nonetheless, Korean immigrants gained a favorable reputation of “being very strong” and “better adapted for hard work” and were valued by their employers for their “industrious and peaceful habits.”⁵²⁰ Koreans were regarded “*poleznyi* (useful)” in “colonizing a territory that was so remote from Moscow.”⁵²¹ The usefulness of Koreans increased during the Russo-Japanese War since they emerged as a group of Tsarist subjects who were able and eager to fight against Japan in reconnaissance activities and “guerrilla-style raids” with necessary language skills in

⁵¹⁶ Kuropatkin, [Memorias], 97.

⁵¹⁷ J. Chang, *Burnt*, 16-17.

⁵¹⁸ J. Chang, *Burnt*, 26-27.

⁵¹⁹ J. Chang, *Burnt*, 26-27.

⁵²⁰ Leroy-Beulieu, *The Awakening*, 51.

⁵²¹ H. G. Park, *The Displacement*, 48.

Korean, Chinese, and Russian and with strong anti-Japanese motivation.⁵²² Historian Dae-Sook Suh noted that the Japanese were aware of the existence of some 4,000 Korean soldiers in the Czarist army.⁵²³

The new infusion of anti-Japanese nationalists in the RFE—well-educated upper-class elites in political exile—came from wider geographical areas of Korea. They arrived from the northern as well as southern provinces, whereas the earlier settlers—the poor peasant farmers in migration—originated mostly from Hamgyongdo in the northern provinces of Korean Peninsula in the late 1800s. These newcomers were even more motivated to fight on the Russian side with the necessary pre-requisite abilities as highly-educated elites, willing to play their parts against Japan, as they fled from Korea to pursue Korea’s independence from Japan’s colonialism.

At the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War, both the Russian and the Japanese military forces recruited soldiers and spies from the Korean communities in the RFE, Manchuria, and Korea. Both sides had numerous spies, although hard to estimate the approximate number due to the clandestine nature of the operation. Statistics in 1905 showed approximately 16,500 Koreans in the RFE had Russian citizenship—the second- or third-generation descendants of earlier migrants from the late nineteenth century—and were typically Russian speakers who had been educated in Russian higher education or military academies.⁵²⁴ They considered themselves Tsarist subjects ready to fight against the Japanese colonial aggression toward not only Russia, their new home, but also Korea, their old home of the ancestors.⁵²⁵ Even though they showed some assimilation as Russian citizens, these younger generations of Korean immigrants still

⁵²² C. H. Park, *Koreitsy*, 74.

⁵²³ Dae-sook Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement: 1918-1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 5.

⁵²⁴ C. H. Park, [Rosia yonbang,] 100.

⁵²⁵ J. Chang, *Burnt*, 25.

maintained a strong affinity to Korea—either their homeland or the origins of their parents or grandparents.

These descendants of early settlers were joined by recently-arrived political exiles and intellectuals of a high social status who migrated from Korea as the Japanese colonial aggression intensified and were eager to fight and preserve Korea's sovereignty. Koreans trusted the Russian army of the "White Suzerain" as the protectors of Korean sovereignty to help fight the Japanese from encroachment into Korea and possibly Russia, if the latter lost the war.⁵²⁶ Some of these pro-Russian ethnic Koreans were recruited to participate in "guerilla-style raids against the Japanese army" with Righteous Armies, also called *Uibyong* (義兵), as well as in reconnaissance work with the elite Russian intelligence division, such as the Shanghai Service.⁵²⁷

a. Russian Secret Intelligence Agents - Shanghai Service

One of the ways transnational Koreans found to fight against the Japanese colonial regime was through intelligence and counter-intelligence activities such as the Shanghai Service. The Shanghai Service was established as a clandestine operation of the Russian secret service based in Shanghai, China, under the leadership of Aleksandr Ivanovich Pavlov (А. И. ПАВЛОВ, 1860-1923) in April 1904 within two months of the start of the Russo-Japanese War.⁵²⁸ Pavlov, born to a "noble military family" and a graduate of the "elite Naval Cadet Corps" in 1882, was a former diplomat who served as the First Secretary of the Russian Embassy in Beijing in the mid-1890s.⁵²⁹ Recognized for his contribution to the successful conclusion of the Russo-Chinese Agreement which led to the lease of the Liaodong Peninsula in 1898, Pavlov was promoted to

⁵²⁶ Evgeny Sergeev, *Russian Military Intelligence in the War with Japan, 1904-05* (London: Routledge, 2007), 150.

⁵²⁷ H. G. Park, *The Displacement*, 65.

⁵²⁸ Pavlov, Dmitrii B. "The Russian 'Shanghai Service' in Korea, 1904-05," *Eurasian Review*, Volume 4 (November 2011), 2.

⁵²⁹ Sergeev, *The Russian MI*, 78.

Full State Counsellor and appointed to the post of Minister to Seoul in 1903.⁵³⁰ Minister Pavlov was also instrumental in assisting Emperor Gojong make the Declaration of Neutrality, as already discussed in this chapter.

The Shanghai Service was founded for the purpose of rectifying the Russian Far-Eastern reconnaissance's weakness, as seen in the prewar underestimation of the future enemy and lack of information about that enemy—Japan. Dmitrii B. Pavlov, Russian historian in Moscow, stressed the fact that the Shanghai Service was “not to replace the army intelligence, but to amplify its activities and to some extent revise its information” on the initiative of Viceroy Admiral E. I. Alekseev (Е. И. Алексеев) who hand-picked Alexander Pavlov to be in charge.⁵³¹ The Shanghai Service also provided covert guidance to news media in China and Korea, such as the *Korea Daily News* (大韓每日新報), a bilingual newspaper published by Ernest Bethell, which will be examined in the next section on the anti-Japanese Korean news media.⁵³²

Before the Shanghai Service was instituted under Pavlov, Russian military intelligence (HUMINT) relied on a spy network previously set up in Emperor Gojong's court after the Sino-Japanese War in 1896-1898.⁵³³ When Pavlov took on the role of heading the Shanghai Service, he recruited a network of agents mainly of Koreans, Chinese, and some Europeans from Emperor Gojong's close aids and influential Korean dignitaries.

A Korean-Russian citizen, named Matvei Ivanovich Kim (Золотарёв Виктор Николаевич), also known as Victor or Insu Kim, was hired as a translator and primary contact

⁵³⁰ Pavlov, Dmitrii B. “Russia and Korea in 1904-1905: ‘Chamberlain’ A.I. Pavlov and his ‘Shanghai Service,’” Ch. 11 in Chapman, J.W.M. and Inaba Chiharu, eds. *Rethinking the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-5* (Global Oriental, 2007), 159.

⁵³¹ Pavlov, “Russian Shanghai Service,” 2.

⁵³² Pavlov, “Russian Shanghai Service,” 2.

⁵³³ Sergeev, *The Russian MI*, 39.

to the “imperial mission” in Seoul as well as at locations in the Yalu region with a mission to set up reconnaissance in the Korean territory at the end of April 1904.⁵³⁴



(Figure 37: Kim In-su (Matvei Ivanovich Kim))⁵³⁵ (Figure 38 : 최재형 (Peter Semeovich))⁵³⁶

However, the АВПРИ record of 1896 shows Victor Kim (aged 20) and two others, named Pietor Pento Kim (16) and Nikolai Kigohn (37) applying to serve as mercenary soldiers in Seoul on October 28, were granted permission on February 25, 1897.⁵³⁷ This grant was in adherence to the requirement for Russian citizens who wish to work in a foreign government, Korea in this case, to obtain permission from the Russian government. So, it seems that Victor Kim had been working in Seoul since 1897 when he was recruited to serve on the Shanghai Service in 1904.

Kim and other volunteers, known as “Biriukov’s ‘alumni’ or “Biriukov’s Korean team,” were named after retired Captain Nikolai N. Biriukov who took charge of the group.⁵³⁸ The team

⁵³⁴ Chong Hyo Pak, *Russko-iaponskaia voina 1904–1905 gg. i Koreia* (Moscow: Vos-tochnaia literature, 1997), 211, cited in Sergeev, *The Russian MI*, 150; Pavlov, “Russian Shanghai Service,” 5.

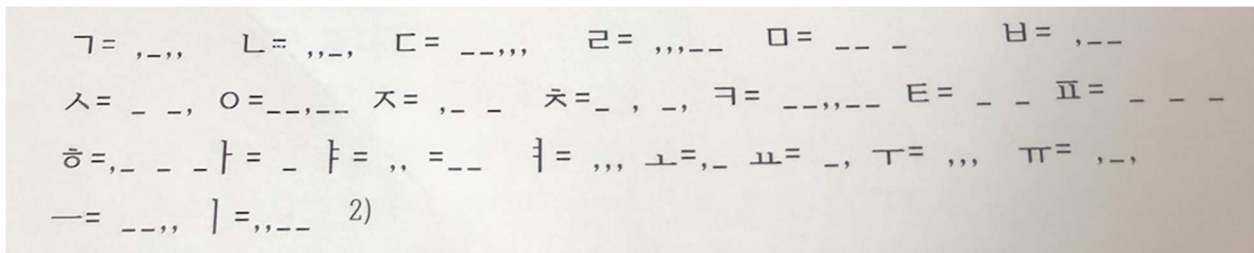
⁵³⁵ 사진으로 본 러시아 한인의 항일 독립운동. 제 3 권. 3.1 운동 100 주년 기념. [РОССИЙСКИЕ КОРЕЙЦЫ В БОРЬБЕ ЗА НЕЗАВИСИМОСТЬ КОРЕИ ФОТОПОРТРЕТЫ КНИГА 3] (Seoul-Moscow: 한울, 2019), 61.

⁵³⁶ Suh, [Kim Yak-yun], 124.

⁵³⁷ АВПРИ, Vol. 150, No. 493, 93, 1-15, “Russian Minister in Seoul K.I. Weber to Ministry of Foreign Affairs,” October 28, 1896 and “Minister of Internal Affairs to Foreign Affairs Minister,” February 25, 1897.

⁵³⁸ Pavlov, “Russian Shanghai Service,” 5.

was comprised of nine former students of the Russian language school, attached to the Russian mission in Seoul, as well as a student from the Kursk Academy (*Real'noe Uchilische*) and several graduates of the “Kazan’ theological seminary (*Doukhovnaia Seminariia*).”⁵³⁹ Also involved was a lecturer at St. Petersburg University, engaged in composing the “Russian-Korean pocket phrase-book,” twelve thousand copies of which were printed and distributed in the RFE.⁵⁴⁰ Between April and December 1904 alone, over 850 dispatches were sent, received, and deciphered with about the same number of replies through the Shanghai Service.⁵⁴¹



(Figure 39: Secret coded messages exchanged between agents of the Shanghai Service)⁵⁴²

Victor Kim and the Biriukov’s team of the Shanghai Service organized a united Russo-Korean detachment of Koreans in the RFE and joined forces with Major General Anisimov on July 7, 1904, when they were thought to have disappeared into thin air by historians Evgeny Sergeev and Dmitri Pavlov.⁵⁴³ Along with another unit of 300 Korean guerillas, Kim’s team committed sabotage and reconnaissance against the Japanese army, forming a cooperative partnership of Korean guerilla detachments with active Russian troops. On June 19, 1905, Major General Mardanov of Priamur province “issued the order to set up a national battalion of Korean irregulars to support the Manchurian armies.”⁵⁴⁴ Four more Korean partisan detachments were

⁵³⁹ Pavlov, “Russian Shanghai Service,” 5.

⁵⁴⁰ PGVIA, f. 400, op. 4, d. 321, II, 148, 159, 162, in Pavlov, “Russian Shanghai Service,” 5.

⁵⁴¹ Pavlov, “Russian Shanghai Service,” 3, 5, 6; Sergeev, *The Russian MI*, 79.

⁵⁴² C. H. Park, “Бирююов Н. Н.,” 17.

⁵⁴³ C. H. Park, “Бирююов Н. Н.,” 17.

⁵⁴⁴ Sergeev, *The Russian MI*, 151.

set up by the Russian military authorities in the provinces of Posiet, Hunchun, Shkotov and Nikol'sk in July, intensifying the Russian front after Japan's occupation of Sakhalin.

In a report sent to an unknown recipient on September 13, 1905, Alexander Pavlov acknowledged the role of Biriukov in training and overseeing the students. Albeit excellent intelligence work, his help was no longer deemed necessary since the War has ended.⁵⁴⁵ In the same memo, Pavlov requested the students be rewarded for their superb service with continuing education in military institutions with all expenses paid for by the Russian military government. This request was granted by Commander Grushetsky via a secret telegram, approving Biriukov to accompany the students.⁵⁴⁶ According to the financial reports in the АВПРИ, however, all expenses including the medical costs paid to "Matvei Kim" in the amount of \$91.20, \$1,642.60 for Yi Hyun-kun, the former Minister of Military Service, and \$630 for Biriukov's two months' salary had been paid for by Emperor Gojong's treasury.⁵⁴⁷

While some others were sent as translators or secret agents to the Manchurian borders after the Shanghi Service operation was closed, Victor Kim was sent back to the Russian military front in Priamur with a mission to continue organizing reconnaissance, thus putting an end to reconnaissance on the Korean Peninsula.⁵⁴⁸ The role Kim played has been documented well by Russian intelligence headquarters, showing him as the central figure in the Korean reconnaissance operation:

...a Korean, Kim, attached to our diplomatic mission, to establish permanent covert contacts with local Korean authorities and agents in the middle of April 1904. The latter might be handpicked both from the retinue of the Korean emperor and from among

⁵⁴⁵ АВПРИ, Тома 143, No. 491: 2984, 1-145 (September 13, 1905), in C.H. Park, [Rosia Kungnip...Yoyakchip], 48.

⁵⁴⁶ АВПРИ, Тома 143, No. 491: 2984, 1-145 (October 9, 1905), in C.H. Park, [Rosia Kungnip...Yoyakchip], 49.

⁵⁴⁷ АВПРИ, Тома 143, No. 491: 3028, 1-68 (1904), in C.H. Park, [Rosia Kungnip...Yoyakchip], 50.

⁵⁴⁸ Sergeev, *The Russian MI*, 106; Pavlov, "Russian Shanghai Service," 5.

influential Korean dignitaries well disposed towards us. The agents might later be sent on missions to the Manchurian borders.⁵⁴⁹

The order cabled from Lieutenant General Vladimir Sakharov, the Chief of Kuropatkin's Staff and Quartermaster-General Vladimir Kharkevich, to Major General Zasulich, the Commander of the Eastern Vanguard Detachment, was specific to Kim's expected duties:

Kim will be provided with Pavlov's detailed instructions, concerning the collection of data which are most important to us in view of operations in the offing, together with a secret codebook for mail communication with both the Diplomatic Chancellery of the Viceroy and the Diplomatic Representative at the Supreme Headquarters. Besides, agent Kim will be obliged to report all reliable and urgent information about the realignments of Japanese ground forces in adjacent areas to our command personally or through special orderlies without delay.⁵⁵⁰

As the Russian military commanders saw disappointing results in battles in late 1904 to spring 1905, they started to question the efficacy of recruiting local inhabitants for intelligence on a massive scale, which seemed to reduce the quality of the intelligence reports by untrained personnel.

In June 1905 Major General Anisimov decided to "lessen surveillance of Korea, which has lost its significance" and move the focus to "keep restraining the Japanese along the Tumen river line" instead.⁵⁵¹ This change of focus and disappointing results steered the Russian military to eliminate the Korean section in the Shanghai Service. The commanders, such as Aleksandr Svechin, saw the problem of relying military intelligence on spying by amateurs with insufficient training, specific skills, or experience. Russian historian Evgeny Sergeev put the overall blame on the Russian intelligence for lacking a comprehensive plan of operations, based on a "pre-war analysis of the theatre of operations."⁵⁵² Russia's difficulty in deciphering Asian languages with

⁵⁴⁹ PGVIA, f. VUA, d. 27506, ll. 1–15 ob., in Sergeev, *The Russian MI*, 79.

⁵⁵⁰ Sergeev, *The Russian MI*, 80.

⁵⁵¹ Pavlov, "Russian Shanghai Service," 4.

⁵⁵² Sergeev, *The Russian MI*, 183.

Chinese hieroglyphic characters, coupled with their lack of understanding of the regional culture, proved to be detrimental to their success in winning the War.

As Sergeev noted, resistance by “poorly equipped people to elite Japanese landing troops was doomed to failure” as the history has proven through the Russo-Japanese War.⁵⁵³ The Russian military intelligence had been shoulder-strapped to local groups or field diplomats in addition to their day-to-day responsibilities, whereas the Japanese ran a system of “total espionage” under the principles of: “1. Each person can be a spy; 2. Each person must be a spy; 3. There is no such secret that cannot be exposed.”⁵⁵⁴

Historian Ian Nish observed that “there were communities of Japanese merchants in each port who doubtless kept their eyes open. But the prime source of information about movements of naval ships in and out of Port Arthur was the Japanese consulate at Chefoo from which steamers plied regularly to Port Arthur until the outbreak of war.”⁵⁵⁵ In comparison, the Russian military intelligence in the Far East which depended on “a network of spies and scouts recruited from ruined peasants, illegal tradesmen, former deserters from the Chinese army and other local villains” was no match to the Japanese counterpart of professional spies, most of whom were members of the Black Dragon patriotic association.⁵⁵⁶ The Black Dragon Society, incidentally, was a rightist organization, organized and led by Uchida Ryohei, with the aim “to dethrone the Korean monarch Kojong and to expedite the annexation.”⁵⁵⁷

Japan had established its first college to teach the Russian language in 1892 and select groups of spies were organized to move ahead of the troops to provide espionage information to

⁵⁵³ Sergeev, *The Russian MI*, 151.

⁵⁵⁴ Sergeev, *The Russian MI*, 28.

⁵⁵⁵ Ian Nish, “Japanese Intelligence and the Approach of the Russo-Japanese War,” in C. Andrew and D. Dilks, eds., *The Missing Dimension. Governments and Intelligence Communities in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 29.

⁵⁵⁶ Sergeev, *The Russian MI*, 15 and 29.

⁵⁵⁷ Moon, *Populist*, 10.

the active army or navy by the end of 1903.⁵⁵⁸ In contrast, Russian military intelligence “lacked adequate organization” and “proved unfit...in the hell of modern war.”⁵⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the Shanghai Service offered an opportunity for Korean transnationals in the RFE and Manchuria to collaborate with Koreans back home to engage themselves in anti-Japanese intelligence service during the Russo-Japanese War.

Conclusion

Korea was indeed the key to Japanese expansion in Asia. By Japan’s victory in the Sino-Japanese War, China was removed from the arena in 1895. Now in 1905, Japan’s success in the Russo-Japanese War “destroyed Russian imperial pretensions in Eastern Asia and solidified Japanese domination in Korea and Manchuria” as much as any other European nations’ chances of expansion in Asia.⁵⁶⁰

Consequently, “Russia’s mettle as both a nation and a global power” of nationalism and imperialism with a keen interest for expansion in Far Eastern Asia was shattered in 1905.⁵⁶¹ Russia’s opportunity to seize the Far Eastern territories into the Outer Manchuria, which offered “a space to demonstrate” Russia’s “vital national energies and room for independent accomplishment,” was irrevocably derailed in the Russo-Japanese War—a war of yellow vs. white at the dawn of the twentieth century.⁵⁶²

In the Western mindset of racial arrogance, an Asian nation was never expected to beat a white nation of long military and naval strength. It was the “first time in modern history that an Asian or non-white nation had defeated a major Western power in a major conflict,” declared

⁵⁵⁸ Sergeev, *The Russian MI*, 29.

⁵⁵⁹ Sergeev, *The Russian MI*, 182-183.

⁵⁶⁰ Crossley, *The Manchus*, 176.

⁵⁶¹ Zachary Hoffman, “Subversive Patriotism: Aleksei Suvorin, Novoe Vremia, and Right-Wing Nationalism during the Russo-Japanese War.” *Ab Imperio* (1/2018), 98.

⁵⁶² Hoffman, “Subversive,” 98.

historian Daniel A. Métraux.⁵⁶³ As historian John A. Steinberg put it, the Russo-Japanese War was the first war fought “between an established European power and an emerging Asian power... in China and Korea or in adjacent waters....”⁵⁶⁴ Attesting to the transnational ramifications of the War, Steinberg stated, “When peace was restored in September 1905, it came neither at Shimonoseki nor in St. Petersburg, but in the American city of Portsmouth, New Hampshire,” while Europe simply looked on as crucial decisions were being made for Asia, facilitated by an American President.⁵⁶⁵

Russian Emperor Nicholas II’s plans to “annex Manchuria and Korea” with his own imperialistic dreams clashing against Japan’s suffered “a humiliating defeat” in 1905, according to the *Recollections of the Minister of War A. Kuropatkin* [*Memorias del General Kuropatkin: Guerra Russo-Japonesa*].⁵⁶⁶ After the defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, Russia’s attention was diverted to Manchuria with Dalny (Dalien) emerging as the main depot of China Eastern Railway and Harbin as the hub of commerce. This point will be further addressed in Chapter III.

However, the Russian government in St. Petersburg was eager to improve their diplomatic relations with Japan after the Russo-Japanese War and the two Russo-Japanese Conventions were signed in 1907 and 1910. In those Conventions, Russia and Japan 1) made a secret pact to settle their border demarcation in southern and northern Manchuria, 2) Russia agreed to refrain from any actions of interference in the Japan-Korea relations and, in return, Japan would honor Russia’s sphere of influence on Korean Peninsula, and 3) Japan would honor Russia’s priority in concessions in the Outer Mongolia.

⁵⁶³ Métraux, *The Asian Writings*, 9-10.

⁵⁶⁴ John W. Steinberg, Bruce W. Menning, David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, David Wolff and Shinji Yokote, eds., *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), xix.

⁵⁶⁵ Steinberg, et al., *The Russo-Japanese War*, xix.

⁵⁶⁶ Lee & Lukin, *Russia’s*, 34.

The feeling of reconciliation was mutual between the two countries. Russia reaffirmed the special interests of Japan in Korea and South Manchuria, as Japan recognized Russia's in the northern Manchuria—*quid pro quo*. Peace between the two belligerent nations was established for the time-being with Korea and Koreans as the sacrificial lamb.

The Portsmouth Peace Treaty, ending the Russo-Japanese War, was signed in November of 1905, facilitated by the U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt, who garnered the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in this diplomatic maneuver. Another *quid pro quo* was made between the U.S. and Japan in recognizing the Philippines as the U.S. colony in exchange for Korea as Japan's first colony in this affair.

Next came the Japan-Korea Protectorate Treaty of August 1910, formalizing Japan's annexation of Korea as its first imperial colony. All non-Russian Koreans in Russia and non-Chinese Koreans in Manchuria became *de facto* stateless and subjects of the Japanese Empire by international law. However, many Koreans in the RFE refused to be considered "subjects of Japan" and chose to be counted in the census as "*poddannymi korei* or *koreiskimi poddannymi*" (both meaning 'subjects of Korea') or "*net*" ('non-subjects')." ⁵⁶⁷ Many Koreans in Manchuria disappeared into the hills in exile. The lives of these transnational Koreans, now stateless, will be the subject of Chapter III.

⁵⁶⁷ Aleksandr I. Petrov, *Koreiskaia Diaspora v Rossii 1897-1917* [Korean Diaspora in Russia in 1897-1917] (Vladivostok: Institut Istorii, Arkheologii etnografii narodov dal'nego vostoka, 2001), 285.

CHAPTER III. KOREAN TRANSNATIONALS AS STATELESS PEOPLE, 1906-1920

*A-ri-rang A-ri-rang A-ra-rio,
You are going over the peak of A-ri-rang,
Over yonder is Baik-du-san Mountain,
Full of blossoms in wint'ry cold December.*

The third stanza of *Arirang* portrays *Baik-du-san* (白頭山, white peak mountain), the highest mountain in Korea which stands 9,003 feet tall at the northern-most border of the peninsula in the pathway to Manchuria. To migrants from Korea, this mountain was what separated their new home from their old and what separated them from their loved ones. It stood magnificently with snow-capped peaks, which appeared like beautiful blossoms in their eyes yearning to return home to Korea.

Baik-du-san was the *Arirang gogae* (hill) of no return for tens of thousands of Koreans in the coming decades as Korea ceased to exist as an independent country and left its former subjects stranded abroad as stateless. Even more Koreans crossed the borders in search of freedom and independence after the March First Movements in 1919.

Another version of the third stanza went thus:⁵⁶⁸

*Now I am an exile crossing the Yalu River
And the mountains and rivers of three thousand li are also lost.
Ariran, Ariran, Arari O!
Crossing the hills of Ariran[g].*

Kim San (金山, pseudonym of Chiang Chi-rak, 張志樂) who was known as an underground Marxist revolutionary, active in Japan, Korea, and Manchuria in the 1930s, shared the verse in an

⁵⁶⁸ Kim San and Nym Wales, *Song of Ariran: The Life Story of a Korean Rebel* (New York: John Day, 1941), [ii]. Helen Foster Snow, the ex-wife of American writer Edgar Snow, met Kim San, a Korean communist revolutionary active in China (a pseudonym of Chang Chi-rak, 張志樂) in Yen-an, China in 1937. Helen Snow wrote of her encounter and interviews with Kim under her pseudonym of Nym Wales, published in *Song of Ariran[g]* in 1941.

interview by Nym Wales (pseudonym of Helen Foster Snow), the ex-wife of American writer Edgar Snow, in Yen-an, China in 1937.

Kim was born on March 10, 1905, in a town near Pyongyang while his family was evacuated in the hills nearby during the Russo-Japanese War. Kim reminisced, “I was born on a mountain in the middle of a battlefield.”⁵⁶⁹ Kim’s father was a yeoman farmer with a tiny patch of farm fields. They lived in a typical mud-walled hut of *chogajip* with a thatched roof. Kim fondly remembered the warmth of the *ondol* floor of the one-room hut where he grew up among his family of eleven people, despite the constant hunger he felt as his hometown was being ravaged by the Russian and Japanese military as they passed through. Kim left his home at the age of eleven when his wandering life of a revolutionary began after witnessing the massacre that followed the March First Demonstrations in 1919.

Kim explained, “There are twelve hills of Ariran,” just as Dante wrote of “twelve heavens and twelve hills...Abandon all hope ye who enter here.”⁵⁷⁰ As Kim said, “Korea has crossed painfully over more than twelve hills of Ariran.... Our little peninsula has always been a stepping stone from Japan to China and back again, and from Siberia to the south...for hundreds of years.”⁵⁷¹ Indeed, in the years following the Russo-Japanese War and during the Japanese occupation of Korea as its colony from 1905 to 1945, many Korean political exiles as well as peasant migrants crossed over the hills of *Baik-du-san* and the Yalu River to get to the other side of the border—the promised land with hopes and dreams to recover their lost land of *samchon-li* (三千里, three thousand *li*). This chapter will cover the continuing struggles of the transnational diasporas in the RFE and Manchuria in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War.

⁵⁶⁹ Kim and Wales, *Song of Ariran*, 11.

⁵⁷⁰ Kim and Wales, *Song of Ariran*, 6; Dante Alighieri, *Divine Comedy*, Canto III, Kindle ed.

⁵⁷¹ Kim and Wales, *Song of Ariran*, 7.



(Figure. 40: “Korea-Manchuria” border on the Yalu River, photographed by Jack London, 1904)⁵⁷²

Koreans in the Russian Far East and Manchuria struggled not only in their daily lives but also in their fierce fights to help regain the independence of Korea while maintaining their loyalty to the newly-adopted homelands. As their new diasporas fell victim to the rapidly changing geopolitical environment of the early twentieth century in Far East Asia, these Korean transplants were embroiled in bloody revolutions and the fall of empires: the Russian Revolution (1905-1907) and the Xin-hai (辛亥) Revolution of China (1911) which toppled the old empires of the Tzarist Russia and the Qing Dynasty of China respectively—followed by the First World War (1914-1918) which brought more bloodshed.

⁵⁷² Jack London Photographs, JLP444, Album 6, #00646.

As historian Jon Chang wrote, “RFE Koreans amply displayed their loyalty to the state during the First World War and the Intervention...yet there were rumors... that linked Koreans to the forces of Japanese expansion.”⁵⁷³ This statement aptly describe the tenuous predicament in which Korean transnationals found themselves under suspicion as the authorities could not distinguish the long-time Russified-Koreans with allegiance to Russia from the newly-exiled Koreans from China, Japan, or Korea with nationalist political loyalties. The situation in Manchuria was just as difficult, if not worse, as Koreans were suspected to be Japanese imperial agents.

Korea as Japan’s Protectorate and Colony

The popular banner of ‘civilization and enlightenment (文明 改化)’ of the Pan-Asianists and *Ilchinhoe* Korean elites facilitated Japanese subjugation of Korea which began upon the second (and final) Japan-Korea Protectorate Treaty, signed on November 17, 1905. This agreement was based on the first Japan-Korea Treaty of February 23, 1904 and the Taft- Katsura Agreement made between the U.S. Secretary of State William Howard Taft and the Prime Minister Katsura Taro of Japan on July 27, 1905. The Treaty was signed by Japanese Plenipotentiary Minister to Korea Hayashi Gonsuke and Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs Park Che-soon (朴齊純) under the oversight of Japanese Foreign Minister Ito Hirobumi on November 17, 1905.⁵⁷⁴

This final Protectorate Treaty was also based on Imperial Ordinance No. 267 of 1905. This policy with its thirty-three articles laid out a clear picture of Japanese absorption of Korean government affairs from top to bottom:

Article I. The residency-general (tokan-fu) shall be established at Seoul, Korea.

⁵⁷³ Chang, *Burnt*, 33.

⁵⁷⁴ JACAR, “Japan-Korea Treaty,” by Count Katsura Taro, Minister of Foreign Affairs / Hayashi Gonsuke, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary / Pak Che-Soon, Foreign Minister, A09050064600, 1905. 11. 17.

Article II. A resident-general (tokan) shall be appointed to the residency-general. The resident-general shall be of the Shin-nin rank.

...

Article VI. The resident-general shall exercise supervision over the Imperial officials and others in the service of the Korean Government.

...

Article XXXIII. A police force shall be attached to the residency-general and each residency. The policeman shall be of Hannin rank. The number of policemen shall be fixed by the resident-general.⁵⁷⁵

The Ordinance laid out the overall hierarchical structure of the new residency-general over Korea with Japanese nationals (*shinnin*) at the top and Korean nationals (*hannin*) at the bottom layers of the governing fabric, five years before the establishment of the Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty (韓日合併條約) of 1910. The Ordinance was carried out with an iron fist immediately to affect all levels of the Korean government, Korean society, and Korean lives for the following 35 years during the Japanese colonial occupation of Korea. Marquis Ito Hirobumi (伊藤博文) took office as the first Resident-General (統監) of Korea on December 21, 1905 and ruled with an iron fist until he was assassinated on October 26, 1909.

Ito Hirobumi, who also served as Japan's first Prime Minister after the Meiji Restoration, was hailed as the Father of the Meiji Constitution and was recognized as the person who “symbolizes imperialist Japan's annexation of Korea.”⁵⁷⁶ His contemporaries in the Japanese government found Ito to be lacking in philosophy as a politician but a “skilled strategist” unpredictable in a “fearsome battleground of clashing powers.”⁵⁷⁷ Historians also found Ito enigmatic, elusive, and ambiguous, but a man of “wit and intelligence” and “flexible opportunism.”⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁵ FRUS, “Japanese Administration,” No. 389, 1026.

⁵⁷⁶ Takii Kazuhiro, *Ito Hirobumi – Japan's First Prime Minister and Father of the Meiji Constitution* (London: Routledge, 2014), t.p.

⁵⁷⁷ Takii, *Ito Hirobumi*, 4.

⁵⁷⁸ Historians Ito Yukio and Takahashi Korekiyo, referenced in Takii, *Ito Hirobumi*, 5.

Perhaps it was this last quality, flexible opportunism, with which Ito “co-opted the *Ilchinhoe* leadership into the coalition for deposing” Gojong.⁵⁷⁹ Ito rewarded some of these Koreans with official positions but ruthlessly abandoned them when their usefulness ran out. To the chagrin of *Ilchinhoe* membership, Ito was not interested in promoting “civil rights” for colonized Koreans, a goal for which *Ilchinhoe* sacrificed the “sovereignty of the Korean state.”⁵⁸⁰

Ito delivered a speech to the local newspaper editors in Seoul on December 20, 1905, regarding the establishment of a residency-general in Korea and his own appointment as the first person to fill that position. As interpreted by the U.S. Chargé Huntington Wilson, Ito’s “speech was calculated to dispel the idea that Korea is to be considered fair prey for the Japanese, and to persuade the Koreans that although their foreign relations are taken over by Japan, yet the prestige of their court is upheld...under the direction of the Korean Emperor.”⁵⁸¹ However, Gojong was a monarch only in name after the Japan-Korea Protocol went into effect.

Ito spoke of the “specific tasks before him” having to deal with “the corruption of Korean administration and the need for its reform, and the poverty of the people.”⁵⁸² Even Ito who was put in charge to “undertake the very delicate and onerous labors of the first resident-general at Seoul” saw the poverty-stricken people as one of his top three challenges in Korea.⁵⁸³ U.S. representative Wilson regarded Ito as “very conservative, earnest, and sincere” with a “mouth of the greatest Japanese statesman.”⁵⁸⁴ Wilson concluded his report sufficiently, but naively reassured that “American interests in Korea will receive good treatment” under the new

⁵⁷⁹ Moon, *Populist*, 286.

⁵⁸⁰ Moon, *Populist*, 287.

⁵⁸¹ FRUS, “Japanese Administration of Korean Affairs. Chargé Wilson to the Secretary of State,” No. 389 (February 13, 1906), 1027.

⁵⁸² FRUS, “Japanese Administration,” No. 389, 1030.

⁵⁸³ FRUS, “Japan. Chargé Wilson to the Secretary of State,” No. 389, 1030.

⁵⁸⁴ FRUS, “Japanese Administration,” No. 389, 1028.

protectorate government of Japan.⁵⁸⁵ Wilson soon found out otherwise as Japan requested the U.S. to withdraw its legation in Seoul, sever all direct ties from Korea—diplomatic, commercial, or religious, as of November 28, 1905.

“It is not with regard to Korea alone, but with regard to the whole problem of the Far East,” explained Ito in a speech to the press in Seoul on December 20, 1905. “If Japan, puffed up by her victories in war, should forfeit the sympathy of the powers, she will be laying up for herself misfortune in the future.” By giving “the most satisfactory assurances along these same lines” and mainly referring to “the attention he would give to the open-door policy, as to which the United States, Great Britain, and Japan were in accord,” Ito’s speech reaffirmed Japan’s self-promotion to the ranks of world’s superpowers as the leader of Pan-Asianism who can bring peace and prosperity to Asia.⁵⁸⁶

This type of conviction in Japan’s leadership for *Pan-Asianism* (亞細亞連帶論) was behind the country’s decades-long preparation to become the conqueror of Asia and fulfill its *mission civilatrice*, a self-imposed burden to save the “backward peoples” of Asia into civilization, as seen by historians such as W. G. Beasley and Peter Duus.⁵⁸⁷ The Japanese also believed they needed to take on “Britain’s role as a lawgiver” of *mission législatrice*—legitimizing colonialism to make the colonized feel rescued from their backwardness towards not only civilization but also their independence.⁵⁸⁸ In other words, Japan would not treat Korea as an independent nation until it became a civilized country according to their standards.

⁵⁸⁵ FRUS, “Japanese Administration,” No. 389, 1028.

⁵⁸⁶ FRUS, “Japanese Administration,” No. 389, February 13, 1906.

⁵⁸⁷ W.G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism, 1894-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 256; Duus, *The Abacus*, 412.

⁵⁸⁸ Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism*, 256.

In fact, historian Alexis Dudden argued that “the most transformative aspects of Japan’s Meiji era (1868-1912)” were in their “[t]ranslating international law into Japanese and using its terms in practice.”⁵⁸⁹ In doing so Japanese rulers enabled themselves to have “a new method of intercourse” with the Western powers—the white foreigners—using the “vocabulary of power” which demonstrated that Japan was on a “legal and often legislating mission—*mission législatrice*—to Korea.”⁵⁹⁰ Japan learned to speak in the same language of law as the international community of imperialist power in whose eyes the Japanese annexation of Korea would be seen as legal. “Japanese legal missionaries to Korea,” as Dudden called them, started a massive public relations campaign to publicize their efforts to legalize Korea to the international and domestic audiences.⁵⁹¹ Although Korea had some criminal codes, Japan’s legalists claimed the codes were “random and exceedingly dangerous” and “worse than no law at all.”⁵⁹² Such a promise for legal reform would have been welcome by Korea’s populace. Many had packed up and moved to the Russian Far East and Manchuria due to the unjust treatment they received from *yangban* society.

Koreans in the Russian Far East

Images of Koreans in the Russian news media during the Russo-Japanese War were mostly based on telegrams and reports often “borrowed from foreign media and news agencies” for lack of Russia’s own reliable sources, resulting in “sensational” news on what was happening in Korea at the time.⁵⁹³ On the one hand, Korea was seen as “a potential ally of Russia.” According to a telegram from Russian Lieutenant-General N.P. Linevich, the acting commander of the

⁵⁸⁹ Alexis Dudden, *Japan’s Colonization of Korea: Discourse and Power* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 2005), 1.

⁵⁹⁰ Dudden, *Japan’s Colonization*, 3.

⁵⁹¹ Dudden, *Japan’s Colonization*, 114.

⁵⁹² Dudden, *Japan’s Colonization*, 110.

⁵⁹³ Ermachenko, “Korea,” 224-5.

Manchurian Army, on February 6, 1904, Koreans feel a “special confidence in us, see us as friends and say that the Russians are stronger than the Japanese.”⁵⁹⁴ A large color poster-sized photo of Koreans welcoming Russian soldiers, seen in Moscow on March 6, 1904, validated such a sentiment.⁵⁹⁵

On the other hand, one article in *Novoje Vremya* [New Time] reported some Koreans fighting on the Japanese side, describing “Korean soldiers disguised in the Japanese uniforms in Manchuria.”⁵⁹⁶ Such commentary shows Koreans on both sides of the war, also validating the central finding in this dissertation—Koreans in the Japanese and Russian armies during the Russo-Japanese War.

After the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, Korean migrants continued their desperate plights to find new opportunities in the Russian Far East. Despite many success stories of their survival and accomplishment to prove themselves as worthy subjects of the Tsar and the Soviet Union in the decades following, their intentions were often misconstrued, resulting in persecution in the coming decades.

According to historian Zachary Hoffman, “The year 1905 proved a disaster for the tsarist regime on many fronts.”⁵⁹⁷ On January 9—Bloody Sunday—while Petersburg languished in a general strike, Russian troops fired on a peaceful demonstration of people, headed toward the Winter Palace. This event ignited “a revolution that saw further strikes, popular demands for representational government and civil rights, and peasant violence in the countryside.”⁵⁹⁸ This

⁵⁹⁴ *Illyustrirovannaya letopis' russko-yaponskoj vojny* [Illustrated chronicle of the Russian-Japanese War,] (1904), Issue I, 31, in Ermachenko, “Korea,” 224.

⁵⁹⁵ *PTBIA*, “대한제국에서 전개된 러시아군과 일본군 전투 화보 [Poster Report of the Russo-Japanese War in Korea],” No. BYA, No. 16, No. 9233, 9261, 9292, 9008, 1-10, 1904, indexed in C. H. Pak, *Rosia Kungnip Munso Pogwanso sojang Han'guk kwallyon munso yoyakchip* (Seoul: Korea Foundation, 2002), 631.

⁵⁹⁶ *Novoje Vremya* [New Time], 1904, No. 10177, 1 (A Note by the Russian Telegraph Agency), cited in Ermachenko, “Korea,” 225.

⁵⁹⁷ Hoffman, “Subversive Patriotism,” 88.

⁵⁹⁸ Hoffman, “Subversive Patriotism,” 88.

event also signified a momentous turn of circumstances for Koreans in the RFE because their new lives as Tsarist subjects were about to change with the Russian Empire collapsing into the hands of revolutionaries.

Vladimir Lenin called the Russo-Japanese War “the dress rehearsal” to the Russian Revolution of 1905, in which “All classes came out in the open” and without which the “victory of the October Revolution of 1917 would have been impossible.”⁵⁹⁹ Russia’s defeat in the Russo-Japanese War to Japan was being compared to Goliath’s defeat by David’s sling shot and brought the stunned people onto the streets of St. Petersburg, demanding the Tsar to be held responsible for the “shameful peace,” inflicted upon Russia.⁶⁰⁰ The uproar sparked the revolution.

However, the question of ethnicity and national origins was different from accepting all classes as worthy participants of the revolution, as will be seen in the following years. Nationality became “the preeminent and singular marker of identity,” targeting Asians as “unfit” to be “Russified subjects” despite other markers of identity such as citizenship, language, and record of personal or public accomplishments.⁶⁰¹

Upon signing of the Japan-Korea Protectorate Treaty in 1905, a large exodus of Korean elites in the anti-Japanese resistance movement fled to the Russian Far East. The Korean population in the RFE nearly doubled from 32,410 in 1901-1902 to 59,715 in 1912, owing to the massive influx from Korea, as validated by various scholars.⁶⁰² These figures, however, do not take into account the actual, unofficial number of increase, estimated by 30 percent at 43,452,

⁵⁹⁹ Vladimir Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder* (USSR: Progress Publishers, 1920, 1964), n.p.

⁶⁰⁰ Hoffman, “Subversive,” 79,

⁶⁰¹ Chang, *Burnt*, 29-30.

⁶⁰² Rossiiskii gosudarstvennii istoricheskii archive Dalnego Vostoka (The Russian National Historical Archives of the Far East – РИНА FE), file no. 87-4-1593, 7-8; Grave, Kitaitsey, 129-130, cited in Savelieve, “Militant,” 149, and in Chang, *Burnt*, 11.

bringing the estimated total of Koreans up to 80- to 100,000 by 1910.⁶⁰³ In 1910, Korean-owned agricultural properties were estimated at 1,190 *desiatina* (1,190 hectare) in total with 2 hectares (6,050 pyong) per household, producing all types of grains as well as corns, potatoes, and ginseng.⁶⁰⁴ Also raised by Koreans were cattle stocks for use in farming or for distribution as beef. Another source estimated 50,000 Koreans living in southern Ussuri district, spread out in 104 Korean villages.⁶⁰⁵

Documents in the Archives of Foreign Policy of Russian Empire, АВПИИ, show 57,000 Koreans living in the Ussuri Province with 22,000 households (39%) with Russian citizenship. 35,000 households (61%) retained their Korean citizenship in the period between 1906 and 1915.⁶⁰⁶ This low rate of naturalization suggests that the newer migrants from Korea after annexation represented political rather than economic migrants and their hopeful wish to return to Korea and re-establish themselves in their homeland in the near future.

A table of “Naturalized and non-Naturalized Koreans in the RFE” in the Russian National Historical Archives of the Far East (РИНА FE) shows the ratio of 16,965:17,434 (34,399 in total) in 1906 and 16,263:43,452 (59,715 in total) in 1912, representing a third, 37 percent, of Koreans with Russian citizenship.⁶⁰⁷ Between 1910, when Japan officially annexed Korea, and 1920, when Japan started to promote the active settlement of Koreans in Kando, Manchuria, the Korean population in the Maritime Province of RFE, in reaction, grew to 100,000 by 1917 but only 25 percent of Koreans had acquired Russian citizenship.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰³ Ban, *Koreans*, 161-162.

⁶⁰⁴ C. H. Park, [Rosia yonbang], 101.

⁶⁰⁵ Ким Сын Хъа, Очерки по истории советских корейцев, 1965, cited in C. H. Park, [Rosia yonbang], 101.

⁶⁰⁶ C. H. Park, [Rosia Kungnip...Yoyakchip], 62.

⁶⁰⁷ RNHA FE, file 87-4-1593, 5-10, in Savelieve, “Militant,” 154.

⁶⁰⁸ George Ginsburgs, “The Citizenship Status of Koreans in Pre-Revolutionary Russia and the Early Years of the Soviet Regime,” *Korean Affairs*, 5, no. 2 (July 1975), 9; John J. Stephan, *The Russian Far East: A History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 75; Alyssa Park, *Borderland*, 92.

Most of the newcomers who flocked to Korean villages in the Priamur area could only find work as “farm laborers (*batrak*)” or “tenants (*arendatory*)” under Russian or “fellow” Korean landlords.⁶⁰⁹ Hence, the rift between the old immigrants, prosperous Korean landlords with citizenship from the 1890s, and the new migrants of later arrivals in the 1910s and 1920s deepened as their political allegiance diverged. The early immigrants were feeling settled as Russified loyal Russians by now, whereas the later migrants viewed their time in the RFE as temporary.

Ironically hoping to gain influence in Russia through the early migrants from Korea, the Japanese colonial government willingly issued Koreans passports and other certificates to facilitate their travels to the RFE. In 1910 alone, 3,923 new migrants from Korea officially entered Russia, adding to the 50,965 Koreans who were already settled in 104 villages in the Southern Ussuri district.⁶¹⁰ Including the unofficial entries into the region, historian Ban Byung-yul reported an increase from 34,399 to 59,715 (74% increase) during the 1906-1912 period.⁶¹¹ Of these Koreans officially counted, 17,080 (31%) were Russian subjects with 36,996 non-Russian in 1910, staying with the previous rate of one third of Koreans naturalizing.⁶¹² This trend continued according to the census data taken in January 1916, which showed 2,981 Koreans in Vladivostok with 812 educated professionals (27.2%), 760 skilled laborers and craftsmen (25.5%), 51 household servants and drivers (1.7%), and 1,357 manual laborers (45.5%).⁶¹³ Only one in three Koreans in the RFE were Russian subjects in 1914, maintaining a similar ratio from 1910.

⁶⁰⁹ Savelieve, “Militant,” 153.

⁶¹⁰ C. H. Park, [Rosia yonbang], 100-101.

⁶¹¹ Ban, *Koreans*, 162.

⁶¹² Chang, *Burnt*, 27; C. H. Park, [Rosia yonbang], 110.

⁶¹³ RGIA-DV f. 702, op.1, d.1275, 1.25, cited in Chang, *Burnt*, 31.

Historian Ban Byung-yul and Park Chong Hyo attribute this low rate of naturalization of Koreans to the negative campaign of *Russia for Russians* by Governor P. F. Unterberger during his administration in the RFE in 1905-1910. Unterberger targeted his antagonistic campaign toward Korean migrant population in the RFE, believing they would become the source of a “wide range of intelligence networks” for Japan or China against Russia during the period of conflicts.⁶¹⁴

This position of Unterberger was also influenced by the sudden surge in the migration of white Russians into the area by 450 percent due to the completion of Trans-Baikal Railway in 1900 and Eastern China Railway in 1902. In this situation, public opinion was also leaning toward the protection of Russian farmers and laborers. In November 1907 the conservative congress, or Duma, where the great majority of the deputies were Russians, promulgated a new electoral law. This legislation reduced the number of deputies from non-Russian regions, as well as pushed for and enacted a law restricting the immigration of foreigners in the RFE.⁶¹⁵ The Nationalist members of the Duma “vehemently asserted the necessity of maintaining and increasing restrictions on the non-Russian nationalities.”⁶¹⁶ However, the bill was short-lived and was reversed by March 23, 1911, due to the opposition of Russian mining companies that were profiting from the hiring of Korean migrants at low wages.⁶¹⁷

A prominent Russian newspaper, *Ruskiie Vedomosti (Русские Веломости)*, reported an article sympathetic to the Koreans on June 20, 1910. The story explained how

Many Koreans, after Japanese occupation of Korea, fled to Russia and settled here as their newly-found home by working hard to transform the terrible wasteland into fertile farmlands. Thanks to their hard work, the agricultural production in the RFE was

⁶¹⁴ P.F. Unterberger, *Primorskaia oblast, 1856-1898* (St. Petersburg: V. F. Kishbauma, 1900), 114-115; V.V. Grave, *Kitaitsy, Koreitsy I Iapontsy v. Priamur'e* ((St. Petersburg: V. F. Kishbauma, 1912), cited in Ban, *Koreans*, 162.

⁶¹⁵ Harold Whitmore Williams, *Russia of the Russians* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1915), 79.

⁶¹⁶ Williams, *Russia*, 83.

⁶¹⁷ Ban, *Koreans*, 162.

drastically improved as did the gold mines in the area where 12 percent of the miners are of Korean origin.⁶¹⁸ (Author's translation)

This editorial was in line with the findings of the Amur Expedition led by Nikolai Gondatti in 1910-1912, which concluded that Russia's local government failed to recognize the contributions made by Korean migrants. Russians needed to utilize Korean desires to be productive citizens of the country. Gondatti, who succeeded Unterberger as the Governor of the RFE in 1911-1917, implemented more accommodating policies toward Koreans for their hard work and recognized their additional contribution to the local economy as they spent 80 percent of their earnings in the area.⁶¹⁹

In summary, Koreans in Russia during this post-Russian-Japanese War period were squeezed harder as Russia, their new homeland was in a period of transitioning from a long history of Tsarist monarchy to nationalistic Bolshevik government, pushing for Russia for Russians. At the same time Korean transnationals in the RFE were caught between Japan's empire building and Russia's nation building as both countries strove to find their respective ways to expand in their sphere of influence in the region.

Continuing Korean Anti-Japanese Resistance in the RFE and Newspaper Influences

a. Anti-Japanese Newspapers in the Diasporas

Anti-Japanese Korean newspapers, published in the RFE and Manchuria, played a crucial role in reporting news about what was happening in Korea. These publications helped to incite patriotic nationalism among Koreans in Korea as well as in transnational diasporas abroad including the RFE, Manchuria, and the United States. Early newspapers and books published in the Korean language were made possible by missionary publishing outside of Korea in the

⁶¹⁸ *Русские Веломости*, 20 (1910), cited in C. H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 105.

⁶¹⁹ C.H. Park, [*Rosia Yonbang*], 108; Ban, *Koreans*, 162.

late nineteenth century including Fengtian (奉天) in Manchuria and Yokohama, Japan, and the Catholic printing press Söngsöch'ulp'anso (聖書出版社, Printing Press of Religious Books), which moved from Nagasaki, Japan, to Seoul in 1886.⁶²⁰

Through the efforts of Christian Literature Society (CLS), with financial support from domestic and foreign sources, Christian missionaries enjoyed a monopoly in publishing newspapers and Christian books in Korea such as *The Independent*, *Hyupsung Hoebo* and *Maeil Sinmun*.⁶²¹ Protestant missionaries established the Trilingual Press, operated by missionary Homer Hulbert, in 1888 in Seoul. This organization started publishing the *Korean Repository* in 1892, followed by *The Independent Newspaper* in 1896. The Trilingual Press was renamed the Methodist Publishing House in 1900 “but did not survive into the colonial period.”⁶²²

The Independent (독립신문, *Tongnip sinmun*) was a bilingual newspaper published in Korean and English from April 7, 1896, until it was closed down on December 4, 1899, first under the editorship of Soh Jae-Pil (Philip Jaisohn) and later under the leadership of Yun Chi-ho. The editorial in its first issue on April 7, 1896 explained the paper's mission to publish both domestic and foreign news in a language that any Korean, learned or not, noble or base, men or women, as well as any foreigner, can read and understand what was happening around them:

The time seems to have come for the publication of a periodical in the interests of the Korean people. By the Korean people we do not mean merely the residents in Seoul and vicinity nor do we mean the more favored classes alone, but we include the whole people of every class and grade. To this end ... it shall be written in a character intelligible to the largest possible number...put in the native character called the ðn-mun, for the time is shortly coming, if it is not already here, when Koreans will cease to be ashamed of their

⁶²⁰ Michael Kim, “The Trouble with Christian Publishing: Yun Ch’iho (1865-1945) and the Complexities of Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea,” *Journal of Korean Religions*, 9: 2 (2018), 142.

⁶²¹ An Chongmuk, “Han'guk kũndae sinmun-chapchi ũi paldal sigi e sŏn'gyosadũl ũi ðllon hwaldong e kwanhan yŏn'gu” [Research on the activity of missionaries during the development period of Korean newspapers and journals], *Han'guk ðllon hakpo* 48:2 (2004), 6-7, quoted in Kim, “The Trouble,” 143.

⁶²² Kim, “The Trouble,” 142.

native character, which for simplicity of construction and phonetic power compares favorably with the best alphabets in the world.⁶²³

Koreans did not have a written language to “express the language of their everyday speech” until King Sejong assembled a group of scholars to invent a phonetic system comprising an alphabet of 14 consonants and 10 vowels in 1443.⁶²⁴ The system, called *Hangul* or *Hunmin Chongum* (訓民正音=proper sounds to instruct the people), was proclaimed as the national written language for Koreans by King Sejong in 1446. Until then, only *yangbans* could learn to read and write with Chinese characters in private schools, called *suh-dang* (書堂). Poor commoners of Korea who could not afford education in the past were now able to learn or teach themselves to read and write in the new easy-to-learn 24-alphabet system that works with the spoken language of Korea. Therefore, this editorial of *The Independent* indeed was proclaiming the paper being published as a newspaper for the people, rich or poor, learned or not, of Korea.

The newspaper, reporting in everyday Korean vernacular, was able to communicate to the general Korean public what was happening in the country and beyond, which had not occurred until then. The populace of Korea had been kept in the dark by the *yangban* ruling class because all official communication had been written in Chinese characters. This birth of print language for all Koreans offered equal opportunities for learning and acquiring of new knowledge which had been restricted to the upper class with a “language-of-power” in the past, as historian Benedict Anderson exemplified.⁶²⁵

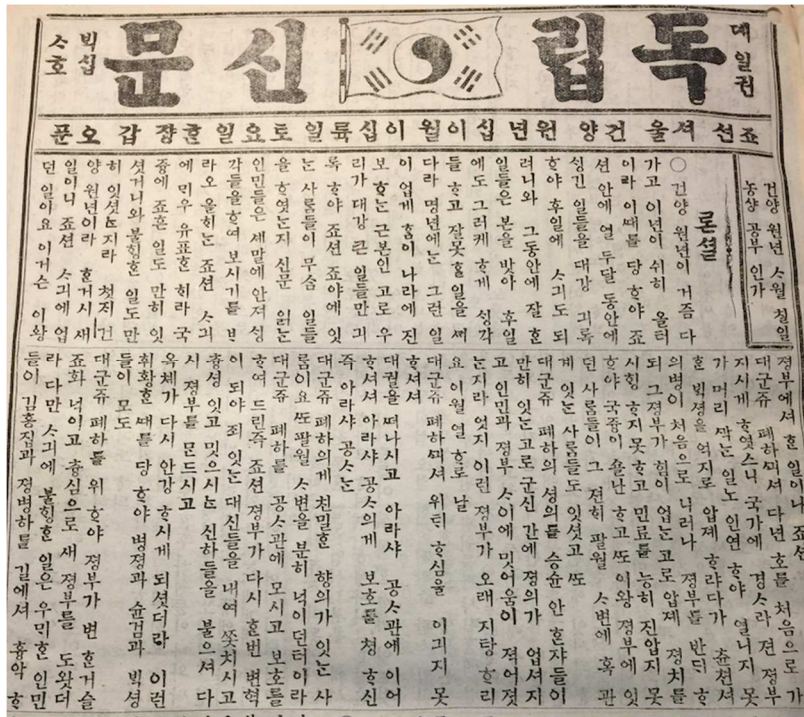
The February 26, 1904 issue of *The Independent* reported that Emperor Gojong had taken asylum in the Russian Legation in fear of his own safety. The report of King Gojong having fled

⁶²³ *The Independent*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (April 7, 1896).

⁶²⁴ Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*. [Translation of Han'guksa Sillon (韓國史新論) by Edward W. Wagner] (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1984), 192.

⁶²⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 45.

his palace at night for asylum at the Russian legation stirred up the Korean public immediately. The editorial, as shown in Figure 41 below, informed the public in plain Korean language:



(Figure 41: 독립신문, February 26, 1896.)

The Emperor, feeling threatened of his personal security among the factional divisions in the court, took a leave from his own palace to seek an asylum in the Russian Legation. The Russian Minister who was sympathetic to the grave situation, especially after the unfortunate incident in past August, welcomed and accommodated the Emperor until which time he could safely return. (Author’s translation)⁶²⁶

This incident, called *Agwan-pachon* (俄館播遷), refers to the monarch having taken a refuge (播遷) in the Russian Legation (俄館), coordinated by Yi Pom-jin, the Korean Minister to St. Petersburg, and Russian Minister to Korea Waeber. *Agwan-pachon* lasted over a year from February 11, 1896, to February 20, 1897. To Korean people, their monarch hiding from the Japanese within the Russian legation building for such an extended period was a matter of great

⁶²⁶ “론설 (Editorial),” 독립신문 [*The Independent*], Vol. 1, No. 114 (1896.02.26).

concern and a national disgrace. It pained them to see their sovereign so powerless and cowardly in self-committed captivity in a foreign prison a few steps away from his own palace.⁶²⁷

During this period, nonetheless, the King took a few daring measures while in the comforts of the Russian Legation such as suspending the top-knot rule. Such actions did not please the Japanese. As Fred Harvey Harrington commented on the incident, “Russia is on top and Japan is eating crow,” referring to Russia seemingly having an upper hand over Japan in influencing the affairs of Korean court.⁶²⁸ The situation between the countries of the region was extremely tense.

On July 18, 1904, the *Korea Daily News* (大韓每日新報) published its first issue in English and Korean under the editorship of an Englishman Ernest Thomas Bethell (裴設) and Yang Ki-tak for the welfare and order in Korea. Bethell, formerly with *London Daily Chronicle*, enjoyed relative freedom in reporting and carrying “scathing articles” about Japan’s abusive relationship with Korea, thanks to his extraterritorial status as an English subject based on the Anglo-Japanese Treaty.⁶²⁹ The *Korea Daily News* enjoyed the rare exclusion from “pre-publication” censorship of 1907 Newspaper Law, imposed by the Japanese colonial government and continued to publish three daily issues: one in Korean vernacular, one in mixed script, and another in English.⁶³⁰

Under Bethell’s editorial leadership, the *Korea Daily News* had “the widest readership” and a circulation of 13,000 that led the other local newspapers in Seoul to express their “deep

⁶²⁷ C. H. Park, [Rosia Kungnip...yoyakchip], 93.

⁶²⁸ Fred Harvey Harrington, *God, Mammon and the Japanese* (New York: Arno Press, 1980, c1944), 254.

⁶²⁹ Michael E. Robinson, “Chapter 8. Colonial Publication Policy and the Korean Nationalist Movement,” in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*, edited by Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 315.

⁶³⁰ Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, 48.

frustration” of Japan’s “betrayal of the yellow nations’ solidarity.”⁶³¹ For example, on August 4, 1904, the *Korea Daily News* carried an editorial on the outlook of the Russo-Japanese War. The newspaper reported that, in Port Arthur, Manchuria, 40,000 Russians were assembled and ready to fend off Japanese attacks without much problem.⁶³² After Bethel passed away, however, his newspaper was shut down on May 20, 1910 and renamed *Daily News* (每日新報) to serve as “the official mouthpiece of the colonial authority” until the end of the colonial period.⁶³³

Many influential Korean intellectuals overseas were engaged in forming organizations and publishing newspapers and journals for enlightenment and outreach to regain Korean sovereignty. They were practicing what historian Benedict Anderson emphasized as the critical role of print medium in forming “imagined community” of which members across borders may never meet or hear of each other yet feel such close ties and comradeship with each other.⁶³⁴ These newspapers and journals printed in Korean language and distributed throughout the diasporas in different regions of the world—the RFE, Manchuria, Hawaii, and California as well as in Korea—“constructed landscapes of collective aspirations” and created a sense of fraternity with a common purpose.⁶³⁵

b. Anti-Japanese Organizations in the Diasporas

While the heightened uprisings of “seventy-thousand strong” Righteous Armies “who attacked the Japanese troops from the territory of Manchuria in 1908” were dispersed by the anti-guerilla operation of Japanese military, these groups tried to find new bases in the RFE.⁶³⁶ The Enlightenment Movement (啓蒙運動), formerly organized by Yi Kang of *Kookmin Hoe*

⁶³¹ Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, 51.

⁶³² 大韓每日新報, no. 16 (1904.08.04).

⁶³³ Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, 51.

⁶³⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

⁶³⁵ Ong, *Flexible Citizenship*, 55.

⁶³⁶ Saveliev, “Militant Diaspora,” 150.

(國民會, KNA) and the *Gongrip Hyuphoe* (供立協會) in San Francisco, moved to the RFE and Manchuria and was centered in Vladivostok in the fall of 1908.

This decision to relocate the KNA was also based on suspicions of American influence by the Russian government, who worried about support coming from the U.S.-based organization. Such a move helped Koreans in the RFE develop anti-Japanese activities through the organizations of *Shinminhoe* (新民會), *Yuhakhoe* (游學會), and *Kungminhoe* (國民會=Korean Nationalist Association). Supported by Korean newspapers published in Vladivostok, *Haejo Sinmun* (海朝新聞) and *Taedong Kongbo* (大東共報), the *Kookmin Hoe* expanded its outreach into the Russian Far East and Manchuria among the transnational diasporas of Koreans.⁶³⁷

Korean Nationalist Association (KNA) was founded in Hawaii and San Francisco by Park Yong-man, Syngman Rhee, and An Chang-ho in 1909 to carry out a comprehensive independence movement.⁶³⁸ As the most active organization, KNA opened its branches in the Maritime Province, more specifically in “Vladivostok, Nikolsk, Iman, Khabarovsk, Blagoveschsk, Irkustsk, Tiumen, Krasnoiarsk, Verkhneudinsk (present-day Ulan Ude), China, and two other Russian cities,” increasing to thirty-three branches by 1914.⁶³⁹

Taedong Sinbo (大同新報), previously published under the name of *Taedong Gongbo* (大同公報) in San Francisco but folded due to financial hardships, was taken over by Choe Jai-hyung in Vladivostok under the new name in 1910. When the news of Japan’s annexation of Korea reached the diasporas, *Taedong Sinbo* printed an article about the Korea-Japan Treaty of

⁶³⁷ Ban, “Koreans,” 163; Alyssa Park, *Borderland*, 248.

⁶³⁸ Saveliev, “Militant Diaspora,” 151.

⁶³⁹ Saveliev, “Militant Diaspora,” 151.

Annexation having been signed on August 22, to be announced to the public on August 29-30, 1910. Governor Unterberger was alleged to have shut down the paper for its agitative report written in a violent tone in fear of negative reactions from Japan, as Russia was anxious to maintain an amicable relationship with Japan.⁶⁴⁰

KNA organized a meeting of Koreans on August 25, 1910, in Vladivostok where 2,324 (or 2,821) participants assembled and signed a declaration which was addressed to “The Minister of Foreign Affairs at Washington” and “To the great powers of Europe and America, and to China,” protesting against the annexation of Korea by Japan.⁶⁴¹

In the post-Russo-Japanese War period of 1905-1910, Yi Pom-yun brought his Righteous Army from Kando, Manchuria, to the RFE and formed *Dongui-hoe* (同義會) by joining forces with Choi Jai-hyung, Yi Wi-jong, An Choong-keun, Um In-sup and Kim Ki-ryong. This group launched aggressive raids on Japanese police which peaked in the summer of 1908.⁶⁴² The dispatching of additional troops from Japan, authorized by the Ministry of Defense, will be presented further later in this chapter.

After the Newspaper Law (新聞社法, *Shinbunshi hō*) was enacted in 1907, Japanese censorship restrictions and regulations intensified to crack down on Korean publishing within Korea. Consequently, Korean-language newspapers abroad took on the media role of critiquing Japanese colonial rule in Korea.⁶⁴³ At the head of these newspaper attacks were *Haejo Ilbo* (海朝日報), the first Korean-language newspaper in the RFE, published in Vladivostok from

⁶⁴⁰ C. H. Park, [Rosia yongbang], 190; Saveliev, “Militant Diasporas,” 152.

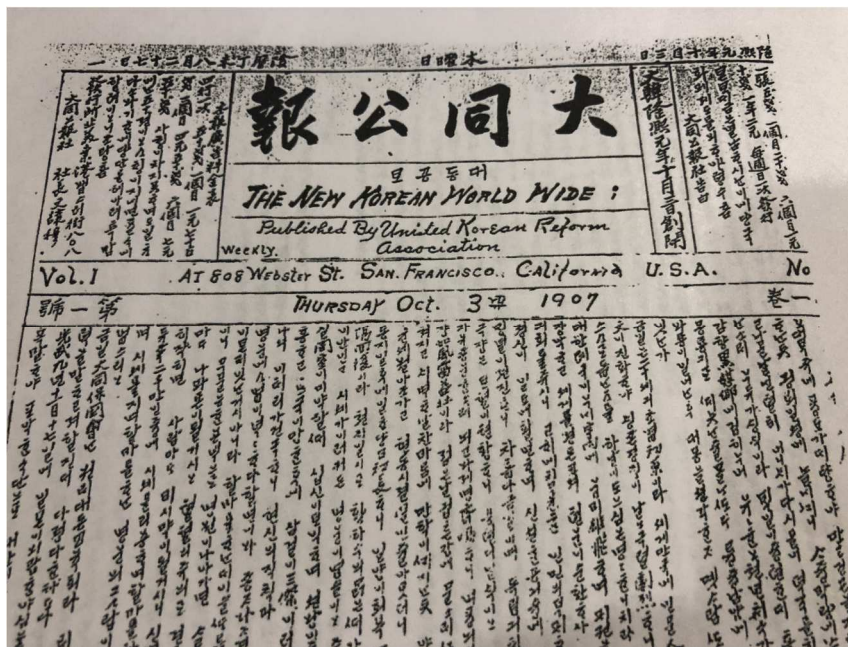
⁶⁴¹ Saveliev, “Militant Diasporas,” 151, reported 2,324 participants, whereas C. H. Park, [Rosia yongbang], 193, reported 2,821 who signed the declaration.

⁶⁴² Ban, “Koreans,” 163.

⁶⁴³ Robinson, “Colonial Publication Policy,” 312; Saveliev, “Militant,” 152.

February to July 1908 under the direction of Ch'oe Pong-joon, the head of the Korean Mutual Aid Society (韓國人共濟會長).

Taedong Kongbo (大東共報) was another influential newspaper published in San Francisco under the editorial leadership of Yi Gang from 1907 to 1910, along with *Shinhan minbo* (新韓民報) which was published in Los Angeles, California.⁶⁴⁴ Numerous articles carried in *Shinhan minbo* between 1909 and 1944 exemplified the paper's role in disseminating news and updates to Koreans at home and abroad.⁶⁴⁵



(Figure 42: *Taedong Kongbo*, Thursday, Oct. 3, 1907)

These papers carried general news on the state of affairs in Korea and in diasporas in California, the RFE, and Manchuria. Also reported were activities of missionaries, such as Dr. Horace Hulbert, updates on the Righteous Armies causing a havoc in various regions, and

⁶⁴⁴ *Taedong Kongbo* (大東共報, *The New Korean World Wide*, published by United Korean Reform Association), October 3, 1907, Vol. 1, No. 1.

⁶⁴⁵ *Shinhan minbo* (新韓民報), 1909-04-07, 1909-04-28... 1944-10-26.

disastrous flooding in Japan as seen in the October 3, 1907 issue of *Taedong Kongbo*. (Figure 42).

Kwonuphoe (勸業會) was an organization established by Choi Jai-hyung in the RFE, effectively leading the anti-Japanese movement and publishing a Korean-language newspaper, called *Kwonup sinmun* (勸業新聞) under the editorial leadership of Shin Chae-ho in 1912. All of these newspapers served to organize meetings of Koreans, report articles about Korean anti-Japanese movements in Russia, and voice their protests against the Japanese annexation of Korea.⁶⁴⁶

In summary, the table below shows newspapers and monthly journals that were published from 1892 to the early 1910s in Korea, California, and in the RFE, as well as in Manchuria in the 1930s.

Newspaper	Pub. Date	Language	Organization (Place of Pub.)	Editors
<i>The Independent</i> (獨立新聞)	1892-1899	Korean/ English	Independence Club (Seoul)	Soh, Jae-Pil, Yun, Chi-ho
<i>Korean Repository</i> (Monthly)	1892, 1895-1898	English	Trilingual Press→ Methodist Pub. House (Seoul)	Homer Hulbert, F. Ohlinger
<i>Hwangsung Sinmun</i> (Capitol Gazette)	1898-1910	Korean/ Chinese	Independent Association (Seoul)	Namgung Eok
<i>The Korea Review</i> (Monthly)	1901-1906	English	Methodist Publishing House (Seoul)	Homer Hulbert
<i>Korea Daily News</i> (大韓每日新報)	1904-1910	Korean/ English	(Seoul)	Ernest Thomas Bethell, Yang Ki-tak
Daily News (每日新報)	1910-	Korean	Residency-General (Seoul)	
Haejo Sinmun (海朝新聞)		Korean	Korean Mutual Aid Society (Vladivostok)	Choe, Pong- Joon

⁶⁴⁶ C. H. Park, [*Rosia yonbang*], 204; Saveliev, “Militant,” 152-153.

Taedong Gongbo (大同公報)	1907-1910	Korean	New Korean World Wide (San Francisco)	Yi, Kang
Taedong Sinbo (大同新報)	1910-	Korean	(Vladivostok, RFE)	Choe, Jai-hyung
Shinhan Minbo (新韓民報)	1909-1944	Korean	Taehan Kungnip Hoe (Los Angeles)	An, Chang-ho
Kwonup Sinmun (勸業新聞)	1912-	Korean	Kwonup Hoe (Vladivostok, RFE)	Shin, Chae-ho
<i>Manmong-ilbo</i> (滿蒙日報)*	1933-1937	Korean	(Shenyang, Manchuria)	
<i>Kando Ilbo</i> (間島日報)*	1936-1937	Korean	(Shenyang, Manchuria)	
<i>Mansun-ilbo</i> (滿鮮日報)*	1937-	Korean	(Shenyang with branches in Seoul, Tokyo, and other cities in Manchuria)	Yi, Yong-suk, Yum, Sang-sup

(Figure 43: Newspapers published in Korea, the RFE, Manchuria, and the U.S.)

The May 7, 1908 issue of *Taehan Maeil Sinbo* in Seoul, however, reported the suspension of Korean newspapers, *Haejo Sinmun*, *Gongnip Sinmun*, and *Hapsung Sinmun* by the Japanese Residency General on account of the New Newspaper Law of 1907, Article 34. Their actions were cited as “agitating and hindering of security”—“治安의 妨害” (*chian ui bang hai*), as highlighted below in Figure 44.⁶⁴⁷ *Mansun-ilbo* (滿鮮日報), *Manmong-ilbo* (滿蒙日報), and *Kando Ilbo* (間島日報) were the newspapers published in Korean language in Manchuria, as shown in Figure 43, fueling the independence movement and the rise of Righteous Army’s activities to its peak in the next several years of the 1930s.

⁶⁴⁷ 大韓每日新報: 대한매일신보 [*Taehan Maeil Sinbo*], 1908. 5. 7, p.2.

日七月五年二熙臨 報申日每獨大 [可認物史都種三第] (二)

<p>● 소업비등 이등박문씨와 중 미씨와 장곡천씨와 김씨 단장은 자일에 덕수궁에 배편하고 또 차림중에 배편 하였다더라</p> <p>● 서리하임 법부대신 조중 응씨는 자일에 동상공부 대신서리물 헌임하였다더라</p> <p>● 각대신분주 근일에 각부 대신들이 무승일인지 시무 항기에 분주분가다 못하며 밤 이면 잠은 자지못한다니 말 이있다더라</p> <p>● 군유주론 নিজ에서 군유 주론의 동의안건을 통감부 에 청의홍지가 수심일이다 니 헌안건은 자일에야 নিজ 으로 보낸대로 일간에 반 포가된다더라</p> <p>● 화한당종류 자자일에 영 성군 리준용씨의 종유원고 문 리지용씨의 종이품 김 숙규씨가 기악을 영술고로 화한당에 가서 화음쓰고 놀았 다더라</p> <p>● 미일선방 동상공부대신송 백준씨는 환국후에 미일 일에서 통감부에 신방한다 더라</p> <p>● 은가유세규족 학지부에서가 유세남 거두는 규족을 영 한야 নিজ 회의에 대출하 였다더라 그 거두는 귀한 은 출주말음으로 대우고가 유 두수선 등등으로 팔등 사지오 제남은 일등에 심</p>	<p>● 원미로 팔등에 삼십정인력 일방간이상은 일등이오 심 간미하는 팔등이라더라</p> <p>● 소업비등사 학지부에서자 영브러 검사판과 주수를 막 부애 파송하는 취부에 제 반수업은 도사호다더라</p> <p>● 소용법피조 법부에서 일 정에 대신선이라 공소한다 방지판소 법판들이 회동하 야 민정소 소용법을 괴초 하노라 허부 주임판과 한 국임은 호사말도 청에치못 하고 일인 서리판은 모다 청에하였다더라</p> <p>● 시찰일성 동상공부 사림 국기소 명목씨의 주수 두환씨가 승민을 시찰할초 로 명법관등디에 갖다가 지 자일에 입성하였다더라</p> <p>● 피초신소 갑화군슈 교청 통씨의일은 여러번 제지하 였거니와 경의 재판소에 그 리원비에 조를하였노라 그 모을 빚성들이 불응하여 평 리원에 선소하였더니 평리 원에서 밋지 아니하고 고 씨도 또로 평리원에 선소 하였다더라</p> <p>● 회주보고 허유정찰에서 니부로 보고하기를 그요를 동남지방에 호재한다 수 합하였고 서부 사연에노 병이호재할 그 정음으로 갖 다가 밋치라호 사음으로 지 금진수한지못하였더라 ● 퇴인인척 연수 일유승 씨가 연산 김경덕 철현씨 판인물은 유인야 노를</p>	<p>● 면답수로 퇴인인물 시 여서 한성지판소에 재판 하노라 김씨의말이 리지하 고 퇴인인은 어찌하여 티 답지못하는고로 법소에서 제가와서 퇴송을라고하였다 더라</p> <p>● 정부시회 한성도 오부경 찰에서와 각과 경부명명식을 시회하였노라 장호 각지방 으로 파송을타이라더라</p> <p>● 신문금지 아다스 회승취 에 류승노 회판하씨의 발 행하노라 회요신문 매스심 호와 상항에 류승노 정지 판씨의 발행은 공립신문 지 대정심철호와 포파에 류승 박일삼씨의 발행은 합 성신문 매스소로 신문지 본처안의발행됨으로 신문 지법 매스소로 신문지 금지하고 압유하였다고 너 부에서 고지하였다더라</p> <p>● 민씨피착 재판서 민병한 씨의 아오 민병숙씨는 무 승스건인지 수일전에 경시 청으로 잡혀갔다더라</p> <p>● 상민정원 함경남도 함흥 군에있는 상민 로민슈 리 형제들이 헌군의 성을 해 철은 괴지스건에 덕야작 그의설에인가 부서 벽등 세로 드리잇은 로원명이라 하노 사모이 노를판을 버 리고 날마다 그근처에 사 판인물은 유인야 노를</p>
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(Figure 44: *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, 1908. 5. 7.)

While most of the newspapers were actively published in California, Seoul, and Vladivostok from 1892 to 1910, three newspapers were published in Manchuria later in the 1930s. *Manmong-ilbo* (滿蒙日報) first appeared in August of 1933 in Shenyang (新京), formerly called Changchun, after the city was designated as the capitol of Manchukuo (滿州國) by Japan in 1932.⁶⁴⁸ *Kando Ilbo* (間島日報) came to be published in 1936 but was taken over by *Manmong-ilbo* by Yi Yong-suk and reintroduced as *Mansun-ilbo* (滿鮮日報) as of May, 1937, under the editorship of Yun Sang-sub. *Mansun-ilbo* became the focal point in the lives of the Korean transnationals in Manchuria with branches in Seoul, Tokyo, and other major cities. After *Dong-A Ilbo* and *Chosun Ilbo*, which had been the only newspapers published in Korea during

⁶⁴⁸ Kim, et al., [Korean Diaspora,] 183.

the colonial period, were suspended by the Residency-General in August of 1940, only the *Maeil Sinbo* (Daily News) served as the official arm of communication by the Japanese.⁶⁴⁹

Kwonuphoe was also a significant financial supporter of seventy Korean schools, such as Kyedong, Syedong, and Sindong, in the RFE, the most famous one being Hanmin School (韓民學校) in Shinhanchon (新韓村=New Korea Town). With 240 student enrollments, Hanmin School was the largest in the RFE and offered a wide-ranging curriculum of mathematics, science, history, music, and physical education as well as Korean and foreign languages. In addition to bible education, the students were introduced to Korean songs and indoctrinated in anti-Japanese nationalist spirits.⁶⁵⁰

By supporting these Korean schools to instill anti-Japanese spirits into the students and working with the local newspapers such as, *Haejo sinmun* (海朝新聞) and *Taedong gongbo* (大東供報), *Kwonuphoe* contributed to promoting the enlightenment of Korean people in the area by holding educational programs to enrich their businesses and lives to become better Koreans.⁶⁵¹ Many of the influential people in leadership positions, such as Choi Jae-hyung, Choe Bong-joon, and Kim Hak-man, joined forces with the leaders of Righteous Army, such as Yi Pom-yun, Yu In-suk, and Hong Bom-do, as well as those involved, such as Yi Sang-sul, Shin Chae-ho, and Yi Dong-hwi, in the Enlightenment Movement in Korea after their exile in the RFE.⁶⁵²

By 1914, *Kwonuphoe* had affiliate offices in over ten cities in the RFE with 7,000 members in January which grew to 10,000 by July of the same year. *Kwonup sinmun* (勸業新聞)

⁶⁴⁹ Kim, et al., [Korean Diaspora,] 231.

⁶⁵⁰ C. H. Park, [Rosia yonbang,] 204.

⁶⁵¹ C. H. Park, [Rosia yonbang,] 204.

⁶⁵² C. H. Park, [Rosia yonbang,]205.

with a circulation of 1,400, supported by *Kwonuphoe*, reached out to the Korean farmers and laborers with news on job opportunities in an effort to help Koreans for economic achievement as well as political independence of their homeland, Korea. *Kwonup sinmun* printed many articles condemning the Japanese colonial administration, as seen in its editorial carried on August 18, 1912:

일본인이 한국 13 도를 넓은 교도소로 만들었으며, 그 안에 살고 있는 우리 동포는 다 일본인의 죄수며, 우리나라에서 쓰는 일본의 법률과 정치는 다 우리에게 대한 교도소 규칙이며, 우리나라의 일본 군사시설은 다 우리에게 대한 큰 형구다.⁶⁵³

Japan has built a large prison out of the 13 provinces of Korea and made all the Korean people who live in them the prisoners of Japan. All the law and order Japan has established in Korea serve as the rules of the prison; the Japanese military systems in Korea serve as the torture chambers for the Koreans. (Author's translation)

This editorial, in particular, was printed in condemnation of the Japanese torturing incident of 105 Koreans, in which Righteous Army militias and many resistance activists were arrested and tortured in Korea. The editorial reflects the effects of Japan's *mission législatrice* in concurring Korea and by learning to speak in the same language of law as the international community of imperialist power in whose eyes the Japanese annexation of Korea would be seen as legal.⁶⁵⁴ One can see how much the print media, published by patriotic intellectuals and organizations overseas in diasporas, helped to lead the anti-Japanese resistance movements when the press in Korea was under the watchful eyes of Japanese colonial administration in this period. Now this dissertation will examine the Korean transnationals in their efforts to become loyal Tsarists and Soviet subjects in the changing environment of their new homelands, the RFE, after the Russian Revolution of 1905-1917.

⁶⁵³ *Kwonup sinmun*, "Editorial," 1912. 8. 18, in C.H. Pak, *Rosia yonbng*, 206; 박환 (Park Hwan). 러시아한인민족운동사 [History of the Russian-Korean People's Movement] (Seoul: T'amgudang, 1995), 175.

⁶⁵⁴ Dudden, *Japan's Colonization*, 3.

c. Koreans as Tsarist and Soviet Subjects

While some Korean newspapers in the RFE demonstrated and cultivated Korean nationalism and anti-Japanese sentiment in the transnational diaspora, other Russian newspapers also showed Korean devotion to Russia. For example, Koreans in the RFE “amply displayed their loyalty to the state” through an open petition carried in *Dalny Vostok* (Far East), an RFE newspaper on August 19, 1910. Signatories pledged that the second- and third-generation Koreans would be “Russified and loyal” to Russia by 1910.

PETITION.

We, the representatives of the Korean associations of the Primore region from Vladivostok, Nikolsk-Ussuriisky, Khabarovsk, ... and other places, numbering sixteen people, met in the city of Vladivostok on August 19, 1910. We resolved to request that the Russian Government allow Korean subjects to become Russian subjects.... You should take into account that we, Koreans, have resided for many years on the Russian territory, and have lost any connections with our former motherland, which has been replaced by Russia. We would like to be faithful subjects of Russia along with many other nationalities, populating it with equal rights... and pledge to serve the Russian czar faithfully... to reinforce the ranks of the Russian army in the Far East.... We sign this on behalf of the associations of the Primore region numbering some 9,780 males of the population, not including females and children. City of Vladivostok, August 19, 1910.⁶⁵⁵

Through this petition, a comprehensive declaration of loyalty, including service in the army along with all other duties, as Russian subjects was pledged in the name of 9,780 men with their family members. Another article in the same paper, also in 1910, reported that hundreds of Korean children were entering the Russian school system with many finishing their secondary education or working among the “general (Russified) populace” to serve Russia as “their new fatherland.”⁶⁵⁶

Historian Chong Hyo Park also noted that Koreans who acquired Russian citizenship started to happily serve in the military by 1909 because they saw this as proof of having equal

⁶⁵⁵ Chang, *Burnt*, 23.

⁶⁵⁶ Chang, *Burnt*, 23, with an unidentified date of “ca. 1910.”

rights as Russian subjects. In 1915 3,000 Koreans residing in Khabarovk, Vladivostok, and Beliye Sovki applied for citizenship. V.V. Grave recognized the fact that many Koreans had served in the Russian Army.⁶⁵⁷ And their children of school age entered schools: 816 boys and 46 girls were attending 20 mission schools run by Russian Orthodox Church, and others attended three schools run by the Russian government. One of those three schools were opened with funds from Koreans in Vladivostok under the Superintendent G. V. Podstavin.⁶⁵⁸

Koreans also showed their loyalty by enthusiastically participating in the “Russian Revolution of February 1917”—the February Revolution (二月革命)— which overthrew the Tsar’s regime. Koreans of the RFE assembled at the First General Assembly of Korean Socialist Rally in Nikolsk-Ussurisk in June 1917.⁶⁵⁹ Many of the *wonhoins* (元戶人), the early settlers, as well as *yohoins* (餘戶人), the newcomers, joined with 96 representatives from various towns in attendance at the rally. Unfortunately, a division showed during the rally among the participants. The *yohoins*, who were mostly engaged in manual labor jobs, were unhappy about the *wonhoins* contingents. Some of the earlier migrants with financial means were already Russified, seemingly pursuing their own interests without any concerns for the patriotic independence causes of Korea or the ideology of Bolshevism.⁶⁶⁰

In 1919, four thousand Koreans also returned from the First World War after serving in the Russian Army. These veterans prodded other Koreans in their diaspora into becoming “staunch Bolshviks.”⁶⁶¹ During the period of *Korenizatsiia* (indigenization) into the 1920s, a program was instituted to educate Soviet national minorities and convert them to “fervent Soviet

⁶⁵⁷ B. B. Граве, quoted in, C. H. Park, [Rosia Yonbang], 138.

⁶⁵⁸ C. H. Pak, [Rosia Yonbang], 94.

⁶⁵⁹ Chang, *Burnt*, 33; C. H. Park, [Rosia Yonbang], 236; Ban, “Koreans,” 163.

⁶⁶⁰ Ban, “Koreans,” 161.

⁶⁶¹ Chang, *Burnt*, 31.

cadres”—a “socialist construction” of the Koreans as a Soviet people.⁶⁶² While the program succeeded in its outreach to younger generation, it also produced “a generational clash” within the Korean community on the issues of Russification.

Korean transnationals, old and new, Russified or not, made earnest efforts to show their support for the new Soviet Russia. Whether out of true sense of allegiance or instinct of pure survival in the volatile geopolitical environment, they rallied in the Russian Revolution and served in Russian military in the First World War. The wide-ranging differences in the origins, family and social backgrounds, education and experiences of those in leadership positions in the RFE and Manchuria will be presented in the next section.

One case in the contemporary Korea-Russia relations to be noted before moving forward is the appointment of Yi Bom-jin (李範晉) as the plenipotentiary consular in St. Petersburg by Emperor Gojong in 1899. As recorded in *Yijo Sillok* on March 15, 1899:⁶⁶³

미국에 주재한 특명전권공사 (特命全權公使) 이범진은 러시아 (俄羅斯), 프랑스 (法蘭西), 오스트리아 (奧地利國) 세 나라에 주재하도록 하라.

I am hereby appointing Yi Bom-jin of the U.S. Plenipotentiary Consular to serve as the Plenipotentiary Consular to Russia, France, and Austria simultaneously. (Author’s translation.)

By this order, Yi Bom-Jin was reassigned from his previous diplomatic post in the U.S. and appointed to represent Korea as Plenipotentiary Consular in Russia, France, and Austria simultaneously. Kim Suk-kyu was appointed to Japan and Min Yong-hwan to the U.S. Yi was a close confidant and family relation of Emperor Gojong, known to have played an important role in the Emperor’s asylum in the Russian Legation (俄館播遷) in Seoul in 1898.

⁶⁶² Chang, *Burnt*, 32.

⁶⁶³ Gojong Sillok, “특명전권대사 이범진을 러시아, 프랑스, 오스트리아에 주재하라고 명하다 [Yi Bom-Jin is hereby appointed as Plenipotentiary Consular to Russia, France, and Austria],” Vol. 39, No. 3 (1899.3.15)

Yi served in his appointed capacity as Korea's representative to Russia from 1900 through the Russo-Japanese War. However, the Japanese Foreign Minister Jutaro Komura raised his objection to having Yi stay in his post in St. Petersburg after the Russo-Japanese War ended. Komura questioned on May 28, 1904: "Corea has now annulled all her treaties and conventions with Russia, would it not be better to take steps to have Corean Minister at St. Petersburg recalled as I hear he is a person of rather pro-Russian character?"⁶⁶⁴ Komura's objection clearly raised a red flag in having Korea's diplomatic liaison in foreign relations not to mention a pro-Russian.

After Yi's position officially ended with no further official recognition or financial support from the Korean court, Russian Emperor Nicolai II (reigned 1894-1917) who had become fond of Yi continued to provide a nominal level of financial support for Yi. And Yi, called "Prince Yi" in the Russian diplomats circle in reverence for his noble composure, continued to communicate with Gojong by secret correspondence and telegram, until he committed suicide on January 13, 1911.⁶⁶⁵ Historian Sergei Kurbanov wrote that there existed over 100 pages of confidential documents and records, regarding the surveillance on Yi and other Koreans who frequented the Consulate in St. Petersburg, preserved in Russian archives.⁶⁶⁶ Yi, born into an upper-class yangban family and in his service to Emperor Gojong as a diplomat, was one of the transnational Koreans displaced on foreign lands, Russia and the U.S., continuing to serve his homeland across the borders and to restore its sovereignty after all. In Yi's own

⁶⁶⁴ NGB, "駐露韓國公使引揚 必要 件," May 28, 1904, 461-463.

⁶⁶⁵ Sergei Olegovich Kurbanov, *Корейская дипломатическая миссия в Санкт-Петербурге в 1900-1911 гг.* (Деятель-ность ч. п. п. м Ли Бомчжина). Избранные материалы [Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in St. Petersburg, Russia, 주 러시아 대한제국 공관 1900-1911: 이범진 공사의 활동에 대한 자료집] [Collected Records on the Activities of Yi Bom-jin, Korean Consular to Russia:1900-1911] (St. Petersburg: Korean Consulate, 2016), 171.

⁶⁶⁶ Kurbanov, [Consulate General], Translated by Kim Kyung-Joon (Seoul, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018), 83.

words, “I was reduced to the lonely life of a refugee without country, family, or future.”⁶⁶⁷ The significance of Yi’s case exemplified how a diplomat of a fallen nation struggled to keep an “embassy without government” as was experienced by another diplomat in a similar situation, Dmitrii I. Abrikossow, of the Russian Empire in Japan in 1917.⁶⁶⁸

The St. Petersburg Gazetta carried the news of the Korea-Japan Treaty having been signed by the Korean Emperor Gojong in an article, printed on July 9, 1907 under the heading, “The Arrival of Lawless Era in Korea –Japan Threatening, Emperor Self-abdicating” (Author’s translation) with a caricature entitled, “Korean Emperor self-abdicating” as shown in Figure 45 below.⁶⁶⁹ Russian media so noted the sad ending of the autonomous state of Korea.



(Figure 45: “스스로 물러나는 대한제국의 황제 [*susuro mulernanun daehan jeguk ui hwangje*= Korean Emperor, signing his self-abdication paper]” A caricature in *Petersburg Gazetta*, 1907.7.12, No.188, p.2)⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁷ Ban, Byung-Yool, “이범진 (李範晉)의 자결(自決) 순국과 러시아와 미주 한인사회의 동향(動向) [Yi Beom-Jin’s Suicide Martyrdom and Korean Communities in Russia and the US: Centering on the Period after 1905],” *The Journal of Korean Studies*, Vol. 26 (2010), 340.

⁶⁶⁸ Dmitrii I. Abrikossow, *Revelations of a Russian Diplomat: The Memoirs of Dmitrii I. Abrikossow*, ed. by George Alexander Lensen (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), 26.

⁶⁶⁹ Kurbanov, *Корейская*, 132.

⁶⁷⁰ Kurbanov, *Корейская*, 130.

d. Diversity of Leadership among the Korean Transnationals in the RFE

It was in the Russian Far East, centered at *Shinhanchon* (新韓村=New Korean village) in Vladivostok, where the first group of Korean migrants to the RFE had settled and formed a Korean diaspora in 1863. This location also served as the central hub of the Korean independence movement in the 1910s. Many former Koreans joined in and united at the coordination of *Kwonuphoe* as the central organization of support.⁶⁷¹ This group's leaders included Yi Wi-jong, the son of Yi Bom-Jin, former Consular to Russia, who was dispatched to Hague Peace Convention as Gojong's envoy; Yi Dong-hui who established the Temporary Korean Government in Shanghai; Oh Ha-mook who served in the Red Army; and Kim In-su who served in the White Army. These individuals had to choose among the ideologies of Marxism, communism, socialism, and partisanship.

Working together with the two prominent leaders of the early settlers, Choi Jai-hyung and An Choong-keun, was a core resistance group known as *Danji dongmaeng* (斷指同盟). All thirteen members of this group, of which An was a member, severed their left ring fingers to pledge allegiance to work together for Korea's independence, hence the name "*danji*" which means cutting fingers. An was arrested for having assassinated the much-hated Governor General Ito Hirobumi at the Harbin Train Station and has been hailed as a national hero by Koreans ever since.⁶⁷²

When examining the profiles of the fifty top resistance leaders in the RFE, as presented in *РОССИЙСКИЕ КОРЕЙЦЫ*, [Photographic Representation of the Anti-Japanese Independence

⁶⁷¹ 사진으로 본 러시아 한인의 항일 독립운동. 제 3 권. 3.1 운동 100주년 기념. [РОССИЙСКИЕ КОРЕЙЦЫ В БОРЬБЕ ЗА НЕЗАВИСИМОСТЬ КОРЕИ ФОТОПОРТРЕТЫ КНИГА 3 = Photographic Representation of the Anti-Japanese Independence Movement of Koreans in Russia (Author's translation)]. (Seoul-Moscow: 한울, 2019), 34.

⁶⁷² [РОССИЙСКИЕ], 39.

Movement of Koreans in Russia] (Author’s translation), one can see the diversity of their transnational origins and the ways they made contributions to the movement. Some were born in Korea and migrated with their families at an young age. Others were born in the RFE. Some were highly educated elites in Korea, Japan, or Russia, while others were uneducated laborers or poor farmers. A few including Yi Bom-yun and Yi Yong were born in noble *yangban* families of Korea. A few were born to rich merchants in the RFE, while most others were born in poor, peasant migrant families from various regions of Korea. Some fought in the Russo-Japanese War on the Russian side, while others went on to fight in the Red Army, White Army, or World War II as Russians.⁶⁷³

The following table shows an analysis of the 50 leaders presented in the 2019 publication entitled *Anti-Japanese Independence Movement of Russian Koreans Seen by Photographs* and edited by Valentin Valentinovich Choi (Цой Валентин Валентинович), the grandson of Choi Jai-hyung.⁶⁷⁴ Where they were born in Korea or in the RFE, their family and educational background, status in the Russian Communist Party, Red Army, participation in Righteous Army or Partisan activities, and whether they or their families were deported in 1937 or executed are tabulated and presented in Figure 46.

Born in Korea	Born in the RFE	Yangban:Poor Farmer’s family	Korean Independence Movement	Partisan commander	R-J War participant
31	14	5 : 24	22	26	3
Red Army commander or soldier	High official in Communist Party	Deported in 1937	Executed in 1937 or later	Laborer	Educated in college or military schools
12	15	13	11	5	18

(Figure 46: Analysis of the profiles of Korean leaders in the RFE and Manchuria)

⁶⁷³ [РОССИЙСКИЕ], 39-137.

⁶⁷⁴ [РОССИЙСКИЕ], [138].

Most of these leaders were in the Righteous Army, actively involved in independence movement activities including the March First Demonstrations that were held in the RFE and Manchuria a few weeks after the news of March First demonstration in Seoul. Some organized or became active as Bolsheviks and in the partisan movement before getting into the upper echelon of the Communist Party in the 1920s and 1930s. Many were deported to Uzbekistan, executed, or exiled during Stalin's terror years in 1937 and after. Some were reinstated to the Communist Party and served as top officials while others never regained their former glory as Tsarists or Soviets.

Most were fluent in Korean, Russian, and Japanese languages. Some were educated in Korean schools, even in traditional *suhdangs*, old-fashioned schools as in Korea, in the RFE or Manchuria. A few were educated in teacher's colleges in Vladivostok, in the Havarovsk Leningrad Military Academy, or Waseda University in Japan. Most were also active in the Russian Revolution and the Communist Party as well as in Righteous Army in the 1900s-1910 and the Korean Independence Movement in the 1920s. Several were either deported, executed or sent into exile around 1937 during the Great Terror years of Stalin. As these Korean transnationals were busily working to regain independence for their homeland, Japan's aggressive colonial administration tightened their domination of Koreans not only in Korea and but also reached over to exert their new power of imperialism in the RFE, which will be examined next.

During the Russian Civil War, 1918-1921, following the Bolshevik-led October Revolution (1917), the Supreme War Council of the Entente Powers decided to invite the Allies of World War I to share in Siberia's wealth of natural resources. Japan was the first nation to enter the RFE with "55,000 to 120,000 soldiers" in some counts and "73,000 soldiers" in other

estimates.⁶⁷⁵ Even using lower estimates, Japanese troops outnumbered other allies with 12,000 Poles, 9,000 Americans, 5,000 Chinese, 4,000 Serbs, 4,000 Romanians, 4,000 Canadians, 2,000 Italians, 1,600 British, and 700 French soldiers. After American forces pulled out of the region on April 1, 1920, the Japanese took control of “all the railways from the Transbaikal to Vladivostok (the Ussuri, Amur, and Transbaikal lines)” which they saw as critical in their “empire building” with rich natural resources, such as timber, oil, natural gas of the region.⁶⁷⁶

When all Allied Forces cleared out of the RFE, Japanese forces grew in number from 73,000 to 100,000 by joining operations with the White Army from Lake Baikal to Vladivostok. The Japanese began to raid Korean districts, including *Sinhanchon*, killing and beating hundreds of Koreans, closing down Korean schools, and emerging as “de facto rulers” of the RFE.⁶⁷⁷ During this raid of terror in the evenings of April 4 through 7, 1920, most of the Korean leaders were killed including Choi Jai-hyung.⁶⁷⁸

Japanese forces “laid siege to Korean independence armies, decimated villages of Korean expatriates, and dissolved Korean nationalist and socialist organizations,” wrote Alyssa Park.⁶⁷⁹ Through this violent siege, the Japanese military firmly established “a non-negotiable state of martial law, brutalizing not only Chinese and Koreans, but Russians, Cossacks, and Ukrainians” across the RFE. Japan acted “as an ‘enemy nation’ that did not value the lives of others” and a self-proclaimed world power that had beaten the Russian Army in 1905.⁶⁸⁰

In spite of their continuing resistance activities against Japan and show of loyalty to Russia, the Korean nationalists in the RFE were greatly reduced in their power. Not only Choi

⁶⁷⁵ Lee and Lukin, *Russia's Far East*, 35; Chang, *Burnt*, 34.

⁶⁷⁶ Chang, *Burnt*, 35.

⁶⁷⁷ Chang, *Burnt*, 36.

⁶⁷⁸ Ban, “Koreans,” 165.

⁶⁷⁹ Alyssa Park, *Borderland*, 271.

⁶⁸⁰ Chang, *Burnt*, 37.

Jae-hyung was killed in the Japanese raid in April of 1920 but also Yi Bom-yun was arrested and sent into an exile in 1910. The resistance movement of Koreans in the transnational diasporas would gain strength by combining their forces in 1905-1908 but suffer a significant loss of their power in the 1910s, as will be presented later in this chapter.

Koreans in Manchuria

Having examined how Korean transnationals fared in the Russian Far East after the Russo-Japanese War ended, this chapter will now investigate how their fellow Koreans in Manchuria managed. Manchuria appeared to offer a great refuge for various types of Koreans who arrived in the early twentieth century: working-class poor in need of income either by farming or manual labor, middle-class commoners without any prospect of social mobility in Korea, and educated elites in exile to pursue anti-Japanese resistance in independence movements. At this point, Manchuria was still under the Qing Dynasty on its way to a final collapse in 1912, soon to become Manchukuo, the puppet nation of Japan in 1932.

With a total population of approximately 29,198,020 in 1920, Manchuria was inhabited by Manchus, Chinese and in the Kwangtung Peninsula by Japanese.⁶⁸¹ The Korean population, as reported by the Foreign Ministry, was 488,656 in 1920, 513,973 in 1925, and 629,000 in 1931.⁶⁸² Mongolia was inhabited “chiefly by Mongolian tribes with a large sprinkling of Chinese.... Besides these, there are some 600,000 Koreans in Mongolia, and more than 100,000 Russians” which is more or less similar to the estimates given by the Foreign Ministry.⁶⁸³ The pattern of labor migration continued: “Every spring from 350,000 to 450,000 coolies migrate from Shantung to work on the Manchurian farms, and on the railway, and after the harvest

⁶⁸¹ H. K. Lee, *Korean Migrants*, 200

⁶⁸² Brooks, “Peopling,” 29.

⁶⁸³ South Manchurian Railway, *Manchuria*, 3.

220,000 to 330,000 return to their homes.”⁶⁸⁴ Many others stayed in Manchuria and found permanent employment.

As Charles Walter Young, Technical Counsellor to the Far Eastern Commission of Enquiry by the League of Nations, reported in 1932, the number of Koreans in Manchuria has been “variously estimated as totaling between approximately 700,000 and 1,500,000” for several reasons.⁶⁸⁵ Young attributed such an “extraordinary discrepancy” to various factors: 1) no real census had ever been taken of Manchurian population, 2) most of the Japanese figures came from the Consular Service in Manchuria with a tendency to minimize the Korean population, while the Chinese sources gave “extraordinarily high” counts to claim their allegation of Koreans in Manchuria being the “vanguard of Japanese penetration and absorption” and 3) Koreans in Manchuria wanted to “conceal their nationality and identity” and remain unaccounted for, as many were engaged in clandestine activities of independence movement or militant resistance such as Righteous Armies.⁶⁸⁶

Koreans in Manchuria have been categorized into two types in the historiography: *transnational migrants* who came in search of better life but with no opportunities open except for agriculture or manual labor, and *patriotic nationalists* fighting for Korea’s independence—“Korea for Koreans”—in opposition to the Japanese imperialist aggression.⁶⁸⁷ Both groups of Koreans were wedged between “two opposing forces”—the nationalist Chinese who resented the

⁶⁸⁴ South Manchurian Railway, *Manchuria*, 3.

⁶⁸⁵ C. Walter Young, *Korean Problems in Manchuria As Factors in the Sino-Japanese Dispute: An Analytical and Interpretative Study* by C. Walter Young, Technical Counsellor to the Far Eastern Commission of Enquiry; Far Eastern Associate, Institute of Current World Affairs, New York City. Study No. 9. Supplementary Documents to the Report of the Commission of Enquiry. [Geneva?: League of Nations, 1932?].

⁶⁸⁶ Young, *Korean Problems*, 4 and 6; Santiago J. Ravello, *Koreans as Japanese as Manchurians: Korean Nationality in Manchuria* (University Honors Thesis, Portland State University, 2018), 10.

⁶⁸⁷ Young, *Korean Problems*, 8.

Korean intrusion and the imperialist Japanese who regarded Koreans as the Japanese “medium” of imperialism.⁶⁸⁸

Other historians argued there were three types of Koreans in Kando district in the early 1900s: pro-Japanese serving the Japanese *kempeitai* (憲兵隊), anti-Japanese guerrillas in Righteous Army (義兵), and members of *Ilchinhoe* (一進會= Advancement in Unity Society). These three groupings of Koreans in Manchuria brought more divisiveness into their transnational diaspora as the Russo-Japanese War erupted in 1904 and Korea fell under the Japanese colonial administrative structure between 1905 and 1910.

Historian Hyun Ok Park described Korean lives in Manchuria as being caught between Chinese nationalism and Japanese imperialism as well as Korean desire for land ownership. Koreans developed a “triangular relationship” or “bedfellow-type relationship” with the Chinese and Japanese “by turning these rivals against each other.”⁶⁸⁹ Park further characterized this phenomenon as the “politics of osmosis” in a strange dual dynamic relationship of “*tongsang imong*” [同床二夢] in which two “bedfellows”—the colonizers and the colonized sharing one bed—are having two different dreams.⁶⁹⁰

In their attempt to occupy and expand into Manchuria as their next colony, Japan dispossessed them of their land in Korea to make room for Japanese farmers as part of the Japanese national plan of imperial expansion into the continent of Asia. The Kando Treaty was established in 1909 between China and Japan with the latter “acting on the interest of its protectorate”—Korea.⁶⁹¹ The territorial rights of Kando, to which Koreans had migrated and

⁶⁸⁸ Hoon K. Lee, “Korean Migrants in Manchuria,” *Geographical Review*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (April, 1932), 196; Hyun Ok Park, *Two Dreams*, 231.

⁶⁸⁹ Hyun Ok Park, *Two Dreams*, 24.

⁶⁹⁰ Hyun Ok Park, *Two Dreams*, 1.

⁶⁹¹ Santiago J. Ravello, *Koreans as Japanese as Manchurians: Korean Nationality in Manchuria* (University Honors Thesis, Portland State University, 2018), 12.

cultivated since 1860s, were seceded to China by this Treaty in exchange for the Japanese right to establish a police presence under the pretext of providing safety for the Japanese consulate and its residents.

Such politics of osmosis developed prominently in the relationship between Korean migrants and the Japanese empire in Kando. Between Korean peasants and Japanese power holders, both dreamt of obtaining land in Manchuria after the Sino- and the Russo-Japanese Wars. Both ended up empowering the Japanese advancement into Manchuria. Korean migrants of the early days were preoccupied by their wish to own lands, which they could not do in Korea. The Korean population grew from 71,000 in 1907 to 356,010 by 1926, while the Hans and Mans amounted to only 23,500 in 1907 and 86,349 in 1926. As discussed in Chapter I, many of these Koreans in the Kando area were given rights to own land regardless of their status as Chinese subjects or not, because China wanted to populate their borderlands with migrant Koreans to create a buffer zone.

On the other hand, the Japanese government wanted to promote emigration of Japanese and Koreans to Manchuria for a number of reasons. First of all, after the massive demonstrations across Korea and in the diasporas in 1919, Japan appeared to relax their aggressive repression of Koreans. Instead the Japanese government encouraged Koreans to move out of the peninsula to the outer regions of Manchuria, the RFE, Hawaii, and the U.S. mainland.⁶⁹² Secondly, in view of the reluctance of Japanese's emigration to Manchuria, Japan tried to make room for Japanese nationals in the Korean peninsula where daily life was less harsh and relatively easier.⁶⁹³ With the establishment of Southern Manchurian Railway Company with a headquarter in Dalien in

⁶⁹² The Ho Young Ham Papers, Special Collections of Research Library, University of California in Los Angeles, compiled by Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation, 2013, 25.

⁶⁹³ Kim, [Manchuria Arirang], 88-89.

1906 and the Oriental Development Company in 1908, followed by the Kando Treaty, signed in 1909, Japan tried to encourage more Japanese to emigrate to Kando area. However, the Japanese people preferred to open businesses and settle in Korea where they felt safer and closer to home in Japan. Although statistics show an increase of the Japanese in Manchuria from 75,219 in 1910 to 228,700 in 1930, the Japanese tended to stay within the confines of *Kwandong Chochaji* (關東州租借地) area.⁶⁹⁴

Overall, the Japanese population in the general areas of Manchuria increased only by a fraction at best according to the same statistics quoted above, from 13,285 in 1910 to 14,407 in 1930. The report from South Manchurian Railway shows a decrease from 14,399 in 1910 to 13,909 in 1927, whereas Korean population grew from 50,666 in 1910 to 545,833 in 1927, more than ten-folds, in a striking contrast.⁶⁹⁵ According to the statistical data of Harbin taken by the number of residents in 1938, the population of Koreans in Kando, “a new frontier of impoverished and uneducated peasants,” represented 47 (0.2%) with 31-51 years as early settlers, 1,978 (19.2%) with 6-30 years, 2,118 (36.7%) with 0-5 years as new arrivals in Kando, and 1,621 (28.1%) as the second generation born in Manchuria.⁶⁹⁶ Using these statistics in the absence of reliable population reports of the late 1800s and the early 1900s, one may deduce the presence of new arrivals, as well as early settlers and a second generation of Koreans—in almost equal distribution, taking into account that about a half of the new arrivals returned to Korea.⁶⁹⁷

Charles Young quoted Kim San-min, one of the Korean employees of the South Manchurian Railway in Dalian, as saying “Generally speaking, no opportunities are open for the

⁶⁹⁴ Kim, et al., [Korean Diaspora], 36.

⁶⁹⁵ South Manchurian Railway Research Department statistics, quoted in, Kim, et al., [Korean Diaspora], 49.

⁶⁹⁶ 滿州國國務院總務廳統計處, 第一次臨時人口調查報告書 都邑偏 第二卷 哈爾濱特別市 [Census Data of Harbin Special District of Manchuria], 1938, 140-141, quoted in Kim, et al., [Korean Diaspora], 307.

⁶⁹⁷ Hyun Ok Park, *Two Dreams*, 234.

Koreans, except in agriculture. Of educated Koreans in Manchuria living in the interior, some 30 percent are paid for by anti-Japanese organizations and the rest are all educated idlers....in places directly under the jurisdiction of the Japanese consulates, some 30 per cent of the Koreans are traders in contraband, 10 per cent are merchants and another 10 per cent are engaged in various trades.”⁶⁹⁸ What Kim meant by various trades included trading of illegal drugs and smuggling as noted by Young.

The image below in Figure 47 shows a pattern of distribution of Korean migrant population in Manchuria in 1929. This information was captured by historian Hoon K. Lee of Union Christian College in Pyongyang, Korea as part of the studies of “migration and land use in pioneer belts of the world” sponsored by the American Geographical Society.⁶⁹⁹ As shown in Lee’s calculation based on his intensive fieldwork and footwork, extremely heavy concentrations of Koreans existed right above the Yalu (on the left) and Tumen (on the right) Rivers, densely clustered in Jilin and Kando regions.

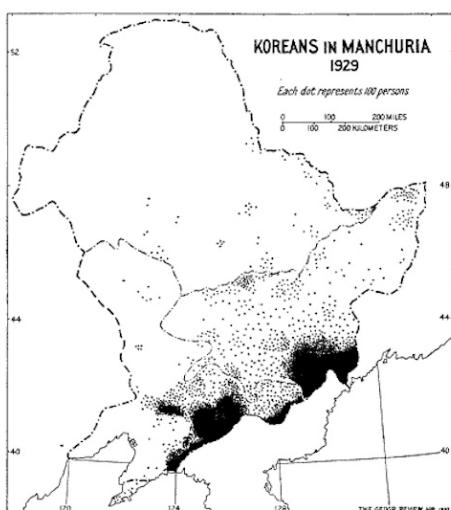


FIG. 5—The distribution of Koreans in Manchuria. One dot represents 100 persons. Note the concentration in Kando (Chientao) and the basin of the Yalu (West Kando). Scale of map, 1 : 19,250,000.

(Figure 47: Koreans in Manchuria, 1929)⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁸ Young, *Korean Problems*, 7.

⁶⁹⁹ H. K. Lee, “Korean Migrants,” 196.

⁷⁰⁰ H. K. Lee, “Korean Migrants,” 201.

As another Japanese whom Young quoted wrote: “Of Koreans in Manchuria, about half of the inhabitants, other than farmers, are without regular employment, or, more exactly, are secretly engaged in unlawful occupations... smuggling of contraband drugs and other articles Most of the smugglers live in cities in the Chinese Eastern Railway area, notably in Harbin.”⁷⁰¹ Both legal and illegal opportunities were open to Korean transnationals in Manchuria in the post-war period. Korean lives in Manchuria were deeply affected even as new opportunities arose for them to serve as Japanese colonials without actually having the same privileges as the Japanese nationals. Koreans were increasing their status as owners of lands or sizable businesses, as more of their compadres continued to migrate from Korea to escape the Japanese colonial administration.

a. The South Manchurian Railway Company

As a statement of self-congratulations for public relations and advertisement in 1922, the South Manchurian Railway Company claimed that a “great railway system has brought modern enterprise, education and civilization into the provinces.”⁷⁰² Historians have recognized South Manchurian Railway Company as one of the two primary vehicles of the Japanese enterprise of economic imperialism in the region along with the Oriental Development Company.

Bertram Lenox Simpson, also known as B. L. Putnam Weale, gave insight into the impact of the South Manchurian Railway Company in the early 1900s. He explained how:

There is to-day a curious and ominous little sign in North-Eastern Korea. During the war a great deal of light railway material was landed at Gensan, and carried by small steamers to the northern port of Songching. It now transpires that a light military railway has been constructed from...Chinch'eng to a village bearing the name of Huailin on the Tiumen river. This river...marks the Chinese-Russian frontier. The total length of the railway is given as 112 miles (230 Chinese li, or 75 miles) by road from its terminal point, Hualin, to the Chinese town of Hungchun on the Kirin-Primorsk frontier.⁷⁰³

⁷⁰¹ M. Akatsuka, *A Treatise on Koreans in Manchuria*, quoted in Young, *Korean Problems*, 7.

⁷⁰² South Manchurian Railway, *Manchuria: Land of Opportunities* (New York: South Manchurian Railway, 1922), 3.

⁷⁰³ B. L. Putnam Weale, *The Coming Struggle in Eastern Asia* (London: MacMillan, 1908), 501.

Weale noted the expanding presence of railways throughout Korea as the Japanese were trying to build a throughway system to connect with ease from Japan to China via various cities of Korea: Seoul-Gensan, Seoul-Busan, and Seoul-Gunsan then up to the northern borders in Hoeryong, Hamgyongdo, and up to Hunchun, China.

Such a system would make Japan's imperial projects in Korea and China infinitely easier for transporting people and materials in the coming years. Weale suspected that railways for commercial concessions such as the Tumen River Lumber Concession were being brought into Chosun by Japan to enable massive transportation of Japanese soldiers into China or Russia "with the utmost secrecy at a few hours' notice," forecasting what was to come in the coming decades.⁷⁰⁴ Historian Peter Duus confirmed in 1984 that "there was a strong army interest in railroad construction" since the railway line to connect "from Fusan through Seoul to Uiju on the Manchurian border" along with telegraph lines between Seoul, Fusan, and Incheon, served as a "great thoroughfare across the Asian continent" which served not only the Japanese Military but also the commercial ventures well in the coming years.⁷⁰⁵

By way of diplomatic dispatch No. 47 sent from Ambassador Luke E. Wright in Tokyo on October 15, 1906, the U.S. Secretary of State was informed of the incorporation of the South Manchurian Railway Company as of August 18, 1906. The Government Order was signed by Minister of Communications Isaburo Yamagata, Minister of Finance Yoshiro Sabatani, and Minister for Foreign Affairs Tadasu Hayashi on August 1, 1906. The South Manchurian Railway

⁷⁰⁴ Weale, *The Coming Struggle*, 501.

⁷⁰⁵ Duus, "Economic Dimensions," 138.

Joint Stock Company was founded by Imperial Ordinance No. 142, signed on June 7, 1906. The Head office would be located in Tokyo and with a branch office in Tairen (Dalien).⁷⁰⁶

According to Ambassador Wright's dispatch, the South Manchurian Railway Company was established "for the purpose of operating the railways and adjacent mines in southern Manchuria."⁷⁰⁷ The company's shares were to be held "only by the Governments and subjects of Japan and China." The capital of the new company was to be 15,000,000 yen, of which the Japanese government held "one-half in the shape of its Manchurian railways and mines."⁷⁰⁸ The remaining half of the shares was to be divided among Japanese subjects, the Japanese government and the subjects of China (to be determined by the Chinese government), ensuring a majority of the stock would be in Japanese hands.

Wright surmised that it was the Japanese policy to own a controlling interest and to direct the operations of all railways in Manchuria. One of the sore points of contention in the future, as laid out in Wright's memo, was the size of the railroad gauge in the Russian railway of the north (5 feet wide) being different from the standard 4 feet 8.5-inch gauge of the lines in Korea and China. This issue of compatibility was resolved by the Japanese replacing the Russian railroad tracks.

The first president of the South Manchurian Railway (SMR), Goto Shimpei (後蘇新平), founded the Research Department, which he "considered utterly essential to colonial management" in April 1907.⁷⁰⁹ By 1940, the Research Department of the company alone employed 2,354 employees for 38 years under the master plan developed by Goto. The president

⁷⁰⁶ FRUS, "South Manchurian Railway Company – Ambassador Wright to the Secretary of State," From Luke E. Wright to the Secretary of State, Diplomatic Dispatches, Japan, No. 11, June 15, 1906.

⁷⁰⁷ FRUS, "Ambassador Wright to the Secretary of State," Tokyo, June 15, 1906.

⁷⁰⁸ FRUS, "Ambassador Wright to the Secretary of State," Tokyo, June 15, 1906, p. 1017.

⁷⁰⁹ Fogel, Joshua A. *Life Along the South Manchurian Railway: The Memoirs of Ito Takeo* (London: Routledge, 2015), vii.

believed in “military preparedness in civil garb (*bunso teki bubi*)”—a “cultural invasion with a Central Laboratory, popular education for the resident populace, and forge other academic and economic links.”⁷¹⁰ In other words, Goto believed the best way to rule the colonials was to infiltrate their cultural lives through education. As seen in the later years of Japanese colonial administration of Korea, the government deprived the colonials of the use of their own national language, *Hangul*, in their daily lives, public and private.

Under Goto’s direction, major research projects were launched to 1) study the economy, society, and cultures of Manchuria to help develop “long-range economic policies” in the region, 2) study the environment, science and technology, “such as physics, chemistry, geology, agriculture, botany, hygiene, meteorology, and bacteriology,” of the region, as well as 3) connect the findings of these studies to “business and statistical matters connected with the Company activities.”⁷¹¹ These research projects were launched and accomplished in the next decades, producing monumental research reports of 2,250 pages in five volumes on the history and geography of China and Korea, in cooperation with Tokyo University School of Sinology.⁷¹²

The next management principle Goto Shimpei applied after taking office as the first president of the SMR was to push for agricultural immigration of Japanese people into Manchuria between 1904 and 1906 and facilitate the formation of a Japanese town near the SMR. However, the Japanese who migrated came under the assumption that Manchuria was a wide open, mostly uninhabited area, were confronted by many antagonistic Chinese who had already settled in the area. Majority of the Japanese ended up returning to Japan promptly.⁷¹³ As

⁷¹⁰ Fogel, *Life*, viii.

⁷¹¹ John Young, *The Research Activities of the South Manchurian Railway Company, 1907-1945: A History and Bibliography* (New York: Columbia University, 1966), 3.

⁷¹² Fogel, *Life*, xiii.

⁷¹³ K.I. Kim, et al., [*Korean Diaspora*], 28.

seen in the table below by H. K. Lee (Figure 48), the total population of Manchuria by agricultural regions in 1920 was 29,190,020.

TABLE I—MANCHURIAN POPULATION ACCORDING TO AGRICULTURAL REGIONS*

DISTRICTS	POPULATION	DENSITY PER SQUARE MILE	DENSITY PER SQUARE MILE OF CULTIVATED LAND
1. South of Mukden	7,057,270	218	1,206
2. Peking-Mukden Line	2,335,600	343	823
3. Kaiyuan	2,808,140	333	804
4. Mukden-Hailung Line	1,206,160	132	949
5. Changchun-Kungchuling	2,620,200	359	671
6. Szepingkai-Taonan Line	1,297,730	72	403
7. Kirin-Changchun Line	1,253,070	66	503
8. Chientao	578,000	38	578
9. Southern Branch of the Chinese Eastern Railway	2,111,300	195	406
10. Harbin	475,490	2,353	3,396
11. Eastern Branch of the Chinese Eastern Railway	1,149,150	48	385
12. Lower Sungari	1,899,490	53	412
13. Hulan-Hailin Line	1,389,230	97	366
14. Western Branch of the Chinese Eastern Railway	2,791,980	31	319
15. Northern Manchuria and other localities	225,110	1	89
Total Population and Average Density	29,198,020	78	590

*Industrial Statistics of Manchuria, Research Bureau of the South Manchuria Railway Co., 1920.

(Figure 48: Manchurian Population According to Agricultural Regions)⁷¹⁴

From 1895-1910, the impact of the establishment of the South Manchurian Railway in 1906 and the Oriental Development Company in 1908 on the lives of Korean transnationals was too soon to be measured in full scale. Their lives in Manchuria were impacted more greatly, for better or worse, after Japan established Manchukuo, the puppet state, in 1932 with a figure head of Pui as the last Emperor of China.

b. Newer Arrivals from Korea, 1910-

With the establishment of the Oriental Development Company (東洋拓殖會社) by Ito Hirobumi in 1908, the Japanese Government launched an aggressive acquisition of agricultural

⁷¹⁴ H. K. Lee, "Korean Migrants," 200.

lands and cadastral registration of lands in Korea, resulting in “the mounting indebtedness of Korean landowners and tenants” and “the consequent mortgaging of agricultural lands to loan associations,” all of which pushed more Korean migrant farmers to cross the borders without much choice, being deprived of lands to work on at home.⁷¹⁵

Mass migration of Koreans to Manchuria surged to 300,000 after the March First Demonstration in 1919 before decreasing by 90,000 disappointed returnees. The net total of Koreans was 200,000 by 1926. However, C. Walter Young who had been dispatched to investigate “Korean problems in Manchuria” by the Commission of Enquiry by the League of Nations stated that “No doubt there had long been a clandestine seepage of Koreans from their homeland into Manchuria, especially of those who are political partisans opposed to Japanese rule in Chosen.”⁷¹⁶ The Japanese Government’s official policy toward Korean emigration to Manchuria vacillated between the terms of Governor General Terauchi who took the position of restriction and the next Governor General Viscount Saito who stood for encouragement of emigration . The Japanese never “imposed rigid passport and inspection regulations” at the border of Koreans migrating to Manchuria.⁷¹⁷

Koreans as the colonized became Japanese subjects by legal definition, which placed Koreans in Manchuria supposedly at the same level as the Japanese nationals and above the Chinese. However, Koreans were not considered entirely Japanese. Koreans were categorized as “*Bandoin*” (半島人=Peninsula people), which put Koreans in a precarious position in between the Chinese and the Japanese.⁷¹⁸ As of March 1932, Koreans in Manchuria were permitted to maintain dual citizenships as Japanese and Manchukuo subjects by the Japanese Government in

⁷¹⁵ Young, *Korean Problems*, 16.

⁷¹⁶ Young, *Korean Problems*, 9.

⁷¹⁷ Young, *Korean Problems*, 14.

⁷¹⁸ K. I. Kim, et al., [Korean Diaspora], 24.

their push to promote more Koreans to migrate from Korea to Manchuria as producers of rice, as well as to “make room for Japanese immigrants” on Korean Peninsula.⁷¹⁹

Historian Barbara Brooks asserted that the Japanese colonial administrators, such as Consul General Hayashi Kyujiro and Consul Ishii Itaro, advocated policies that encouraged Korean immigration to Manchuria and naturalization as Japanese subjects, which “exacerbated Chinese abuse of Korean settlers.”⁷²⁰ In an interview characterized as “extremely hostile” by Brooks, when questioned by a reporter about the dangerous situation of “Chinese authorities oppressing or harassing Koreans in Manchuria,” Hayashi answered:

Dangerous? Isn't this inevitable because they are said to be Japanese citizens just like us? I treat Koreans as citizens of the empire in just the same way I treat Japanese people. The majority of problems of my job concern ordinary people.⁷²¹

Hayashi and other Japanese leaders' so-called policy of inclusion of Koreans as Japanese in Manchuria further aggravated the Chinese abuse of Koreans whom they regarded as the foremen of Japanese colonialism.

Among the many reports and documents recorded in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives for the period of 1930-32 on the matters of Koreans in Manchuria is a comprehensive analysis called “Situation of life of Koreans in Kanto (Jiandao [Chentao], Gando)” with tables, showing the “ratio of farmer and peasant families to land owners, classification of landowners, owner farmers, peasants, owner farmers with tenant work in Hunchun region of Kanto in 1930.”⁷²²

⁷¹⁹ Brooks, “Peopling,” 40.

⁷²⁰ Brooks, “Peopling,” 38.

⁷²¹ Brooks, “Peopling,” 39.

⁷²² JACAR, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Records of Investigation on issues regarding Jiandao, investigated in April 1931,” B02130106200 (1931).

	Koreans	Chinese
No. Households of Farmers	29,551	3,373
No. Farmers	167,359	19,544
Land owned (町)	66,586	56,748
Landlords	1,630	1,301
Yeomen	9,671	1,178
Tenant Farmers	11,084	507
Small Yeomen Farmers	7,166	387

(Figure 49: Ratio of Farmers between Koreans and Chinese in Kando, 1931)⁷²³

The above figures represent predominantly large numbers of farming households and farmers of Korean descent compared to the Chinese by nearly ten-fold, while the size of the land owned show very little difference with Korean-owned being slightly larger than Chinese-owned acreage. This high number of Koreans who owned lands in 1931 might have been due to the influx of affluent upper-class Koreans exiling to escape the Japanese imperialist aggression. As for the number of tenant farmers, Koreans were predominantly higher than Chinese, however, it is not certain whether Korean tenants were working under Korean landlords or Chinese.

When the official inauguration of Manchukuo was about to be announced in February 1932, Yun Chi-ho wrote in his diary on February 22, “As a Korean patriot I would like to see Japan succeed in its Manchurian policy...the Japanese nation ... may be inclined to be somewhat more generous in its political and economic treatment of the Koreans in Korea...A Japan-controlled Manchuria will have room for employment of a large number of educated Koreans.”⁷²⁴ Yun hoped that Japanese expansion into Manchuria would bring more opportunities for Koreans as it did for Japanese who gained jobs and businesses to assist their imperial

⁷²³ JACAR, Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Records of Investigation on issues regarding Jiandao, investigated in April 1931,” B02130106200 (1931). (Author’s tabulation).

⁷²⁴ *Yun Chi-ho ilgi*, February 22, 1932.

projects. Many Koreans spoke the language and were familiar with the Japanese culture, having been a colony for two decades by then.

Although Japanese officials and businessmen were “ambivalent about enlarging the scope of Korean duties and responsibilities,” due to “fear and suspicion” as well as “arrogance and racism” against Koreans, historian Carter J. Eckert saw some of Yun’s expectations were fulfilled to a certain extent.⁷²⁵ Eckert cited a Korean businessmen joining in the expansion of the empire by establishing a ten-million-yen textile subsidiary near Mukden in 1939 as an example. There were some Koreans such as teachers, technicians, and medical doctors who found their “professional niches” in Manchukuo, according to Eckert.⁷²⁶

A comparative tabulation on the jobs and businesses run in the city of Bongchun (Mukden) by nationalities in 1935 shows 16,509 Chinese (including the Mans, the Hans, the Mongols, and others) occupying 88.5% of the professional job market while only 1,921 (10.3%) were occupied by 1,921 Japanese (including 201 Koreans as Japanese). The table also reflected a large number of jobless Chinese (226,202) and Japanese (10,632, of whom were 5,886 Koreans).⁷²⁷ Owen Lattimore found in 1929-1930 the majority of Koreans in Manchuria to be “revolutionary and anti-Japanese, having for that reason migrated from Korea into Chinese territory” except for rice farmers who took up 90 percent of Korean migrants in rural villages of Manchuria.⁷²⁸ That may explain the low representation of Koreans in the city of Bongchun in terms of employment and business ownership.

⁷²⁵ Carter J. Eckert, “Total War, Industrialization, and Social Change in Late Colonial Korea,” Chapter 1 in *The Japanese Wartime Empire: 1931-1945*, ed. by Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 33,

⁷²⁶ Eckert, “Total War,” 35.

⁷²⁷ Kim, et al., [Korean Diaspora], 115.

⁷²⁸ Lattimore, *Manchuria*, 239.

As for business ownership in the vicinity of the South Manchurian Railways, 1,634 Japanese owned restaurants, groceries, construction material shops, cafés, obstetrical clinics among others in that order, with 1,015 Chinese trailing behind with street merchants (728), groceries (72), and restaurants (58) among the top. 28 Koreans were shown to own small lodging houses (旅館), street merchants, and miscellaneous small businesses.⁷²⁹

Regarding the living conditions of Koreans in the vicinity of South Manchurian Railways, more specifically in the Korean town of Sohtap (西塔) and Bokdo (福島) sections, where 80-90 percent of Koreans lived at the time, an article in *Mansun Ilbo* on September 1, 1940 explained below.

The streets and alleys in these Korean neighborhoods have not changed even a bit since 70 to 80 years ago when people were wearing topknots. Not a speck of asphalt or sewage can be seen. After one hour's rain, streets get flooded and dirty waters run through the gates of homes to the point of not being able to walk without taking off shoes....Less than ten meters away from the train tracks, the ghettos of Chosun attract my attention to the miserably gruesome scenery.⁷³⁰ (Author's translation)

From the rice patches of farmlands to the cities bustling with new opportunities, albeit as part of the Japanese imperial projects, Korean transnationals' lives did not seem to fare any better than their previous lives in Korea.

Historian Kim Young-pil described the Korean migrants' contradicting views of Manchuria as the land of stability versus instability, settled versus unsettled, and safety versus lack of safety. They knew they needed to settle down and make Manchuria their home. But deep down they kept their hopes of returning to Korea sometime in their lifetime, not trying to patch up the holes on their roofs, thinking they will be leaving soon to go home.⁷³¹ Hence, the title of

⁷²⁹ Kim, et al., [Korean Diaspora], 123.

⁷³⁰ Kim, et al., [Korean Diaspora], 165.

⁷³¹ K.I. Kim, [Korean Diaspora], 55.

Kim's book—*Manchuria Arirang of Korean-Chinese Diaspora*—reflects the tragic sentiments of Korean sojourners in their transnational diaspora in Manchuria. In spite of such a dim outlook on their personal lives, Korean transnationals in Manchuria kept up with their collective efforts to restore the sovereignty of their old ancestral homeland in anti-Japanese resistance and education of their off-springs. They maintained their “homeland orientation” collectively in solidarity, long after their original dispersement, and “boundary maintenance” by educating their children in Korean customs and language—typical characteristics of life in transnational diaporas as scholars such as Rogers Brubaker has categorized.⁷³² These characteristics will be the focus of examination in the next section.

c. Manchuria as the Hub of Education and Independence Movement

In 1906 a new wave of Koreans migrated to Manchuria after the Japanese intensified their colonial reach into all aspects of the Korean state as their protectorate—foreign and domestic affairs as well as private lives. More Korean farmers, such as Kim Shi-soon (金時順), migrated and started wet-rice cultivation in the outskirts of Bongchun and formed a Korean diaspora, called *Oh-ga-hwang-chon* (吳家荒村).⁷³³ Many other families followed into the area, as Bongchun was not only the center of commerce and transportation but also the hub of foreign legations such as Japanese, American, Russian, and German. This location was convenient for migrants to conduct business as a dependable source of income.

A family of importance in the history of Korean transnational migration to Manchuria in this period was led by a matriarch—a widow with three sons and a daughter—in 1913. The Im (林) family, led by Boeboe Yim under her Christian name, migrated from Hamheung city in

⁷³² Brubaker, *Grounds*, 122-124.

⁷³³ 김주용 (Joo Yong Kim). “만주지역 도시화와 한인이주 실태 – 봉천과 안동을 중심으로- [The Urbanization in Manchuria and the Korean Emigration Condition]” *한국사학보* 35 권 0 호 (2009 년 5 월), 333.

Hamgyong Namdo (Southern Hamgyong Province) after her husband passed away. She settled with her family in Yongjung (龍井), not far from Myungdong where Kim Yak-yun's clan had settled in 1899 in Kando.

A significant aspect of the Boeboe Yim's case was her steadfast resolve to migrate to Kando and raise her three sons and a daughter singlehandedly in a foreign land of transnational diaspora. Mrs. Yim Boeboe's third son, Im Gook Jung, was involved in an incident, called "*sib o man won talchui sagun* (Robbery of 150,000 won, 十五萬圓 奪取事件)" in December of 1919, which will be described more fully in the section on Korean Independence Movement later in this chapter.⁷³⁴

As the Korean population increased exponentially after 1906 and into the 1910s, a wave of educational zeal spread among the Korean migrant communities, with members wanting to teach their young to learn the Korean way and infuse them with nationalist patriotism toward Korea. North Kando became the center of education, led by members of *Shinminhoe* (新民會=New Peoples' Association) such as Yi Sang-gu. A new educational institution called *Suhjeon-susook* (瑞甸書塾) was founded in Yongjung (龍井) with 22 students and taught by Yi Sang-sul (李相高). A renowned scholar, Yi paid for all the financial needs of the school including the teachers' salaries so that students could attend tuition-free.⁷³⁵ Students came not just from the adjacent areas of Myungdong, but also from other regions of the Russian Far East as well as from Hamgyongdo, Korea.

⁷³⁴ 임영수 [Im Young-soo], 임국정 의사와 간도 15 만원 사건 [*Im Kook-Jung Uisa wa Kando 15 man won sagun*] (Seoul: Yullin Sesang Communication, 2014), 38; Mael Sinbo, "*sib o man won talchui sagun*," (1920.1.28.).

⁷³⁵ 서평일, 김재홍, [Suh Gwoeng-il and Jai-hong Kim], 북간도민족운동의 선구자 규암 김약연 선생 [Kyuam Kim Yak-yun: the Pioneer of Buk-Kando Nationalist Movement] (서울: 고려글방, 1997), 272; D. S. Suh, [*Kim Yak-yun*], 58.

However, the *Suhjeon-susook* was short-lived, as Yi Sang-sul was sent to the Second Hague Peace Convention as one of the Emperor's three envoys in October 1907. He became implicated in what was called the *Hague Incident*, in which the Emperor's envoys were refused of admission to enter the convention.⁷³⁶ Gojong's three envoys, Yi Sang-sul, Yi Joon, and Yi Wi-jong (the son of Russian Consular Yi Bom-Jin), were supposed to inform the international community of the forcible signing of the 1905 Ulsa Protectorate Treaty by Japan. Although they could not gain admission to attend the convention, this incident stirred up the attention of the international community as well as wide publicity. Yi Joon died of an unknown cause a few days later and the others returned to Korea.

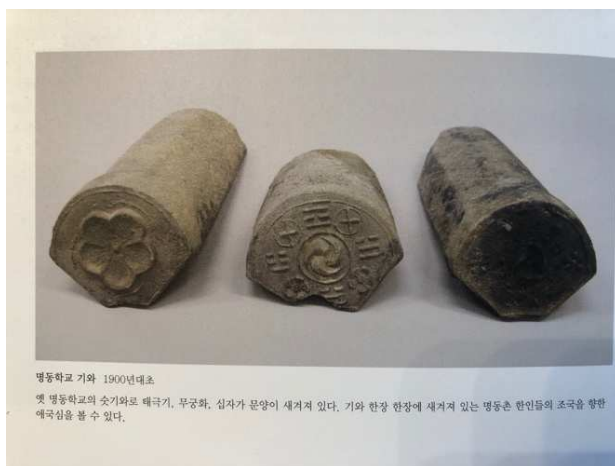
In the following year of 1908, Kim Yak-yun opened a school, *Myongdong-susook* (明東書塾), to continue with what *Sujeon-susook* had started to accomplish—education of Koreans in the transnational diasporas of Manchuria. In 1908 Kim opened another school for girls to provide equal opportunities for education. Together the two Myongdong Schools lasted side by side for 25 years, as seen in Figure 50 below of their graduation ceremony in 1926.

⁷³⁶ D. S. Suh, [*Kim Yak-yun*], 58.



(Figure 50: From left to right – the original Myungdong School built in 1914, rebuilt in 2011 after a fire, the Graduating Class of Girls’ School and Boys’ School on March 26, 1926. Courtesy of The Memorial Center of Kyu-Am Kim Yak-yun)

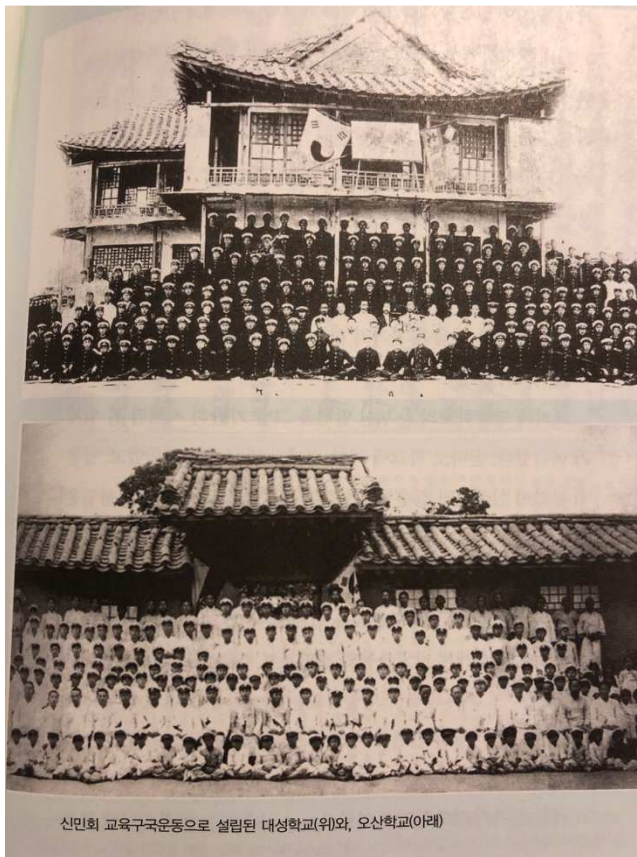
Myungdong School was built in Korean-style with tiled roofs, using the tiles and support beams inscribed with images of blossom petal of Rose of Sharon (無窮花), the national flower of Korea, as well as symbols of the Korean flag with ying-yang (陰陽) logos and crosses, standing for Christianity and patriotism. The school building on the top right in Figure 50 was burnt in a Japanese raid of 1914 and rebuilt in the original form in 2011.



명동학교 기와 1900년대초
 옛 명동학교의 숫기와로 태극기, 무궁화, 십자가 문양이 새겨져 있다. 기와 한장 한장에 새겨져 있는 명동촌 한인들의 조국을 향한 애국심을 볼 수 있다.

(Figure 51: The tiles and support beams used in building the Myungdong Susook (School) in 1900. Courtesy of The Memorial Center of Kyu-Am Kim Yak-yun)⁷³⁷

Students—boys and girls—seen in the above photo (Figure 50) were wearing traditional Korean outfits of white shirts and black pants or skirts, as were the teachers. Kim, the founder, was always seen dressed in Korean fashion, as he preferred, and also to set an example for others to do the same to preserve Korean customs in Manchuria. However, in the photos below (Figure 52) of the two schools in the 1910s, the students were in western-style school uniforms in black with shiny gold buttons, reflecting the changing of times and preference for comfort and convenience over traditionalism by younger generations in the Korean diasporas.



(Figure 52: Taesung School in Pyung Yang and Osan School in Jungjoo. Courtesy of The Memorial Center of Kyu-Am Kim Yak-yun)

⁷³⁷ Museum of Korean Immigration, Commemorative Exhibit Catalog, “North Kando Myongdong-chon: the Light that shone the Far East,” (2011), 20.

As seen in the above photos (Figure 52), the school buildings in other towns were also built in Korean-style with Korean flags in prominent display to show the foundation of nationalistic patriotism with the belief that education was the key to regaining Korean independence. The curriculum of these schools consisted of history, geography, law, biology, hygiene, agriculture, mineralogy, teacher's education, foreign affairs, Korean and Chinese classics, language translation, mathematics, singing, physical education, and the New Testament, reflecting the missionary's influence of the time. Given the primary motivation of educating Korean transnationals to instill patriotism and nationalism, the schools' curricula reflected two themes: modernization and nationalism. For the former, human virtues, business, citizenship, law, economics, science, teacher's education, foreign languages, and Chinese classics were taught; for the latter, Korean language, Patriotic education, Christianity, and history of modern Korean independence and modern Asia.⁷³⁸

According to a survey conducted by Japan in 1916, there was a total of 182 Korean schools in Kando alone—83 established by private foundations and 99 by religious foundations. Of the theological foundations, 71 were Protestant Christianity, nine were Catholic, one as *Chondo-gyo*, and 18 in other religions. There were 70 schools in Yenji with 1,370 students, 66 schools in Hwaryong with 1,219 students, 33 schools in Hoonchoon with 757 students, 13 schools in Hwangchong with 490 students—3,836 students in 182 Korean schools in total.⁷³⁹ It is difficult to ascertain what percentage of the Korean population went to school, since the available statistics only counted the number of adults at the time, sometimes only men.

While some of these schools charged nominal fees for tuition, Myongdong School's tuition cost a minimal amount of 4 won 80 jeon (4.80 dollars) or small quantities of coal for fuel

⁷³⁸ 서굉일 [Suh and Kim], 북간도 [Buk-Kando], 275.

⁷³⁹ 서굉일 [Suh and Kim], 북간도 [Buk-Kando], 266.

(新炭 若干). Schools in general were operated with the tuition paid by students, donations from parents and Christians, and subsidized by the grains and coal brought by the students. The original five families of the Myongdong Schools discussed in Chapter I (Kim Yak-yun, Kim Hahyu, Moon Jung-ho, Nam Wi-un, and Yoon Jae-ok) continued to provide ten percent of their annual harvests to the schools to pay for teachers' salaries and teaching materials, such as textbooks, as well as room and board for the students.⁷⁴⁰

Many graduates from these schools served in leadership roles in the future independence movements as Korea fell more deeply into the colonial grips of Japan in the coming years and decades. Also believing that knowledge in agriculture (農), engineering (工), and commercialism (商), which had been ignored if not looked down upon in the old Korean society, would enable weaker nations to become self-sufficient and self-reliable, the schools put a lot of emphasis on the above three fields. Some schools ran cooperative farms (協同農場, *hyupdong nongjang*) where students could learn and practice in those fields. By 1919 three Korean middle schools and 1,200 primary schools were reported to have been in Manchuria as well as two military schools, established by the Korean Independence Army (大韓獨立軍) of Yi Bom-yun (Figure 53) and Hong Bom-do (Figure 54) to train young men how to fight and shoot with guns.⁷⁴¹

⁷⁴⁰ 서굉일 [Suh and Kim], 북간도 [Buk-Kando], 273.

⁷⁴¹ Suh, [Kim Yak-yun], 142.



(Figure 53: Yi Bom-yun). (Figure 54: Hong Bom-do)⁷⁴² (Figure 55: Hwang Byung-gil and Yi Dong-hwi)⁷⁴³

Kim San wrote that these trained young men in Manchuria traveled to Korea in winter to fight against the Japanese and earn money to buy more guns.⁷⁴⁴ Myongdong School in Kando served as military training grounds as well as a site for fundraising to buy guns for the Independence Army of 2,000 men.⁷⁴⁵ Kim Yak-yun, the founder of Myongdong School, was engaged in actively fundraising with the help of military leaders, Hwang Byong-gil and Yi Dong-hwi (Figure 55). Such a pattern of training young Koreans in Manchuria to travel and fight against the Japanese in Korea, as well as engaging in fund-raising for the guerilla efforts, criss-crossing the borders between Manchuria, the RFE, and Korea, signifies the main characteristics of the Korean lives in their transnational diasporas in the 1920s-1930s.

Im Kook-jung (林國楨), Yim Boeboe's third son, and his compatriots (Figure 57), who were educated in Korean schools in Yongjung and Myongdong villages, were involved in a 1919

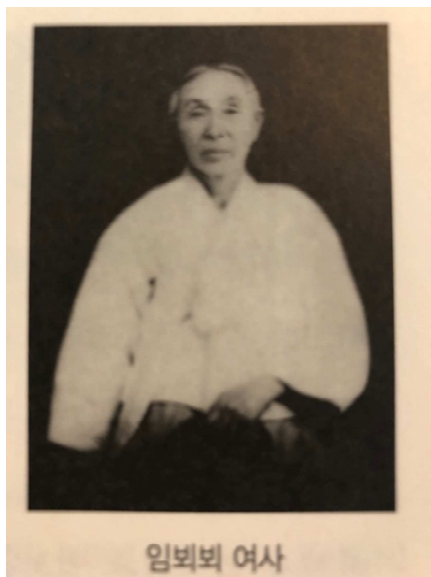
⁷⁴² D. S. Suh, [Kim Yak-yun], 147.

⁷⁴³ D. S. Suh, [Kim Yak-yun], 145.

⁷⁴⁴ Kim and Wales, *Song of Ariran*, 46.

⁷⁴⁵ D. S. Suh, [Kim Yak-yun], 142.

incident called “十五万圓 奪取事件 (*sib o man won talchui sagun*=Robbery of 150,000 won)”.⁷⁴⁶ Im was one of the three principals involved in the incident of apprehending 150,000 won while the money was being transported by a Japanese bank from Hoeryung to Yongjung one day in December 1919. The money seized was meant for the procurement of Russian rifles to be used in guerilla warfare for the Korean Independence movement. Although this robbery by Im’s group was successful, the incident ended tragically as the three principals were reported to the Japanese police by a Korean informant, leading to their arrests, trial, and execution in 1920.⁷⁴⁷ The incident is considered one of the landmarks in the history of Korean independence movement, as the money could have been used to arm two battalions of militias with Russian rifles.



(Figure 56: Yim Boeboe, the matriarch)⁷⁴⁸ (Figure 57: Im Gook-jung and Choi Bong-sul)⁷⁴⁹

⁷⁴⁶ Im, [Im Gook-Jung], 37.

⁷⁴⁷ Im, [Im Gook-Jung], 19.

⁷⁴⁸ Im, [Im Gook-Jung,] 53.

⁷⁴⁹ Im, [Im Gook-Jung,] 31.



(Figure 58: Family photo of Im Kook-jung of the Incident of Robbery of 150,000 won)⁷⁵⁰

This Kando region, formed by the early pioneers who migrated in traumatic circumstances from Hamgyongdo, Korea, and settled down in transnational diaporas in the late nineteenth century, served the greater needs of its occupants as the center of education, commerce, and socio-political activities, including the independence movements during and after the Russo-Japanese War.

d. Keeping Up with Traditional Lifestyle of Korea

In this section, the way in which the transnational migrant population in Manchuria, as well as in the RFE, not only preserved the traditional lifestyle of Korea but also enhanced their culture and passed it down to the younger generations will be examined. It was important to these diasporic Koreans to continue to live by the collectivist view of the state (*kukka*=國家), even when the state no longer existed. The people held onto the idea of having the state and a monarch who looked after his subjects, believing that the country could be restored by their hard work and

⁷⁵⁰ Im, [Im Gook-Jung,], 66.

collective efforts poured into the education of their young ones and in pursuit of independence without losing hope.



(Figure 59: A Korean migrant standing in front of his house of thatched roof in Kando, circa 1910. Courtesy of The Memorial Center of Kyu-Am Kim Yak-yun [圭巖 金躍淵記念事業會])

As was shown in Chapter I, Korean farmers in Manchuria continued to work in wet rice fields as they did back in Korea. Alongside their rice fields were rows of houses of thatched roofs and mud walls in which they lived in Korea. Their burial grounds (Figure 60) were also lined with rows of round domed tombs in traditional Korean style with epitaphs bearing the names of the dead and their surviving family members as was done in Korea.



(Figure 60: Cemetery with Korean-style raised graves: one with an epitaph of a famous Korean poet, Yoon Dong-ju. Courtesy of The Memorial Center of Kyu-Am Kim Yak-yun)



(Figure 61: A girl on a Korean-style swing while other girls in Korean school uniforms watch in Manchuria, circa 1908. Courtesy of The Memorial Center of Kyu-Am Kim Yak-yun)

In the above photo (Figure 61), taken around the year of 1908 when Kim Yak-yun opened the girls' school, one can see school girls in Myungdong, Manchuria looking on as

another girl in school uniform was swinging in a Korean-style high swing mounted on a tall tree. Swinging in high swings, called *geune-tagi*, was one of the popular forms of games enjoyed by young girls and ladies in Korea traditionally. The highest one could swing without falling off or getting tangled up by the twisted swing won the game. These young girls were also wearing traditional Korean dresses except for the length of skirts and the color of their clothes in black and white. Shorter skirts and navy blue uniform colors would have allowed for more active movements and sense of uniformity in the school environment, as was done in Korea.

When Jack London traveled in Korea in 1904, he also captured such scenes with his camera in Korea. London's photographs in Figures 62 and 63 portray a see-saw game, called *nul-tuigi*, often played in Korea by two people jumping on a long wooden panel laid on top of a rolled straw mat. The higher one can jump and drop on the board, the rockier her or his opponent at the other end of the board gets. Eventually one falls off, ending the game.



(Figure 62: See-saw Game, Huntington Library, JLP449, Album11)



(Figures 63: Nul-tuigi, Huntington Library, JLP449, Album11, No. 14)



(Figure 64: After the field day of Myongdong Christian Young Women's Association, August 30, 1929. Courtesy of The Memorial Center of Kyu-Am Kim Yak-yun)

In the above photo (Figure 64), women and girls are shown celebrating the field day event of the Myongdong Christian Young Women’s Association in 1929 at which the winners of *gune-tagi* (high swing game) won large cooking pots as prizes. Some women in the front row were seen sitting with their prizes proudly. This particular photo demonstrates how Koreans in Manchuria were still playing the Korean game of high swings about twenty years after their migration. The prizes given were Korean-style large pots used for cooking Korean food for large family dinners. All the participating female members of the community, young and old, were also wearing traditional white Korean dresses.



(Figure 65: The sixtieth and seventieth birthdays being celebrated, wedding ceremonies in western style, burial and memorial services, Courtesy of The Memorial Center of Kyu-Am Kim Yak-yun)

The two photos in the top row of Figure 65 show birthday celebrations of *Hoegap* (回甲)—the sixtieth birthday celebration in 1928. The wedding photos show the bride and bridesmaids in traditional Korean dresses. The groom and other men are in western suits with short hairdos, signifying the trend toward modernization that Koreans often equated to westernization, or the adopting of western ways. As the imperial administration of Korea by Japan was well underway by this time as well as the civilization and enlightenment (文明 改化) movement spread across Korea, younger generation of Korea tended to prefer donning themselves in western fashion which they saw as a sign of modernity.

In contrast, Kim Yak-yun, the leader of the Myungdong-chon village community, is said to have never worn anything but traditional Korean clothing of white shirts, pants, long coats and a top knot covered with a tall black hat all through his life, encouraging the rest of the community to do the same. The bottom two photos were from Kim's funeral and burial services in 1942, which were attended by many of his clan people as well as the villagers, dressed in traditional mourning outfits.

An aspect one might gather from these photos is the possible presence of the hierarchical stratification that was typical in Korean *yangban* society within the migrant society in the diaspora. Not everyone would have been able to celebrate birthday parties with a variety of Korean foods and delicacies stacked up high, attended by many gleeful well-dressed guests. Not all Koreans in Manchuria would have as many relatives in mourning outfits and headgears made of rough unbleached hems, which were supposed to be worn only by close family members according to Korean custom. Therefore, it is quite possible that lives in the transnational diaspora thousand *li* away from home still had all the makings, good or bad, of class distinctions, gender separations, and demonstrations of wealth or lack-there-of decades later.

United Righteous Army (義兵) in Manchuria and the Russian Far East

As examined in Chapter II, during the Russo-Japanese War the Righteous Army under Yi Pom-yun and Hong Bom-do fought alongside the Russian Army under the command of General Kuropatkin. After the war ended and the peace treaty was signed between Russia and Japan, Righteous Army's base operation was set up in Manchuria and became the center of united resistance activities, as will be presented in this section.

After the Russo-Japanese War ended, Yi Pom-yun's *Chungui-dae* (忠儀隊) soldiers that had joined forces with the Russian Army were dispersed according to the Portsmouth Treaty on November 11, 1905. Some of the soldiers followed Yi Pom-yun and Hong Bum-do to the Ussuri region of the RFE by way of Kando. The group, initially of 200-500 soldiers, grew to 34,399 by 1906 and to 50,965 in 1910.⁷⁵¹

In 1908, McKenzie had praised the Korean militia group of "tiger-hunters" in the Righteous Army who were involved in the Russo-Japanese War as "sons of the hills, iron-nerved" and "amongst the boldest sportsmen in the world."⁷⁵² They were armed with only an "old-fashioned percussion gun with a long barrel and a brass trigger" and trained to kill at one shot because of the time required to load the gun in each attack.⁷⁵³ In the fall of 1906, McKenzie tracked down these tiger-hunters, mountaineers, young and older men, many of whom were recently-discharged soldiers from the Korean Army.

⁷⁵¹ C. H. Park, [*Rosia yonbang*,] 98 and 148.

⁷⁵² McKenzie, *Korea's Fight*, 134.

⁷⁵³ McKenzie, *Korea's Fight*, 134.



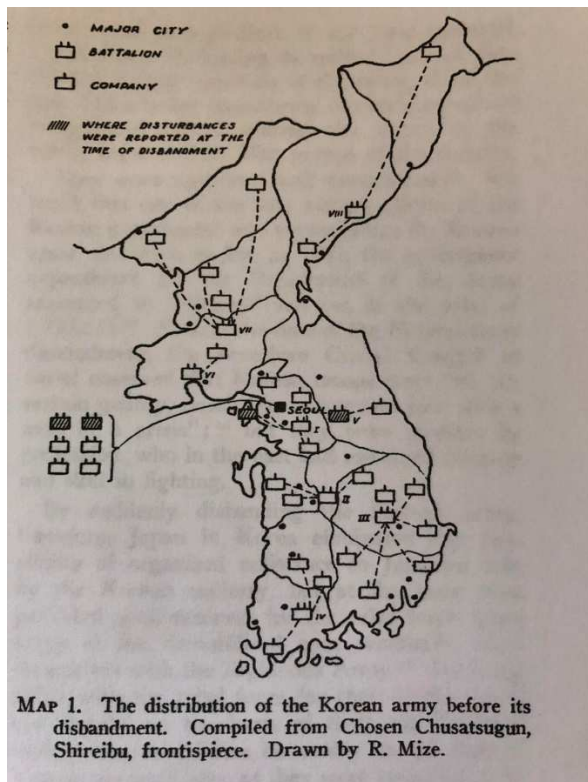
(Figure 66: “A Company of Korean Rebels,” photograph by F. A. McKenzie, 1906)⁷⁵⁴

As seen in this photograph (Figure 66), the *Ui-byong* (義兵), or Righteous Army soldiers were equipped with old guns and dressed in rag tag outfits. Some wore Korean traditional white pants, others were in western shirts and pants, and one is seen in a military uniform, possibly of the now-defunct Korean Army.

In 1905-1906, these *Ui-byongs* banded themselves into militant groups and gathered in secluded mountainous regions in Korea and Manchuria to fight against the Japanese encroachment of Korean independence. When the announcement of the disbanding of the Korean Army was made by General Hasegawa Yoshimichi, the commander of the Japanese garrison force, on August 1, 1907, a mutiny was raised by “the smartest and best of the Korean battalions” that had been under the command of Major Pak Se-han, who killed himself in protest of the disbandment.⁷⁵⁵ The mutiny was subdued after 27 officers and over 100 soldiers were either killed or wounded, and 500 captured. Other battalions across the country were disbanded between August 3 and December 3 of 1907.

⁷⁵⁴ Frederick Arthur McKenzie, *The Tragedy of Korea* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), 206.

⁷⁵⁵ C. I. Eugene Kim, “Japanese Rule in Korea (1905-1910): A Case Study,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 106, No. 1 (Feb. 15, 1962), 57.



(Figure 67: “Map 1. The distribution of the Korean army before its disbandment in 1907. Compiled from Chosen Chusatsugun, Shireibu, frontispiece. Drawn by R. Mize.”)⁷⁵⁶

The map in Figure 67, showed the “distribution of the Korean army before its disbandment in 1907, compiled from Chosen Chusatsugun, Shireibu.”⁷⁵⁷ The Korean Army had ten battalions and twenty companies located at strategic locations throughout the peninsula.

After the Korean Army was completely disbanded, former national guards joined the Righteous Armies in Kyongsang, Kangwon, Kyonggi, and Hwanghae Provinces in the central and southern parts of Korea where they remained active but also spread out nationwide within the peninsula as well as into Manchuria and the Russian Far East. Many of the guerilla units of Kando in Southern Manchuria even crossed the Tumen River down “to harass Japanese garrisons in north Korea.”⁷⁵⁸

⁷⁵⁶ Eugene Kim, “Japanese Rule,” 57.

⁷⁵⁷ Eugene Kim, “Japanese Rule,” 57.

⁷⁵⁸ Ki-baik Yi. *A New History of Korea*, 316-317; Eckert, et al., *Korea*, 242-243.

Historian Yi Ki-baek cited “official Japanese statistics” from an unknown source on the “scale of operations” by Righteous Armies between 1907 and 1910: 44,116 “guerillas under arms” in 1907, 69,832 in 1908, 25,763 in 1909, and 1,891 in 1910 in a total of 2,819 “clashes with Japanese forces,” ending with over 17,600 guerilla fighters who died in the struggles.⁷⁵⁹ Yi Ki-baek presumed much larger numbers than those given by Japanese sources.



(Figure 68: Tiger hunters in the Righteous Army in Manchuria, circa. 1908)⁷⁶⁰

Taehan Maeil Sinbo reported on April 19, 1908 the intensity of clashes between *Uibyongs* and the Japanese police or military between August 1907 and December 1908—1,772 clashes involving 11,394 *Uibyongs*, 2,000 Japanese *Kempeitai*, and Japanese Army of the Sixth Division and one Infantry Division. The Japanese Army set fire to homes and killed hundreds of Koreans on suspicion of having provided shelters to *Uibiyong* soldiers all over the country, such

⁷⁵⁹ Yi, *A New History*, 317.

⁷⁶⁰ D. S. Suh, [Kim Yak-yun], 53.

as in Goryangpo, Kwangju, Namyang, and Gapyung from 1907 to 1908. Hundreds of innocent people were killed, and 775 homes and a temple were burnt to the ground by Japanese military all over the peninsula. In Gapyung, 200 Japanese soldiers under the command of Lieutenant Ikura, dressed in Korean clothing, raided and killed 30 some *Uibyongs*. In response, 6,000 *Uibyongs* assembled in January 1908, in Pochun (抱川), 3,000 in Gapyung (加平), and 8,000 in Yangju (揚州).⁷⁶¹



(Figure 69: *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, 1909.6.16. Vol. 2, No. 479, “잡보 (Miscellaneous)”)

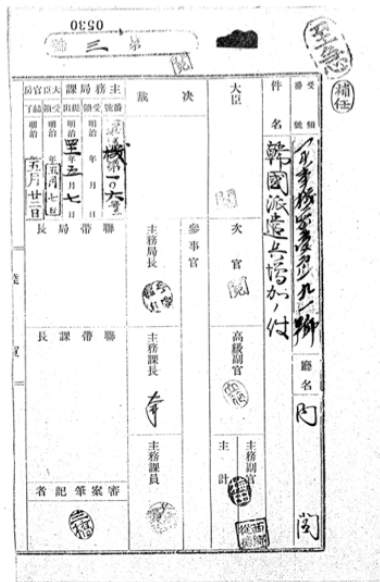
Reported in the above article in the June 16, 1909 issue of *Taehan Maeil Sinbo*, sporadic scrummages between *Uibyongs* and Japanese police occurred in the southern parts of Korea as well as in the RFE. Several hundred *Uibyongs* destroyed the police building in Pochun on June 4, over 200 *Uibyongs* battled and killed several Japanese policemen in Chunnam on June 1, and 40+ *Uibyongs* fought and killed three Japanese policemen at Gomak in Chunnam province on the same day. It was also reported that more than 30 Chinese were seen hanging around the *Uibyongs* at Baekchundong in the Ussuri area, although it is unclear whether the Chinese had

⁷⁶¹ C. H. Park, [Kuhanmal], 22.

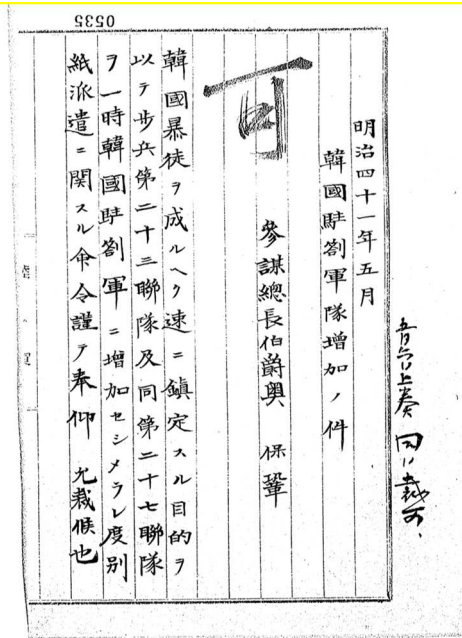
joined in to fight with the *Uibyongs* or they were simply loitering around them, perhaps as spies. Although the leadership of the Righteous Armies, such as Yi Bom-yun and Hong Bom-do, had strategic plans, their grand plans may not have filtered down to the level of militants who were filled with resentments and anxiety to fight against the Japanese, hence the sporadic scummages occurring.

Two corresponding documents of classified military communication (陸軍省 軍事機密大日記) found in the Japan Center for Asian Historical Records (JACAR) show an urgent request, C0230347400 (M41-2-2), made on May 7, 1908 to dispatch a regiment of soldiers to Korea to suppress militant rioters (韓國駐屯軍增加件) The May 9, 1908 approval for an immediate dispatch of Infantry Divisions 23 and 27 in C02030347500 by the Ministry of Defense indicated the urgency felt by the Japanese military to quell the disruption raised by rioters in Korea. The latter, “Delivering list of personnel to be dispatched to Korea for the purpose of quelling Korean rioters,” was dated May 9, 1908, as shown below in Figure 71.⁷⁶²

⁷⁶² JACAR, “Delivering list of personnel to be dispatched to Korea and other items,” Rikugunsho Dainikki Gunjiki mitsu Dainikki, Jan. to Dec. 1908, C02030347400 and C02030347500, 陸軍省 軍事機密大日記 – M41-2-2. 韓國駐軍增加件 “韓國暴徒鎮定目的 步兵 23 聯隊와 27 聯隊를 一時 增加” 1908.5.7. C0230347500, 陸軍省 軍事機密大日記 – M41-2-2. “步兵第 23 聯隊 韓國派遣” 1908.5.9. 第 6 師團長 男爵 Nishijima Sukeyoshi (西島助義). 參謀總長 伯爵 奧保鞏 – marked “Approved (可)”.



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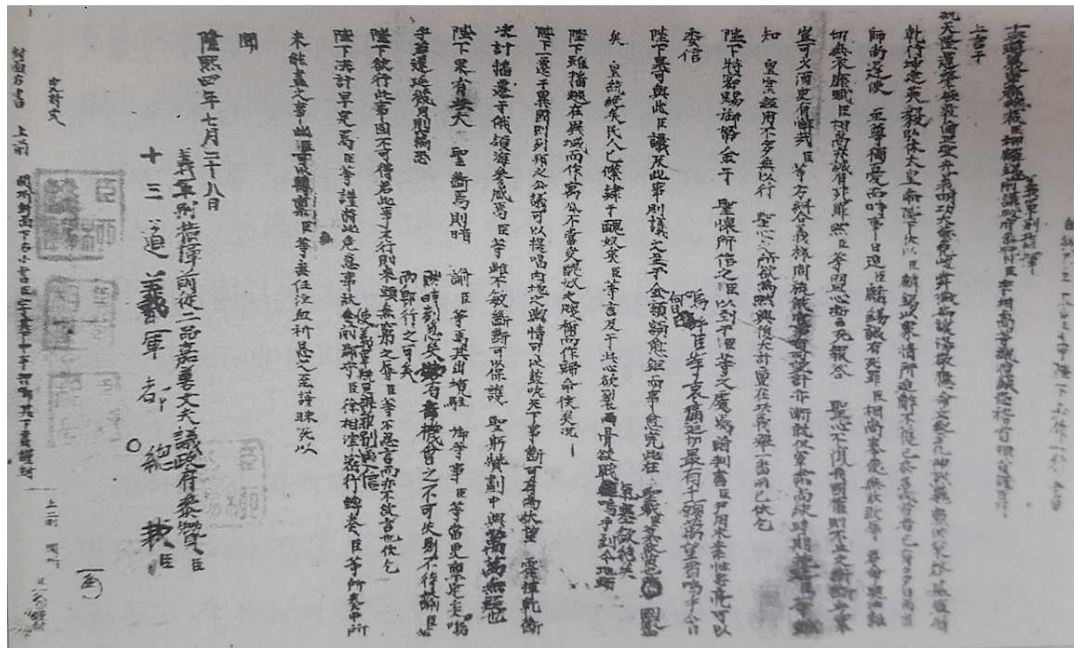
(Figure 70: C02030347400 requested, 1908.5.7) (Figure 71: C02030347500 approved, 1908.5.9.)

These militant activities of Righteous Army, which the Japanese government called ‘Rebels (暴徒)’ as shown in the above documents, continued in the Ussuri region as well as in Korea, reaching 898 occurrences and involving 24,783 militias by 1909. The Japanese Military reinforced their troops to closely monitor the coastal cities up north in the Yalu River basins as well as in Jeju Island in the south—across the entire Korean Peninsula.⁷⁶³

Despite such efforts, a strong pledge of allegiance by Koreans from 13 provinces, known as “13 Province Righteous Army’s Declaration (十三道 義軍 上訴文),” was secured in 1910 by Yi Pom-yun as the Commander of Righteous Army, aided by Yu In-suk and Yi Sang-sul in the Russian Far East. The Declaration publicly proclaimed a united front of defense for their new transnational homeland in the name of 9,780 Koreans as shown below in Figure 72. With the

⁷⁶³ C. H. Park, [Rosia Yonbang], 170.

appointment of Hong Bum-do as the military leader, the group presented an integrated front of the people from 13 provinces and reached the peak of their resistance efforts in August 1910.



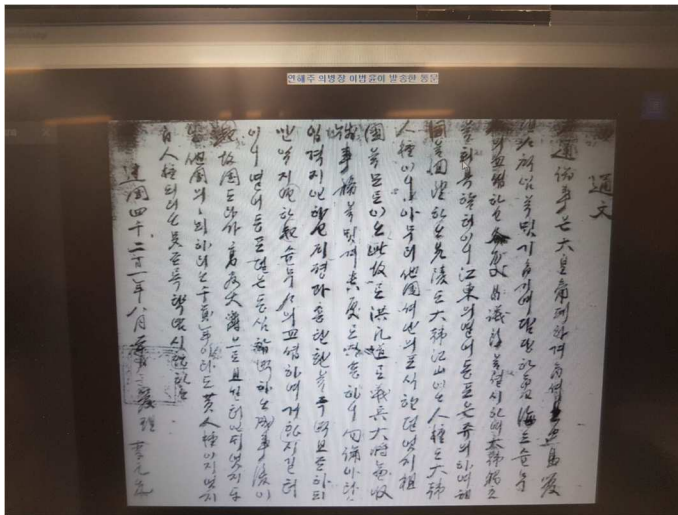
(Figure 72: 十三道 義軍 上訴文 [Declaration of Uigun in 13 Districts], July 28, 1910)

The Righteous Army organized by Yi Bom-yun initially in 1904 in Kando, Manchuria, moved its base to the RFE at the declaration of the pledge of residents in thirteen districts in 1910. Both groups of participants of Righteous Army, representing the old and the new-comers, joined and announced a petition on August 19, 1910 as the news of Japanese annexation of Korea spread:

We, representatives of the Korean associations of the Maritime Province from Vladivostok...and other places, numbering sixteen persons, met [and] resolved to demand that the Russian Government allow Korean subjects to acquire Russian citizenship without any special privileges and advantages and that these Koreans be put under the protection of Russian laws, as Korea was annexed. You should take into account that we, Koreans, have resided for many years on the Russian territory and have lost any relation with our former motherland, which has been replaced by Russia. We would like to be faithful subjects of Russia along with many other ethnicities, populating it, with equal rights to them.... We sign this on behalf of the associations of the Maritime Province, numbered some 9,780 persons of male population, not including females and children. Vladivostok city, August 19, 1910.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁶⁴Grave, Kitaitys, Op. cit., 423, in Saveliev, *Militant*, 155.

This petition was also made in Korean language, signed by Yi Pom-yun as the Commander of Righteous Army in the Russian Far East, dated August 20, 1910.



(Figure 73: 연해주 의병장 이범윤이 발송한 통문, 4201.8.20. [Declaration by Yi Pom-yun, the Commander of Righteous Army in the Russian Far East])⁷⁶⁵

Nevertheless, the long-established, affluent Koreans who owned land in the RFE and acquired Russian citizenship in the 1890s did not share the same level of nationalistic fervor to fight for the independence of their old homeland, which they left in despair a long time ago. Without the financial support of the wealthy Koreans who were ready to serve in the Russian army, Yi's insurgent militant group could not sustain long and decreased in numbers soon after Yi was arrested by Russian police in October 1910.

The Russian government was also extremely concerned about these militant activities of the Righteous Army in the RFE, as the Japanese Foreign Ministry officially complained about their rebellious movements being too close to the border in the Ussuri region in 1908. The diplomatic correspondence between Russia and Japan pointed to Yi's activities in Shinhanchon (新韓村, New Korean town) in Vladivostok, urging Russia to expel Yi from Russia.⁷⁶⁶

⁷⁶⁵ Dae-Sook Suh, Kim In-Sik, Yi Dong-un, et al., [Hanguk ui Dongnip Undongadul] (Seoul: Yuksa Gongkan, s.d.).

⁷⁶⁶ C. H. Park, [Rosia Yonbang], 166.

Moreover, the insurgent group leaders of the Righteous Army in the RFE and Manchuria were met with the “punitive expedition of Japanese troops and the activities of the pro-Ilchinhoe members” and could not recruit “more than 1,000 new soldiers.”⁷⁶⁷ Most of the recent recruits were Koreans who fled Korea after 1905 and had trouble earning a living in Russia—with arms, ammunition, and food in short supply, leading to “tensions within the Korean diaspora” and a scattering of the soldiers in mid-1909. When the news of Japanese annexation of Korea reached the RFE in 1910, political disagreements intensified among the Koreans “who were reconciled with the absorption of Korea” by Japan and “those who wished to continue the struggle of independence.”⁷⁶⁸

In spite of all these activities of disputes facing the Righteous Army, called *Chang-ui-soh* (倡義所) after 1910, numerous riots erupted all across the RFE, Kando, and in Korea immediately upon the announcement of Japan’s annexation of Korea. In contrast, when the Ulsa Treaty of Annexation was made public on August 22, 1910, no apparent opposition was raised by Russia, the United States, or any other nations in Europe. Echoing the country’s low global status at the turn of the twentieth century discussed in the introduction, no other country protested when Korea ceased to exist as an independent nation with all diplomatic ties severed.

Yi Pom-yun and his followers were captured in Nikolayevsk and banished to northern Irkutsk, Russia, according to the telegram sent by Foreign Minister Sazonov to Russian Minister to Seoul A.C. Somov on October 26, 1910.⁷⁶⁹ This decision to banish Yi and his *Uibyong* followers instead of returning them to Seoul was due to the concerns that many other Koreans who fought secretly on the Russian side in the Russo-Japanese War and for Korea’s

⁷⁶⁷ Saveliev, *Militant*, 150.

⁷⁶⁸ V. V. Grave, *Kitaitsy, koreitsy I iapontsy v Priamur’e*, Vol. 11, 183-184., in Saveliev, *Militant*, 153.

⁷⁶⁹ C. H. Park, [Rosia Kungnip...Yoyakchip], 65.

independence against Japan would be exposed in the hands of the Japanese police. Therefore, Yi Pom-yun who served as the leader of Righteous Armies for decades became the first exile to be banished to Irkutsk as were other Korean leaders such as Yi Dong-hui who served in the pro-Russian activities. The Righteous Armies went underground afterwards, continuing to fight against the Japanese in the hills of Manchuria and Korea in the coming decades.

a. Unified Korean Independence Movement

Moving into the 1910s, Koreans in the RFE and Manchuria combined their forces to raise a united front for the Korean Independence Movement across their transnational diasporas in vast geographical areas. Their activities supported by various organizations and newspapers in their regions will be the subject of this section.

Officially accredited by the Russian Government on December 17, 1911, *Kwonuphoe*, as introduced in the earlier section in this chapter, kicked off a Korean language newspaper, *Kwonup Sinmun* (勸業新聞), opened a Korean school, helped Koreans to acquire Russian citizenship, and engaged in community relations to foster cooperation among Koreans in the area. In commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the first Korean settlement in 1863, *Kwonuphoe* also organized ceremonial programs to celebrate the historic occasion. The newspaper, *Kwonup Sinmun*, which began its publication on May 4, 1912, was distributed across the RFE, Manchuria, Korea, China, Japan, Hawaii, and California, serving and being recognized as one of the three most influential anti-Japanese nationalist newspapers of Korea, along with *Sinhan Minbo* (新韓民報) and *Sinhan Kookbo* (新韓國報).⁷⁷⁰

⁷⁷⁰ Ban Byung-yul, "Koreans in Russia," in 러시아의 한인들: 뿌리 깊은 인연이여, 그 이름은 고려인 [*Rosia ui Hanindul: ppuri kip'un inyon iyo, ku irum un Koryoin = Koreans in Russia/Photographs by Kim Ji-Youn*] (Seoul: Noonbit Publishing, 2005), 163.

In 1913, Koreans in the RFE started to organize the Korean Independence Army (大韓光復軍) in time to mark the tenth anniversary of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904. But the Russian Government, in adherence to the terms of the Portsmouth Treaty and to appease the Japanese Government, ordered *Kwonuphoe* and *Kwonup Sinmun* to be discontinued, arresting or expelling Korean migrants from Russia. As the First World War erupted in 1913, all activities for Korea's independence were put on hold. Approximately 4,000 naturalized and registered Koreans were reported to have fought in the Russian army during World War I with 150 as officers.⁷⁷¹

After World War I ended and the news of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson taking leadership of post-war peace at the Versailles Peace Conference on January 8, 1918 spread, Korean nationalists in exile in Hawaii and California rallied to plead to the world for Korea's independence. Most of all, Wilson's speech "to provide for the freedom of small nations, to prevent the domination of small nations by big ones" with the Fourteen Points to promote the enduring world peace was received by Koreans as "the clarion call to Korea."⁷⁷²

Korean leaders attempted to send Syngman Rhee (李承晩), backed by the Korean National Association (大韓國民會) in Hawaii, to Versailles but failed because Rhee could not get his passport issued by the Japanese government as a colonial subject. The New Korean Young Men's Association (新韓青年黨) in Shanghai managed to send Kim Kyu-sik to Paris with a plan to inform the world of Korea's plight and lobby for the country's independence. But Kim Kyu-sik was refused of admission or attendance at the Paris Conference. Korean students in Japan then formed the Korean Youth Independence Corps (朝鮮青年獨立團) and held a

⁷⁷¹ Ban, "Koreans," 163.

⁷⁷² Frederick Arthur McKenzie, *Korea's Fight for Freedom* (London: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1920), 243.

conference in Tokyo where over 600 Korean students attended and passed a declaration which was authored by a famous Korean writer Yi Kwang-su on February 8, 1919.⁷⁷³

With the sudden passing of Emperor Gojong on January 22, 1919 and his funeral service scheduled for March 3 in Seoul, Koreans made a secret plan to use the occasion to rally nationwide on March 1. “To avoid police discovery” and outwit the police, student organizers of the March First Movement planned the rally just a few days before the launch date of March 1, 1919.⁷⁷⁴

On March 1 the Declaration of Independence was dispatched to the Governor-General. The protestors also announced their intention to make a peaceful demonstration at Pagoda Park in Seoul to the police. Over a million people, male and female, wearing straw-woven *jipsins*, the proper attire for mourning for the nation’s father, gathered from all across the country and participated in the demonstration. They shouted “*Taehan tongnip manse* (大韓獨立萬歲=long live an independent Korea)! *Manse! Manse! Manse!*”⁷⁷⁵ This triple chanting of *Manse* (萬歲三唱) was echoed throughout the Korean Peninsula.

Instructions for the demonstration, planned as a peaceful one by the organizers, were distributed nationwide:⁷⁷⁶

Whatever you do
Do not insult the Japanese
Do not throw stones
Do not hit with your fists
For these are the acts of barbarians.

⁷⁷³ Eckert, et al., *Korea*, 277.

⁷⁷⁴ Eckert, et al., *Korea*, 278; McKenzie, *Korea's Flight*, 245.

⁷⁷⁵ Eckert, et al., *Korea*, 278.

⁷⁷⁶ McKenzie, *Korea*, 244.

Such instructions showed not only their peaceful intentions but also the fact that these Koreans did not have any weapons other than their bare hands to express their opposition to Japanese aggression.

Caught by complete surprise, Japanese police cracked down on demonstrators with brutality, leading to “533 killed, 1,409 injured, and 12,522 arrests made” on that day. In the following months an estimated toll of “7,500 deaths, roughly 15,000 injured, and some 45,000 arrests” occurred nationwide.⁷⁷⁷ Despite the Korean traditional custom of separating the populace from the *yangbans*, women from men, the young from the old, McKenzie observed a unified Korea in this movement, which was meant to be peaceful. “But now all were one,” reported McKenzie on the unified nature of the demonstrations of the Koreans and wrote “The weak things had set themselves up to confound the strong.”⁷⁷⁸

As the news of the March First “Manse” Movement (三一萬歲運動) demonstrations in Korea reached the Korean transnationals in Kando, Manchuria, another peaceful demonstration was planned and held on March 13, 1919. Thousands of Koreans gathered, waving flags with taeguk (太極) symbols and a banner of ‘righteousness (正義) and humanity (人道)’ in the open field of *Sohjeon Daeya* (西田大野) in Kando as shown in Figure 74 below.⁷⁷⁹

⁷⁷⁷ Eckert, et al., *Korea*, 279.

⁷⁷⁸ McKenzie, *Korea*, 252.

⁷⁷⁹ D. S. Suh, [Kim Yak-yun], 138.



● 북간도의 3·1운동 3·13용정서전대야에서 열린 독립선포 축하식.

(Figure.74: Declaration of Independence in Buk-Kando on 1919.3.13.)

Historians acknowledged but lamented that while these demonstrations by Koreans at home and abroad did not succeed in getting rid of Japanese rule over Korea or arousing any interests of “the world powers” who looked on “with indifference,” the movement served as “a catalyst for the expansion of the nationalist movement as a whole” and united Koreans at home and abroad in coordinated efforts to assert “Korean national identity.”⁷⁸⁰

Koreans in the RFE held another demonstration, organized by the Great Korean People’s Congress (大韓國民議會), at Shinhanchon in Vladivostok on March 17, and delivered copies of the Declaration of Independence to all foreign embassies in town as well as to the Russian government and the Japanese Legation. All kinds of Koreans, Russified or not, *wonhoin* or *yeohoin*, were reported to have attended the demonstration. Japanese immediately demanded all Korean flags to be taken down and stop the demonstrations. However, the protests quickly

⁷⁸⁰ Eckert, et al., *Korea*, 279.

spread to other towns in the RFE from Ussuri to Nikol'sk-Ussuri, Suifun, Suchan, and Spassak, as far north as to the Korean town in Blagoslovenno.⁷⁸¹

Russian onlookers saw the leaflets entitled “Declaration of Independence of Korea” and waved by the demonstrators throughout the city of Vladivostok. As the demonstration moved from the Korean town of Shinhanchon throughout Vladivostok, which was covered with Korean national flags and red flags, some Russians noted the “Red flower of the awakening Korea” and joined in the demonstration.⁷⁸² A. N. Yaremenko wrote in his *Diary of a Communist* that “The single-heartedness of the Koreans is manifested with great strength.”⁷⁸³ Korean patriotism was expressed openly throughout the RFE in the aftermath of the March First Movement, as it did in Manchuria and in Korea.

Historian Hamish Ion speculated that the Hunchun branch of the Great Korean Peoples' Congress was supported by 20,000 Koreans, following the March First Movement, which was coordinated between Korea, Chientao (Kando), Vladivostok, and Shanghai.⁷⁸⁴ By August 1920, Ion wrote that the Hunchun branch was also supporting 450 guerrillas and about 2,600 partisans operating in North Kando area.⁷⁸⁵

As for the reasons why the independence movement failed despite such a high level of strength garnered after the demonstrations of April 1, 1919, historians have attributed two factors: the movement became increasingly radical and militant and caused the factionalism within the Provisional Government of Korea, formed in summer of 1919. The opposing factions between the Korean ex-patriates, led by Syngman Rhee, in the United States advocating

⁷⁸¹ C. H. Park, [Rosia Yonbang], 270-271.

⁷⁸² Alyssa Park, *Borderland*, 268.

⁷⁸³ A. N. Yaremenko, “Dnevnik kommunista,” [Diary of a communist] in *Revoliutsiia na Dal'nem Yostoke* (Moscow-St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennoe Isdatel'stvo, 1923), 216-217, quoted in Alyssa Park, *Borderland*, 268.

⁷⁸⁴ A. Hamish Ion. *The Cross and the Rising Sun: The Canadian Protestant Missionary Movement in the Japanese Empire, 1872-1931* (Waterloo, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1990), 197.

⁷⁸⁵ Ion, *The Cross*, 197.

diplomatic means, and the socialists and nationalists in the RFE and Kando, led by Yi Dong-hwi, advocating “armed struggle,” could not be reconciled.⁷⁸⁶

On the other hand, the Japanese intelligence activities to crack down the Korean nationalists in the RFE and Manchuria escalated, employing many Korean residents in the Novoyevsk and Vladivostok in their service, leading to the arrest of 42 Koreans, including Yu In-suk and Yi Kang, the editor of *Taedong Kongbo*, who were later released at the discretion of Governor Gondatti.⁷⁸⁷

All the leaders who participated in counter-intelligence activities in the Shanghai Service, Righteous Armies, as soldiers in the Russo-Japanese War on the Russian side, joined in the rallies across the RFE and Manchuria to raise their voices in unison with their comrades in Korea and in the U.S. across the hills of Arirang—the transnational diasporas of Koreans.

Conclusion

During the decade after the Russo-Japanese War ended in 1905 and the Japanese annexation began in full force in 1910, culminating at the March First “*Mansei*” Movement in 1919, Koreans at home as well as in transnational diasporas in the RFE and Manchuria were caught in an extremely volatile period of history. In such a politically-charged environment, many Koreans lived in wretched conditions. Koreans yearned to build “a healthy and stable society that would allow the unfolding of a heavenly kingdom on the peninsula (*chisang ch’onguk*)”—(地上天國), meaning “heaven on earth,” as historian Albert Park has explained.⁷⁸⁸

This chapter began with the description of the transnational process by which Yijo Dynasty of Korea collapsed as a colony of Japanese imperialism at the end of the Russo-

⁷⁸⁶ Ion, *The Cross*, 197.

⁷⁸⁷ C. H. Park, [*Rosia Kungnip...Yoyakchip*], 198.

⁷⁸⁸ Albert Park, *Building a Heaven*, 79.

Japanese War and the signing of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty between Russia and Japan at the coordination by the U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt. The war was started, fought, and ended by foreigners on Korean soil, negotiated by foreigners, and peace was declared by foreigners without any sort of input from any member of the Korean populace, many of whom were dispersed in transnational diasporas.

Korean transnationals continued their struggles in their new-found homes in the RFE and Manchuria. Despite coming from diverse social origins, educational backgrounds, and upbringings, the Korean migrants of early or later arrivals fought for their old and new homelands together. Many hoped to return to their old homeland as proud citizens of Korea sometime in their lives or those of their children over the *Arirang gogae*.

CONCLUSION

*A-ri-rang A-ri-rang A-ra-rio,
Now I am an exile across the Yalu River
And the hills and rivers of three thousand li are also lost
A-ri-rang A-ri-rang A-ra-rio,
Crossing the hills of Arirang*⁷⁸⁹

This Conclusion will discuss the lives of Koreans in transnational diasporas in the RFE and Manchuria after 1920. How the Russified Koreans, by then called *Goryo-in*, were eliminated by mass deportation or execution in 1937 in spite of their decades-long dedication to serve as Soviet citizens will be reviewed. How the Korean transnationals in Manchuria endured the Chinese persecution of Koreans (1905-1945), being regarded as the vehicle of Japanese imperial projects, and suffered through the more tumultuous period of the Chinese Communist Revolution (1921-1927) and the Korean War (1950-1953) will be examined. Many Korean transnationals in China were deployed to fight against their own people of Korea. The conclusion will wrap up with a brief assessment of where the Korean transnationals are in terms of their journey over the Arirang hills in more contemporary times.

As of 1924, *Goryo-ins* (高麗人, Корё-цапан), Koreans living in the Soviet Union, were reported to be approximately 150,000 in total: 147,000 in the Russian Republic, of whom 140,000 were first-generation migrants living in the RFE, as reported in ГАРФ (Russian Archive of National Documents) by the Russian Far Eastern office in September 1924.⁷⁹⁰ The report also mentioned that more Koreans were known to be living in various regions, such as Uzbekistan, Kazakstan, and Estonia in the Soviet Union, although their exact number could not be ascertained at the time of reporting. Additionally, the Korean labor unions, with 12 registered

⁷⁸⁹ Kim and Wales, *Song of Ariran*, [vii].

⁷⁹⁰ ГАРФ, Record Group No. 1235, Series 119, Event 12, No. 61-62 (1924), in C. H. Park, [Rosia Kungnip ... Yoyakchip], 809.

members and 18 affiliate members of the Communist Party, were not recognized officially by the Second Convention in December of 1923, making it difficult to get an accurate number of Goryo-ins living in Ukraina and White Russia.⁷⁹¹

In 1936 John Benjamin Powell, an “influential newspaperman in Asia” who helped start the *China Weekly Review* in Shanghai in 1917 and served as its Managing Editor until 1941, made a trip to the RFE in the capacity of Correspondent for *The Chicago Tribune*.⁷⁹² The observations he made during his trip to Vladivostok and Khabarovsk in 1936 were submitted as “U.S. Intelligence Report Regarding Khan Chan Gol (OGPU) and the Koreans in the OKDVA (Red Army of the RFE)” to Vice Consul John M. Allison in the State Department. Khan Chan Gol was one of Stalin’s close confidants who later got executed in 1937 around the time of mass deportation of Korean migrants in the RFE. Powell also authored a book, *My Twenty-Five Years in China*, and revealed his perceptions of Korean lives in the RFE in 1936, one year before they were subjected to a mass deportation and execution.

In his book, Powell described a visit he made to a Korean university in Vladivostok where he saw the Korean language being taught despite the fact that speaking at home or in public, let alone teaching the Korean language, was outlawed by the Japanese Governor-General in Korea in the 1930s. During the latter part of Japanese colonization of Korea, the wartime years of 1931-1945, Japan instituted the “most demeaning policies—name changes, efforts to eradicate the Korean language, forced labor, and sex slavery....”⁷⁹³ There at the university in Vladivostok, Powell witnessed “some fifty students...translating articles and pamphlets into the

⁷⁹¹ C. H. Park, [Rosia Kungnip ... Yoyakchip], 809.

⁷⁹² Powell, *John Benjamin (1886-1947), Papers, 1910-1952*, at The State Historical Society of Missouri, 1.

⁷⁹³ Mark Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 169.

Korean language” which were to be “smuggled into Korea.”⁷⁹⁴ Powell also reported to the U.S. State Department that Korean newspapers, magazines, and “thousands of books in the Korean language,” were being published in Vladivostok and smuggled into Korea.⁷⁹⁵

As Powell asserted emphatically, “The Japanese are killing the language, while the Russians are keeping it alive.”⁷⁹⁶ Historian John J. Stephan also noted this phenomenon: “Korean nationalists were neither extradited nor prevented from publishing vernacular newspapers” by the Russian government in St. Petersburg despite the heavy Japanese pressure to crack down on Korean expatriates who continued to publish Korean newspapers in Vladivostok—*Haejo sinmun*, *Taedong kongbo*, and *Kwonop sinmun*—until 1908, long after the Korean newspapers in Korea were suspended.⁷⁹⁷

Powell observed that “at least ten per cent” of the Russian Far Eastern Army was “made up of Orientals: Chinese, Koreans, and Mongols” with heads of some of the units Chinese.⁷⁹⁸ There were “over 100,000 Koreans, many of them in the army” between Vladivostok and Khabarovsk where he “saw a unit of two hundred Red soldiers... every one of the two hundred was Korean,” teaching the villagers how anti-aircraft defense worked.⁷⁹⁹

In his *Report* to the State Department, Powell wrote, “The Russians make no secret of the fact that they are building up the nucleus of a Korean Revolutionary Army in this territory.... At Vladivostok, there is a whole system of Korean schools extending from primary school up to a university which they claim has 700 students.”⁸⁰⁰ Powell witnessed “a regiment of Korean

⁷⁹⁴ John Benjamin Powell, *My Twenty-Five Years in China* (New York: Macmillan, 1945), 211.

⁷⁹⁵ J.B. Powell, “U.S. Intelligence Report Regarding Khan Chan Gol (OGPU) and the Koreans in the OKDVA (Red Army of the RFE),” January 1936, in Chang, *Burnt*, 198.

⁷⁹⁶ Powell, “U.S. Intelligence,” 198.

⁷⁹⁷ Stephan, *The Russian Far East*, 76

⁷⁹⁸ Powell, “U.S. Intelligence Report,” in Chang, *Burnt*, 192.

⁷⁹⁹ Powell, “U.S. Intelligence Report,” in Chang, *Burnt*, 198.

⁸⁰⁰ Powell, “U.S. Intelligence Report,” in Chang, *Burnt*, 198.

troops, drilling and maneuvering under Soviet officers” as part of the Soviet border-defense force. In Lake Baikal area, he saw even larger group of “Oriental troops” in Soviet Army uniform.⁸⁰¹

Earlier, five “Russified Koreans” from the Kazan Seminary along with graduates from the Far Eastern Institute of Vladivostok were among those sent to Manchuria and involved in translating intelligence documents in 1904. One of those five, Andrei Abramovich Khan Myon She, who had served as the “most fervent Bolshevik of all Soviet Korean leaders,” was arrested on charges of Japanese espionage in Leningrad and executed on December 10, 1937⁸⁰². So was the fate of Grigorii Khan Chan Gol, a Korean NKVD commander of Third Division, about whom Powell had written to the State Department in 1936, along with 2,500 Soviet Korean elites, many of whom served in important positions in the Soviet Red Army. They were all executed from 1937 to 1938 despite their leadership in anti-Japanese activities among the Soviet Koreans.⁸⁰³ Stalin suspected the presence of “fifth columnists among the Soviet diaspora peoples” and harbored pathological distrust of foreigners.⁸⁰⁴ Historian Hyun Gwi Park lamented the “irony” of the Koreans in the RFE becoming the “most powerful agent of the ‘Slavicization of the RFE’” and then falling as its “victims in the most ‘passive’ way” of mass deportation and exclusion during the Great Terror of Stalin in 1936-1938.⁸⁰⁵

Mass Deportation of Koreans from the RFE, 1937

Shortly after Powell’s visit to Vladivostok, the Korean university was shut down and the entire Korean population from the RFE was forcibly relocated to Central Asia in 1937. The next

⁸⁰¹ Powell, *My Twenty-Five Years*, 211.

⁸⁰² Chang, *Burnt*, 159.

⁸⁰³ Chang, *Burnt*, 27, 159, and 199.

⁸⁰⁴ Chang, *Burnt*, 153.

⁸⁰⁵ H. G. Park, *The Displacement*, 74.

ordeal awaiting Koreans in the RFE was the mass deportation of 1937. Joseph Stalin, after removing all of his opposition within the VKP (All-Union Communist Party) by execution from power, embarked on “repressive purges” in the Great Terror of 1936-1938.⁸⁰⁶ These purges, led by Stalin and Nikolai Ezhov, the head of NKVD, were carried out against “elites/Old Bolsheviks, anti-Soviet elements (social groups).”⁸⁰⁷ Historian Jon Chang claimed the Korean deportation was the “first *total* deportation of a Soviet nationality,” to be followed by other nationalities such as “Poles, Germans, Latvians, Estonians, Finns, Greeks, Iranians, Kharbintsy, Chinese, and Romanians” through 1950.⁸⁰⁸

Resolution 1425-3266ss, entitled “On the Exile of the Korean Population from the Border Regions of the Russian Far Eastern Region,” was signed by General Secretary, Joseph Stalin, and the Chairman of the Ministry of People’s Commissars, V. Molotov, on August 21, 1937.⁸⁰⁹ Assisted by Ezhov, Stalin carried out massive purges and deportation of non-Russian social groups and nationalities “to weed out potential enemies and prepare Soviet society for an impending war”—the Second World War.⁸¹⁰ Thus unfolded the Great Terror of 1936-1938 in which a massive number of Korean-Russians were deported from the Russian Far East to Southern Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, the Aral Sea, and the Lake Balkhash regions.⁸¹¹

Between September and November of 1937, 171,781 Koreans of 16,272 families received but a few days’ notice to pack up and were taken to unknown places in Central Asia. Packed into 124 cargo or cattle trains, 95,246 people in 20,170 households were transported to

⁸⁰⁶ Chang, *Burnt*, 151.

⁸⁰⁷ Chang, *Burnt*, 152.

⁸⁰⁸ Chang, *Burnt*, 152.

⁸⁰⁹ Chang, *Burnt*, 153.

⁸¹⁰ Chang, *Burnt*, 152.

⁸¹¹ “Document NKVD officer Meer to Ezhov” as cited in V.D. Kim, *Pravda polveka spustia*, 76-77, in Chang, *Burnt*, 157; Elena Chernolutskaia, “Forced Migration in the Soviet Far East in the 1920-1950s: Synopsis of the Thesis for Doctoral Degree in History” (Vladivostok: Institute of History, Far Eastern Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences, 2012), 35-36, quoted in Lee and Lukin, *Russia’s Far East*, 37.

Kazakhstan and 76,525 in 16,272 households to Uzbekistan.⁸¹² Many Koreans who were elderly, young, pregnant, or already sick, perished during the month-long trip due to starvation and spread of diseases.

The Korean population had been projected to grow to 204,600 by 1937 in the 1927 census. But due to “collectivization and dekulakization” in 1928-1932, only 172,597 were left to be deported in 1937.⁸¹³ Historian Jon Chang estimated that about 50,000 Koreans had to leave the RFE for Manchuria and Korea “due to collectivization and dekulakization” during 1928-1932, making the number of deportees to Central Asia in 1937 lower than what could have been.⁸¹⁴

The mass deportation of Koreans in the RFE with a few days’ notice signified a marked difference from their initial migration into RFE. Voluntary *migration* includes the process of preparation which is denied in this type of forced *deportation*. This is how Russia “kicked out all the Koreans [vydvoriali vsekh koreitsev]” to unspecified regions of the Middle East: Southern Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, the Aral Sea administrative regions, and the Lake Balkhash region.⁸¹⁵ A report of November 3, 1937, signed by NKVD agent Meer and chief Lushkov, read: “On October 30, from the city of Vladivostok’s station was sent the last assembled echelon 501 ordinal 125/62 with the suspicious Koreans.”⁸¹⁶ Regardless of how hard Korean transnationals served their new homelands, be it Tsarist or Soviet Russia, they were under suspicion as the people of other ethnicity.

⁸¹² Ban, “Koreans,” 166.

⁸¹³ Chang, *Burnt*, 154.

⁸¹⁴ Chang, *Burnt*, 154.

⁸¹⁵ H. G. Park, *The Displacement*, 76; Chang, *Burnt*, 153.

⁸¹⁶ V.D. Kim, *Pravda polveka spustia*, 76, in Chang, *Burnt*, 156.

Even before they were able to settle in their new surroundings, 60 percent of the Koreans, who survived the arduous trip of deportation, were moved again in the next spring (1938) to yet other unknown areas, with no reasons or explanations given as to why, where the transnational Korean migrants had to settle into yet another diaspora. They received no compensation for their lost properties or resettlement, which was promised to them by the Russian government.⁸¹⁷

Their deportation was carried out in inhumane conditions without access to bathrooms or cooking facilities on a journey which took thirty to forty-five days. The former Tsarist subjects and loyal Soviet Koreans “suffered a mortality rate of 16.3 percent” wrote Chang, due to illness and injuries.⁸¹⁸ The transnational Korean migrants had to settle into yet another diaspora. They received no compensation for their lost properties or resettlement, which was promised to them by the Russian government.⁸¹⁹

⁸¹⁷ Ban, “Koreans,” 167.

⁸¹⁸ Ediev, *Dmograficheskie poteri deportirovannikh narodov SSSR*, 302, cited in Chang, *Burnt*, 156-157.

⁸¹⁹ Ban, “Koreans,” 167.



(Figure 75: Koreans being deported from the RFE by cargo trains to unknown areas of Central Asia in 1937)⁸²⁰

In the oral interviews that Chang conducted for six years from 2008 to 2014 with former Soviet Koreans who had been deported to Central Asia, mostly elderly by then, the deep sorrows of transnational diasporic people can be heard. Maia Kim talked about her parents who did not want to go anywhere else because “They grew up there [RFE], their children were born there. They put down their roots there.”⁸²¹ Just as the poor peasants packed up and crossed the northern Korean border to escape poverty and discrimination, the same people were yanked out of their

⁸²⁰ C. H. Park, *Rosia*, 344.

⁸²¹ Maia and Vladmimir Kim Interview (husband and wife), by Jon Chang, Kolkhoz Politotdel, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, September 14, 2009, quoted in J. Chang, *Burnt*, 155.

transnational diasporas and forced to make a home in another unknown region clear across the globe.

Vladimir Li, eight years old at the time of deportation in 1937, was living happily in a village on the Pacific coast near Ternei. Li thought he was going on a trip where he would have fun with no homework from school. Some tried to run away and hide in remote areas only to be captured and “shot on the spot” for resisting deportation, while others gave away their cows, chickens, and pigs to neighbors.⁸²²

Koreans as Japanese Subjects in Manchuria

For those who had taken the path northwest to Manchuria, all was not well either. Koreans in Manchuria had to endure the Japanese colonial administration in China as *Bandojin*, (半島人, meaning the Peninsula people), the second-class Japanese subjects, caught in struggles between the Chinese and the Japanese. The Chinese regarded Koreans in Manchuria as the vanguards of the Japanese colonial regime not to be trusted and to watch out against in the “colonial architecture”— between the colonizer and the colonized.⁸²³ The Japanese regarded the Koreans in Manchuria rebellious, on the other hand, as obstacles to Japanese colonization of the continent and further tightened their grips on Koreans.

In the 1920s and 1930s Manchuria was also inundated with an influx of migrants from other parts of China as well as ethnic minorities: Muslims, Uygurs, Tibetans, and Mongolians.⁸²⁴ The Ainus, ethnic minorities, from northern Japan due to discrimination by the Japanese on the mainland migrated from Japan to Manchuria. White Russians, during the Russian Revolution, also migrated to Manchuria, further attributing to this region’s status as a land of diasporas for

⁸²² Chang, *Burnt*, 156.

⁸²³ Kim, [Manchurian Arirang], 58.

⁸²⁴ Suh and Shultz, *Koreans in China*, 5.

many different ethnicities. In 1930, the Korean population in Yenbian reached 388,600, occupying 76.4% of the total population of 508,613.⁸²⁵

In the meantime, a bomb explosion mistakenly caused by troops in the Japanese Independent Garrison Unit, but misconstrued as the “work of Chinese saboteurs,” triggered a massive siege by the Japanese Kwantung Army on September 13, 1931.⁸²⁶ This incident, called the Manchurian Incident (also known as the Mukden Incident), led to the Japanese occupation of southern Manchuria and Japan’s active promotion to populate the area with Korean immigrants to help secure Japan’s control over the continent.

During the Manchurian Incident, with several uprisings in 1931, the Korean Communists in Manchuria collaborated with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to stage “carefully planned, destructive riots” in Yongjung area of Kando.⁸²⁷ The Manchurian Provincial Committee (MPC) of the CCP with its headquarters in Mukden urged Koreans in Manchuria to “rise against the Japanese troops.”⁸²⁸ This was reflected in the slogans of the Korean Communist Party as the first item among the 17 slogans in April 1925: “Complete overthrow of the Japanese imperialist rule and complete independence of Korea.”⁸²⁹ While lacking “a proper understanding of the theoretical principles of communism,” as historian Dae-sook Suh noted, some Koreans in Manchuria accepted communism as a “revolutionary mission” to liberate Korea and its people from Japanese exploitation.⁸³⁰ But Korean communists in Manchuria with their ruthless disturbances, 961 times with 3,872 men, causing damage to Korean properties as well as the

⁸²⁵ Kim, [*Manchuria Arirang*], 63.

⁸²⁶ Alyssa Park, *Borderland*, 279.

⁸²⁷ Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement*, 230.

⁸²⁸ Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement*, 239.

⁸²⁹ Dae-Sook Suh, *Documents of Korean Communism: 1918-1948* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 140.

⁸³⁰ Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement*, 251.

Japanese police, clashed with Korean Nationalists and Christian organizations.⁸³¹ The Korean Communists in Manchuria ended up exhausting their strength and retreated to Siberia. Many were arrested and jailed by the end of 1930.

Kim San, who was introduced in Chapter III as Chiang Chi-rak, an active revolutionary and organizer of Communist Party in China in the 1920s and 1930s, was captured, suspected as a Japanese secret agent, and killed in Yunan, China, in 1938.⁸³² Kim, who lived in Japan and Manchuria after leaving home at the age of eleven, was one of the active members of the Communist Party in China, also actively seeking the independence of Korea from the Japanese occupation until his death, alleged of being an agent of Japan—the country that he hated.

In the photo below (Figure 76), Kim San was photographed with a banner on his chest which said, “Chang Chi-rak, aged 27, originally from Yong-chun, Pyongando in Korea, is hereby forbidden to stay in China by order of the Japanese Consulate in Tsenjin, China.”⁸³³ This portrays a classic example of many Korean transnationals in Manchuria who struggled to live in exile during the tumultuous era of Korean history, only to be banished and eliminated in the end.

⁸³¹ Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement*, 235.

⁸³² Kim, [*Manchuria Arirang*], 245.

⁸³³ Kim, [*Manchuria Arirang*], 245.



(Figure 76: Kim San at the age of 27)⁸³⁴

Of the Koreans in Manchuria who survived the process of communist revolution of China over 80,000 were dispatched to Korea during the Korean War of 1950-1953: 55,000 – 60,000 of them joined the North Korean Army of *Inmingun* (北韓人民軍), and 20,000 joined the Chinese People’s Army (中國人民支援軍) to fight against the South Korean Army supported by the United Nations Allied Forces.⁸³⁵ From Yanbian Province alone, historian Chae-jin Lee claimed, more than 5,000 Koreans were sent to fight in the Chinese People’s Volunteers (中共人民軍) along with another 5,740 support personnel, such as “1,773 army operators, 2,163 translators, 898 nurses, 330 transportation workers, 433 stretch-bearers, and 140 truck drivers.”⁸³⁶ Lee conjectured that almost “all of the 6,981 persons from Yanbian who died in Korea were

⁸³⁴ Nym Wales and Kim San, *Song of Arirang* [아리랑: 조선인 혁명가 김산의 불꽃 같은 삶] (Kyunggido, Korea: Dongnyok, 1996), t.p.

⁸³⁵ Kim Jai-ki, Yim Yun-un, “중국 만주지역조선인 디아스포라와 한국전쟁,” *재외한인연구*, No. 23 (2011), 175, cited in Kim, [Manchuria Arirang], 55, n14.

⁸³⁶ Yonbyon chosunjok chachiju kaehwang [The general situation of the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture] (Yanji: Yonbyon inmin ch’ulp’ansa, 1984), 116, quoted in Chae-Jin Lee, “The Political Participation of Koreans in China,” in Dae-Sook Suh and Edward J. Shultz, *Koreans in China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, Center for Korean Studies, 1990), 97.

Koreans.”⁸³⁷ The phenomenon of Koreans fighting on both sides of a war, as this dissertation revealed during the Russo-Japanese War, happened again about fifty years later.

Koreans in the RFE and Manchuria in the Twenty-First century

Upon arrival in Yenji Airport today, visitors are welcomed with bilingual street signs and advertisements which present the contents in the Korean language on top of the Chinese displays, signifying the majority rule of the province. Yenbian, the capitol of Jilin Province, densely populated by Koreans who are called *Chosunjok* (朝鮮族), has been designated as the administrative seat of Chosunjok Autonomous Government (朝鮮族自治州行政首都)—the Autonomous State of Chosunjok (朝鮮自治州) since 1952. The City of Yenbian reported a *Chosunjok* (Korean) population of approximately 530,000 in 2003.⁸³⁸

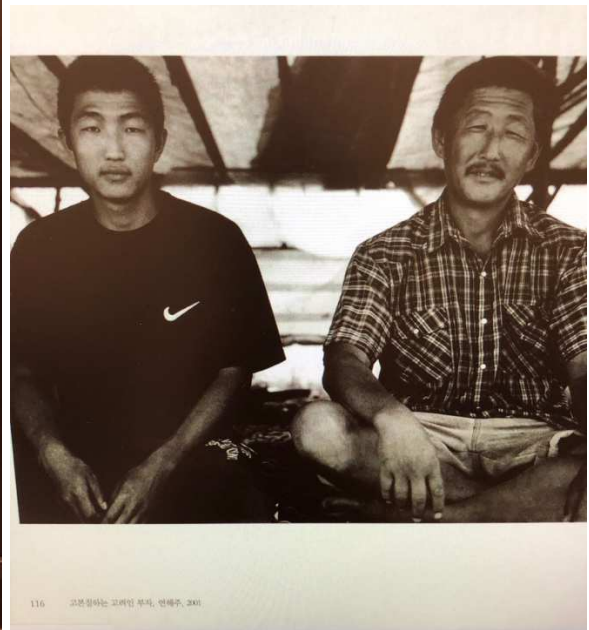
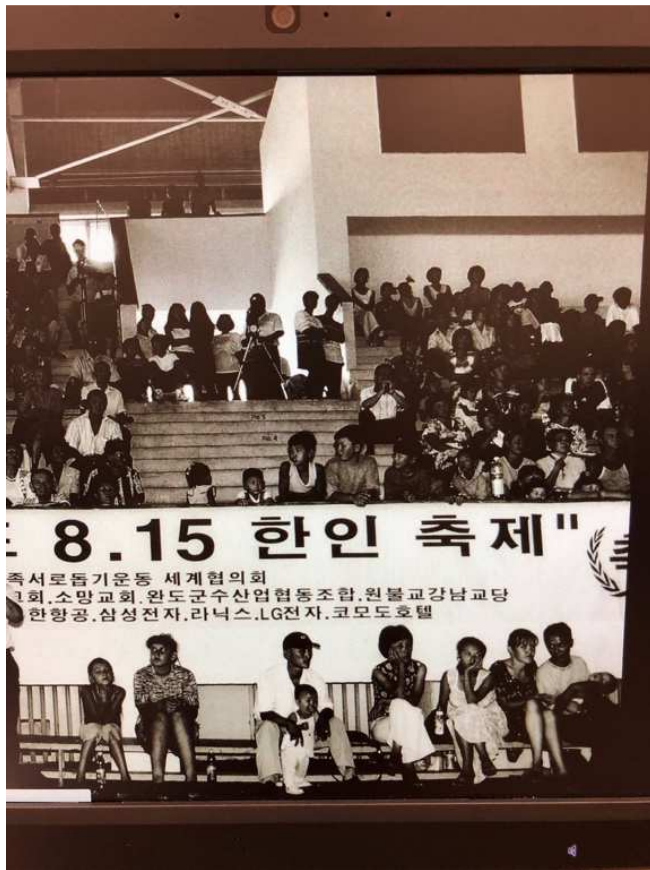
The Cultural Revolution of Red China in 1966-1967, which swept through China as a whole nation, did not succeed to wipe out the Korean cultures and customs onto which the transnational Koreans in Manchuria held tightly. Neither did the Bolshevik Revolution and the formation of the Soviet Union completely destroy the Korean diaspora in that region. Korean transnationals who had been deported thousands of miles away to Central Asia by Stalin in 1937 are still holding onto their Korean way of living, eating, sharing, and enjoying their lives in their new diaspora while some others returned to the RFE.

The only visible difference between the Korean transnational migrants currently living in the RFE and those in Manchuria is their form of appellation: *Goryoin* (高麗人) or *Goryo saram* of the former and *Chosunjok* (朝鮮族) of the latter. Both are still “discriminated against as

⁸³⁷ Lee, “The Political Participation,” 97.

⁸³⁸ 임계순 [Im Gye-soon], 우리에게 다가오는 조선족은 누구인가 [Who is this Chosun-jok that is Approaching us?] (Seoul: Hyunamsa, 2003), 198, in Kim, [Manchuria Arirang], 64.

‘other’” and discriminated as second-class citizens in their respective countries of transnational diasporas in the twenty-first century.⁸³⁹



(Figure 77: Koreans celebrating the “8.15 Independence Day” in Volgograd, Russia. Photographed by Kim Ji-youn)⁸⁴⁰

(Figure 78: Father and son of Goryoin farmers in Priamur, 2001)⁸⁴¹

⁸³⁹ Alyssa Park, *Borderland*, 286.

⁸⁴⁰ 러시아의 한인들: 뿌리 깊은 인연이여, 그 이름은 고려인 [*Rosia ui Hanindul: ppuri kip'un inyon iyo, ku irum un Koryoin = Koreans in Russia/Photographs by Kim Ji-Youn*] (Seoul: Noonbit Publishing, 2005).

⁸⁴¹ [*Koreans in Russia*], 116.



(Figure 79: Young Korean fourth-generation girls performing Fan Dance, a traditional Korean dancing, dressed in colorful Korean dresses, during the 8.15 Independence Day Celebration)

The above three photos (Figures. 77, 78, and 79) show the *Goryoins* (高麗人) who had been deported to Uzbekistan during Stalin's Terror in 1937 and have returned to Russia in the 1990s. These third- and fourth-generation Koreans have made a large settlement in Volgograd by the Volga River, formerly called Stalingrad which served as a front of the Soviet Union's Red Army during the World War II. Due to the language barrier as Russian speakers, the *Goryoins* had much difficulty adjusting to their new lives in Uzbekistan and migrated back to Russia when the Russian government declared the freedom of ethnic minorities in 1990.

The primary occupation of *Goryoins* continues to be farming, using the old Korean methods of seasonal farming as they migrate and rotate from place to place, planting and harvesting year around. A father (third-generation) and son (fourth-generation) team of Korean transnational farmers, seen in the picture taken in 2001, farm together in the Priamur region of the RFE. Although their living is still tough with barely enough proceeds to make ends meet

despite the hard labor they must endure, the father is beaming at the joy of working with his son side by side. The young son flaunts a Nike shirt, sitting next to his father in western-style plaid shirts. No more Korean way of dressing but still very much Korean in many other ways.

Revisiting the Myungdong-chon Korean village formed by the Kim Yak-yun group in 1899 (Figure 80) and taking a glimpse into the lives in Korean transnational diaspora in Manchuria today (2011), one can see the community the Korean migrants have created in Manchuria, still standing and prospering today. Yenbian State of Autonomy in Jilin Province, Manchuria, where Myungdong-chon stands today, reported a population of 2,177,126 of whom 1,092,343 are women in 2004.⁸⁴² A remarkable change from the earlier days when women were not even counted as part of population statistics, although they suffered the same hard work of farming, feeding, and clothing their families. The contribution made by women in the transnational diasporas in Manchuria, as well as in the RFE, needs to be better documented and researched for their role played not only in the diaspora building and maintenance but also in other political activities, such as independence movements in future studies.

⁸⁴² Kim, [Manchuria Arirang], 294.



(Figure 80: Myungdong-chon, May 2011, Courtesy of The Memorial Center of Kyu-Am Kim Yak-yun)

Initially, this dissertation delved into the general history of Korea to investigate the deployment of Koreans in the Japanese army during the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-1905, based on the clues left by Jack London and other media reports. The investigation revealed a complex web of findings and evidence which supported the deployment of Koreans not only in the Japanese military forces and intelligence activities but also in the Russian military and intelligence activities concurrently in the period of the study—1904-1905.

Furthermore, the current investigation revealed that the Japanese engagement of Koreans in the reconnaissance endeavors occurred much earlier in the nineteenth century, before the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895—as early as in 1876 when a “Russian national and a former Korean

national Kim Rin-sung” was hired on July 13, 1875.⁸⁴³ Kim In-sung, a native of Hamheung (咸興), Hamgyongdo Province in Korea, a product of the early transnational migrant diaspora in the RFE, was hired to help the Japanese military in its exploratory and mapping expeditions of the Korean peninsula and Manchuria, prior to the establishment of the Kanghwa Treaty between Korea and Japan—the first treaty signed to open the doors of Korea in 1876.

In conclusion this dissertation is a study of transnational diasporic communities of Koreans in Russia and China, more specifically the Russian Far East and Manchuria. Their desire for better lives and their struggle for survival during a time of natural disasters, political conflicts, and societal discrimination at the end of the Yi Dynasty of Korea helps us understand why and how Koreans became involved in someone else’s war—the Russo-Japanese War. The transnational aspects of their lives in various regions of Far East Asia must be taken into consideration as the core reasons.

As for the transnational migrants from Korea who settled in the RFE, their true allegiance could have been for the Russians to win the war so that their homeland of Korea would not fall into the Japanese colonial grip, wishing to return home to Korea sometime in their lifetime or their children’s. Russified Koreans were motivated as well as endowed to contribute to the war efforts on the Russian side, having already acquired necessary language skills and financial means to help out.

For those who sided with Japan in Manchuria and the RFE, however, the issues got complicated by the question of collaboration or survival. As historian Yumi Moon raised the question of collaboration, one must consider what it would have meant for the colonized to be

⁸⁴³ “魯國籍元朝鮮國產金麟昇傭入何 [Inquiry about employment of a Russian national and a former Korean native, Kim Rin-sung],” National Archives of Japan, A01100100700, Meiji 8. 7. 13. (July 13, 1875).

collaborative in the colonial period.⁸⁴⁴ The colonized are given little choice to collaborate or not in their given circumstances in order to survive. Another historian Andre Schmid suggested, “the enlightened leaders” of Korea created “structural dilemmas within Korean nationalist discourses and reform ideas” by using the “language of ‘civilization and enlightenment’” as it helped bring Korea into submission to Japan in their attempts for the country’s progress.⁸⁴⁵ The populace of Korea at home and in diasporas were caught in this dilemma, having had to choose sides.

Historian Mark E. Caprio and Yu Jia wrote of the excitement and jubilation that sent Koreans “throughout the empire into the streets in celebration” at the news of “unconditional surrender” by the Japanese Emperor Hirohito on August 15, 1945.⁸⁴⁶

For the first time in decades they could freely associate with their fellow countrymen, communicate in their language, and wave their national flag [taegukgi] as Koreans without fear of punishment. The United States estimated that three to four million Koreans resided overseas at this time.... Throughout the eastern part of the Asian continent (including the Russian Far East), as well as in other parts of the Japanese Empire including the Dutch East Indies, Hong Kong, the Philippines, the South Pacific, and Taiwan.

To all these Koreans in their transnational diasporas—“1.45 million Koreans in Japan and 1,475 in Manchuria” as well as many others in Sakhalin, Australia, Hawai’i and the United States—their days of living in fear and guilt, caught between the sense of collaboration or non-collaboration, of which they had no choice as the colonized people, were over at the news of Korea’s independence.⁸⁴⁷ The population of South Korea increased “by an estimated 22 percent, or slightly fewer than 3.5 million” within a year as the repatriated Koreans came home to

⁸⁴⁴ Moon, *Populist*, 3.

⁸⁴⁵ Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, 24; Moon, *Populist*, 9.

⁸⁴⁶ Mark E. Caprio and Yu Jia, “Occupations of Korea and Japan and the Origins of the Korean Diaspora in Japan,” Ch. 1 in John Lie and Sonia Ryang, *Diaspora Without Homeland: Being Korean in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 21.

⁸⁴⁷ United States Joint Intelligence Study, 1992, 271, cited in Caprio, “Occupations,” 21.

Korea.⁸⁴⁸ While some of these transnational migrants of Korea were able to cross over the Arirang road and come back home, many others still have not.

This dissertation concludes with the idea, shared by historian Madeline Y. Hsu about living in transnational diaspora. The “unidirectional shift” of uprooting is sustained by “continuing loyalty” which can bring Koreans at home and abroad together in unity regardless of where they may be situated at the moment, sustained by the idea and undying hope of “Heroic Returns” of crossing the hills of Arirang someday.⁸⁴⁹

⁸⁴⁸ Caprio, “Occupations,” 21.

⁸⁴⁹ Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, 7-14.

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