A Comprehensive Assessment of Korean Collaboration under Japanese Colonial Rule (1910-1945)

日本の植民地支配下における朝鮮人の「協力」に関する包括的な評価（1910-1945）

by

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ABSTRACT

Although almost seventy years has passed since Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule, the issue of collaboration still haunts Korea today. Attempts to resolve this issue have tended to focus attention on the traitorous actions of pro-Japanese collaborators without considering the gray areas that surround their actions such as the circumstances that influenced the accused to commit their alleged traitorous acts and the intentions that drove their decisions. However, a closer examination of these collaborators' lives reveals that most collaboration happened in gray areas between treason and collaboration. In re-examining different presuppositions associated with this issue, this dissertation attempts to demonstrate the complexity and the ambiguity of collaboration.

Chapter one focuses on the evolution of the criteria of *ch'inilp'a* (pro-Japanese collaborator) in Korean history. It considers five different texts written in different years to examine what has changed, what has remained, and what still remains problematic. The five main texts used for comparison are: "Puil hyŏmnyŏkcha, minjok panyŏkcha, kansangbae e taehan t'ŭkpyŏl chorye" (The Special Law on Pro-Japanese, National Traitors, and Profiteers) of 1947, "Panminjok haengwi ch'ŏbŏlbŏp" (the National Traitor Law) of 1948, the *Ch'inilp'a Kunsang* (A Group of Pro-Japanese), the *Ch'inilp'a: kŭ in'gan'gwa nolli* (Pro-Japanese Collaborators, the Person and the Logic), and the *Ch'inil inmyŏng sajŏn* (Pro-Japanese Biographical Dictionary).

Chapter two challenges the notion of absolute loyalty towards one's ethnicity by

considering the element of gender in colonial identity. Helen Kim [Kim Hwalran], as a "new woman" and as an educator, valued the necessity of providing education and equal opportunity for women. Yet, her efforts to realize these goals, to the contrary, forced her into actions that would later be used to construct a reputation as a pro-Japanese collaborator. Helen Kim's case illustrates how as a colonial subject, a person's multi-faceted identity could influence the decision to collaborate with the Japanese Empire.

Chapter three addresses the assumption that all intellectuals firmly believed in Korea's immediate independence. Hence, anyone who collaborated with Japan is a traitor. The national narrative of Korea is only willing to accept independence fighters such as Kim Koo as heroes who valiantly battled for Korea's independence from Japan. This narrative is largely based on the premise that pursuit of Korea's immediate independence was the only patriotic act Koreans should have pursued; all else was an act of treason against the Korean race. However, this rather simplistic narrative overlooks various nationalisms and their development throughout three decades of Japanese colonial rule in Korea. Chapter three focuses on the reasons behind Yun Ch'iho's decision to not support Korea's immediate independence, a decision that caused the public to brand him as a pro-Japanese collaborator.

Chapter four focuses on the notion of ethnic nationalism and its development during the colonial era. Through examining Yi Kwangsu's notion of *ethnie* (*minjok*) and *minjok*'s survival, this chapter challenges the binary understanding of collaboration, where often a person is labeled either as pro-*minjok* (pro-Japanese) or *panminjok* (反民族, anti-Japanese). Through the case study of Yi Kwangsu, this chapter demonstrates that being pro-Japanese collaborators did not necessarily mean that they harbored anti-*minjok* sentiments.Lastly, Chapter five addresses Japan's wartime propaganda and Koreans' collaboration under wartime circumstances. This chapter goes in depth to investigate why so-called pro-Japanese collaborators rather enthusiastically collaborated with the Japanese especially during the war.

Through these individuals' case studies, this dissertation attempts to complicate the

issue of collaboration by raising questions that address the gray areas that surround the actions of these pro-Japanese collaborators. In doing so, it hopes to challenge the nationalist historiography's propensity to oversimplify this issue and present a more nuanced understanding of the colonial era.

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PREFACE

Note on Romanization:

I use the McCune-Reischauer system for Korean and the Hepburn system for Japanese. Korean names in Korean sources are romanized following the McCune-Reischauer system except for certain proper names with established, alternate spellings that are already in wide circulation.

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Introduction

In 2011, a well-known actress in Korea named Lee Jia was thrown into the limelight by the media due to her grandfather's colonial past. Her grandfather, Kim Sun-hŭng, is listed in the *Ch'inil inmyŏng sajŏn* (Pro-Japanese Biographical Dictionary) compiled by the Minjok Munje Yŏn'guso (Institute for Research in Collaborationist Activities). Some people attacked Lee, stating that they could not believe "an actress who lives off adoration from the citizens would be a descendent of a *ch'inilp'a* [pro-Japanese collaborator]." Others expressed a sympathetic view, saying "she should not be responsible for her grandfather's wrongdoings."[1] A few days later, Lee's cousin defended her by posting tweets addressing this issue. He argued that their grandfather was already wealthy before the colonial period and that the Japanese imperial government forced him to pay for political funds. He then confronted the public with the following question: "Should everyone who paid a large amount of tax to the imperial government during the colonial period be labeled as a pro-Japanese collaborator?"[2]

Lee Jia certainly was not the last person to be thrust into the spotlight for an

[1] Kim, Eunku, "Lee, Jia tto nollan, ibŏnenŭn `chobu ch'inilhaengjŏk`…pinan vs tudun" (Lee, Jia Faces Another Controversy, Her Grandfather's Pro-Japanese Acts…Criticism vs. Defense), *E-daily Star*, December 20, 2011, http://starin.edaily.co.kr/news/NewsRead.edy?newsid=01423526596480488.

[2] Chŏng, Chiŭn, "Lee, Jia sach'on 'chobunŭn ch'inilp'aga anida' chujang" (Lee Jia's Cousin Defends His Grandfather, "Our Grandfather is not a Pro-Japanese Collaborator"), *JoongAng Daily,* December 20, 2011. http://news.joins.com/article/6940621.

ancestor's activities; Again and again, well-known figures have been scrutinized for their ancestor's "sins." Recently, in 2017, a popular South-Korean actor named Kang Tongwŏn came under fire over a so-called pro-Japanese ancestor, who he happened to mention in an interview in 2007. He was reported in the newspaper *Chosun ilbo* to insist that his grandfather, Lee Jongman, was "a great person."[3] This interview only became a problem when a celebrity news outlet decided to make it an issue and "revealed" Kang's grandfather as a pro-Japanese collaborator[4] for having donated a large amount of money to support Japan's war efforts.[5] Two days later, Kang apologized for "not being adequately aware of this past" and admitted to the public that he had just "learned about his great-grandfather's shameful past."[6]

Even though seven decades have passed since the end of Japan's colonial rule in Korea in 1945, the issue of collaboration between Koreans and the Japanese colonial government—who the collaborators were and which punishment they deserve—still plagues South Korea. The extent of the controversy such news causes and the attention it receives, as

[3] Choi, Poyun, "Chakp'um chŏkko, CF kŏŭi ŏmnŭnde…," (Not Enough Work and Commercials…), *Choson.com,* November 3, 2007, http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2007/11/03/2007110300022.html.

[4] Kim, Suji,"'Harabŏji nŭn yesuriŏtta?'…Kang, Dongwŏn, ch'inil huson ŭi silch'e" ("Grandfather was an Artist?" Kang, Dongwŏn, a Descendent of a Pro-Japanese), *Dispatch*, March 3, 2017, http://www.dispatch.co.kr/684637.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Choi, Jieun, "Pro-Japanese Roots Haunt South Korean Actor Kang Dong-won," *Korea Exposé,* March 6, 2017, https://koreaexpose.com/pro-japanese-roots-catches-up-actor-kang-dong-won.

well as the public's often harsh though sometimes sympathetic response to so-called decedents of pro-Japanese collaborators demonstrates that the issue of collaboration still persists in Korean society.

The Idea of *Ch'ŏngsan* (Japanese [J]: *seisan*, to purge or reckon with)

The idea of public retribution against collaborators was especially prevalent in Europe directly after World War II. An attempt to reckon with collaborators swept across Europe, where many governments and individuals were pressured or persuaded into collaborating with the Nazi regime. These individuals were often apprehended and investigated, and sometimes executed. This pursuit of Nazi collaborators took place in many different countries, including Argentina, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Norway, and the Soviet Union. In Belgium alone, 405,067 individuals were accused of collaboration. Out of the 57,254 persons who were persecuted, 2,904 were sentenced to death and 2,340 were sentenced to life imprisonment.[7] Martin Conway notes that one of the reasons why Belgium was swift in its persecution of collaborators is because the rapid liberation of Belgium did not allow "any vacuum of power" to

[7] Deák, István, Jan T. Gross, and Tony .. Judt, eds, *Politics of Retribution in Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 134.

develop after World War II.[8] Belgium's authorities were able to swiftly reestablish their authority and take charge over how collaborators were dealt with.[9] Czechoslovakia went above and beyond with its purge as well. Beginning in 1945, Czechoslovakia's government initiated a "national cleansing" program that included banning "political parties considered responsible for the German occupation, expropriating and redistributing the property of suspected traitors, and purging alleged collaborators from the civil service, the academy, and the arts."[10] Furthermore, it created an extensive system of summary courts and administrative tribunals that tried over 23,000 accused collaborators and war criminals.[11] By February 1948, Czechoslovakia had executed nearly 700 defendants.[12]

Unlike European countries, Korea was unable to fully experience this process of *ch'ŏngsan* after World War II, when it was under the direct rule of the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) from September 8, 1945 to August 15, 1948. This is because USAMGIK did not allow Korea's interim legislative assembly to deal with collaborators for reasons that are discussed in the next chapter. Unfortunately, even after the end of the

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Benjamin Frommer, *National Cleansing: Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2.

[11] Ibid, 2.

[12] Ibid, 3.

United States' occupation of Korea and the Korean War (1950–1953), Koreans did not have the opportunity to reckon with their colonial past due to decades of authoritarian presidents such as Park Chunghee, who himself having a pro-Japanese past did not see the need to resolve this issue. The largely unresolved issue of retribution (or purging) gained momentum with the democratization of South Korea in the late 1980s and 1990s. Song Yeunjee demonstrates in her dissertation that in the midst of intensifying confrontations between conservatives and progressives, Korean progressives embraced the pro-Japanese discourse as their own political rhetoric in the late 1990s.[13]

Advocates in favor of *ch'ŏngsan* blame many of Korea's current ills on pro-Japanese collaborators. For instance, former congresswoman Kim Heesun, who established the Minjokchŏnggirŭl Seunŭn Kukhoeŭiwŏn Moim (an assembly of congress members established to encourage national spirit) asserts in an article that because Korea never went through with *ch'ŏngsan*, "pro-Japanese figures grabbed power and caused moral chaos in Korean society."[14] In order to improve this reality, she argues, *ch'ŏngsan* is a necessity. In another article, she claims that *ch'ŏngsan* is like a second independence movement for Koreans. She passionately

[13] Song, Yeunjee, "Historicizing the Discourse on Pro-Japanese Collaborators in Contemporary Korean History from the Late 1970s to the Late 2000s" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2013).
[14] Shin, Minkyŏng, "Minjokchŏnggi rŭl seunŭn kuk'oeŭiwŏn moim hoejang kimhŭisŏn ŭiwŏn" (Kim Heesun, President of An Assembly of Congress Members to Encourage National Spirit), *Yŏsŏng shinmun,* May 12, 2005, http://www.womennews.co.kr/news/16649.

asserts that "we must make distorted history right and purify our ethnic spirit and get rid of Japan's poisonous effects."[15] This type of argument stems from the presupposition that without Japan's colonization of Korea, Korea would have thrived. Therefore, the process of cleansing (*ch'ŏngsan*) is a way for Korea to set its course back on track. Kim Dongchun, a prominent sociologist in Korea, goes as far as to describe this process as a "nationalistic psychotherapy." Yoon Haedong expresses his concern regarding this inclination as follows:

> Kim Dongchun's politics of *ch'ŏngsan* is excessively moralistic . . . We can call this process of understanding *ch'ŏngsan* as a fundamental source of moralism and a necessary basis for a reform, as fundamentalism of *ch'ŏngsan*. In this particular situation, the past becomes a symbol. The process of reckoning with one's past becomes a way to create a certain type of memory, and through this process the past becomes a political symbol.[16]

Yoon further warns that in this kind of environment, it becomes impossible to have a flexible understanding, acknowledging that politics and moral values often intersect with each other.[17]

The attempt to approach this issue academically is further hindered by the general sentiment towards history in Korea, whereby the Korean historical narrative is believed to be a permanent truth. Especially any new discoveries or theories that challenge the authority of

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[15] Ryu, Chŏngmin, "Ch'inil yŏksa ch'ŏngsanŭn che2ŭi tongnip undong" (Purging Pro-Japanese History is the Second Independence Movement), *Midiŏ onŭl*, August 13, 2004, http://www.mediatoday.co.kr/?mod=news&act=articleView&idxno=30176.

[16] Yun, Haedong, *Kŭndaeyŏksahak ŭi hwanghon* (The Twilight of Modern Korean History), (Seoul: Ch'aekkwa hamkke, 2010), 273.

[17] Ibid, 274.

nationalist historiography are shunned as an abomination against the Korean people. For instance, New Light's explanation of colonial modernity is chastised as a "neocolonialist view":

> Since there is more exchange between Korea and Japan and Japan is funding more and more research, some have argued that Japan "developed" Korea, not exploited it. This is very similar to Japanese scholars' neocolonialist view. A few scholars and intellectuals are agreeing with colonial government's propaganda and expressing an absurd view that supports colonial modernity and development.[18]

It is not the intention of this dissertation to defend or chastise New Light's attempt at re-writing or revising history textbooks. However, it is important to bear in mind that any attempt to present a view outside of what is deemed as absolute truth is most likely met with shrewd name-calling and accusations of being a revisionist in the most negative sense. This rigid mindset is applied to the issue of collaboration as well. Pro-Japanese collaborators were traitors to their own people; End of discussion.

Recently, there have been more attempts to present different perspectives on this issue. Pak Hyochong agrees that the pro-Japanese *ch'ŏngsan* is an important agenda in order to "protect our *minjok*'s [the Korean race's] identity and express our determination to cultivate a prosperous and a strong nation."[19] He emphasizes that it is important to distinguish

[18] Kang, Pyŏnghan, "Shin, Yongha kyosu 'ilbon shinsingminjuŭi sagwan yuip'" (Professor Shin, Yongha Argues 'This is Influx of Neocolonialism'), *Kyunghyang shinmun*, March 26, 2008, http://v.media.daum.net/v/20080326181409977.

[19] Pak, Hyochong, "Ch'inil uriege muŏshin'ga" (Chin'il, What is it to Us?), *Han'guk nondan* 244 (2010), 58.

between those who committed *panminjok* (*anti-minjok*) actions and those who suffered during the colonial era. However, he argues that the purpose and lesson of pro-Japanese *ch'ŏngsan* are to realize that "we should never allow another nation to rob our nation," rather than "what is the just way to live *after* our nation is already robbed." He draws an analogy between the colonial era and darkness in a cave. A bat, an animal which lives in a cave, is blind in order to become accustomed to the surrounding darkness: "can we criticize the bat for not having better eyesight?" He argues that whoever neglected or forced the bat into the cave in the first place should be responsible for the bat's misery. For him, Japan's imperial ambition and Korean bureaucrats' foolishness at the end of the Chosŏn dynasty is to be blamed for Koreans' time in the darkness.[20]

Pak Noja also offers an intriguing argument. He asserts that the core issue is not whether pro-Japanese individuals betrayed their people; Rather, it is how they willingly participated in powerful internal and external violence.[21] He further articulates that the punishment of pro-Japanese is a condition for Korean society to transition from a violent society into a normal society.[22] Indeed, collaborators engaged in and climbed the social ladder

[20] Ibid, 78.

[21] Pak, Noja, "Ch'inil ŭn wae tanjoe haeya hanŭn'ga" (Why We Need to Punish Pro-Japanese Collaborators), *Han'gyŏrye,* February, 23, 2016.

[22] Ibid.

to a certain degree. However, if collaborators are to be criticized for being part of a society that is divided into different classes and for the violence committed by such a society, it is also absolutely necessarily to recognize that Korean society was strongly hierarchical before Japan's colonization of Korea. If we are to hold collaborators responsible for violence against the lowest social class of society, we must also hold Koreans responsible for maintaining the Chosŏn dynasty and benefitting from the monarchy.

In many instances, European nations' attempt at purging collaborators is seen as a model example of how Koreans should have dealt with the pro-Japanese after the liberation. However, this comparison is unfair, as occupation is inherently different from colonization. Before Koreans were coaxed and coerced into collaboration under wartime circumstances, they lived as colonial subjects for approximately three decades. How did these three decades of living as colonial subjects shape Korean intellectuals? How and why did collaborators, many of whom had a background in Korea's independence movements, become avid advocates of Koreans' assimilation into the Japanese Empire later in their lives? Did their transition occur abruptly in 1937, as much of the literature on pro-Japanese collaborators claims? These are some of the questions this dissertation attempts to answer.

The Question of Collaboration

To dismantle the issue of collaboration in Korea-Japan relations, it is first important to consider the wider context in which the word collaboration is used. It is interesting to note that in Korea, the word *ch'inilp'a* (pro-Japanese collaborator) is preferred over the more general term, collaborator. The term *chin'il* (J: *shinnichi*) in its literal translation means someone who is intimate with Japan. It suggests a person who reveres Japan and has an absolute allegiance to Japan. However, a closer examination of many pro-Japanese Koreans reveals that this is not necessarily the case. Their motivations appear far more complex and ambiguous than those implied by simply labeling them *ch'inilp'a*. For this reason, the term "collaborator" is utilized in this dissertation to explore the complexities and ambiguities that are glossed over by the term *ch'inilp'a*. However, in referring to original materials or secondary sources, "pro-Japanese collaborator" is used as a direct translation of the term *ch'inilp'a*.

The issue of collaboration has been more widely researched and studied in Europe, especially regarding the collaboration between occupied countries and countries under Nazi rule during World War II. One of the most well-known examples of this is France's Vichy regime's, led by Philippe Pétain, collaboration with Nazi Germany following France's capitulation on June 22, 1940. On October 24, 1940, Pétain publicly pronounced on French

radio the Vichy regime's intention to collaborate with Adolf Hitler. At the end of World War II, Pétain was tried as a collaborator on August 15, 1945. He was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death. However, due to his advanced age and deteriorating health, the court decided to sentence him to life imprisonment. As in Pétain's case, "collaboration" in European countries specifically meant a choice to support the occupying Nazi power.[23]

One of the difficulties with the issue of collaboration is how to define the term generically. As Christopher Lloyd observes, in the case of France, depending on the definition of collaboration one could argue that either the entire population of occupied France or a few thousand enthusiasts who held power could be accused of collaboration.[24] He asserts this is true even if someone obviously collaborated, as it is difficult to make a judgment based only on outwardly behaviors. He suggests differentiating between active commitment to and passive complicity in collaboration. According to him, active commitment means the following:

> Either more conscious ideological choices (such as producing pro-German propaganda or joining persecution) or at least deriving personal benefit from association with the occupying authorities (such as a career advancement or

[23] Kerstin Von Lingen, ed. *Debating collaboration and complicity in war crimes trials in Asia, 1945-1956* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 3.

[24] Christopher Lloyd, *Collaboration and Resistance in Occupied France Representing Treason and Sacrifice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 26.

profiteering).[25]

This differentiation is helpful in grasping that not all collaborators are actively committed to collaboration. Many passively comply, without being aware of how strongly they may later be condemned for their consent to complicity.

Peter Davies categorizes the motivations behind the act of collaboration into six different types: 'heart-and-soul' collaboration, 'shield' philosophy, 'conditional' collaboration, 'tactical' collaboration, 'submission on the grounds of superior force,' and '*attentisme*' (wait-and-see policy).[26] By identifying different types of motivation, Davies strives to examine the complexity of a person's intention underlying the decision to collaborate with the Nazi regime. Philippe Burrin suggests examining collaboration through various modes of accommodation. He divides into structural, non-deliberate accommodation and deliberate accommodation, which is further specified as opportunistic and political accommodation.[27] As Davies suggests, "there were as many types of collaboration as there were individual collaborators."[28] On a similar note, Patrick Marsh observes that "despite an ever-increasing

[25] Ibid.

[26] Peter Davies, *Dangerous Liaisons - Collaboration and World War Two* (London: Routledge, 2004), 23-36.

[27] Philippe Burrin, *France under the Germans: Collaboration and Compromise* (New York: The New Press, 1996), 468-469.

[28] Ibid, 27.

amount of literature on the history of the Second World War in general and Nazi rule in occupied Europe in particular, there is still no real agreement on the exact meaning of 'collaboration.'"[29] Indeed, as Konrad Lawson adequately sums up, "collaboration obscures more than it explains."[30]

As the word "collaboration" has a strong correlation with the word "treason", it may be helpful to examine how the latter term is defined. According to Merriam-Webster, treason is defined as "the offense of attempting by overt acts to overthrow the government of the state to which the offender owes allegiance or to kill or personally injure the sovereign or the sovereign's family."[31] Traditionally, before the formation of modern states, treason was viewed in the context of subjects' relation with their king. This can be seen in the 17th-century English discussion on loyalty and treason by Rebecca West in *The New Meaning of Treason*:

> Because as the subject hath his protection from the King and his laws, so on the other side the subject is bound by his allegiance to be true and faithful to the King. And hence it is, that if an alien enemy comes into this kingdom hostilely to invade it, if he be taken, he shall be dealt with as an enemy, but not as a traitor, because he violates no trust nor allegiance. But if an alien, the subject of a foreign prince in amity with the King, live here, and enjoy the benefit of the King's protection, and commit a treason,

[29] Gerhard Hirschfeld and Patrick Marsh, *Collaboration in France: Politics and Culture During the Nazi Occupation, 1940-1944* (Oxford: Berg, 1989), 3.

[30] Konrad Lawson, *"Wartime Atrocities and the Politics of Treason in the Ruins of the Japanese Empire*, 1937-1953," (PhD diss., University of Harvard, 2012), 22.

[31] "Treason," https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/treason.

> he shall be judged and executed, as a traitor, for he owes a local allegiance.[32]

In the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910), treason also was seen as an act that violated one's allegiance to the king. Any attempt to undermine the king's authority was viewed as an act of betrayal against him. According to Taejŏnhoet'ong,[33] not only the person who committed treason against the king with the help of troops was sentenced to execution, but also his/her family members, including brothers, sisters, wife, and concubines, were sentenced to execution.[34] However, Kim Chongsŏng indicates that in reality, the traitor's family members were forced into slavery instead of being executed.[35]

After Japan's annexation of Korea, Korea no longer had a kingdom or a king who ruled over it. Without a king to protect them, Koreans no longer had an authoritative figure to whom to declare their allegiance. Koreans had neither a government nor a sovereign entity to stay loyal to or even betray. Herein lies another problem: although these discussions of collaboration with the occupying force (mainly Nazi Germany and the Japanese Empire) provide a fresh perspective to understanding collaboration, this perspective is limited in its

[32] Rebecca West, *The New Meaning of Treason*, (kindle edition, location 278).

[33] It is a body of law, a córpora júris of Chosŏn dynasty.

[34] Kim, Chongsŏng, *Chosŏn nobidŭl* (Chosŏn Slaves), (Seoul: Yŏksaŭiach'im, 2013), 50.

[35] Ibid, 51.

applicability in Korea's case because Korea was not occupied territory but a colony. Could one betray the king when the king did not have any authoritative power over his citizens for decades? In the case of *ch'inilp'a*, one could argue that pro-Japanese collaborators betrayed their own people, their *minjok*. However, this argument neglects to question how *minjok* should be defined in the colonial context. Furthermore, it needs to be addressed how and on the basis of which standard this betrayal can be measured.

Although there is still much debate about what collaboration is and how it should be defined, several definitions of collaboration can be useful in understanding Korean collaboration with the Japanese colonial government. Timothy Brook cites Henrik Dethlefsen in defining collaboration as "the continuing exercise of power under the pressure produced by the presence of an occupying power."[36] While this definition is useful, Brook indicates that it is limited in that it is used to describe Denmark's unique history, in which Denmark was allowed to keep and maintain its government under Nazi occupation.

In the case of Korea, Yumi Moon's definition of collaboration as "political engagements of local actors to support a given colonial rule and to justify its sustenance in

[36] Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 2.

their society"[37] is more applicable in that it reflects Korea's subordinate position as a colonial subject. In this study, this particular definition is used to understand Korean intellectuals who collaborated with the colonial government.

Even if historians could devise a generic definition of collaboration upon which everyone agrees, they are still faced with the issue of morality regarding collaboration. In recent years, scholars have made novel attempts to re-examine the issue of collaboration beyond the discussion of who is guilty and who is not. For instance, J. Kenneth Brody in his work considers the reasons behind Pierre Laval's willingness to collaborate with the Nazi regime,[38] observing that the resistance effort amongst men in German prison camps in occupied France was understandably minimal. As Brody comments "prudence, not rebellion, seemed to be the best course" in many cases.[39] Breaking away from idealized polarities between collaboration and resistance, some argue that the issue of collaboration is not as simple as many perceive it. For instance, Poshek Fu shows through an analysis of Chinese writers during Japan's occupation of Shanghai that collaboration and resistance had many

[37] Yumi Moon, *Populist collaborators: the Ilchinhoe and the Japanese colonization of Korea, 1896-1910* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 5.

[38] Laval worked as a minister of state in the Vichy government. (1940-1941) Brody especially criticizes the way the trial was conducted.

[39] Kenneth J. Body, *The trial of Pierre Laval: Defining Treason, Collaboration and Patriotism in World War II France* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2010), 256.

different facets. In fact, Chinese writers in "Shanghai exhibited a complexity and ambiguity of moral choices that defies simplistic stereotyping."[40] He also indicates that even writers who openly resisted were often "fearful, hesitant, and wavering."[41] Brook masterfully illustrates how collaboration happened in the everyday lives of local elites in wartime China. In his own words, "there was collaboration, there was resistance, but there were much else besides."[42]

In the case of Korea, the issue of collaboration is ensnared with strong nationalistic sentiments, which makes it all the more complicated to pose difficult questions that would inevitably be criticized as anti-nationalistic. The issue of collaboration is still often inseparable from anachronistic moral judgments, which proclaim that these individuals are guilty of a crime that should be publicly censured. One can witness this trend in the sustained popularity of publications on pro-Japanese collaborators in Korea, which mostly focus on making a judgments on whether an individual is a pro-Japanese collaborator and therefore a traitor.

For instance, in the 1993 publication *Chin'il Pa Ninety-nine,* Kim Bongu proudly states that this is "the first book that makes a judgment of *ch'inilp'a*,"[43] insisting that this

[40] Fu, Poshek. *Passivity, Resistance, and Collaboration: Intellectual Choices in Occupied Shanghai, 1937-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 14.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China*, 31.

[43] At the time of the publication, Kim served as the head of the Minjok munje yŏn'guso.

compilation shows dedication to "historically and objectively bring this issue to justice."[44] The Pro-Japanese Biographical Dictionary explains that they have "limited" the list to traitors and pro-Japanese collaborators who had a larger, "historical responsibility."[45] Some go as far as to argue that pro-Japanese collaborators are criminals; They are symbols of *panminjok* (anti-*minjok*), *panminjung* (anti-public), and anti-democracy.[46] The verdict is already reached before the trial begins; These collaborators have committed an abominable act that must be shamed publicly. The plethora of ambiguities surrounding the issue is never discussed because the verdict has already been reached.

For instance, these studies claim that objectivity must be questioned in the context of collaborators in similar positions in other Asian nations who were and continue to be considered national heroes despite their association with Japan. Boyle notes that in some Asian countries, "collaboration with the Japanese led to little or no stigma at all."[47] He observes that in the case of Indonesia, nationalists collaborated with the Japanese occupation

[44] Han, Ch'ŏrhŭi et al., *Chin'ilp'a 99 vol. 1* (99 Pro-Japanese Collaborators), (Seoul: Dolbegae, 1993), 6.

[45] Yun, Kyŏngro et al., *Ch'in'il Inmyŏng Sajŏn* (The Pro-Japanese Biographical Dictionary), (Seoul: Minjok munje yŏn'guso, 2009), 18.

[46] Kim, Samung and Chŏng, Unhyŏn, *Ch'inilp'a: kŭin'gan kwa nolli* (Seoul: Hangminsa, 1990), 20.

[47] John Hunter Boyle, *China and Japan at War: 1937-1945: the Politics of Collaboration* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972), 7.

authorities because they shared similar goals.[48] Likewise in Burma, many known patriots were collaborationists. For instance, Dr. Ba Maw openly expressed his gratitude towards Japan for the role it played in the Burmese resistance to the British, despite Japan's often arrogant and harsh treatment of the Burmese people:

> Nothing can ever obliterate the role Japan has played in bringing liberation to countless colonial peoples. The phenomenal Japanese victories in the Pacific and in Southeast Asia, which really marked the beginning of the end of all imperialism and colonialism; the national armies Japan helped to create during the war, which in their turn created a new spirit and will in a large part of Asia; the independent states she set up in several Southeast Asian countries as well as her recognition of the provisional government of Free India at a time when not a single other belligerent power permitted even the talk of independence within its own dominions . . . these will outlive all the passing wartime strains and passions and betrayals in the final summing-up of history."[49]

The different treatment of collaborators with the Japanese Empire in post-war nations indicates the extent to which post-liberation developments influence how these collaborators are judged. Ironically, in the case of Indonesia and Burma, because Japan's occupation of these nations supported their cause to gain independence from other colonial empires, so-called pro-Japanese collaborators are remembered as heroes. However, if Japan had won World War II and officially colonized Indonesia and Burma (on the premise that both nations

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid, 9.

would eventually become independent states), these pro-Japanese collaborators perhaps would be remembered as traitorous souls who did not fight against Japan's occupation. This instance alone shows that it is nearly impossible to argue that an objective moral judgment can be made against *ch'inilp'a*, as the above studies claim.

On the opposite side of the spectrum is the tendency to deny everything and "defend" these collaborators, with studies making far-fetched claims to deny any of Japan's wrongdoings. For instance, Kim Wansŏp argues (to discredit independence movements) that independence activists were simply Korean hooligans,[50] citing various Japanese newspapers to support his argument. Not once does Kim question the validity of his sources or question why Japanese newspapers would portray these activists in a certain way. He discredits independence activists to prove that pro-Japanese collaborators were upright citizens, which leads to an oversimplified and sometimes erroneous analysis of his subjects. Such studies show how ineffective it is to prosecute collaborators. The crucial question is not whether or not they collaborated but why they decided to collaborate, resist, or waver somewhere in between.

Several scholars suggest adopting colonial modernity as an approach to overcome this

[50] Kim, Wansŏp, *Shinnichiha no tame no benmei* (A Justification for Pro-Japanese Collaborators) (Tokyo: Sōshisha, 2002), 128.

binary narrative of nationalist historiography.[51] Koen de Ceuster observes that although "dealing with collaboration was for many [then]—younger—[Korean] historians an indirect way of continuing the political activism,"[52] in recent years, there has been a shift towards a more contextualized approach to the issue of collaboration.[53] For instance, Yumi Moon braves re-examining the Ilchinhoe's activities, which is known as one of the most notorious pro-Japanese organizations. Contrary to popular belief, Moon argues that Ilchinhoe had a populist character. According to Moon, the organization claimed that

> the people's rights to address their material grievances, justified their collective intervention in the government administration with the new rhetoric of reform, and advanced the idea of the people's "duty" to engage in greater political participation.[54]

She observes that "it is paradoxical that the Ilchihoe collaborated with the Japanese in opposing the Korean monarchy only to find themselves in bed with a colonial regime that was in favor of acknowledging the local status quo."[55] Her work on the Ilchinhoe illuminates how

[51] Michael Robinson in *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea* (Seattle, WA: Univ. of Washington Press, 2014), 48-77, describes intellectuals who experienced colonial modernity head on as cultural nationalists. These intellectuals believed that enlightenment and personal development had to precede political independence. Also see, Shin, Gi-Wook, and Michael Edson. Robinson, *Colonial Modernity in Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999) for further discussion on colonial modernity in the Korean context.

[52] Koen De Ceuster, "The Nation Exorcised: The Historiography of Collaboration in South Korea," *Korean Studies* 25, no. 2 (2001): 225.

[53] Ibid, 227-228.

[54] Yumi Moon, *Populist collaborators: the Ilchinhoe and the Japanese colonization of Korea, 1896-1910*, 284.

[55] Ibid, 286.

the binary understanding of resistance and collaboration failed to capture the essence of the Illchinhoe as a populist movement.

Shirakawa Yutaka suggests in his work to use the new framework of *chi'il* (J: *chinichi*, to know Japan) instead of *ch'inil* (J: *shinnichi*, to be intimate/in collaboration with Japan) in order to explore the similarities between bilingual writers of the colonial era.[56] Although this term may be useful in understanding these writers by including Japan (日), the term's applicability to the wider context of collaboration is limited.

Yoon Haedong is noted for his work, which challenges the dichotomous understanding of resistance and collaboration. Similarly to Shirakawa, he suggests re-conceptualizing the term *ch'inil*, insisting that the term *hyŏmnyŏk* (collaboration) should be used instead of *ch'inil* to illustrate that collaboration existed in a wider gray zone, in which "as colonial subjects, the general public often ambivalently swayed between collaboration and resistance."[57] Furthermore, he criticizes that the effort to reckon with *ch'inilp'a* has been largely limited to the persecution of individual collaborators. He argues that the criticism should strive to expand in order to dismantle and reform the undemocratic governing system

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[56] Shirakawa Yutaka, *Chosŏnkindai no chinichihasakka kutō no kiseki* (Korea's Modern Pro-Japanese Writers: their Struggles and Trajectory), (Tokyo: Bensei shuppan, 2008).

[57] Yun Haedong, *Shingminji ŭi hoesaekchidae*, (The Gray Area of Colonialism), (Seoul: Yŏksa pip'yŏngsa, 2003), 35.

that was established through colonization.[58]

While acknowledging the importance of the gray-zone paradigm of collaboration in breaking away from the binary understanding of resistance and collaboration, this dissertation hopes to delve deeper and consider why certain individuals swayed between collaboration and resistance, and why some individuals swayed further than others.

Presuppositions Associated with the Issue of Collaboration

Although there are many ambiguities surrounding the issue of collaboration, they are hardly ever brought to light. This is because these ambiguities are often conveniently masked by various presuppositions regarding the issue of collaboration, which shape and determine how collaborators should have behaved as Koreans; They serve as a standard to measure the level of their patriotism. According to these presuppositions, there is no doubt that collaborators are traitors to the Korean people. Even though many of these presuppositions are problematic in their logic, there is hardly any effort to challenge them. By challenging these assumptions, this dissertation aims to reveal the grey area beneath them and to explore in depth how collaborators navigated this gray area of collaboration.

The following chapters challenge the various presuppositions associated with the

[58] Ibid, 76.

ch'inilp'a issue. Specifically, Helen Kim, Yun Chi'ho, and Yi Kwangsu are chosen with the purpose of dismantling the presuppositions around each of their cases, dedicating one chapter to each. Kim's case is utilized to dismantle the notion that one's ethnic identity should be prioritized in all circumstances. Through Yun's case, chapter three addresses the expectation that every Korean should have rooted for Korea's independence for 35 years. Through Yi's case, chapter four considers whether *minjokchuŭi* and *minjok*'s definition remained static throughout the colonial era. Each chapter addresses a different presupposition surrounding the *ch'inilp'a* issue, with the hope of problematizing the issue of collaboration and instigating further discussions on it.

Chapter one deals with the notion that criteria for collaboration are set in stone. The current literature on Korean collaborators provides an extensive list of criteria defining who the pro-Japanese collaborators are. If a person fits into any of the extensive categories, he/she is found guilty of treason. This chapter examines the various definitions of collaboration throughout Korean history. Considering cases ranging from the effort to pass *Puil hyŏmnyŏkcha, minjok panyŏkcha, kansangbae e taehan t'ŭkpyŏl chorye* (the special law on pro-Japanese,[59] national traitors, and profiteers) in 1947 to the most recent pro-Japanese

[59] While the English translation uses the word Pro-Japanese collaborators or Japanese collaborators, the Korean title does not say chin'il (親日). Instead they use the word puil hyŏmnyŏkcha. (附日協力者) However, during the discussions regarding this law, members used these two words, buil and chin'il interchangeably.

dictionary published in South Korea, it takes into consideration what has changed, what has remained, and what continues to be problematic.

Chapter two addresses the assumption that everyone should have prioritized *minjok* above all else, regardless of other factors that constitute one's identity, such as gender. This assumption ignores that today's Korean identity is shaped by various events that occurred throughout the 20th century. Secondly, it ignores how complex personal identity can be, especially in a society in which a person's social status is defined by class and gender, as explored in chapter two. How does gender affect one's decision to collaborate with the Japanese Empire? Why did the majority of well-known Korean female intellectuals decide to collaborate? Through Helen Kim (also known as Kim Hwalran), this chapter examines women's identity in the colonial context and how people's gender identity influenced their decision to collaborate with the Japanese Empire. As a new woman (*Sinyŏsŏng*, J: *Shinjosei*), Kim represents the first generation of Korean women who received modern education and were at the forefront in advocating for women's rights. Even though as a well-known educator and an activist she can be expected to have been known amongst Korean intellectuals, she never openly advocated for Korea's independence. In fact, she is one of many feminists who

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Currently, chin'il used more often.

publicly supported Japan's war efforts in the late 1930s and 1940s. Was people's colonial identity only comprised of their ethnic identity? Through Kim's case, this chapter contemplates different layers of colonial identity and how this influenced her decision to collaborate with Japan.

Chapter three addresses the belief that staying loyal to *minjok* equals working for Korea's immediate independence. This is linked to the discussion in chapter one: because Koreans are expected to have remained absolutely loyal to Korean *minjok*, it is assumed that a vast majority of Koreans continuously supported Korea's independence movements throughout the colonial era. This presupposition is prevalent in Korean nationalist historiography, in which individuals such as Kim Koo, who fought for Korea's immediate independence, are hailed as national heroes, whereas individuals who envisioned a different future for Korea are condemned as traitors. However, the lack of nation-wide independence movements throughout the 1920s to 1940s shows that resistance was not the norm but rather an exception. In this context, it is possible to imagine that many lost hope in Korea's immediate independence. The diaries of Yun Ch'iho, a prominent Korean intellectual of his time, help to observe this process. Chapter three examines the reasons behind Yun's decision to oppose Korea's independence movements and his eventual support of Japan's war efforts.

Another presupposition is the notion that *minjokchuŭi* (ethnic nationalism) is inherently anti-Japanese. Therefore, anyone who collaborated with the colonial government is condemned as having committed a *panminjok* act. Chapter four addresses the following question: How did Koreans' status as stateless colonial subjects affect Korean intellectuals' perception of *minjok* and *minjokchuŭi*? With the rapid modernization and urbanization, Korean intellectuals came in contact with new ideologies and thoughts. How Koreans viewed and identified themselves as *minjok* was inevitably influenced by this new wave of learning. It would be shallow to assume that Koreans during the colonial period had a unified understanding of who they were as Koreans, let alone of what constitutes *minjokchuŭi*. As Carter Eckert notes, prior to the late 19th century, "there was little, if any, feeling of loyalty towards the abstract concept of 'Korea' as a nation-state, or towards fellow inhabitants of the peninsula as 'Koreans'."[60] Accordingly, it would be unrealistic to assume that Koreans' understanding of *minjok* and *minjokchuŭi* remained static for 35 years. Through Yi Kwangsu's writings, chapter four explores this fluid nature of *minjok* and *minjokchuŭi*. As a colonial intellectual and thinker, Yi contemplated how Koreans as an *ethnie* could survive and thrive. His contemplation illustrates that *minjokchuŭi* cannot be simply assumed to be

[60] Carter J. Eckert, *Offspring of Empire: the Koch'ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876-1945* (Seattle: Univ Of Washington Press, 1991), 226.

anti-Japaneseism, especially in a colonial context.

This point is further explored in chapter five, which addresses acts of collaboration under wartime circumstances. These acts are often deemed as absolutely *panminjok* and criminal in nature. This presumption overlooks one of the core questions these intellectuals struggled with: the survival of Korean *minjok* rather than a Korean state, which different nationalists envisioned achieving in different ways. Some believed in a socialist or communist revolution, some believed in complete anarchism, and some believed in allying with the Japanese Empire to ensure Koreans' survival. This chapter explores various reasons why Korean intellectuals decided to support Japan during the Pacific War, specifically discussing why many Korean intellectuals were attracted to the idea of Pan-Asianism and *naisen ittai* (Japan and Korea as one). Is it possible after 30 years of colonization that some Koreans began to assimilate or desired to assimilate into the Japanese Empire? And could this desire be condemned as treason against *minjok*, an ethnic group without a guarantee of national sovereignty?

Unlike Germany, where the objective of the Nazis was clear—to brutally annihilate the so-called non-Aryans, including the Jews, the Romani, and the physically and mentally disabled—Japan justified its status in Asia as the big brother who fulfilled the role of

protecting all other Asians from the arrogant West. Certainly, as Korea was a colony within the Japanese Empire, many Koreans were subjugated to racism and the brutality of imperialism. However, it would be misleading to argue that ethnic genocide[61] was leashed out against Koreans, especially considering the fact that Japan was desperately in need of support from the colonies in terms of material goods and human resources.

What if Japan had won the war? What if Japan had been the victor? Would "the war of aggression" still be the phrase used to define Japan's war in Asia? Would collaborators still be viewed as traitors to Koreans? Which factors contributed to their decision to collaborate with the colonial government? Were their actions as clear-cut as Korean historiography portrays them? This dissertation addresses these questions by challenging some of the presuppositions regarding the issue of collaboration through a closer examination of the lives of Helen Kim, Yun Ch'iho, and Yi Kwangsu, and the circumstances surrounding their lives.

The Political Climate of Korea (1910–1945)

Many Korean intellectuals who were active especially during the earlier years of

[61] *Minjokhaksal* (ethnic genocide) is a common term used to describe Japan's assimilation policies in Korea. However, we must be cautious in using this term to describe colonial relation, especially since the word "genocide" has an actual definition. For its definition, refer to Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted by United Nations General Assembly on December 9, 1948. (http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CrimeOfGenocide.aspx)

Japan's colonial rule in Korea were born around the end of the Chosŏn dynasty, a dynasty that succeeded in lasting for centuries (1392–1897). After the first Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), a series of international and domestic incidents eventually led to the Eulsa Treaty (Japan-Korea Treaty) in 1905, in which Korea became a protectorate of Japan. Five years later, Japan annexed Korea as a colony of the Japanese Empire. The Japanese governor-general of Korea (J: *Chōsensōtokufu* [GGK]) was established to keep Korea under control. The first GGK after annexation was Terauchi Masatake (1910–1916), followed by Hasegawa Yoshimichi (1916–1919). The years leading up to the March First Movement in 1919 were marked by the use of military force to maintain tighter control over Koreans. Also, the GGK implemented various reforms with the intent to modernize Korea. However, the question of how these policies should be described has been hotly debated within the Korean academic field. Unlike the contested areas, this first decade is consistently referred to as *budanseiji* (military rule).

Led by 33 Korean religious leaders who signed and announced the Proclamation of Independence, the March First Movement erupted in Seoul on March 1, 1919 and gained momentum as it spread throughout the country. Many of the leaders and youths involved in the movement were inspired by President Woodrow Wilson's speech, known as "Fourteen Points," delivered at a joint session of the United States Congress on January 8, 1918, in which

the key phrase was "the right to self-determination":

> A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.[62]

Regardless of Wilson's true intention, Korean nationalists interpreted this as Korea's right to self-determination from Japan's colonial rule. The GGK did not hesitate to use brute force to oppress Koreans who participated in these demonstrations. It is estimated that approximately 45,000 people were wounded and 7,000 killed by the Japanese police and soldiers. Furthermore, nationalists who initiated these movements were imprisoned and tortured.[63] Even within divergent accounts, as Lee Chongsik notes, "it is evident that the movement was conducted on a large scale and was met by severe suppressive measures."[64]

Gradually, as the colonial government continued to oppress independence movements and revise policies to appease Koreans' discontent, the March First Movement dwindled as its members scattered. Some nationalists fled to China and joined the Provisional

[62] Terry Golway and Richard R. Beeman, *American political speeches* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012).

[63] Ban, Pyŏngryul, *Kankoku dokuritsuundō no rekishi* (Korea's History of Independence Movements), ed. Song, Jiyu, (Cheonan: The Independence Hall of Korea, 2013), 118. It is also noted that according to colonial government's official record, 631 people were killed and 1,404 people were wounded, and 11,831 were tried in court. (From March 1, 1919-Juy 20, 1919). (p. 118).

[64] Lee Chongsik, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 114.

Government of the Republic of Korea, with Syngman Rhee as president, where they continued to advocate for Korea's immediate independence. Some in the Russian Far East and China joined the Russian communists in their fight against the Japanese Empire, adopting more radical means to challenge the colonial government. In the United States, Phillip Jaisohn established the Philadelphia Korean Congress in April 1919. He explained publicly the purpose of such a gathering:

> We called the Korean Congress because we want America to realize that Korea is a victim of Japan. Korea's wrongs have been insidiously covered up by Japan, and we believe that America will champion the cause of Korea as she has that of other oppressed peoples, once she knows the facts.[65]

As Jaisohn emphasized, the major purpose of the congress was to encourage support in the United States for Korea's independence movement. As is observable, the most directly appealing locations for Korea's independence were largely outside of Korea, such as China, the United States, and Japan.

Although the March First Movement may not have achieved its most coveted goal of securing Korea's independence from Japan, it presented sufficient threat for Japan to reconsider its policy towards Korea. Hasegawa Yoshimichi, who was not hesitant to use

[65] Korea Review, I, No. 1 (Apr., 1919), 90: quoted in Lee, Chongsik, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 142. To have a look at a more detailed account of independence movements outside of Korea, see Chapter 4: The Exiled Movement in The Politics of Korean Nationalism in Lee's *The Politics of Korean Nationalism.*

Japan's military force to repress and control Koreans, was replaced by Saito Makoto, who implemented changes that allowed Korea to have some breathing room to flourish in the limited colonial sphere. The fervor of the March First Movement continued into the era of *bunkaseiji* (cultural rule), which resulted in a massive increase of organizations such as youth groups, religious organizations, study groups, and academic societies.[66]

Coupled with the colonial government's shift to *bunkaseiji* from *budanseiji*, many Korean intellectuals began to advocate self-strengthening programs to educate Koreans and economically develop Korea for its gradual independence, rather than for an immediate independence from Japan.[67] Michael E. Robinson describes this ideological shift as cultural nationalism. Cultural nationalists worked within a limited colonial space, while some nationalists sought ways to secure Korea's immediate independence. These nationalists had the tendency to believe that only more radical actions could result in Korea's independence, not gradually but immediately. One of the most well-known examples of this is their attempt at assassinations of Japanese leaders and military officials. For instance, on January 8, 1932, near Sakuradaimon, Yi Bongchang, a young independence activist, threw a hand grenade at Japanese Emperor Hirohito as he was leaving the Imperial Palace in his carriage. His

[66] Michael Edson Robinson, Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 49.

[67] Ibid, 6.

assassination attempt failed and the Japanese police immediately arrested him; He was convicted and executed in the same year.

These independence activists' more radical activities were concentrated outside of Seoul: in Tokyo, Peking, and Shanghai, where they were less exposed to the GGK's surveillance. However, with the lack of proper funding and deepening ideological splits amongst radical nationalists themselves, their immediate impact on Korea's political, social, and economic spheres could only be minimal, especially after 1919. On the other hand, the cultural nationalists could advocate their agendas within Korea in various forms by carefully navigating within the limits of Japan's cultural policies.

Even though Japan's cultural policy had a degree of leniency, the colonial government continued to control its subjects through censorship and routine surveillance. The Japanese police in Korea was especially keen on penalizing certain categories such as defamation of the emperor or imperial institutions, military issues, Korean nationalism, and ideologies they considered to be too radical.[68] Koreans who roused the police's suspicion of any of the above were called in and interrogated for clarification. Many nationalists were all too familiar with this process, including the intellectuals mentioned previously. Although cultural nationalists were ambitious to bring change, as imperial subjects, they were eventually swept into the

[68] Ibid, 51.

Japanese Empire's ambition to expand its empire. The Second Sino-Japanese War was a pivotal conflict in that it was followed by many other conflicts, eventually leading the Japanese Empire to declare itself as being in total war. And it was important for Korea as well, as Koreans as Japan's imperial citizens were bound by fate to participate in these conflicts. In this troubled time, there were collaborators. As colonial subjects, they were often forced to react and adapt to the ambitions of Japan's Empire, especially when resistance was not viewed as a viable option. Therefore, it is essential to bear in mind the volatile political environment in which these individuals found themselves and to consider how this influenced their decision to collaborate, in order to provide a context for their actions.

Relevant Political Ideologies

Social Darwinism

Many scholars acknowledge that social Darwinism was first brought to Korean intellectuals' attention through a Chinese scholar and philosopher named Yang Kyech'o (Liang Qichao). For many young Korean intellectuals, social Darwinism was accepted as part of the discourse of modernity.[69] Especially from the 1880s to the 1910s, social Darwinism, the

[69] Vladimir Tikhonov, *Social Darwinism and nationalism in Korea— the beginnings, 1883-1910: survival as an ideology of Korean modernity* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 11.

"survival of the fittest" in the social order, provided a framework for Korean progressives to analyze Korea's failure to modernize, as well as future guidance for Korea under the impending colonial power. It is important to note that this fixation of becoming the "fittest" *minjok* became a fundamental belief and a basic principle that shaped and influenced moderate nationalists for years to come.

The Rise of Fascist Ideologies in Europe and Japan

Fascism is another term that is often associated with collaborators such as Yi Kwangsu. Several scholars argue that his decision to embrace fascism led him to collaborate with the Japanese Empire.[70] Several issues regarding fascism must be considered in order to discuss its influence on collaborators. First, there was and is hardly any consensus in terms of fascism's generic definition. Duus and Okimoto observe that "finding a minimal core of characteristics shared by all fascist countries in Europe is difficult, the task is virtually impossible if we try to include China or Japan or Korea."[71] Furthermore, they argue that it would be "meaningless to speak of Japan in the 1930s as a 'fascist political system' due to too many dissimilarities

[70] See Park Chanseung, "Yi Kwangsu and the Endorsement of State Power," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 19, no. 1 (December 2006): 161-190 and Kim, Hyoshin, "Han'guk kŭndae munhwa ŭi ch'unwŏn Yi Kwangsu wa it'allia p'asijŭm" (Italian Fascism, Korean Modernity and Yi Kwangsu), *Minjok munhwa nonch'ong* 37 (2007): 551-622.

[71] Peter Duus and Daniel I. Okimoto, "Comment: Fascism and the History of Pre-War Japan: The Failure of a Concept," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 39, no. 1 (1979): 66.

between Japan and other European countries."[72] Therefore, it is more worthwhile to look into why "fascist rhetoric had so much appeal in the 1930s" in Japan.[73]

As fascist ideologies gained popularity in European nations, these ideas also reached Japanese intellectuals who were keen to take heed of Western learnings. Alan Tansman argues that the fascist sentiment in Japan was innately reactionary: it was a response to "the threat of modernity in its political forms, whether Marxism or liberalism."[74] As he observes,

> The social, economic, and cultural conditions that gave birth to European fascism were also shared by Japan, and the solutions, through the state's imposition of mythic thinking that extolled natural bonds of blood an demanded devotion and sacrifice of the individual to the state, nation, or lineage, backed by coercion at home, in the name of the domination of peoples of poorer bloodline abroad, made Japan one among other fascist nations.[75]

Abe Hirozumi describes the rise of fascist ideologies in Japan as a "preventive, anti-revolutionary measure against the overall crisis of capitalism."[76] This shift in Japanese society certainly can be expected to have influenced Korean intellectuals in Korea. Japanese intellectuals were as intimate with European texts as Korean intellectuals were familiar with

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[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid, 67.

[74] Alan Tansman, *The Culture of Japanese fascism* (Durham: Duke Univeristy Press, 2009), 7.

[75] Ibid, 8.

[76] Abe Hirozumi, *Nihonfashizumuro* (Japan's Fascism), (Tokyo: Kage shobo, 1996), 50.

intellectual discussions in Japan. As Vladimir Tikhonov describes, by the 1930s, "the fascist mood in a broader sense was already in the air" in Korea.[77] Coupled with a social Darwinist view of the world, Korean intellectuals such as Yun Chi'ho and Yi Kwangsu were attracted to fascist ideals. To them, it seemed to provide a way for Koreans to secure a place in the increasingly unstable world. However, as colonized people, this meant they were required to collaborate with Japan and contribute to its effort to expand its empire.

Both social Darwinism and (the ideologies and rhetoric of) fascism impacted Korean intellectuals; These ideologies influenced how some Korean intellectuals understood Korea's position within the Japanese Empire and which path they considered Koreans should pursue. Therefore, it is essential to bear these ideologies in mind in considering the issue of collaboration for Koreans accused of collaboration, as both social Darwinist and fascist rhetoric is present in so-called collaborators' writings, such as those of Yun Chi'ho and Yi.

Korean intellectuals who decided to collaborate indeed engaged in political activities with the intention of supporting Japanese colonial rule. Retrospectively, it is easy to conclude that these individuals committed traitorous acts against their own people. But how can one determine whether a political engagement is for or against *minjok*? Is there a tendency to

[77] Vladimir Tikhonov, "The Controversies on Fascism in Colonial Korea in the early 1930s," *Modern Asian Studies* 46 (2011), 1005.

impose a modern-day definition of nationalism or anti-nationalism without considering the circumstances in which these individuals found themselves? This dissertation focuses on the following question: Should Koreans' collaboration with Japanese colonial rule automatically be assumed to be treason against *minjok* and thus punishable? As Brook describes in his analysis, "collaboration happened when individuals in real places were forced to deal with each other"[78] and this happened in a gray zone in which the distinction between collaboration and resistance was often ambiguous and equivocal.

[78] Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China*, 26.

Chapter 1

Criteria of *Ch'inilp'a* (pro-Japanese Collaborator) in History

Despite the continuous appearance of publications about *ch'inilp'a*, there is rarely discussion on the wide variety of definitions of this term. For instance, studies often apply or utilize parts of the *Panminjok'aengwi ch'ŏbŏlbŏp* (the national traitor law) of 1948, without fully discussing its ambiguities and unclear wordings. Therefore, this chapter focuses on providing various definitions of *ch'inilp'a* that have been put forth since the liberation of Korea in August 1945. It demonstrates how some definitions have evolved or remained unclear and discusses the implications of such ambiguities on the current discussion of collaboration.

Serious consideration of how to define *ch'inilp'a* only emerged after Japan's colonial rule of Korea ended in 1945. Korean intellectuals and activists with diverse backgrounds mobilized to take part in rebuilding Korea as an independent state. One might assume that these groups unanimously agreed on how to reckon with collaborators but in reality, different political factions had different ideas about how to do so. Even before the establishment of the Interim Legislative Assembly in 1946, they could not agree on whether to punish collaborators or if they were to be punished, to what extent. One of the first efforts came directly after Japan's surrender. The *Kŏn'guk Chunbi Wiwŏnhoe* (a committee for nation building, which later became the *Chosŏn inmin konghwaguk* [the People's Republic of Korea]), led by Yŏ

Unhyŏng, announced that individuals who conspired with the Japanese had committed *minjokchŏk choeak* (ethnic sin) and could not be part of the nation-building effort.[79] However, the *Han'guk minjudang* (Korean Democratic Party), ironically accused Yŏ Unhyŏng for being a pro-Japanese collaborator, even though they themselves did not make any statements regarding how to reckon with collaborators.[80] As Hŏ Jong observes, early attempts to reckon with collaborators were heavily politicized by the left and right to legitimize and strengthen their parties.[81] And as one may discover, these political moves were an integral part of the Interim Legislative Assembly's sessions as well.

The Interim Legislative Assembly played a major role in the *ch'inilp'a* discourse, as it was one of the first official institutions of elected officials that attempted to resolve the issue of collaboration through judicial measures. The Interim Legislative Assembly was established on August 24, 1946, under the guidance of the USAMGIK. From October 21 to 31, 45 members were elected through an indirect election and the USAMGIK selected another 45 members. To balance the body politically, the assembly introduced the first draft of the *Puil hyŏmnyŏkcha, minjok panyŏkcha, kansangbae e taehan t'ŭkpyŏl chorye* (the special law on pro-Japanese

[79] Hŏ Jong, "Haebang chik hu ch'inilp'a ch'ŏri e taehan kak chŏngch'iseryŏk ŭi inshik kwa panŭng" (Political Factions' Understanding and Reaction Towards Chin'ilp'a After Post-Liberation), *Taegusahak* 55 (1998), 72.

[80] Ibid, 74.

[81] Ibid, 76.

collaborators, national traitors, and profiteers), on March 13, 1947. The *T'ŭkpyŏlbŏp Kich'o Wiwŏnhoe* (Special Drafting Committee) consisted of members of leftist persuasion.[82]

As the title of the law suggests, this legislation categorized collaborators into three different sections: pro-Japanese collaborators, national traitors, and profiteers. The law targeted a broad spectrum of collaborators, ranging from those who misused ration materials to those who worked as government officials in the colonial government. It treated collaboration as a criminal act and thus punishable by incarceration.

The first draft was met with heated criticism and concern from various members of the assembly. While some accused the lawmakers of leaving out certain categories, others argued that some people had no choice but to collaborate and certain clauses should therefore not be applied.[83] The assembly revised the law and submitted the final draft on July 2, 1947.[84] However, the USAMGIK exercised its veto right over this law, which as a result did not come to light until 1948. The conversations surrounding the drafts illuminate how ambiguous and complex the issue of collaboration was.

[82] Hŏ Jong, *Panmint'ŭgwi chojikkwa hwaltong* (A Special Investigative Committee of Traitorous Activities' Organization and Activities) (Seoul: Sŏnin, 2003), 98.

[83] Ibid, 91.

[84] For the draft submitted to USAMGIK, refer to Appendix I.

For some, the law was simply insufficient and many demanded that lawmakers explain why they left out certain categories of collaborators. Yang Chebak questions why they did not define parents who sent their children to Japanese schools as collaborators, arguing that a child who is sent to a school run by the Japanese only learns the Japanese language and not the Korean language. Therefore, he states, "the fact this child cannot speak any Korean shows the parent's intention of turning him into a Japanese bloke."[85] He goes on to question why Koreans who read the *kōkoku shinmin no seishi* (oath of loyalty) or shouted "*nihon teikoku banzai, nihon kakka bannzai*" (long live the empire, long live the emperor) were not included in the law.[86] Some questioned the definitions themselves. Wŏn Sehun questions whether people could be defined as collaborators if they worked for Japan in their own interests but did not "harm fellow countrymen and did not commit any sinister acts."[87] Similarly, Oh Hayŏng inquires under which category Koreans who "filled their own stomachs" and "caused damage" to fellow countrymen would fall. Many of these inquiries show that some members felt the law was not inclusive enough.[88]

[85] Namchosŏn Kwadoippŏbŭiwŏn (South Korea's Interim Legislative Assembly), Namchosŏn Kwadoippŏbŭiwŏn Sokkirok 2 (Records of South Korea's Interim Legislative Assembly vol. 2), Seoul: Yŏgangch'ulp'ansa, 1984, 354.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid, 356.

[88] Ibid, 357.

However, there were also members who expressed concern regarding the ambiguities of the law. Ŏm Uryong uses a personal anecdote to express his concern. He admits that he sometimes spoke Japanese, recalling that "one time, a member of the assembly kept saying *e-to* (a pause in Japanese) and we all laughed with him. How much usage of Japanese in everyday life is considered Japanization?"[89] To this question, Jung replies that a person has to "volunteer" to use Japanese daily. Still, Ŏm continues, this time questioning those who drafted the law,[90]

> I am sorry to mention this. As I read through this draft, although I acknowledge the spirit behind it, I believe it was written by a person who has been away for half a century and does not really understand Korea's current situation. I know the person who explained also spent nineteen years in jail. When you look at the truth, we should decide who the traitors and collaborators are. However, considering the reality Korea is in since August 15th, when we actually decide on the criteria, we need to be very cautious and serious—and make a judgment based on practicality.[91]

He warns the other members that if they are not clear on how they intend to criticize and define collaborators, they will not only be unable to resolve the issue but also "cause confusion in society."[92] In response to his lengthy speech, he only received a brief comment from Chŏng

[89] Ibid, 358.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid.

Ihyŏng, who had been in jail for 19 years, stating that this draft was not solely written by him and that other members were also involved in drafting it, and that he was therefore not willing to accept Ŏm's accusations.[93]

Some concerns addressed more practical matters. For instance, Sŏ Sangil questions who would manage Korea if everyone were to be put away:

> Even if they were collaborators and traitors, if they have cleaned up their past and were willing to be part of rebuilding Korea's new home and help Korea become an independent nation, we should take them in . . . who will build our house if we ostracize all of them?[94]

The law's wide scope is illustrated by the fact that many claimed shady or criminal activities must be punished under it. For instance, Koreans who went from rags to riches by seizing properties left by Japanese people fleeing from Korea after the war were accused of being *moribae* (謀利輩), which literally means people who use any means to obtain personal gains.[95] Chŏng Ihyŏng argued that these properties should belong to the government and not to individuals.

The Interim Legislative Assembly's limits were revealed when the USAMGIK decided to veto the law. G.C. Hermick, a United States Army deputy military governor, explains the

[93] Ibid, 359.

[94] Ibid, 362.

[95] Ibid, 355.

reasons behind the rejection in a memo addressed to the chairman of the assembly. In it, he acknowledges the need for South Korea to come to terms with pro-Japanese collaborators and traitors but notes that there were two types of collaboration: those who collaborated in order to survive and those who collaborated willingly.[96] He advises that there needs to be a clear distinction between these two groups and comments that the law needs to be meticulously specific so that "it cannot become an instrument of partisan and even personal vengeance, as it has happened elsewhere in the world."[97] Later in the letter, he expresses a similar opinion regarding the section on profiteers, arguing that the law should only punish pro-Japanese collaborators and traitors[98] and that if the assembly wishes to prosecute profiteers, this should be carried out in a separate bill. In addition, he advises that a "wholly elective Assembly" should draft such a law so that it can reflect "a consensus of the entire Korean nation."[99] After all, the interim legislative assembly was only provisional. The letter ended in a somewhat positive tone. Helmick congratulates the members for their work and comments

[96] Migungmusŏng han'gukkwan'gye munsŏ (U.S. Internal Affairs of Korea vol.3). *General Helmick's Letter to the South Korea Interim Government).* South Korea Interim Government (Seoul: Arŭmch'ulp'ansa, 1995), 193.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid, 194.

[99] Ibid, 193.

that the draft law will "serve as a valuable foundation for discussions by a future elective body."[100]

The tide turned when South Korea established the constituent assembly on May 31, 1948. The Constituent Assembly established the *Panminjok Haengwi T'ŭkpyŏl Chosa Wiwŏnhoe* (a special investigative committee of traitorous activities) and passed the *Panminjok haengwi ch'ŏbŏlbŏp* (*National Traitor Law*, henceforth "the 1948 law") on August 7, 1948. The first section of the law consists of articles defining who the collaborators were, while the second section specifies how *Panminjok Haengwi T'ŭkpyŏl Chosa Wiwŏnhoe* would be established and the third section explains the process of the trials. The title *Panminjok haengwi ch'ŏbŏlbŏp* is far shorter than that of the 1947 legislation, which is significant in that under this new law, all degrees of collaboration were considered as treason against Koreans.

Even though this law did not yield as much result as members hoped it would, it is often taken into consideration as a reliable source for judging whether a person was a pro-Japanese collaborator. However, like its precedent draft from 1947, the discussions surrounding the law illuminate how riddled it was with unresolved issues from the previous draft.

[100] Ibid, 194.

The 1948 law was largely identical to the 1947 legislation in terms of content. The most obvious difference between the two laws is how they categorized collaborators. While the 1947 legislation divides collaborators into three separate categories—traitors, collaborators, and moribae（謀利輩)—the 1948 law does not attempt to differentiate them and lumps all collaborators together. However, the punishment of perceived "national traitors" remained the most severe. For instance, a person who collaborated with Japan's annexation of Korea could either be "sentenced to death or receive a life-sentence without parole and have more than half of their property and inheritance confiscated."[101] This type of capital punishment is again mentioned in Article III, which targets those who "persecuted or killed independence activists or their family members with a vicious intent."[102] Although the law is not specifically divided into three different categories, it still shows that certain types of collaboration were viewed as traitorous and thus deserving of the most severe punishment possible. However, as the law makes no distinction between acts of treason and acts of collaboration, it gives the impression that all forms of collaboration were deemed to be traitorous *panminjok* acts.

Also, it is important to note that *moribae* was no longer punishable under the 1948 law, which reflects the committee's decision to focus on acts that took place before 1945, as

[101] Refer to Appendix II, Article I.

[102] Ibid, Article III.

the original section on *moribae* targets people who committed the alleged crimes after 1945. This move to limit the law's application to the period before 1945 solidifies the notion that *panminjok* explicitly means pro-Japanese. Therefore, anyone who is accused of being a pro-Japanese collaborator is simultaneously labeled as a traitor of Korean *minjok*.

One of the lengthiest discussions revolved around the word *agŭi* (or *akchil*) (directly translated as vicious or with malicious intent). Sŏ Usŏk argued that *agŭi* should be included in Article 4, as otherwise anyone who was a *ch'igimgwan* (government official) would be punished according to this law. He argued that this goes against Article 101 of the Korean Constitution, which stipulates that only *panmimjok* acts with vicious intent should be punished.[103] Similarly, Yu Jinhong stresses the importance of intent:

> The purpose of the draft (of the law) is to sort out and punish those who committed acts with a vicious intent. It is what we hope to achieve as well. If we are to overlook and jail everyone who committed a panminjok act, there is no one who did not read out loud *kōkoku shinmin no seishi* (an oath of loyalty).[104] Under Japan's rule for forty years, there is no one who lived who was not a pro-Japanese collaborator and committed a panminjok act. However, I believe people who harmed Koreans and committed a vicious act is actually small in number.[105]

[103] Chehŏn'guk'oe (the Republic of Korea's National Assembly), Chehŏn'guk'oe Sokkirok 1 (Records of Republic of Korea's National Assembly vol. 1), (Seoul: Sŏninmunhwasa, 1999), 806.

[104] After October 2, 1937, Koreans (children included) were required to recite this oath publically.

[105] Chehŏn'guk'oe, Chehŏn'guk'oe Sokkirok 1, 909.

Although Yu asserts that few committed collaboration with vicious intent, he does not clarify what makes an act vicious. Similarly to the previous law, even though many argue that not all collaborators had vicious or evil intent, they seldom discuss what exactly makes an act vicious or harmful towards the Korean people. This lack of a clear definition is evident in the discussion of whether holding a specific government position proves one's evil intent. Some argued that being part of such organizations (referring to the colonial government and other government-related organizations) alone proved one's intent to harm other Koreans. Casting doubt on this issue, Kim Yŏngki asked to consider how many people who were part of these organizations actually participated in independence movements or worked for the Korean people.[106] Instead, Korean overseers and government officials who were hired by the Japanese used their positions to swindle, threaten, and even murder other Koreans.[107]

As a response to such arguments, Yi Gusu asserted that not every Korean with a title or position in the government fawned on the Japanese. He argues that he was aware of people in government positions who fought for Koreans while "shedding tears for losing one's country."[108] Similarly, Kim Kwangchun argued that there were conscientious people who

[106] Ibid, 942.

[107] Ibid, 897.

[108] Ibid, 941.

worked in various government positions, stating that some were coerced into these positions and it would be wrong to punish them.[109] Kim Ungjin makes an interesting observation in stating that only the receiving end could ultimately decide whether a person had vicious or evil intentions:

> Whether or not a governor was a good governor or a bad one can be determined by farmers themselves. For example, when Koreans had to provide rice to support Japan's war, some governors enthusiastically collaborated, giving eleven, twelve percent even though only ten percent was required. They committed evil acts—persecuted the farmers and kissed up to Japan so that they could secure their own position. However, some governors worked for people's welfare and tried to give less rice as much as possible. In this case, giving eleven or twelve percent of rice should be considered as an act with an evil intent.[110]

These seemingly contrasting images (an evil Korean taking advantage of fellow Koreans versus a good Korean using his/her position to help others), reveals how the act of collaboration with the colonial government is not simply a black-and-white issue. In addition, this type of example illustrates that the law was extremely vague by not clearly defining what constituted a *panminjok* act. Therefore, a single act (requiring Koreans to provide rice for the Japanese army) could be viewed either as a harmful act against Koreans *or* as an act that would secure Korean *minjok*'s survival. Even though the word could be interpreted in vastly different ways,

[109] Ibid, 820-821.

[110] Ibid, 816.

no one fundamentally questioned what would make an act malicious or harmful. This is the very reason why members occasionally demanded that people assisting the United States occupation be punished under this law for their *panminjok* acts.[111]

Furthermore, there is a lack of clarification on whether particular acts are acts of treason or simply crimes. For instance, Korean business owners who illegally coerced farmers into handing over their land to build factories[112] should be treated as criminals regardless of whether they betrayed their allegiance to the Korean people. In addition, some members believed the law was simply too broad and that under it everyone would be found somewhat guilty. For instance, Kim Ungjin questioned the definition of "weapons." If this term were to define weapons as broadly as possible, rice used as military rations can be viewed as a weapon, thus making 30 million people possible collaborators.[113] The same concern was raised for Article 4, Clause 11, claiming it was too broad and that no patriot would escape it.[114]

Others argued that the Constituent Assembly should address more urgent matters than the issue of pro-Japanese collaboration. Choi Pongsik indicates that the assembly had

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[111] Ibid, 822.

[112] Ibid, 816. Here, Kim Ungjin is referring to Korean businessmen who manufactured and provided military supplies to the Japanese army. He criticized these men for not only their collaboration with the Japanese army but also their exploitation of Korean workers. However, he makes no effort to distinguish between a traitorous act and a criminal act.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid, 824.

still not drafted many laws, arguing that Koreans still had time in the future to deal with what had happened during past 40 years and that this did not need to be addressed immediately.[115] He insists that they should prioritize nation building first:

> The administrative power has not been fully transferred to us yet and I believe it will still take much time to do so. We still have not established central or regional government and it will still take much time to establish these . . . In addition, even if we established the government, we still have not been recognized by other nations and this will also take time.[116]

Similarly, Hwang Hohyŏn argued that there was much work to be done during Korea's establishment of a new government,[117] an argument that was mentioned in 1947 as well. It is intriguing to note that engineers were exempted under Article 5 for this very reason.[118] Yi Sŏnghak insisted that technicians were needed to build industries in the future and that most of these engineers had made a career during Japan's colonial rule. Therefore, assembly members decided to exempt technicians from the abovementioned clause.[119]

Although the committee attempted to prosecute hundreds of so-called pro-Japanese collaborators and traitors, in the end, only 78 people were penalized, of which 68 either

[115] Ibid, 810.

[116] Ibid, 819.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Refer to Appendix II, Article V.

[119] Ibid, 964.

received probation or lost their civil (voting) rights and only 10 individuals were imprisoned.[120] Kim Tŏkki, who worked as a policeman, was the only person who was sentenced to death.[121] Even though his petition for a retrial was accepted, the trial never took place, as the country was engulfed by the upcoming Korean War. Together with the rest of the alleged collaborators, he was released from prison in the following year.

The Special Investigative Committee's effort was heavily hindered by power struggles and competing factions within the Korean government itself.[122] Hŏ believes that one of the reasons why the committee failed to execute its plans is because many pro-Japanese collaborators were in fact in positions of power.[123] Especially president Rhee was accused of willfully hindering the committee's efforts to resolve this issue. Rhee hired those close to him, such as ministers, many of whom had a background that could rouse suspicion within the committee. By hiring those close to him, he could prevent the decentralization of authority and maintain his influence in the government,[124] an effort that could have been derailed by

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120 Hŏ Jong, *Panmint'ŭgwi ŭi chojik kwa hwaltong* (A Special Investigative Committee of Traitorous Activities' Organization and Activities), 231.

121 Ibid, 230.

122 Rhee Syngman served as Republic of Korea's first president. (1948-1960)

123 Hŏ Jong, *Panmint'ŭgwi ŭi chojik kwa hwaltong* (A Special Investigative Committee of Traitorous Activities' Organization and Activities), 313.

124 Ibid.

the committee. Whatever his personal motivations were, he did not hesitate to let the public know how he wanted this issue to be handled:

> There is one important point in this regard. It is that national reconstruction now only at its beginning, and more effort is needed for reconstruction work. We should not too much stick to the past so as to bring about hindrances to further development.
>
> We should aim at liquidating the evils of the past to infuse a new spirit into the people's mind and to uproot national corruption. In view of this, the Legislature and the Judiciary should strive to reduce the member of the criminals who committed crimes previously. And, in case any clear proof cannot be found they should be generous and not give severe punishment. This is a way to protect the countrymen.[125]

Rhee openly censured the Special Investigative Committee, declaring that its actions could not be condoned if they disturbed public order, which the government should prioritize ensuring.[126]

As a result, without any lasting outcome, the committee was dissolved in October 1949. Although official attempts to address the issue of pro-Japanese collaborators ultimately failed, the number of writings published during this time shows the public's interest in it.

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[125] From the English translation of Rhee's January 7, 1949 speech as found in Internal Affairs of Korea 11, 519-20.

[126] *Chosŏn chungang ilbo,* March 12, 1949.

Ch'inilp'a kunsang (group of pro-Japanese) is one of the first publications addressing this issue in the public sphere.

Ch'inilp'a Kunsang, 1948[127]

Published in 1948, *Ch'inilp'a Kunsang* marks the first appearance of the *ch'inilp'a* issue in public discourse. As one of the first publications on the matter, it reveals how the public was introduced to what defines pro-Japanese collaboration. This particular book should be noted for its emphasis on so-called pro-Japanese collaborators' involvement in the Pacific War. The author condemned the pro-Japanese as *chŏnjaeng hyŏmnyŏkcha* (wartime collaborators), a term that was not used the 1947 legislation or the 1948 law. However, a different term, "war criminals," was originally included in the first draft of the 1947 legislation. As Choi observes,

> It is not clear how the concept of "war criminals" suddenly became incorporated into (South) Korean political discourse on colonial collaborators. As discussed earlier, colonial collaborators were mostly understood and framed as pro-Japanese elements and national traitors in post-liberation Korean society. Moreover, the definition of war criminals that the committee had proposed was obviously beyond what was generally understood as belonging to the definition of conventional war crimes as well as crimes against peace and crimes against humanity at the time of the Nuremberg trials and the Tokyo Trial. However, the incorporation of the concept of war criminals into the anti-collaborator law can be seen as part of the Korean leaders' political effort to appropriate the politics of the U.S./Allied democratization of Japan.[128]

[127] *Ch'inilp'a Kunsang* (A Group of Pro-Japanese), Samsŏng munhwasa, 1948. Refer to Appnedix III.
[128] Choi Deokhyo, "Defining Colonial "War Crimes": Korean Debates on Collaboration, War Reparations, and the International Military Tribunal for the Far East," in *Debating Collaboration and Complicity in War Crimes*

This controversial category did not survive the scrutiny of members of the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly and was deleted from the 1947 legislation and the 1948 law. However, there were specific clauses addressing wartime activities, which focused more strongly on the economic aspects of war efforts. For instance, in Article 4, Clause 7, the law defines as collaborators "those who have been responsible for various war industries including airplanes, arms and ammunition."[129] In a broader sense, it defines those who collaborated with Japan's policy of aggression as having committed treason. However, it does not specifically mention wartime collaboration. Distinctly different from the 1948 law, *Ch'inilp'a Kunsang* not only accused individuals *of ch'inil* but also of collaboration under wartime circumstances. It specifically mentions Japan's *naisen ittai* (Japan and Korea as one) policies and condemns those who believed "wartime collaboration would lead to securing Koreas' well-being" by following such policies.[130] They should have known better.

Furthermore, unlike the *Panminjok'aengwi ch'ŏbŏlbŏp* (the national traitor law) of 1948, which focuses more strongly on the acts themselves, *Ch'inilp'a Kunsang* dedicates more attention to the intentions behind the acts. It defines a pro-Japanese or wartime collaborator

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Trials in Asia, 1945-1956, ed. Kerstin Von Lingen (S.l.: Springer International PU, 2017), 50.

[129] Refer to Appendix III, Article IV, clause 7.

[130] Refer Appendix III, 1.2.

either as a person who committed the act with a "sincere heart" or as a person who "passively pretended" to collaborate. Even if a person collaborated passively to "avoid the police's persecution and protect one's safety, status or businesses," he/she was still considered guilty.[131] Even though there was a lengthy discussion over how to judge those with vicious intent, the 1948 law provided specific criteria, such as one's position in the government, to determine whether a person was guilty of collaboration. On the other hand, as even passive collaboration is damnable in *Ch'inilp'a Kunsang*, any person who did not actively, passionately refuse collaboration was labeled as a pro-Japanese collaborator. For instance, if people's names were listed in public lectures,[132] even if they did not physically give the speech, they were still found guilty of collaboration. And even personal safety was considered inexcusable.[133]

Some argued that even though Korea did not directly take part in the war, Koreans must persecute wartime collaborators "who truly supported Japanese Empire's victory in war."[134] Many indeed voiced support for the war and urged Koreans to be part of the Japanese Empire's crusade to "free" the Asians. In fact, all collaborators mentioned in this paper participated in circulating the Japanese Empire's war propaganda. However, whether

[131] Refer to Appendix III.

[132] In an effort to increase volunteers for Japanese empire's war efforts including the military, the GGK hosted lectures throughout Chosŏn where Korean elites often gave propaganda speeches.

[133] Refer to Appendix III, 2.2.1.

[134] *Ch'inilp'a Kunsang* (A Group of Pro-Japanese), 27.

supporting war propaganda should be considered a punishable crime must be seriously weighed within the larger context of whether war propaganda should also be categorized as a crime.

Ch'inilp'a Kunsang certainly illustrates how the issue of collaboration was entangled with growing nationalist sentiments. As every action was judged as being for either *minjok* or *panminjok*, any activity other than active resistance or a life in seclusion from resistance was regarded as cowardly, unthinkable, and ultimately as a traitorous act committed against Koreans. In addition, the author of *Ch'inilp'a Kunsang* concludes that *ch'inil* and wartime collaboration were uniquely wrong. Therefore, pro-Japanese collaborators should have *known* that what they did was not right. They should have predicted Japan would lose the war. This moral absolutism masks the actual moral ambiguities of the issue, which reveal that the line between resistance and collaboration was not as clear as one might hope.

Ch'inil Munhangnon (Pro-Japanese Literature), 1966[135]

Post-liberation South Korea suffered from decades of political oppression under an

[135] Im Chongkuk, *Ch'inil Munhangnon* (Pro-Japanese Literature) (Seoul: Minjok munje yŏn'guso, 2014). Originally, this book was published in 1966. Minjok munje yŏn'guso re-published it in 2002. Since 2002, the research center has published two more editions in 2013 and 2014, respectively. This dissertation referred to the most recent edition, published in 2014.

autocratic leadership, such as that of president Park Chunghee. It is remarkable that *Ch'inil Munhangnon* was published in the midst of Park's authoritarian rule, especially considering Park's intimate relations with Japan. Im Chongkuk's *Ch'inil Munhangnon* was one of the first attempts to academically approach the *ch'inilp'a* issue. Im goes beyond simply listing who the pro-Japanese collaborators were; He considers the political and social context of the issue by examining policies and laws implemented by different governors-general of Korea. Furthermore, he discusses various organizations with a tendency towards *ch'inil*, providing a context for which type of organizations emerged as Japan pushed for Koreans' assimilation into its empire.

Although it is important to acknowledge the novelty of Im's research, it is equally important to note that his work is not free of adopting a moralistic approach towards the issue of collaboration. According to Im, there is a clearly right or wrong answer to what pro-Japanese collaborators should have done. He proudly names various individuals who "remained faithful to one's principles"[136] and praises them for not writing any "pro-Japanese words."[137] He defines *ch'inil* literature as "a literature, which contains blind flunkeyism and adoration towards Japan

[136] Im Chongkuk, *Ch'inil Munhangnon* (Pro-Japanese Literature) (Seoul: Minjok munje yŏn'guso, 2014), 507.

[137] Ibid.

without maintaining one's independence"[138] and accuses its authors of persecuting the Korean language, dampening the national spirit, and betraying their country.[139] He assumes that Koreans should and could have maintained their identity as Koreans. However, considering the fluid and complex nature of identity, it appears nonsensical to have such an expectation of Koreans who experienced the colonial rule firsthand. As long as the intention of the research is to judge and condemn these collaborators, it will be nearly impossible to appreciate the various facets of collaboration.

It is telling that Im Chongkuk authored most of the publications on the issue of *ch'inilp'a* in the 1980s, which includes *Ilchech'imnyak kwa ch'inilp'a* (Japanese Imperial Rule and *Ch'inilp'a*), published in 1982 and *Ch'inil nonsŏl sŏnjip* (A Collection of *Ch'inil* Articles) published in 1987. The lack of publications during the 1970s and 1980s regarding *ch'inilp'a* demonstrates the lack of freedom to pursue such research under the continuous authoritarian rules of presidents Park Chunghee and Chun Doohwan.

[138] Ibid, 22.

[139] Ibid, 508.

1990s–2000s

The resurgence of publications on *ch'inilp'a* overlaps with South Korea's transition to democracy in the 1990s. In fact, the majority of writings on *ch'inilp'a* was published from the 1990s onwards. In addition, South Korea experienced remarkable economic growth during the 1960s and 1980s. By the 1990s, South Korea became a force to be reckoned with in Asia. Under these circumstances, there was a rejuvenated effort by Koreans to confront their past, including the issue of the pro-Japanese and how to deal with them. During these years, *ch'inil ch'ŏngsan* became a popular mainstream issue.

***Ch'inilp'a: Kŭ In'gan'gwa Nolli* (Pro-Japanese Collaborators: the Person and the Logic), 1990[140]**

Published in 1990, *Ch'inilp'a: kŭ in'gan'gwa nolli* marks the re-emergence of the issue of *ch'inil ch'ŏngsan* in the public sphere. The interest in this issue exploded, as is evident in the succession of publications dedicated to it in the 1990s. This publication is particularly illuminating as it illustrates how the issue of *ch'inilp'a* emerged as a tool for nation building in the 1990s. The eradication of *ch'inilp'a* was seen as a necessary step for South Korea to become a democratic state. Lee provides several reasons for why South Korea needs to expose alleged

140 Kim Samung and Chŏng Unhyŏn, *Ch'inilp'a: kŭin'gan kwa nolli* (Seoul: Hangminsa, 1990).

pro-Japanese collaborators.

First, he argues that by eradicating pro-Japanese collaborators, Korean society could "establish justice,"[141] reasoning that as these pro-Japanese collaborators are criminals, they must be punished so that public order can be maintained. Furthermore, they must be dealt with for South Korea to have a "like-minded national spirit and national identity," warning that if they are included as members of this nation, "they will deteriorate Korea's image and legitimacy as a nation-state."[142]

Increasingly, the rhetoric has become highly nationalistic. *Ch'inil ch'ŏngsan* is pitched as an indispensable process that South Korea must go through to become a "proper" nation state. Lee claims that *ch'inil ch'ŏngsan* would resolve Korean people's deep sorrow and restore the national spirit and confidence.[143] As the eradication of *ch'inilp'a* is used as a tool to build Koreans' national identity, it is difficult to discuss any ambiguities within the issue. Again, there is no effort to clarify the definition of collaboration and discuss whether it should be considered as treason against Koreans in the first place. Collaborators are treated as people who should be completely purged from history, which obliterates any possible discussion of

[141] Ibid, 22.

[142] Ibid, 22.

[143] Ibid, 16.

the actual gray areas of collaboration, a troubling trend that continues well into the 2000s.

In the 2000s, as previously explained, progressives fully embraced *ch'inil ch'ŏngsan* as their rhetoric in reaching the public. Especially President Roh Moohyun (2003–2008) is regarded as the president who was most active in his attempts to resolve the issue.[144] During his presidency, the congress passed a law titled *Iljegangjŏmha panminjok haengwi chinsang kyumyŏng e kwanhan t'ŭkpyŏlbŏp* (special act on the identification of anti-nationalist activities under Japanese imperialism) on March 22, 2004. In addition, his administration established the *Ch'inil Panminjok haengwi Chinsang Kyumyŏng Wiwŏnhoe* (Identification of Pro-Japanese Anti-Nationalist Activities Committee) on May 31, 2004 to investigate and identify pro-Japanese collaborators. Other progressives embraced this agenda with enthusiasm. Yŏllinuridang, South Korea's progressive party took the initiative and passionately argued for the importance of passing and executing this law. Furthermore, its members suggested several revisions that would widen the scope of the law[145] and even argued that the investigation should be extended from the initial three years to five years.

[144] Chang Sŭlki, " Chungdan ŏmnŭn kwagŏsa ch'ŏngsan, tashi shijak haeya" (The Past's Ch'ŏngsan must Continue), *Midiŏ onŭl,* September 25, 2016, http://www.mediatoday.co.kr/?mod=news&act=articleView&idxno=132283.

[145] Ryu Igŭn, "Kimhŭisŏn ŭiwŏn 'ch'inildaesang tŏ ch'omch'omhi'," July 13, 2004, *Hankyoreh,* http://legacy.www.hani.co.kr/section-003000000/2004/07/003000000200407131833586.html.

While the purpose of the 1948 law was to penalize, the new 2004 law aimed to "assess the truth of pro-Japanese anti-nationalist acts," an inevitable re-interpretation as none of the indicted were alive to actually stand trial. Yoon Haedong questions whether the Korean nation assumed the role of academics in dealing with this issue:

> In a way, it is inevitable to involve the law when dealing with past issues. This is because in order to impose punishment on a person or hold a person responsible, one must do so through the judicial power. However, we cannot lawfully punish a person who is already dead. Even if these collaborators have offense, we cannot punish them. Then, how should the state "assess the truth?" Of course, "assessing the truth" is fundamentally different from a judicial "trial".
> However, the fact that this law can summon a witness shows how this law is able to use the state's authority. Furthermore, the ultimate definition of who these collaborators are, are decided by the congress. This inherently shows that it is not an academic research . . . Because this organization is part of the government, and the law requires an interpretation based on lawful evidence, it has a quasi-judicial function.

Yoon warns that the state's involvement in the *ch'ŏngsan* process is dangerous because it could be used as a way to moralize politics.[146]

Even though progressives welcomed the effort to purge Korea's past, this effort was undermined when a few of the party's members were accused of having family with a history of pro-Japanese collaboration. Some members voluntarily "confessed" their parents' sins. For

[146] Yun Haedong, *Kŭndaeyŏksahak ŭi hwanghon* (The Twilight of Modern Korean History), 279.

instance, Lee Mikyung confessed that her father participated in the war as a Japanese soldier.[147] In an interview with the press, she commented, "I asked around my father's friends and neighborhood elders. Some have told me he was a soldier in a Japanese army." She suspected that as he attended elementary school through university in Japan, he might have volunteered to serve.[148] The fact that many of these politicians were unaware of their parents or grandparents' pro-Japanese activities makes one wonder whether many chose to stay silent about their colonial experience over the years, afraid of the repercussions if they "confessed" their sins. The committee announced the completion of the final list in November 2009, which included 1,005 individuals as pro-Japanese collaborators.

The *Ch'inil Inmyŏng Sajŏn* (Pro-Japanese Biographical Dictionary) (2009)

The publication of the *Ch'inil inmyŏng sajŏn* (Pro-Japanese Biographical Dictionary) came at a time when there was already widespread public recognition that the issue of pro-Japanese collaborators remained unresolved. The Pro-Japanese Biographical Dictionary (henceforth "Pro-Japanese Dictionary"), published on November 8, 2009 by the Minjok Munje

[147] Lee Mikyung served as a congresswoman from 1996-2014.

[148] Choi Ugyu, "Ch'inil k'ŏmingaut shinhot'an?" *Kyunghyang Shinmun,* August 24, 2014, http://m.khan.co.kr/view.html?artid=200408241758121&code=910402&med_id=khan.

Yŏn'guso, comprises a list of pro-Japanese collaborators.[149] The number of pro-Japanese collaborators listed almost sextupled in a span of five years, from 708 in 2002[150] to 4,300 in 2009. This result was expected, as the Minjok Munje Yŏn'guso had seven years to conduct an extensive research on such individuals. Many researchers and scholars were involved and still today, over 10,000 people support the institution's cause financially.[151]

There are many similarities as well as differences between the Pro-Japanese Dictionary's definition of collaboration and the definition formulated by the Korean government in 1948. While the 1947 legislation and the 1948 law made a clear distinction between pro-Japanese collaborators, national traitors, and profiteers, the Pro-Japanese Dictionary chose to use "pro-Japanese collaborator" as an umbrella term to encompass a variety of collaboration activities. The fact that the Pro-Japanese Dictionary treats those who signed the *ŭlsajoyak* (Japan-Korea Treaty of 1905) and the Korean-Japanese Annexation Treaty as "pro-Japanese" shows that this term is comprised of all shades of collaboration: from actions that would be considered traitorous to seemingly questionable or "minor" collaborations. And

[149] Yun Kyŏngro et al., *Ch'in'il inmyŏng sajŏn* (The Pro-Japanese Biographical Dictionary), (Seoul: Minjok munje yŏn'guso, 2009).

[150] This list was complied by a group of South Korean congress members in 2002. The group called themselves as Minjokchŏnggi rŭl seunŭn kukhoeŭiwŏn moim (An Assembly of Congress Members to Revitalize the National Spirit).

[151] For further information on the center's on-going activities, you can visit their official site: https://www.minjok.or.kr

as the term pro-Japanese was used interchangeably with the term *panminjok*, it was inevitably established that any pro-Japanese act was an act of treason against the Korean people.

In addition, these two materials are similar in that each reflects the unique circumstances of the time in which they were created. In the case of the 1947 draft legislation and the 1948 law, leftist ideologies are observably sprinkled across the text. Section III on profiteers in the 1947 legislation aptly illustrates this point. For instance, the law condemns Koreans who gained wealth for themselves through abandoned Japanese properties after the war, declaring this kind of act to be illegal. It also strongly censures those who gained wealth through their connections with authorities or others. Here, the focus is not on whether one held *chin'il* (an intimate relationship) with the Japanese authority, but whether one profited economically through personal connections. This distinction reflects the left's belief in social equality, whereby all people should have equal access to certain social goods and services. Left-leaning members argued that such "illegally" obtained properties and wealth belonged to the government, not to individuals.[152] It is also important to note that the law dealt with collaboration throughout the colonial era. Anyone who held governmental or managerial positions specified by the law was considered to have committed a *panminjok* act. On the

[152] Namchosŏn Kwadoippŏbŭiwŏn (South Korea's Interim Legislative Assembly), Namchosŏn Kwadoippŏbŭiwŏn Sokkirok 2 (Records of South Korea's Interim Legislative Assembly vol. 2), Seoul: Yŏgangch'ulp'ansa, 1984, 355.

other hand, the Pro-Japanese Dictionary especially devotes attention to collaboration under wartime circumstances, placing special emphasis on individuals who propagated the Japanese Empire's wartime propaganda. This not only includes those who gave public speeches and wrote newspaper articles to encourage Koreans to participate in the war efforts, but also individuals who beautified the ongoing war through various artistic acts such as painting, music, and dance performances.

The editors of the Pro-Japanese Dictionary argue that the type of criteria that are applied depends on "the purpose of purging and the needs of a particular era."[153] They assert that the Pro-Japanese Dictionary has different criteria than the 1948 law because its purpose was "to question thoroughly about past wrongs."[154] This type of rhetoric allows making anachronistic decisions beforehand about which type of story these materials tell, rather than letting the historical documents speak for themselves.

Furthermore, even though the dictionary was published approximately 60 years after the 1948 law, many of the criteria remained unclear and begged deeper contemplation. For instance, was propagating war propaganda to be considered a war crime? If so, should every effort towards war propaganda be considered as a crime? If this is true, should not all nations

[153] Yun Kyŏngro et al., *Ch'in'il inmyŏng sajŏn* (The Pro-Japanese Biographical Dictionary), 20.

[154] Ibid.

involved in World War II be held responsible for their war propaganda, including the allies? Another example of a vague criterion is number 6:[155] "those who committed the above acts while living abroad." Why should those living abroad have an unwavering loyalty towards Korea? How long do they need to have lived abroad before being exempt from this criterion? What if people identified as Japanese because they spent most of their lives in Japan? Are they still required to remain "loyal" to the Korean *minjok*? Due to the criteria's ambiguities, one begins to wonder whether anyone is exempt from these accusations, especially when it is "right" to retrospectively judge individuals.

Like Roh Moohyun, Korea's current president, Moon Jaein, also embraces *ch'inil ch'ŏngsan* as one of his campaign promises. He asserts that "by dealing with *ch'inilp'a ch'ŏngsan"* he would eliminate "the accumulated evils of the mainstream class and their vested rights."[156] He accused the political branch of conservatives of being descendants of pro-Japanese collaborators: individuals who became powerful politically and economically through favors from authoritarian governments.[157] This rings true to a certain extent, as many pro-Japanese collaborators did remain in power politically and economically after the

[155] Refer to Appendix IV, 6.

[156] Kim, Ajin, "Ilje tongniphan chi 72nyŏn… Nugul kyŏnyanghae ch'inil ch'ŏngsan kkŏnaenna" (72 years have passed since Korea's independence from the Japanese Empire…For whom are we purging pro-Japanese collaborators?), *Chosun Ilbo*, January 18, 2017, http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2017/01/18/2017011800296.html.

[157] Ibid.

liberation. However, using this issue as a political agenda to criticize the opposition and earn the public's approval does not help Korea to reconcile with its complex, ambiguous, and turbulent colonial past, nor does it help in attaining a deeper understanding of the colonial era.

Chapter 2

Gender and Nationalism:

Helen Kim as a New Woman and a Collaborator

A statue of Helen Kim, covered with Post-its from students. Students demanded that Ewha Womans University take down the statue (2013).

Introduction

In June 2013, the National Institute of Korean History insisted on removing a picture of Helen Kim' (also known as Kim Hwalran) statue from history textbooks.[158] As an alumnus and the first Korean headmaster of Ewha Womans University, Kim is regarded as a pioneer of

[158] Kim Jihoon, "Kyogwasŏ 'ch'inil' kimhwallan tongsang sajini idae p'yŏmha?" (Does picture of Helen Kim's statue in the textbook disparage Ewha's name?), *Han'gyŏrye*, June 1, 2013, http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/schooling/590024.html.

women's education in South Korea. However, after the list of 708 pro-Japanese individuals was revealed in 2003, students demanded that her statue at Ewha Womans University be removed from the campus.[159] The students argued that it was shameful for the school to honor a traitor with a statue on the campus grounds.

Due to recent accusations regarding pro-Japanese collaborators, evaluators of Kim's works have become sharply divided between those who hail her as a pioneer of women's education in Korea and those who vehemently criticize her for her alleged pro-Japanese collaboration. Those who praise her argue that she was forced to collaborate with the Japanese; To protect Ewha, she had no other choice. Often, these arguments focus on Kim's many achievements, such as her efforts to eradicate illiteracy, to initiate rural enlightenment campaigns, and to build a "Korean" Ewha, to name but a few.[160] However, these arguments are often based on her personal accounts, written decades after the Japanese rule, which demands caution regarding their authenticity.[161]

[159] This list was formulated by Minjokchŏnggirŭl seunŭn Kukhoeŭiwŏnmoim, established by several members from the National Assembly.

[160] Kim Sungeun, "Ilcheshigi Kimhwallan ŭi yŏgwŏnŭishik kwa yŏsŏng kyoyungnon" (Helen Kim's Thoughts on Women's Right and Women's Education During Colonial Era), *Yŏksa wa kyŏnggye* 79 (2011), 184.

[161] Ye Jisook,"Ilche ha kimhwallan ŭi hwaltong kwa taeil hyŏmnyŏk" (Kim Hwal Ran's Public Track and Her Pro-Japanese Collaboration during Colonial Korea under Imperial Japanese Reign), *Han'guksaron* 51 (2005), 398.

Accusations

According to the Pro-Japanese Dictionary published in 2009, Kim is first and foremost accused of beautifying Japan's "war of aggression" and promoting *kōminka seisaku* (Japanization). She is criticized for praising Japan's war of aggression and urging Koreans to participate in the war.[162] Secondly, she is accused of using the Women's Rights Movement to rationalize women and families' involvement in the war, as well as of succumbing to Japan's demands, giving pro-Japanese speeches in villages, and encouraging women to volunteer as sex slaves for soldiers.[163] Those who criticize her claimed that she prioritized women's rights and personal gain over the Korean *minjok*, and thus committed treason.[164]

Another minor accusation is that she was willing to collaborate with the Japanese in order to save Ewha.[165] The imperial government began to tighten its grip on schools as the war progressed and shrine visits became mandatory for schools as part of the *kōminka seisaku*. However, some schools such as Sungshil Secondary School refused to participate in these shrine visits (as a Christian missionary school, it believed these practices went against their

[162] Yun Kyŏng-ro et al., *Chinil inmyŏng sachŏn* (The Pro-Japanese Biographical Dictionary) (Seoul: Minjok munje yŏn'guso, 2009), 709-714.

[163] Okuyama Yoko, "Helen Kim's Life and Thought under the Japanese Colonialism 1918–1945" (MA diss., Yonsei University, 1989), 45-46.

[164] Yun Kyŏng-ro et al., *Chinil inmyŏng sachŏn* (The Pro-Japanese Biographical Dictionary), 709-714.

[165] Okuyama Yoko, "Helen Kim's Life and Thought under the Japanese Colonialism 1918–1945," 45-46.

religious beliefs) and as a consequence, the school was forced to close. Ewha was one of a number of schools that agreed to participate in shrine visits in order to keep the school open.

According to the abovementioned accusations, there is no doubt that she collaborated with the Japanese. However, the focus of this paper is not to prove or disprove whether she collaborated with the colonial government. Rather, it is to problematize the fixed notions that are associated with the issue of collaboration by examining the colonial context in which Kim committed so-called pro-Japanese acts.

Recently, there have been more attempts to understand Kim outside of the pro-Japanese (traitor) versus patriot framework. For instance, in Ye Jisook's article, Kim is portrayed as an indigenous intellectual who tried to elevate women and the overall status of Koreans by becoming part of Japan's growing empire.[166] Kim Jihwa similarly asserts in her dissertation that Kim did not suddenly betray Korea and became a pro-Japanese collaborator; Rather, she had to constantly maneuver between collaboration and negotiation with the Japanese as she devised ways to provide education for Korean women in a rapidly changing society.[167] These studies provide new approaches to the existing paradigm regarding the issue

[166] Ye Jisook, "Ilche ha kimhwallan ŭi hwaltong kwa taeil hyŏmnyŏk" (Kim Hwal Ran's Public Track and Her Pro-Japanese Collaboration during Colonial Korea under Imperial Japanese Reign), 398.

[167] Kim Jihwa, "Kimhwallan kwa pagindŏk ŭl chŭngsimŭro pon ilche sidae kidokkyo yŏsŏng chisigin ŭi 'chinilchŏk' maengnak yŏn'gu" (A Study on the Context of 'Pro-Japanese' activities by Christian Intellectual Women under the Japanese Colonial Rule Focused on Helen Kim & Induk Pahk), PhD diss., Ewha Womans University, 2005,

of collaboration. Nonetheless, a more comprehensive analysis of the issue of collaboration and the role of gender identity in the colonial context is essential.

Korea's nationalist historiography is inclined to minimize the importance of gender and the extent to which gender shaped people's experience in the colonial era. Often, it is assumed that loyalty to *minjok* should have been absolute and ultimately that no other priorities could have been more important. This way of thinking hinders truly understanding the complex nature of women's identity in the colonial era, specifically how Korean women were uniquely situated as not only the "lesser" gender but also as colonial subjects to be ruled. Discussions surrounding the issue of collaboration often fail to mention these glaring double binds to which Korean women were subjugated.

This chapter focuses on the following question: Should a divided loyalty and resultant collaboration automatically be treated as treason against the Korean people? Should these people be assumed to have prioritized their ethnic identity without considering how multi-layered people's identity was? Who determines that ethnic identity should have overridden a person's other priorities? The answer to these questions is explored through Kim,

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who as an educator and new woman was forced to navigate between patriarchal oppression and imperialist exploitation simultaneously during the colonial era.[168]

Helen Kim as an Educator

The effort to establish greater equality for women began in the 1890s as Korean progressives attempted to modernize Korea. During the colonial era, much of the intellectual community embraced this push for more equality between men and women[169] because they believed that Korea's backwardness in cultural development was due to deeply rooted Confucian concepts such as *namjon yobi* (revere men, despise women). However, it was difficult to eradicate deeply embedded Confucian ideals.

For this reason, American missionaries pioneered women's education in Korea and established many of the first educational institutions for women. Schools committed to furthering women's education, such as Ewha Womans University, had their beginning during this era. Methodist Church missionaries established Ewha Haktang (school) in 1886, which

[168] For further discussions on this concept of this "double bind" Korean women experienced, see Lee, Pyeongjeon, "Shinnyŏsŏng ŭi shingmin ch'ehŏm gwa chajŏnjŏk sosŏl yŏn'gu"(A Study on Modern Women's Colonial Experience and Autobiographical Novel's), *Han'gugŏ munha kyŏn'gu* (The Research on Korean Language and Literature) 43 (2004), 225–252. See also Kwon, Insook, "'The New Women's Movement' in 1920s Korea: Rethinking the Relationship between Imperialism and Women," *Gender & History* 10-3 (November 1998), 381-405.

[169] Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Modern Korea: from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 65.

eventually grew and changed its name to Ewha Chŏnmun Hakkyo (Ewha Professional School) in 1925, aiming to provide higher education for Korean girls. The founding of Ewha Chŏnmun Hakkyo (henceforth "Ewha") was followed by the establishment of more schools geared towards women's education, such as Chŏngshin Yŏhakkyo (Chŏngshin Girl's School), Paehwa Yŏhakkyo (Paehwa Girl's School), and Sungŭi Yŏhakkyo (Sungŭi Girl's School). With the support of women's rights advocates, these new establishments provided young women with an opportunity to experience modern education, an opportunity that did not exist in previous centuries. Kim was part of the first generation of Korean women who embraced this opportunity and became a representative figure of this new generation.

Raised by a devout Christian mother, Kim had a rare opportunity to receive education, even though education was considered by the majority of the population to be "useless" for girls in Korea. With the exception of her stay in America to further her studies, Kim's childhood and adulthood were spent entirely in Ewha. Although Kim could not afford education, she was given a full scholarship which allowed her to continue. As an adult, she worked as a teacher at Ewha for decades. In 1939, she became the first Korean headmaster of Ewha and remained in that position until she retired in 1961.

When the March First Movement began, Kim did not participate in the

demonstrations. In her autobiography, she recalls that it was her colleagues who persuaded her not to participate, reminding her that if she was arrested, people with whom she had a relationship would be in danger as well.[170] With financial support provided by Methodist missionaries, Kim decided to pursue a degree in Ohio Wesleyan University. She later earned a bachelor's degree from Wesleyan University (1924) and a master's degree in philosophy from Boston University (1925). She subsequently returned briefly to Korea to teach at Ewha. While teaching, she was actively involved in organizations that promoted women's rights, such as Mangwŏl kurakpu (望月俱樂部) and Kŭnuhoe (槿友會), and as a devout Christian actively participated in Methodist missionary work. In 1930, she returned to graduate school to pursue a doctoral degree in education at Columbia University. In 1931, she became the first Korean woman to receive a doctoral degree.

First and foremost, Kim was an avid educator who believed that many of Korea's ills could be solved through long-term education programs. She was part of the larger enlightenment movement for rural communities in the 1920s and 1930s, initiated by intellectuals and students. As many enthusiasts of this movement, Kim believed education was the key to rural development in Korea, an area in which she was openly passionate.

Regardless of whether or not a child is in the city or the rural area, only

[170] Helen Kim, *Kŭ pitsogŭi ch'agŭn saengmyŏng* (A Small Life in the Light), (Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1999), 63.

> sixty-seven children out of one thousand attend school. However, only one out of ten children in rural areas is able to attend school. The rest remain illiterate for rest of their life. This is a reality we should not ignore.[171]

As a solution, she argued for more educational institutions and practical textbooks, which she contended would meet practical needs.[172] Similarly, in her doctoral dissertation, "Rural Education for the Regeneration of Korea," she suggested that cultural centers should be established in the villages to "keep up the growth of the villagers."[173] She went on to suggest that a training center should be established so that men and women would have the opportunity to prepare themselves for various vocations. She also urged students to return to their hometowns and take on the role of teacher and leader.[174]

Most texts accusing her of collaboration argue that she began to transform into a pro-Japanese collaborator at the end of 1936. According to the Pro-Japanese Dictionary, she at this time "led the pro-Japanese movement in education in general and for women."[175] In her autobiography, she argues that she was forced to collaborate with the GGK to protect Ewha

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171 Helen Kim, "Nongch'onmunhwa chinhŭngundonge taehan cheŏn" (Advice for Regeneration of Rural Area's Culture), *Tonga ilbo,* January 1, 1933.

172 Ibid.

173 Helen Kim, "Rural Education for the Regeneration of Korea," in *Uwŏlmunjip*, ed. Kim Okkil et al. (Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 1979), 132.

174 Helen Kim, "Nongch'on munhwa chinhŭng undong e taehan cheŏn" (Advice for Regeneration of Rural Area's Culture), *Tonga ilbo,* January 1, 1933.

175 Yun Kyŏng-ro et al., *Chinil inmyŏng sachŏn* (The Pro-Japanese Biographical Dictionary), 710.

from Japan's colonial government. To a certain extent, it is imaginable this was true for many Korean intellectuals in Korea. Yun Chi'ho, a Korean intellectual who also had a friendly relationship with Kim, recorded her alarm about the West Gate Police's increasing suspicions:

> Dr. Helen Kim and Mr. Yun Sang Soon called. They are alarmed by the persistent rumor that the West Gate Police intend to terrorize the Ewha College as soon as they are through with the C.C.C. They wish Miss A. [Alice Appenzeller][176] would resign and reorganize the College staff in such way as to win the confirm of the Police—who is running everything in Korea. Told Helen I would see Kim Tai Woo to ask what the authorities want.[177]

This account aptly illustrates that one can never be certain about the extent to which she was coerced into collaboration. Before the police ever investigated Kim, she and other educators at Ewha were willing to appease and collaborate with the Japanese authorities to prevent Ewha from closing. Out of fear and precaution, she was willing to collaborate with the colonial government and use the opportunity to further education for people who did not have access to such institutions.

When the colonial government announced its intention to implement compulsory education, Kim embraced this announcement. She states that this was a policy "we have all hoped for a long time."[178] In addition, she urges the following changes:

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[176] Alice R. Appenzeller served as the sixth headmaster of Ewha Chŏnmun Hakkyo (1922-1939).

[177] Yun, Ilgi, June 28, 1938, 10: 67.

[178] Helen Kim, "Sohak kyowŏn udae rŭl yomangham" (Request of Preferential Treatment for Primary School

> Our elementary schools are overwhelmed by students. It is very difficult to have sixty to seventy first year and second year students in one class. Ideally, we should have fifteen to twenty students in a class so that teachers could closely look after their students like parents. I believe this would be much more effective. We need to make sure we have more classes and lesser students in a class so that our education is not superficial. We need to build as much schools as possible so that every student can have the opportunity to learn.[179]

Many of the pioneers in Korea's modern education have been criticized as being pro-Japanese collaborators (traitors). In fact, there was hardly anyone with status, influence, and responsibility who decided not to "betray" Korea. Many principals of schools (especially in higher education) collaborated with the Japanese to some degree. The overwhelming presence of collaborators in the field of education makes one wonder whether it was even possible for these individuals to resist collaborating with the Japanese at all, without ultimately sacrificing what they had worked for over the years. This was further complicated for Kim, taking into consideration her identity as an inferior gender in Chosŏn society.

Helen Kim as a New Woman

One of the most common accusations collaborators receive is that they committed treason against their own people or *minjok*. The word *panminjok* (betrayal of one's *minjok*) is

Teachers), Maeil shinbo, August 28, 1940.

[179] Ibid.

based on the assumption that the accused collaborated with "the enemy" so that by collaborating with the enemy of *minjok*, they committed treason against *minjok*. In the nationalist narrative, the occupying power, Japan, is pegged as the ultimate enemy or villain for Koreans; Therefore, collaboration becomes the ultimate "crime" against Koreans. This one-dimensional depiction of the occupying power as the omnipotent enemy that all Koreans should have fought against oversimplifies the complex relationship between the Japanese Empire and Koreans. In particular, as much as Korean women were exposed to Japanese imperialist oppression, they were equally or more prone to being targeted by Korean males' oppression and the centuries-old Chosŏn-era patriarchal values and practices. Therefore, to understand the complex nature of identity as the inferior gender and colonized subject, it is vital to explore how Korean women viewed and interacted with men in the colonial context and how this perception of Korean men affected a people's decision of whether to collaborate with Japanese subjugators under wartime circumstances.

First, Kim did not argue for Korea's immediate independence in any of her articles or statements prior to 1937. Her doctoral dissertation was focused solely on rural development within the limits of colonial authority. Even though she mentions in her autobiography that

she always longed for Korea's independence,[180] unlike others who went underground in exile to lobby for Korea's independence, she chose to stay above ground in Korea, where she continued to work for women, for whom she had the greatest passion. Her affection towards Korea's nationhood was less palpable, if it existed in the first place.

Kim possessed many unique qualities associated with the "new women."[181] She was educated, intelligent, and economically independent. She was also a pioneer of the Korean Women's Rights Movement. However, because of her strong Christian background, she was different from mainstream female intellectuals, who were often unfairly accused of having a rather promiscuous lifestyle.[182] She was rarely mentioned in scandals and rumors that unfortunately pestered other female intellectuals, such as Pak Intŏk. She also advocated few of the agendas these new women activists pushed for, such as the freedom to love and choose one's marriage partner.

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[180] Helen Kim, *Kŭ pitsogŭi ch'agŭn saengmyŏng* (A Small Life in the Light), 163.

[181] This term is often used broadly to describe a new generation of educated, intellectual Korean women in early twentieth century. Kwon gives a more specific definition. She describes 'New Women' as "a group of women who challenged the moral system of Confucian patriarchy, using a new self-identity that they crafted through modern education in Korea or studies and journeys to Japan and Europe. See Insook Kwon, "'The New Women's Movement' in 1920s Korea: Rethinking the Relationship Between Imperialism and Women," *Gender & History*, Vol. 10 No.3 November 1998: 381-405.

[182] Christianity played an important role, in that many women were able to gain access to education through schools established by missionaries. It is well known that conflicts intensified between Korean intellectuals and missionaries over time. Thus, even though missionaries were considered pioneers of women's education in Korea, at the same time, they were seen as imposing Western values on Koreans. For further discussion on Christianity and its influence on Christian female intellectuals, see Kim Jihwa, "A Study on the Context of 'Pro-Japanese' activities by Christian Intellectual Women," 26-69.

The national narrative of Korean history depicts Japan as the only oppressor, aggressor, and usurper of Koreans. However, it should be noted that oppression and discrimination against women was a reality for most Korean women long before Japan annexed the peninsula. Women during the Chosŏn dynasty were confined to a status limited to the domestic realm. Confucian ideology bound women to specific roles: they were to be a "virtuous wife, obedient daughter-in-law, and the chaste widow."[183] Their identity and worth depended on how well they accomplished these roles.

How the new women viewed the "old women" or the "old society" indicated the birth of feminist consciousness in colonial Korea. These women began to become vocal about what they believed was debilitating Korean women: the patriarchal values and practices of Chosŏn society. Women were often described as victims of society, bound by centuries-old traditions and values. What once was considered to be the norm began to be questioned and scrutinized. For instance, arranged marriage became synonymous with women's lack of freedom and choice. Many articles in *Shinyŏsŏng* (new women)[184] featured girls who complained that they had nowhere to work after finishing their education, complaining to the editor that the only

[183] Martina Deuchler, *Confucian transformation of Korea* (Cambridge: Harvard Ukrain Res Inst, 1995), 281.

[184] *Shinyŏsŏng* was the first women's magazine published in Chosŏn by Kaebyŏksa. It discussed a wide range of topics that concerned women, including education, housework, child-reading, dating, marriage, and marital problems.

expectations parents imposed on them were to marry and marry well. One girl from the countryside lamented that even if she went back home, she would have nothing to do but be forced into a marriage arranged by her family.[185] The world outside of the school premises was plagued by a centuries-old social system, and unfortunately, for many of these women, modern education could not ensure a different future.

The newly educated women particularly criticized men because to them men were the perpetrators and enforcers of the values and practices they abhorred. They lamented that Korean women were treated as men's slaves and that they were forced to endure unspeakable amounts of abuse inflicted upon them by men.[186] One contributor to the journal argued that because of these abuses, women "experienced many more obstacles" than men.[187]

Female novelists revealed the brutality of the reality many Korean women endured through the popular medium of novels, which depicted women who were manipulated, exploited, and often violated psychologically and physically. In these novels, women appear to have nearly no contact with Japanese men or women, while many Korean male characters are depicted as the main perpetrators, molesting, raping, and abusing Korean women for their

[185] S. WH, "Sijimman karanŭn pumo" (My Parents Only Talks about Marriage), *Shinyŏsŏng* 1 (1923), 131.

[186] SJ, "Puinuntongŭi choryu" (The Tide of Women's Movement), *Shinyŏsŏng* 2 (1923), 433.

[187] Yŏn'gusaeng, "Puinŭi chijŏk nŭngnyŏk" (A Woman's Intellectual Ability), *Shinyŏsŏng* 2 (1923), 533.

own pleasure. One of the most common scenarios mentioned throughout novels, magazines, and newspapers is factory managers' rampant assaults against female workers. Many factory managers took advantage of their positions and molested women of various age groups. Often, managers (both Japanese and Korean) enticed and raped young girls, resulting in unwanted miscarriages, abortions, and stillbirths.[188] Even at home, abuse against women was common and allowed; The abuse could range from adultery to sexual harassments and, at its worst, repeated rape. In the story *Inganmunje* (A Human Problem), the protagonist Sunbi is raped by her own stepfather. Because she is too ashamed of what happened, she decides to leave home and work in a factory, without confiding in anyone.[189] This story illuminates that even though women were victims, society forced them to take responsibility for the consequences brought on by the abuser. Most women could not afford the luxury of independence and only a few managed to build a career outside of their homes, which certainly was an exception, not the norm. In the most tragic cases, women who succumbed to the lures of freedom and financial independence, and the promises made to them were often betrayed by fellow compatriots. As Chunghee Sarah Soh observes:

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[188] Theodore Jun Yoo, *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910-1945* (Berkeley: University of California, 2008), 136.

[189] Kang Gyŏngae, *In'ganmunje* (A Human Problem), (Seoul: Dream Sodam, 2001). This story was originally published in the newspaper *Tongailbo* from September 1934 to December 1934.

> I content that the personal tragedies of Korean comfort women arose, in part, from the institutionalized everyday gender violence tolerated in patriarchal homes and enacted in the public sphere (including the battlefront) steeped in what I call "masculinist sexual culture" in colonial Korea and imperial Japan.[190]

Koreans also need to acknowledge the existence of such institutionalized gender violence within the country and acknowledge that the "biggest perpetrators here are the patriarchal societies of Japan and Korea."[191]

Kim was obviously one of the fortunate ones. She was able to avoid blatant forms of oppression and discrimination against women because she had the opportunity to be brought up in the sheltered environment the Methodist missionaries provided. However, she fought her own personal battles with the opposite sex, starting with her father, who did not believe in women's education. Kim recalls that her own father was against her entering university. He told her that she would miss her opportunity to marry, saying she should stay and learn how to do housework so that she could become an excellent housewife. He claimed that "women don't need to be outstanding! Being average is the best."[192] In addition, she had to deal with the discrimination against women that existed within intellectual circles. Male nationalists who

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[190] Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The comfort women: sexual violence and postcolonial memory in Korea and Japan* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 3.

[191] Ueno Chizuko, *Nationalism and Gender*, trans. Beverley Yamamoto (Melbourne: Trans Pacific, 2004), 128.

[192] Helen Kim, *Kŭ pitsogŭi ch'agŭn saengmyŏng* (A Small Life in the Light), 39.

initially advocated education for women in the early 1900s began to shift their view on women's rights by the 1920s; They believed that the new women's audacious challenge of patriarchy and sexuality could create a debacle for Korean tradition and unity.[193] Instead of promoting women's education and rights, these nationalists viewed education as a means to train Korean women to be a "good wife and a wise mother," ironically a phrase that was promoted by the Japanese government.[194]

In response to the article "Yŏja ŭi pansŏng ŭl ch'okku handa" (Urging Women to Repent), Kim penned "Namja ŭi pansŏng ŭl ch'okku ham" (Urging Men to Repent), in which she strongly reacts to the type of attitude described above:

> I believe that before men criticize women's shortcomings, men should first improve their own shortcomings. It is true that there are a few women who are extravagant, vain, and excessive. However, many educated women do not oil their hair or powder their face. They wear cotton clothes during the winter and simple, modest hemp clothes during the summer. They rack their brain wondering how they can contribute to the betterment of the society. However, many men criticize us as vain, presumptuous, and arrogant, rather harshly.[195]

She cynically questions, "How productive and knowledgeable is it for you [men] to wear a suit that costs hundreds of won, shoes that are shiny, and flash your gold glasses and gold teeth?

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[193] Kwon, Insook, "'The New Women's Movement'," 381.

[194] Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Modern Korea: from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present*, 66.

[195] Helen Kim, "Namja ŭi pansŏng ŭl ch'okkuham" (I Insist Men Should Apologize), *Shinyŏja* 4 (1920).

Why do you strut through the streets with your hair sleeked, showing of your high collars, and brandishing your sticks?"[196] Kim criticized the majority of so-called male intellectuals for harboring stereotypes against women while exhibiting similar habits themselves, indicating that this inequality also existed between men and women in marriage. She observed that even though many men did not have the intellectual or financial ability to support their families, they expect women to be virtuous and educated.[197] She also called men who frequented the pleasure quarters shameless for the double standard they imposed on their wives; Even though they visited red-light districts rather freely, they expected their wives to stay chaste.[198] Her heated responses show that even though new women had privileges that other Korean women lacked, they still had their own battles to wage, ironically, against Korean male intellectuals. Nevertheless, she firmly believed women had characters, rights, and abilities that were equal to those of men. Therefore, if women could find themselves, restore their confidence, and use their abilities to the fullest in society, they could achieve as much as men.[199] However, she did not argue that women should surpass men or usurp their roles. Rather, she envisioned a society in which men and women collaborated with each other and had a partner-like

[196] Ibid.

[197] Ibid.

[198] Ibid.

[199] Helen Kim, "Saramgwa p'yŏngdŭng" (People and Equality), *Chosŏn ilbo*, January 1, 1926.

relationships.[200]

This demand for equal opportunity is also evident in her so-called pro-Japanese articles, which promoted women's participation in war efforts. In Korea, many female intellectuals placed emphasis on urging women to be part of the holy war, asserting that women were able to contribute and participate in the war effort *as much as* men.

Kim often compared women's roles to those of men's regarding national issues. For instance, she expresses that she "finds it unfortunate that men are able to do many activities while women's activities are behind" regarding the implementation of *naisen ittai* (Japan and Korea as one).[201] In this particular article, she goes on to criticize men and their lack of interest in women's issues, suggesting as a solution that Korean women and *naichi* (inland, referring to the Japanese) women should "love each other like sisters" and collaborate with men on *naisen ittai* together.[202] For new women such as Kim, *naisen ittai* policy became an opportunity to argue that women were qualified to provide their services to the nation and that "men and women could collaborate, trust, and understand each other to solve

[200] Kim Sungeun, "Ilcheshigi Kimhwallan ŭi yŏgwŏnŭishik kwa yŏsŏng kyoyungnon"(Helen Kim's Thought of Women's Right and Korean Women's Education), 189.

[201] Helen Kim, "Puindŭlkkiriŭi aejŏnggwa ihae" (Affection and Wisdom between [Korean and Japanese] Women), *Tongyangjigwang* 3, (June 2, 1939): 221. ᄂᆞ sy

[202] Ibid.

problems."[203] Furthermore, she viewed *naisen ittai* as an opportunity for the women's movement to expand. She did not find collaboration with either Japanese women or men to be a barrier in achieving this goal and expresses a similar sentiment regarding the issue of women's participation in war efforts:

> How can women stand still and watch when we are at the climax of a definitive battle, which will decide the fate of a billion people in Asia? Law students from a professional school set out on a boisterous march and had the honor to volunteer and enlist in the army on January 20th along with naichi students. The pupils of Ewha should also take the glorious road towards the camp gate like (our) peninsula pupils. Nevertheless, the only reason why we cannot do so is because we are women."[204]

She celebrated Ewha's transition into Yŏja t'ŭkpyŏl yŏnsŏngso, an institution focused on leadership training for women's participation in war efforts, claiming that students considered this to be a privilege as *hwangguk yŏsŏng* (imperial women).[205] This article is appropriately titled "We Should not Lag Behind Men: To Fulfill the Calling of Imperial Women."

In another passionate article, she encourages men to go forward into battle and leave the rest to us [women].[206]

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[203] Ko, Myŏngcha, "Atarashii fujin no michi" (A New Path for Women), *Tongyangjigwang* 2, (June, 1939): 223.

[204] Helen Kim, "Namjaege chijiank'e hwangguk yŏsŏng ŭrosŏ samyŏng ŭl wansu" (Fulfill Your Mission as an Imperial Women- Do Not Lose to Men), *Maeil shinbo,* December 26, 1943.

[205] Ibid.

[206] Helen Kim, "Twishirŭn uriga" (Leave the Rest to Us), *Chogwang* October 1943, 56.

> Go! To the frontline, we will take care of the rest. Us women are resolved to take care of everything [at the home front] and you men do not have to worry. Please achieve victory and leave a mark in history as true Korean students.

As previously noted, after Korea's liberation, Kim defended her wartime collaboration as an action committed under the duress of the GGK. Indeed, many Korean intellectuals, especially those who had ties to American missionaries, suffered the GGK's constant surveillance. However, even if Kim was forced to adopt scripted propaganda lines, a careful examination of her writings provides glimpses of her own voice in these writing, which is different from the typical propaganda material that Japan attempted to disseminate. Kim also notes that it is difficult to argue that someone else wrote these articles if one understands that Korean female intellectuals viewed "war as an opportunity for Korean women to become main agents,"[207] an opportunity that has been continuously denied to Korean women throughout the centuries.

Nationalization of Women's Role in the Japanese Empire

The ideology of "good wife, wise mother" took on a new meaning as the Japanese Empire began to mobilize its citizen for the war. The glorification of motherhood further

[207] Kim Jihwa, "Kimhwallan kwa pagindŏk ŭl chŭngsimŭro pon ilche sidae kidokkyo yŏsŏng chisigin ŭi 'chinilchŏk' maengnak yŏn'gu" (A Study on the Context of 'Pro-Japanese' activities by Christian Intellectual Women under the Japanese Colonial Rule Focused on Helen Kim & Induk Pahk), 105.

developed as Japan avidly pushed forward its agenda to expand its empire. In other words, because of Japan's pursuit of imperialism, the ideal of motherhood needed to expand as well in order to encompass the agenda of not only producing and raising the "sons of Japan" but also "asserting colonial hierarchy, and managing colonized subjects through assimilation."[208] This imperial motherhood is also reflected in how Japanese women were expected to act towards colonial subjects. As the colonial subject was thought to be underdeveloped (infant-like), slow, and in need of help to become a proper citizen of imperial Japan, Japanese women were expected to take them under their motherly wings.

The short story "Manchu Girl" by Koizumi Kikue illustrates a case of "the deployment of imperialist motherhood in the colonial context."[209] The story is about a young Chinese girl named Guiyu who was first hired as a servant for a Japanese couple. The Japanese woman, Koizumi, does her utmost to embrace Guiyu and teach her the ways of the Japanese, from mastering the language to wearing kimonos. She represents the idealistic role of Japanese women in the colonial context: a parent figure to the colonial subject who surely needed "guidance" from Japan. Kimberly T. Kono notes that Koizumi's status within the empire was

[208] David C Earhart, *Certain Victory: Images of World War II in the Japanese Media* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2008), 226–227.

[209] Michele Mason and Helen J. S. Lee. *Reading Colonial Japan: Text, Context, and Critique* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2012), 227.

dependent on how well she performed her role as an "imperialist mother":

> That is, her recognition as a national subject is contingent upon her successful performance of the officially sanctioned role of motherhood. Her status as a subject of Japan is not preexisting or inherent, but rather is produced through her interactions with Guiyu. Koizumi realized her own identity as a Japanese citizen-subject by means of the very process of educating this girl.[210]

As is observable, the "good wife, wise mother" ideology was used to maneuver Japanese women to embrace motherhood and be responsible for taking care of imperial subjects, including colonial subjects. Nationalized motherhood was the one of a few legitimate roles women could engage in. Similarly, the colonial government's intention was to utilize the tenet of "good wife, wise mother" as a qualification to become an imperial woman.[211] Korean women were to embrace their roles as mothers of Korea by biologically reproducing sons and gladly sacrificing them for the empire. Similarly to Japanese women, Korean women and their wombs attained a higher, more honorable purpose, namely to bear fruit for *naisen ittai.*[212] Therefore, raising imperial subjects well and transforming them into dedicated workers for the nation became the proud duty of mothers.[213]

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[210] Ibid, 234.

[211] Inou Kazue, *Shokuminchi chosŏn no shinjosei* (New Women of Colonized Korea), (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 2013), 37.

[212] Kurashige Shūzō, "Chiwŏnbyŏng moja e parhanŭn sŏ: kukkayunghŭngŭi mot'aenŭn puinŭi hime chae" (The Matrix of Nation's Prosperity Comes From Women's Power and Presence), *Samch'ŏlli 23* (1940), 26.

[213] Oono Teruko, "Chiwŏnbyŏng moja e parhanŭn sŏ: pandobuine kungminŭn kamsa," (People Should be Grateful to the Women of Peninsula), *Samch'ŏlli 23* (1940), 30.

Another role Japanese women were encouraged to embrace was that of cheerleader on the home front. Wakakuwa Midori notes that this phenomenon was not unique to Japan. Many female scholars from Germany, France, and the United States also discussed that women's participation in war efforts was not completely forced; Many longed for the opportunity to work beyond the limits of the domestic realm.[214] Barbara J. Steinson observes that thousands of women willingly participated in war efforts (in the United States) because they viewed it as an opportunity to accomplish a new social identity for women.[215] Female intellectuals were moved when the government expressed its intention to elevate women's status in the public sphere, rejoicing that finally women were recognized politically in the public domain.[216]

As male Korean youths were recruited by the imperial army, their female counterparts were encouraged to take on the role of cheerleader on the home front. One of the ways this was accomplished was by giving meaning and value to what women already did within the household. The domestic realm itself became a battleground in which women could participate as citizens of the growing empire. Ensuring they did not waste any resources

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[214] Wakakuwa Midori, *Sensōga tsukuru joseizō* (Image of Women Made by War), (Tokyo: Chikumashogō, 2000), 125.

[215] Barbara J. Steinson, *Female activism in World War I: the American women's peace, suffrage, preparedness, and relief movements, 1914-1919* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1977), 28-29.

[216] Wakakuwa Midori, *Sensōga tsukuru joseizō* (Image of Women Made by War), 125-26.

and took care of their family's needs were no longer trivial matters: they directly contributed to the empire's survival. Women's identity no longer remained within the boundary of family as mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters; Women had a vital mission to support the "holy war" as mothers of imperial citizens and as imperial citizens themselves. However, it would be an gross oversimplification to assume that these women "suddenly" and "blindly" responded to the Japanese Empire's attempt to nationalize and mobilize women for war efforts.

In fact, the nationalization of women's role beyond the domestic realm was generally a shared theme amongst feminists in westernized nations, especially in the early 1900s. In the case of Japan, Sheldon M. Garon argues that collaboration between Japanese feminists and the government began as early as the 1920s, observing that this relationship blossomed because of Japan's desire to mobilize women for peacetime goals and in view of integrating women's groups into the political system.[217] Garon carefully illustrates that Japanese women chose to collaborate with the government to a certain extent so that they could influence its official agenda. She argues that in doing so, women's groups secured "more authoritative roles within family for housewives and mothers and by, extension, new public roles for women within the state—promoting economic development, social stability and wartime collaboration."[218]

[217] Sheldon M. Garon, *Molding Japanese minds* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 117.

[218] Ibid, 144.

Similarly to their Japanese counterparts, Korean female intellectuals also embraced the idea that women's work within the domestic sphere mattered, arguing that it should be valued. In this discourse, although women were physically bound to the traditional boundary of the home, their identity transcended it through the nationalization process of women's identity. The home was no longer a private sphere: it became a public sphere in which even women's mundane chores became meaningful. The idea that women's role in the domestic realm was directly linked to participation in society is evident in many of Kim's so-called pro-Japanese articles from the late 1930s and 1940s, as well as in her earlier writings from the 1920s. Kim notes that women's rights were ignored and that women were treated like slaves because their role as housewives was undervalued. She believed that there was a need to reevaluate women's role as a housewives and their contribution to society.[219]

In 1931, Kim wrote an article titled "Rebuilding Korea and the Role of Women," in which she passionately argues that it was women`s duty to develop a "dynamic and cultural family" for Korea:

> Most of Korea`s cultural development and continuation depends on the hands of the women. In order for Korea to greatly develop, despite the discrepancies we see, the families of Korea need to function as free entities . . . They need to

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[219] Kim, Sungeun, "Ilcheshigi Kimhwallan ŭi yŏgwŏnŭishik kwa yŏsŏng kyoyungnon" (Helen Kim's Thought of Women's Right and Korean Women's Education), 190.

> not only continue to develop the old, but also continue with conversation, family management, and educate the young adults.[220]

She avidly writes that women mattered to Korea's future development. For her, the family was the smallest unit of a nation and keeping these entities healthy and dynamic was the most important factor determining its further development. In her perspective, family matters were no longer private but rather public matters. In another article, in which she discusses the issue of work and women, she asserts that the family is part of society and that taking care of the domestic realm equates to working in society.[221] She rebuked so-called new women for having a short-sighted attitude, as represented by the following statement: "Since we are stuck at home we might as well raise the kids and take care of the house!" She implored women to realize that "working" did not necessarily mean working outside of the home; Women's primary responsibility and "work" was to develop and maintain the "home." In fact, she argued that chores should actually be considered as work with tangible value.[222] By affirming women's domestic role, Kim argues that women were as valuable as men:

> Men go out to earn money. Women stay home to cook, make clothes, and raise children. If we want to discuss the value of work, both women's work and

[220] Helen Kim, "Rebuilding Korea and the Role of Women," *The Korea Mission Field,* March, 1931, 87-88.

[221] Helen Kim, "Chigŏp chŏnsŏn kwa chosŏnn yŏsŏng" (The Frontline and Korean Women), *Shindonga*, September, 1932.

[222] Ibid.

men's work are valuable. In a way, women's work can be considered more valuable because women give birth to new citizen.[223]

Wakakuwa notes that for many women, the opportunity to participate in war efforts "affirmed the importance of women's existence. Also tasks that were considered mundane (such as pregnancy, child-bearing and raising) were honored and housework became meaningful.[224] It is not difficult to imagine a similar reaction in Korea. Long before 1937, Kim believed the nationalization of women's domestic role as a public role was a way to elevate women's status within society and hoped that women would come to be recognized as contributing members of society. In fact, the Japanese Empire's effort to nationalize women's wartime role created an opportunity for her to continue to advocate that women could become contributing members to society by their participation in the war effort. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Kim declared that the economy of the kitchen is equal to the economy of the nation.[225] Kim asserts that the "women of the East" had their own "Eastern way" of taking care of the household. Phrases such as these reflect her utilization of Japanese war propaganda, which included slogans such as "Asia for Asiatics," to promote, shape, and

[223] Helen Kim, "Yŏgwŏnmunjeesŏ salgirŭl ch'atcha" (Women's Rights Can Provide Us a Better Way to Live), *Tonga ilbo,* October 16, 1926.

[224] Wakakuwa Midori, *Sensōga tsukuru joseizō* (Image of Women Made by War), 125.

[225] Helen Kim, "Puŏk kyŏngje ka kukka kyŏngj e" (The Economy of the Kitchen is the Economy of the Nation), *Maeil shinbo*, July 6, 1938.

form women's identity in Korea.

Both Japanese and Korean feminists are criticized for their collaboration with the regime under wartime circumstances because their collaboration is viewed as an anomaly. Garon criticizes this notion as being a miscast, arguing that in reality, Japanese feminists already began to interact with the regime in the 1920s.[226] In colonial Korea, as Japan tried to impose certain gender roles on women, many Korean women and especially female educators such as Kim attempted to utilize these very ideologies to elevate the status of women in Korean society, the very society that confounded women to only limited roles. It is important to note that contrary to popular belief, there is much continuity in Kim's work. She advocated equal treatment and opportunity between men and women, believed in the nationalization of women's role (reevaluation of domestic work), and continued to work to provide education for the wider public. These threads of continuity disprove the notion that Kim had a specific turning point in her life in which she decided to become a pro-Japanese collaborator and show that her decision to collaborate cannot be explained simply as either a patriotic or a traitorous act.

[226] Sheldon M. Garon, *Molding Japanese minds*, 117.

War Propaganda and Involvement in Inscription

The most controversial allegation involves Kim's involvement in encouraging men and women to participate in Japan's war efforts. Initially, the colonial government hesitated at the idea of enlisting Korean men in the Japanese army, as they were suspicious of Koreans' loyalty towards the army. However, with the growing demand for soldiers, Japan lacked an alternative solution. In an effort to increase the number of enlisted soldiers, the GGK devised strategies not only to enforce enlistment but also to use propaganda in order to motivate the colonial subjects to participate in the war efforts in every possible way.

The general resentment against Kim's collaboration is most likely based upon a misunderstanding of the word *chŏngshindae* (women's volunteer corps). Korean dictionaries' English translations of the term *chŏngshindae* use the word *wianbu* (comfort women),[227] while the English translation of the Japanese word *joshiteishintai* is "women's volunteer corps" or "groups of young female workers organized on Japanese territory during WWII."[228] Several scholars caution that the term *chongshindae* should not be used interchangeably with the term *wianbu*, which indicates that Koreans generally perceive comfort women to be identical

[227] "Naver English Dictionary," accessed December 24, 2015, http://endic.naver.com/search.nhn?sLn=kr&isOnlyViewEE=N&query=정신대.

[228] "Weblio English-Japanese Dictionary," accessed December 24, 2015, http://ejje.weblio.jp/content/%E5%A5%B3%E5%AD%90%E6%8C%BA%E8%BA%AB%E9%9A%8.

to *chongshindae*, even though the term *chongshindae* (which is a direct translation of the Japanese term *teishintai*) encompasses many different activities in imperial Japan's war efforts. Sarah Soh addresses this discrepancy in her work.[229] Most comfort women were recruited through a middleman, who often deceived women by offering them a job and a place to stay. *Chŏngshindae*, however, were part of Japan's official effort to recruit female laborers to support the ongoing war and the purpose of recruiting *chŏngshindae* was entirely different from that of comfort women. *Chŏngshindae* were recruited through official announcements, unlike the women who had to "comfort" the soldiers, many of whom were often alone and were tricked or bribed into forced prostitution.[230] However, the term *chongshindae* has been used interchangeably with the term *wianbu* in South Korea's nationalist historiography, resulting in a perversion and oversimplification of a variety of female wartime activities and creating the impression that most Korean women were officially recruited and forced into sexual slavery as comfort women. This gross oversimplification hinders developing a deeper understanding of the lives of Korean women and their interactions with society during this time, thereby silencing the complexity of facets of the identity that women had to embrace.

When *chongshindae* is separated from *wianbu*, it finally becomes possible to consider

[229] Chunghee Sarah Soh, *The Comfort Women*, 57.

[230] Park, i, *Cheguk ŭi Wianbu (*Comfort Women of the Empire), (Seoul: Ppuriwa ip'ari, 2015), 47.

the issue of collaboration. Many women's rights activists and educators indeed encouraged women to participate in the war efforts in various ways, from being frugal with household items to willingly sending off their sons to the battlefield. However, this willful participation in the Japanese Empire's war efforts cannot be simply explained as collaborators betraying other Koreans. It is important to consider factors that may have influence their decision to collaborate with Japan, for instance gender and how it interacted with Japan's presence in Korea.

Conclusion

From 1937 to 1945, people in Korea were confronted with conflicts for which they did not volunteer. Many amongst the elites were burdened with different opinions of what would be best for Korea. For some, this involved collaborating with the Japanese to varying degrees, which does not negate the fact that Japan's colonial subjects, including Koreans and many others conquered throughout the war, had to experience the brutality and barbarity of the war. Many women in these territories were forced or manipulated into becoming comfort women for Japanese soldiers. Many families in the colonies witnessed their sons being torn away from them, forced to risk their lives to serve Japan in its frantic attempt to continue the

war. Many were coerced into forced labor in foreign lands and many never had the opportunity to return home. As the war raged on, life in Korea and the entire Japanese Empire became increasingly harsher.

Nationalist historiography offers no room to wonder about the difficulties individuals faced in trying to navigate and survive in such a volatile society. However, considering the small number of people who were actually involved in resistance activities, it should be assumed that the general population was destined to struggle in the gray areas, in which what it was they were fighting against and for often became murky and obscured.

Kim's multilayered identities as an educator, new woman, and collaborator help to appreciate that the issue of collaboration can be dauntingly complex. Ultimately, she chose education as a tool to battle oppressive traditions and customs of patriarchy, in which both Japanese and Korean men were co-oppressors. Examining Kim's life helps to understand that it was not dictated by a simple equation of betraying her people to advance women's rights. As a colonial subject who was labeled as being of an inferior gender, Kim and many other women were doubly bounded by imperialism and the patriarchal traditions of Chosŏn society. Nationalist historiography has a tendency to overlook this aspect and by doing so (subconsciously) conspires with imperialism to exclude or oppress women. What is more, it

partakes in concealing the systematic abuse against women.[231]

In retrospectively imposing the idea that loyalty to one's ethnic group should be prioritized above all else, one loses the capacity to grasp the complex nature of collaboration, especially in the colonial context. For her and many others, collaboration with the Japanese remained in a gray area in which the line between collaboration and resistance was blurred. And surely, it is unfair to demand that people swear absolute loyalty to *minjok* without considering their identity and how it may have influenced their decision to collaborate with the Japanese Empire.

[231] Kwŏn Hyŏkpŏm, *Minjokchuŭinŭn choeagin'ga* (Is Ethic Nationalism a Crime?), (Seoul: Arop'a, 2014), 150.

Chapter 3
The Myth of National Independence:
Yun Ch'iho and the Colonial Reality

Introduction

Looking into Korea's independence movement, the name Kim Gu (Kim Koo) quickly emerges as a household name. Kim Gu is revered as Korea's national hero, recognized for his effort to secure Korea's independence from Japan. In the description of Kim Gu Museum and Library, located in Seoul, he is described as having "dedicated his whole life to establish a unified, independent, and democratic fatherland with the most advanced and brilliant culture in the world."[232] With an entire memorial museum dedicated to him, the way in which Kim Gu is commemorated exemplifies the Korean public's attitude towards individuals who are thought to have dedicated their lives to Korea's independence. In contrast, someone such as Yun Ch'iho, who privately and publicly expressed that he did not support the independence movement, is censured and labeled as a traitorous pro-Japanese collaborator.

The term *tongnim undong* (independence movement) in Korea refers to any effort to obtain Korea's independence, including but not limited to the March First Movement of 1919. Any action or activity falling under this term, no matter how small in scale, is praised and considered worthy of remembrance. Even though many of these efforts failed to meet their

[232] "Kim-Koo Museum & Library," Kim Koo Museum & Library, accessed February 20, 2018. http://www.kimkoomuseum.org/eng/museum/museum_lib.html.

original objective, no one dares to ask why this may be so. This narrative is largely based on the premise that pursuing Korea's immediate independence was the only patriotic act one *should have* pursued under Japan's colonial rule; All else was an act of treason against Koreans. However, this rigid moral standard of what makes one worthy of modern-day praise does not reflect the complex nature of colonial reality, in which not everyone maintained a strong and unwavering faith in Korea's independence for 35 years. In fact, out of the 33 signers of the original Declaration of Independence, only three remained unwavering believers in Korea's independence. Some went silent and some are listed as pro-Japanese collaborators. Why did these passionate believers in Korea's independence become supporters of Japan's colonial rule? Why did Yun, who was involved in advocating Korea's independence and modernization at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, no longer advocate Korea's independence later in his life? And should this change of attitude towards Korea's independence be judged as a pro-Japanese action and thus punishable by public shaming?

In extensively focusing on only the later part of these collaborators' lives, it is easy to assume their collaboration with Japan as something extreme and unbelievably treacherous. However, in observing that one collaborator's life was filled with ambiguities, doubts, and frustrations, it becomes clear that 35 years of colonial rule can discourage a person from having

hope for Korea's independence and eventually persuade him/her to support Japan's war in Asia. Although Yun is hardly representative of every intellectual of this period, his diary entries stretching over 50 years provide a rare glimpse into one intellectual's struggle to reconcile with the colonial reality in which he was situated.

Yun was born on December 26, 1864, earlier than other prominent Korean intellectuals mentioned in this dissertation such as Yi Kwangsu and An Ch'angho. Yun was born into a yangban aristocracy and his father served as an official in the Chosŏn government. As a yangban, Yun received formal education and support from his family. He was a cosmopolitan in a true sense, having the opportunity to study in China, the United States, and Japan. Well-educated and multilingual, Yun became a well-known figure amongst Korean intellectuals and government officials. He held several important government positions and was constantly involved in various organizations throughout his life. Like Yi, he is heavily criticized for his willingness to collaborate with the Japanese Empire.

Accusations

Like other so-called pro-Japanese collaborators, Yun is criticized for supporting the Japanese Empire's war efforts through financial donations, public speeches, and writings. Like many other intellectuals, he participated in public events and speeches hosted by the GGK to promote the recruitment of soldiers. According to the Pro-Japanese Dictionary, through speeches and writings, Yun welcomed the military draft and encouraged young men to volunteer to join the military. It is noteworthy that every Korean won he donated (or was pressured to donate) for war efforts is recorded, while his personal donations to other organizations and students are not mentioned. Likewise, although the Pro-Japanese Dictionary states when Yun joined so-called *chin'il* organizations such as Tongminhoe (同民會, the Same Race Association) in the 1920s, it fails to mention that he also joined so-called independence movement organizations such as Hŭngŏp Kurakpu（興業俱樂部）one year after he joined Tongminhoe. In addition, he was an active participant in many Christian organizations and education institutions, which the dictionary fails to dedicate attention to. It can be said that, although the dictionary claims to investigate the truth, it is unwilling to acknowledge actions that may discredit a person's pro-Japanese status. It is willing to record in

detail Yun's involvement in alleged *chin'il* organizations while conveniently not mentioning other activities that would hinder neatly placing him into a pro-Japanese category.

Anyone who reads through Yun's diaries can recognize that he struggled to make sense of his situation as an intellectual and influential political figure in Korea. However, even with an extensive collection of diaries with which to "defend" himself, he did not escape the accusation of betraying his own people. Most works regarding Yun dedicate attention only to those writings that allegedly show why he caved in and became a traitorous pro-Japanese collaborator, rarely questioning the ambiguities and inconsistencies that are displayed in his thoughts. For instance, Yang Hyunhae argues that Yun's betrayal stems from his inferiority complex as a Korean, which caused him to become a pro-Japanese collaborator. She further insists that this attempt led to not only his own self-destruction but also to the destruction of Koreans' ethnic identity.[233] Yu Yŏngryŏl asserts that "national defeatism" was latent in Yun's consciousness after Korea's enlightenment period and that he accepted "conformism" and believed (falsely) that Koreans had to comply with the reality of Japan's rule over Korea.[234] Adopting a more sympathetic tone, another scholar indicates that Yun could "subjectively" be

[233] Yang Hyunhae, "Yun Ch'iho ŭi kidokkyojŏk segyegwan kwa minjokchŏk aident'it'i" (Yun Ch'iho's Ethnic Identity and a Christian World View), *Chonggyoyŏn'gu* 10 (The Journal of the Korean Association for the History of Religion) (1994): 135.

[234] Chŏng Unhyŏn, "Taesesunŭngjuŭi ppajin nayak'an chishigin ŭi mallo" (The End of a Feeble-minded Intellectual who Accepted conformism), *OhMyNews*, October 25, 2004, http://m.ohmynews.com/NWS_Web/Mobile/at_pg.aspx?CNTN_CD=A0000215410#cb.

considered to be patriotic, while "objectively" he deceived his own nation and *minjok*.[235] These studies start with a guilty verdict and proceed to find evidence to prove he collaborated, rather than comprehensively approaching Yun's life with the attempt to understand it. This approach offers the public no other choice than to condemn his actions.

There are a few researches that question this proclivity to regard the issue of collaboration (in this case, Yun's collaboration) within a black-and-white framework. Park Jihyang's work takes a more nuanced approach and provides a thorough analysis of Yun's motivations and thoughts. She asks readers to maintain their verdict until the end of her book and indicates that historians should objectively show what happened in the past and why people acted in a certain way.[236] Mark E. Caprio illustrates how colored people's understanding of the *chin'il'pa* issue is, arguing that Yun's collaboration with the Japanese colonial government can be interpreted differently if viewed from different post-liberation scenarios. The restored Chosŏn regime could have accused him of undermining Chosŏn rule through reform activities, in which case Yun would have been found guilty of treason. However, if Japan had continued to control Korea, Yun would have been honored for his

[235] Kim Sangtae, "Ilcheha Yun Ch'iho ŭi naemyŏnsegye yŏn'gu" (A Research on Yun Ch'iho's Inner World under Japan's Colonial Rule), *Yŏksa hakpo* 165 (2000): 142.

[236] Park Jihyang, *Yunch'iho ŭi Hyŏmnyŏk ilgi: ŏnŭ Ch'inil Chisigin ŭi Tokpaek* (Yun Ch'iho's Collaboration Diaries), (Seoul: Esoope, 2008), 37.

collaboration with the Japanese Empire.[237] Andrew Urban further adds to this discussion by examining the multilayered nature of Yun's identity. He emphasizes that it is important to acknowledge the "more nuanced identity he constructed in his diaries" and that he was "required to perform a racialized and political role within a larger myth-making process."[238]

Nonetheless, most publications in Korea still focus on finding evidence to prove his pro-Japanese status. In this witch-hunt, in which the verdict is already given as guilty, Yun's unwillingness to participate in the independence movement serves as one more piece of evidence to prove his disloyalty. However, a close examination of his writings shows the complexity of the reasons underlying his stance. In fact, he can hardly be described as pro-Japanese given the constant criticism of Japan's colonial government that is peppered throughout his diary entries. And his complex motivations elicit a reevaluation of whether being against Korea's independence earns an individual the title of pro-Japanese collaborator.

[237] Mark E. Caprio, "Loyal Patriot? Traitorous Collaborator? The Yun Chiho Diaries and the Question of National Loyalty," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 7:3 (2007), 10.

[238] Andrew Urban, "Yun Ch'i-ho's Alienation by Way of Inclusion: A Korean International Student and Christian Reform in the "New" South, 1888-1893," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 17, no. 3 (October 2014): 333. Even though Urban's work does not specifically discuss collaboration since it deals with a time period before Japan's annexation of Korea, it is still useful in that it shows how Yun's identity formation was influenced by racial, political, and cultural environment he was in. It demonstrates the importance of considering the context of collaboration and how outside factors influenced one's decision to collaborate with Japan over the years.

The “10 years”: Yun Ch’iho and the Enlightenment Movement (1896–1905)

The Independence Club (1896–1898)

By the end of the 19th century, with looming threats from neighboring countries eyeing Korea, some Korean intellectuals believed modernization was the key to protect Korea’s sovereignty as a state. In an attempt to bring about such changes, like-minded progressives established the Tongnip Hyŏp'oe (Independence Club) on July 2, 1896. The club advocated the national sovereignty of Korea and promoted self-strengthening policies. It also advocated people’s rights to participate in government decisions. Sŏ Chaep'il (Philip Jaisohn), one of the founding members of the club, also established Tongnip shinmun (The Independent), one of the first privately managed newspapers in Korea. The club believed in public education, language reform, and the reformation of Korea’s political system to function more like Western models. The members actively hosted lectures and seminars to disseminate modern ideals. Well-known reformists such as Yun Chi’ho, Yu Kilchun, and Syngman Rhee were some of the club’s leading members.

Initially, the club was able to earn King Kojong’s favor and moderate government officials’ approval by implementing symbolic projects such as building and renaming the Tongnip mun (Independence Gate), the Tongnip kongwŏn (Independence Park), and the

Tongnip hoegwan (Independence Hall). Seo Jaepil desired Koreans to celebrate their country's independence and to mark its historical significance by building a symbolic monument. He found the Independence Gate to be an appropriate choice, considering it was a site "where, as tributaries of China, the Korean kings had traditionally performed the 'ceremonies and formalities' of welcome to the enjoys of the Celestial Empire."[239] As the name indicates, these projects represented Koreans' resolve as citizens of an independent state, free of China's influence. The club was also able to gain Kojong's favor by initiating a movement that allowed Kojong to declare himself *hwangje* (emperor) in 1897. This was a rather conspicuous attempt to symbolically affirm that Korea was no longer under China's influence by removing Chinese-imposed titles and names in the official court.

However, Kojong and moderate officials' support of the club swiftly faded, as many of the club's initiatives were increasingly viewed as a threat to the monarchy.[240] Even though club members such as Yun explicitly expressed they had no intention of building a republic, the conservatives discredited such statements through fabricated rumors and conspired reports, thereby capitalizing on Kojong's fear and worries:

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[239] Vipan Chandra, *Imperialism, Resistance, and Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century Korea: Enlightenment and the Independence Club* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Center for Korean Studies, 1988), 111.

[240] Michael Edson Robinson, *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 25.

> At Cho Pyŏngsik's instigation, posters allegedly composed by the club were carefully planted around Seoul, claiming that Korea was to be proclaimed a republic, with Pak Chŏngyang as president, Yun Ch'iho as vice-president, and Chŏng Kyo as foreign minister. The uneasy Kojong, on learning of the posters, reacted with qualities that had become a hallmark of his personality: credulity and erratic behavior.[241]

Kojong believed the rumor that the club was trying to replace the monarchy with a republic. Suspicious of loyalty, without questioning the validity of the rumor, Kojong ordered 17 club members to be arrested on November 5, 1898, which led to public protests by the club's members.

In his diary, Yun describes how narrowly he escaped being arrested by the government.[242] He expresses disappointment towards the public for its "abominable indifference," describing the public's reaction as that of someone who "looked on the struggle as a personal quarrel of some Independents with the government."[243] Although the club members attempted to keep the agitation alive, eventually the incident ended with the disbandment of the club in 1898 by Kojong himself. As a consequence, like many other reformists, Yun was "exiled" to Wŏnsan, where he reluctantly accepted a royal appointment,

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[241] Vipan Chandra, *Imperialism, Resistance, and Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century Korea: Enlightenment and the Independence Club*, 200.

[242] Yun, Ch'iho, Yun Ch'iho ilgi (Yun Ch'iho's Diaries), (Seoul: Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe [National History Compilation Committee], 1973), November 5, 1898, 5: 176 (hereafter cited as Yun, Ilgi).

[243] Ibid, 178.

arranged with the help of his father. Had Kojong's reign during the Chosŏn dynasty survived, these reformists could have been accused of treason against the king (and thus the Korean people), which shows how precarious it is to define treason, especially under a regime undergoing rapid changes.

In a letter to Durham Stevens, an American diplomat who at that time was employed by the Japanese Finance Department, Yun's pragmatic and, perhaps befitting for a bureaucrat, ambiguous attitude towards Korea's future is observable:

> Does my action puzzle you? I was pro-Russian when I thought Russia would help reforming Korea. But as soon as I found myself deceived, I turned my back to Russia, though to be pro-Russian meant promotion and wealth. I am pro-Japanese as far as, but no further than, I am pro-Korean. If I have grown cold in my faith in Japan it is simply because I have found her Juggernaut and not a Kannon-sama, full of mercy and grace, as some would have us believe her to be.[244]

Although Yun displayed little sympathy towards Kojong and the Korean government, he did not think highly of more radical approaches to Korea's independence either, such as the use of the *ŭibyŏng* (Righteous Army). In the same letter, he emphasizes that he did not identify "with any vulgar agitators,"[245] insisting that Koreans must make the best of whatever situation they

[244] Yun, Ilgi, December 12, 1905, 5: 207.

[245] Ibid.

find themselves in. For him, this meant that he could help his country "better in a private capacity" than in the cabinet.[246]

With his disappointment and frustration towards the disbandment of the Independence Club still unresolved, Yun continued in his quest to reform Korea. With financial support from his father, he opened the Hanyŏng Sŏwŏn school in 1906, located in Kaesŏng. He was also involved in various organizations aimed at promoting education, such as the Ch'ŏngnyŏn Haguhoe (Youth Association) and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Korea. Kenneth Wells describes the period between 1905 and 1910 as one dominated by the rise of Christianity-based institutions.[247] He describes Yun's motivation as follows: "With the situation beyond his control, Yun decided to pursue his ideals through the open avenues of education and religious societies, rather than beating against closed doors."[248] Nonetheless, his diaries evidence his frustration and disappointment towards the situation Korea was in.

[246] Ibid.

[247] To look at Christianity's influence on Korean intellectuals, refer to *New God, New Nation: Protestants and Self-Reconstruction Nationalism in Korea, 1896-1937*, Wells.

[248] Kenneth M. Wells, *New God, New Nation: Protestants and Self-Reconstruction Nationalism in Korea, 1896-1937* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), 69.

Criticism Against Kojong and the Korean Government

Although Yun's frustration with the Korean government was palpable, his opinion of Kojong remained positive in the late 1890s. His diary entries display that he had a cordial relationship with Kojong, who was familiar not only with Yun but also his father, Yun Ungryŏl, who was also a long-time government official.[249] He often commented that "His Majesty was very gracious," a description that is very different from how he portrayed other government officials.[250] He also takes note of Kojong taking personal interest in him, mentioning how kind Kojong was to ask him about his household: "if I warmed rooms with stoves; whether my [Chinese] wife could eat Korean food; how many servants I kept; how much I paid each etc. etc." He exclaimed, "Poor King! He is surrounded by hundreds of people who are hurrying him and his country to ruin."[251] However, his opinion of Kojong quickly turned sour when the king disbanded the Independence Club in 1898 and ordered the arrest of some of its members, after which Yun curses Kojong, calling him a "lying treacherous coward" who "could not have done anything meaner than this."[252]

On the other hand, Yun's frustration with the Korean government was not new. Yun

[249] Yun, Ilgi, July 3, 1897, 5:72; September 4, 1897, 5: 89.

[250] Yun, Ilgi, March 16, 1897, 5:31; September 4, 1897, 5: 89.

[251] Yun, Ilgi, November 14, 1897, 5: 115.

[252] Yun, Ilgi, November 5, 1898, 5: 178.

felt that the Korean government was not doing enough to protect itself from neighboring threats, observing that "the trouble of Corea is neither Japan nor Russia but the Corean mis-government."[253] He was especially critical towards government officials under Kojong, who he described as "scoundrels in whom alone the King trusts." He categorized them into the following four categories:

> First, those who fool him with plans and promises of revenging the death of the Queen by killing the rebels, so called. Cho Piung Sik and Yu Kui Huan lead this party. 2nd, those who delude the King with the schemes and hopes of making him an emperor!! 3rd, those who squeeze money for him. Yi Yun Yong and hundreds of others are at it. 4th, those who waste the money for him in building all sorts of houses. Yi Chai Yon is one of them.[254]

Yun believed these were the years in which Korea had a chance to become a self-reliant state and questions whether anything was being done to "set forth before the people the unmistakable advantages of independence and the reformation."[255] He believed Korea's opportunity to become free of foreign influence came after the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and that Koreans did nothing to secure this "nominal" independence.[256]

For a progressive like Yun, who believed Korea was in dire need of modernization in

[253] Yun, Ilgi, March 16, 1897, 5: 31.

[254] Yun, Ilgi, September 4, 1897, 5: 91.

[255] Yun, Ilgi, November 11, 1897, 5: 114.

[256] Ibid.

order to claim national sovereignty, Kojong and his officials' refusal to implement reforms was incomprehensible. Yun especially criticized Kojong's preference for Confucian traditions and superstitious, folk beliefs. Like many other Korean intellectuals and progressives, Yun viewed superstitious practices as antiscientific, fatalistic,[257] and a waste of time. He wrote in his diary that "the emperor and his ministers are wasting their days and nights in childish ceremonies, in petty intrigues, in sucking the blood of the miserable millions under their damnable power."[258] After expressing his concerns about the Russians in the Northern and Western provinces, and about the Japanese in the Southern provinces and their brutality towards Koreans, he writes: "while all this is happening, the Emperor is busy in building palaces. He who whiles away his time in a couple of rooms with sorceresses and fortune-tellers," and these "useless palaces" will only be burnt down and "occupied by someone else."[259]

The matter worsened when Kojong signed the Treaty of Chemulp'o (the Peace, Amity, Commerce, and Navigation Treaty) on May 22, 1882, which promised the United Sates "good offices" in case Korea received a threat from a third power.[260] Based on this treaty, Kojong

[257] Michael Edson Robinson, *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925*, 33.

[258] Yun, Ilgi, May 7, 1902, 5: 330.

[259] Yun, Ilgi, May 27, 1904, 6: 31.

[260] Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Modern Korea: From the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 15.

hoped the United States would extend help to Korea against the growing threat of Japan's presence. The extent of Kojong's rather naïve faith in the United States is discernible in his numerous appeals to the United States to honor the treaty. After all, one of his closest confidants, Horace Newton Allen,[261] assured the king that the United States remained his friend. Reminding the king of the 1882 treaty, Allen implied the United States would intervene and save Korea.[262] In reality, however, Allen's assurance and pro-Russian stance were not supported by the United States government. In a meeting with Allen on September 30, 1903, Theodore Roosevelt made it clear that the United States had no intention of supporting Russia against Japan, as Allen had hoped.[263] When these indirect appeals failed to capture the United States' attention, the emperor, in desperation, arranged in 1904 for Homer B. Hulburt (an American who was Kojong's longtime friend and confidant) to go directly to President Roosevelt in Washington and deliver a letter on his behalf.[264] This attempt was also destined

[261] Horace Newton Allen was an American physician and a first Protestant missionary sent to Korea during Chosŏn dynasty. It is well known that he had a close relationship with Kojong during his stay in Korea. (1884-1905) He was recalled to United States in 1905, due to his outspoken criticism against United States' decision to not intervene during the Russo-Japanese War.

[262] Fred Harvey. Harrington, *God, mammon, and the Japanese* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 326.

[263] Ibid, 312-318. By 1904, Harrington observes Allen lost hope for Korea's independence, its people and the King himself. (*God, Mammon and the Japanese*, 326)

[264] John Edward Wilz, "Did the United States Betray Korea in 1905?" *Pacific Historical Review* 54, no. 3 (1985): 255. This question refers to the notion whether or not United States should have protected Korea from Japan's advance in Korea, which eventually led to Korea becoming Japan's protectorate in 1905. As Wilz explains, many Korean nationalists, based on the Treaty of Chemulp'o (The Peace, Amity, Commerce and Navigation Treaty) signed on May 22, 1882, believed United States would intercede on Korea's behalf, which unfortunately, never happened.

to be futile, as President Roosevelt had no intention of supporting Korea's independence, as previously noted.[265] Tragically, the United States would not risk offending Japan, a new rising world power, to protect the forgotten peninsula.

In his last desperate attempt to salvage Korea from Japan, Kojong reached out to European nations by sending an envoy carrying his handwritten letter. In a letter addressed to Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, dated January 1906, he wrote,

> "Under increasing offensives from a neighboring power [Japan], we have finally been deprived of our diplomatic rights. Our independence is being threatened. Allow [me] to explain to you the pain we are suffering. I beseech you to join efforts with other powers as protectors of weak nations and to guarantee our country's independence."[266]

The letter never reached its destination,[267] nor did any of the king's other letters persuade European powers to mobilize on behalf of Korea.

By 1905, other world powers such as Britain and Russia also followed the United States in its footsteps. Britain, which had renewed the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in August 1905, states the following: "Japan possessing paramount political, military, and economic interests in Corea, Great Britain recognized the right of Japan to take such measures of guidance,

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[265] Ibid, 251.

[266] "Emperor Kojong's Letter to German Kaiser Unearthed," *Chosun ilbo*, February 21, 2008, http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2008/02/21/2008022161015.html.

[267] Ibid.

control and protection in Corea as she may deem proper and necessary to safeguard and advance those interests."[268] In the Treaty of Portsmouth, which officially ended the first Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), Russia firmly states recognizing "that Japan has predominant political, military, and economic interest in Korea, agrees not to interfere or place obstacles in the way of any measure of direction, protection, and supervision which the Imperial Government of Japan may deem necessary to adopt in Korea."[269] In essence, Japan's victory in Russo-Japanese War guaranteed partially satiating Japan's growing appetite for Korea, with the consent of other world powers, which also boasted about their own colonies. John Edward Wilz argues that "the Japanese, thus, had every reason to feel totally confident that the Americans would make no move at all in support of Korea's independence—even in the unlikely event that the Korean emperor, in a fit of heroic derring-do, should make an open appeal for America's good offices."[270]

Yun, being a cosmopolitan in a true sense, was painfully aware of world politics and that foreign powers would never defend Korea from Japan's annexation of it. In his diary, Yun mentions that Mr. Noble presented Korea's case to President Roosevelt and promised to do

[268] John Edward Wilz, "Did the United States Betray Korea in 1905?", 253.

[269] Komura, Takahira, and Sergius Witte, "The Peace of Portsmouth, September 5, 1905," *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Supplement: Official Documents (Jan., 1907), pp. 17-22.

[270] John Edward Wilz, "Did the United States Betray Korea in 1905?" 59.

all he could to help Korea.[271] Yun cynically comments that "the idea that the President of America should have time or desire to help that miserable ridden and-ruined Korea! There is none to help Korea out of the clutch of the despotism of the—and of the tyranny of the spoilers."[272]

After spending a decade attempting to persuade Kojong and his ministers to consider implementing reforms, Yun came to the conclusion that Kojong and his government officials were unfit to rule a modern nation. He laments that the most disheartening part was that he had "no hope for the future of Korea either in the Emperor or in the servile and corrupt minister or in the thrice dead mass."[273] Accusing the king of despotism, Yun vehemently criticizes Kojong as being the "most shameless bag of beggarly vanities."[274]

Currently, there is sharp disagreement in Korea amongst scholars regarding King Kojong's character and his effort to modernize Korea. Yi Taejin argues in *Kojongshidaeŭi chaejomyŏng* (Shedding a New Light on Kojong's Era) that Kojong did indeed attempt to modernize Korea. As examples, he credits Kojong for ordering over 30,000 books in order to learn about modernization, for his effort to modernize Seoul through a renovation plan, and

[271] Yun, Ilgi, September 9, 1905, 6: 146.

[272] Ibid.

[273] Yun, Ilgi, May 6, 1904, 6: 28.

[274] Yun, Ilgi, January 1, 1905, 6: 82.

for establishing a confidential intelligence agency.[275] Lee Dŏkchu portrays Kojong as a lonely, unaided king who suffered the unfortunate fate of defending Korea all by himself.[276] On the other hand, several scholars argue that Kojong's indecisive leadership appears to stem from his character, which is described as timid and diffident.[277]

However, the aim of this dissertation is not to debate about Kojong's personality and whether he was shy and courteous or timid and wishy-washy. Surely, Kojong cannot be blamed entirely for Korea's fall; However, it is evident that his attempts to modernize the country were not sufficiently fruitful to protect Korea, not was his leadership sufficiently vigorous to bring the sweeping and radical changes that Korea needed at the time. As Palais comments, "maintenance of the status quo became the cornerstone of government policy by about 1875."[278] And certainly, Kojong's timid stance towards state matters did not sit well with pragmatic reformers such as Yun, who felt that immediate reforms were necessary for Korea's survival in the coming age. In Yun's view, Kojong and his government were ultimately responsible for Korea's demise into Japanese hands.

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[275] Lee Dŏkchu, *Chosŏn ŭn wae ilbon ŭi shingminji ka toeŏnnŭn'ga (*Why did Korea become Japan's colony?) (Seoul: Edit'ŏ, 2001), 93.

[276] Ibid, 94.

[277] James B. Palais, *Politics and Policy in Traditional Korea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 23.

[278] Ibid, 284.

Yun's despair and dwindling faith in Korea's independence are detectable in his diary entries from 1905 onwards. Yun recorded his conversation with Prince Wi-Wha when he visited him in October 1905:

> I have telegraphed to the Palace to do something to prevent Japan from assuming protectorships over Korea and to keep the Foreign Legations in Seoul. Good men ought to be sent to America and Europe to enlist public opinion on behalf of the Korean independence. To do that, I must have money. But His Majesty would not give me a cent for that. What do you think of my scheme?[279]

To Prince Wi-Wha's inquiry, Yun answered,

> Your Highness has been long in America, hence must know its opinions. But to my mind it is absurd to think of independence without good internal government. During the ten years between the China-Japan war and the present one, Korea was as independent as England. What did we do? Your Highness knows well enough how these ten years had been spent."[280]

In this passage, he firstly acknowledges the United States' unwillingness to be involved in the matter of Korean independence and secondly admits that Koreans ultimately failed at establishing a modern independent state.

> It was within this period that Korea was in name and in fact an independent state. (referring to 1896-1904) It was in this period that Korea could have laid the foundation of prosperity and progress without let or hindrance. Yet it was in this period that the hope of the Korean independence was forever extinguished.[281]

[279] Yun, Ilgi, October 21, 1905, 6: 175.

[280] Yun, Ilgi, October 21, 1905, 6: 176.

[281] Yun, Ilgi, June 20, 1905, 6: 119.

Yun thus laments that "the greatest criminals and traitors Korea has ever produced in its history are those who ruled or misruled the country between 1896 and 1904."[282]

The 105-Man Incident

The 105-Man Incident refers to Japan's crackdown on the Korean nationalists group Shinminhoe（新民會, New Citizen's Association) in 1911. The leaders of the organization were accused of conspiring to assassinate GGK Terauchi Masatake. Out of the approximately 600 people who were arrested, 105 individuals were found guilty, hence its designation as The 105-Man Incident. Through an appeal, 99 individuals were released, while six endured prison time. Yun was one of the six members.

Some researchers state that Yun's time in jail between 1912 and 1915 was a pivotal period for him. Some believe this had a direct influence on Yun's decision to become a pro-Japanese collaborator in 1915, when he announced in an interview with a reporter that he was more than willing to participate in the efforts to further the assimilation between Koreans and the Japanese.[283] However, his personal diary entries from the time when this article was written do not mention the article, nor do they indicate any significant shift in his attitude

[282] Ibid.

[283] Yun Chi'ho, "Yŏnŭn k'ŭnhi ohaehasyŏnnora, yŏnŭn kwangmyŏngŭl ŏdŏnnora" (I Have Made a Mistake, I Have Gained a Bright Future), *Maeil shinbo,* March 14, 1915.

towards the GGK's assimilation policies. Although it is true that Yun was suspicious and wary of the GGK's attempt to monitor his activities,[284] this was not the singular decisive point in his life in which he abruptly became a pro-Japanese collaborator, as some researchers claim. This is evident in his lengthy diary entries, which are full of ambiguities, doubts, and grey areas that cannot be neatly categorized into either wholehearted collaboration or passionate patriotism.

Yun Ch'iho's Absence from the March First Movement

The March First Movement of 1919, which marks the culmination of the independence movement, is one of the most celebrated events of colonial Korean history today. It is often considered as a hallmark of Korea's unyielding spirit against Japan's tyranny in Korea. Within this narrative, anyone who expresses concern or disapproval of the movement is viewed in a negative light. However, understanding why some people expressed concern or disapproval helps to further comprehend nationalist movements in the 1920s and 1930s, which did not consist of only radical or violent acts in view of gaining independence.

[284] As U.S.-Japan relationship deteriorated, the Japanese police kept a close tab on individuals who had a connection with United States. Yun Ch'iho, who spoke English fluently and was actively involved in several missionary organizations, was a perfect target for this growing suspicion of the police. Mr. Yi kak (mentioned in his diary) warns Yun Ch'iho that the secret police has "a book in which all English speaking Koreans are black – listed as possible or potential spies," (Yun, Ilgi, June 5, 1938, 11: 58). He also mentions how the higher police coerced him to united Y.M.C.A with the Japanese National Council (Yun, Ilgi, June 1, 1938, 11: 56-57).

Yun repeatedly mentions the reasons why he believed that the demonstrations would not bear fruit, which are follows:

> 1. The Korean question will have no chance of appearing in the Peace Conference.
> 2. No nation in Europe or America will run the risk of fighting Japan for Korean independence.
> 3. When a weak race has to live with a strong one, the best policy for the weak is to win the good will of the strong.[285]

The independence movement's fate was heavily hinged upon foreign powers, especially the United States' willingness to guarantee Korea what President Woodrow Wilson articulated in his "Fourteen Points": a nation's right to self-determination. In a desperate attempt to persuade the United States and other Western powers to lend their support, Kim Kyusik, a representative of the Shinhan Ch'ŏngnyŏndang (新韓青年黨, Youth Organization for Independence), was dispatched in 1919 to the Paris Peace Conference. Independence activists in Paris appealed to each country's representative by sending a copy of a "circulaire" and "The Claim of the Korean People and Nation" to urge these nations to support Korea's claim to self-determination. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, none of them responded. The Paris Peace Conference officially responded through secretary-generals Dusata and White, explaining that as Japan's colonization of Korea occurred before World War II, it would not be fitting to address this matter at the conference and they should present the matter to the

[285] Yun, Ilgi, March 2, 1919, 7: 261-262.

League of Nations, which would be established soon.[286] When Carl F. Miller (a protestant missionary) asked the United States to intervene based on the Peace, Amity, Commerce and Navigation Treaty that was signed in 1882, the United States Department of State answered that the 1882 treaty between Korea and the United States was no longer valid because of the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty. Nagata observes that the United States government's policy of non-intervention regarding Korea remained unchanged, even though many Korean nationalists and foreigners who were sympathetic towards Korea hoped otherwise.[287]

As Yun predicted, neither President Wilson nor any other foreign power had the slightest intention of fiddling with global power relations. In fact, the United States was extremely cautious about Koreans misinterpreting its intention:

> The consulate (in Seoul) should be extremely careful not to encourage any belief that the United States will assist the Korean nationalists in carrying out their plans and that it should not do anything which may cause Japanese authorities to suspect (the) American Government sympathizes with the Korean nationalist movement."[288]

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[286] Hwang, Minho and Hong, Sŏnp'yo, *3.1 undong chik'u mujangt'ujaenggwa oegyohwaltong* (Armed Resistance and Diplomatic Activities After the March First Movement), (Seoul: Han'guktongnim undongsa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, 2008), 296

[287] Nagata Akihumi, *Nihon no chosen tōchi to kokusaikankei* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2005), 303-304.

[288] U.S. Department of State, *United States Policy regarding Korea,* Part I: 1834-1941. (Research Project No. 29, Foreign Policy Studies Branch, Office of Public Affairs, May 1947), 35–36.

Yun knew precisely what Korean nationalists hoped for: Western powers' sympathy and assistance towards Korea's independence from Japan. He also knew that other Western nations, especially the United States, most likely would not interfere on behalf of Korea. He argues that even if every American sympathized with Koreans' situation, the United States still did not have "the power nor the intention of risking a great war with Japan for the doubtful independence of Korea."[289] Without the prospect of the United States' assistance, he doubted the demonstrations' effectiveness. In fact, he criticizes agitators for instigating and threatening "the ignorant people who have no more idea of what independence is than of democracy"[290] to participate in the demonstrations. The ideas of national sovereignty and democracy were foreign concepts in Korea, especially for people who did not usually have access to public education. To Yun, the agitators only "exposed the innocent and ignorant villagers to death and destruction."[291] He believed that this "degenerated (the demonstrations) to meaning-less popular uprisings in the country."[292]

For Yun and a few others who did not participate in the movement, the demonstrations were not based on more than a false promise and youthful passion. Yun

[289] Yun, Ilgi, August 10, 1920, 8: 118.

[290] Yun, Ilgi, April 11, 1919, 7: 287.

[291] Ibid.

[292] Yun, Ilgi, April 11, 1919, 7: 286.

quoted Kim, who commented to him that the demonstrations were based on speculation, superstition, lies, and intrigues. Although Yun was rather cool-headed towards the movement and the leaders responsible for the movement, he still expressed compassion towards actual participants.

> Looking out through the windows we saw the street full of students and other running towards the Bell Square shouting "Mansei". The boys waved caps and handkerchiefs. The pitiful sight of these simple youths running voluntarily into certain dangers in the name of patriotism brought tears to my eyes.[293]

Yet, his lack of consent regarding the demonstrations does not translate into zealous support for Japanese rule. Yun still showed a hint of hope and posed the following question: "even granting for the sake of argument that Korea has never been independent, does it necessarily argue that she can never be?"[294]

The 1920s and 1930s: Could Koreans Manage Independence?

For Yun, political power or political rights were earned, not given. Even before the annexation, although he supported the public's participation in politics, he emphasized that Koreans were not yet ready to take the responsibilities required of citizens. He argues that

[293] Yun, Ilgi, March 1, 1919, 7: 261.

[294] Yun, Ilgi, April 9, 1919, 7: 285.

Koreans should first learn to "appreciate not only their own rights but to respect those of others," place public affairs above private affairs," and keep "large moral principles."[295] He emphasized education as a way to overcome Koreans' weaknesses and believed Koreans could eventually become sufficiently qualified to be entrusted with political rights through knowledge and scholarship. Such thoughts echo the social Darwinist understanding of race, in which only the qualified and the fittest survive. In Yun's view, Koreans were not ready yet, though he hoped Kojong and his government officials would become leaders who could lead and modernize Korea: a hope that dissipated with Japan's official annexation of Korea. During the colonial years, Yun repeatedly contemplated whether Koreans could become modern subjects capable of maintaining a modern nation. He asked,

> Can we Koreans answer these inquiries as satisfactorily? Culturally are we equal to our neighbors? Economically- what have we to show? Left to ourselves shall we be able to build railways, exploit mines, develop industries and commerce in a way and to a degree that would command the respect of the old states?[296]

To the question, "Are you [the Korean people] capable of managing an independent state?" Yun perhaps would have answered, "Eventually, but not now." He believed "independence is

[295] Yun, Chi'ho, *Tongnip shinmun*, July 27, 1898.

[296] Yun, Ilgi, December 4, 1920, 8: 177.

ideal for Koreans" and Japan that should guarantee its independence in the "course of time."[297] And over the course of time, he argued Koreans should stop the "useless agitations and devote time and energy to the mental and economical conditions of people," because "sheer beggars howling manseis will never bring independence to Korea."[298] Similarly to other moderate nationalists, Yun believed Koreans first needed to be enlightened and educated, so that gradually they could regain independence.

Another reason why Yun doubted whether Koreans could lead a modern state is that he thought Korean nationalists lacked unity, as was evident by the various factions that existed amongst them. He mentions several times the rumor that An Ch'angho, then a well-known independent activist, favored one faction over another, commenting that if this was true, it alone proved that "Koreans are not ready for independence yet."[299] He cynically questions that "if a handful of leaders in Shanghai [referring to the interim government in Shanghai] can't get along smoothly for a common cause, what hope is there for 17 million to be united?"[300] Yun criticized the propensity towards factionalism as a relic from the past, which Koreans should

[297] Yun, Ilgi, March 4, 1921, 8: 217-218.

[298] Yun, Ilgi, August 14, 1920, 8: 120.

[299] Yun, Ilgi, August 30, 1920, 8: 128.

[300] Yun, Ilgi, November 20, 1921, 8: 303.

get rid of. As he observes,

> The Korean aristocrats, who wasted five inglorious centuries in factional fights and butcheries in plots and conspiracies, are responsible for the notorious fact that where three Koreans are gathered there are four factions whispering and plotting against each other.[301]

He claims that every Korean is aware that factions are "one of the greatest curses to the race."[302] As Kojong failed to pass the litmus test of being the leader of a modern state, in Yun's view, so did Koreans, especially Korean nationalists. Plagued with high illiteracy and poverty, neglected by world powers, and infested with factions and internal strife amongst leaders, Koreans were in his view simply not ready to lead an independent state in the near future.

Yun Ch'iho's Criticism of Japan's Policies towards Koreans

Yun's apparent refusal to participate or have faith in the independence movement does not mean he wholeheartedly advocated the Japanese Empire's rule of Korea. He was especially vocal about the fact that Japan's policies in Korea were in reality beneficial only to the Japanese themselves, not Koreans. As part of the effort to justify the colonization of Korea, Japanese intellectuals and government officials often argued that Korea needed Japan's

[301] Yun, Ilgi, January 6, 1929, 9: 188.

[302] Yun, Ilgi, April 17, 1931, 9: 353.

guidance to modernize. The GGK often showcased modern infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, and railroads as a proof of its effort to better the lives of Koreans. Yun mockingly mimics the Japanese: "the hills are being reforested. Fine roads are being built. Schools and hospitals! See what benefactors we are to the Korean!"[303] Then, he rhetorically asks, "for whose benefit are these material improvements introduced primarily?"[304] According to Yun, the forceful nature of Japan's rule, the discriminatory laws favorable to Japanese settlers, the exclusion of Koreans from political spheres, and the suppression of press and speech seemed only to confirm the rumor that Japan was planning to eventually exile Koreans from their own land.[305] This doubtful sentiment towards the colonial government continued throughout the 1920s and 1930s. For instance, Yun recalls in his dairy a conversation which took place during a dinner hosted at the official residence of the GGK. He describes how Japanese Baron Hayashi boasted about all the "wonderful improvements" he had witnessed in Korea over the past 15 years, to which Yun remarks, "how ashamed and miserable we Koreans [at the dinner] must have felt—for the improvements are of the Japanese, by the Japanese and for the Japanese."[306]

Ultimately, Yun felt that Japan's colonial policies failed to achieve what they were

[303] Yun, Ilgi, April 12, 1919, 7: 287.

[304] Ibid.

[305] Yun, Ilgi, May 1, 1919, 7: 299-300.

[306] Yun, Ilgi, October 14, 1927, 9: 132.

intended for. He warns that "Japan will never succeed in winning over the Korean by persisting in anti-Korean language, anti-Korean policy and anti-Korean propaganda,"[307] accusing Japan of "half-hearted reforms and insincere promises." Nonetheless, Yun did not demand Korea's independence from Japan to eradicate this situation, despite Japan's numerous transgressions in Korea. Even though Yun was aware of the Japanese colonial government's hypocritical, discriminatory attitude towards Koreans, he did not see any use in complaining about such discrimination unless "an individual or a race is able to resist and resist successfully."[308] There was no "use barking—unless you can bite." In Yun's view, Koreans had neither the capacity nor the resources to actually bite and cause damage. Therefore, he found the demonstrations to be futile.

Although he did not hesitate to criticize the GGK's policy in Korea, neither did he condemn the Japanese Empire's territorial expansion, as did other Western nations. In fact, he accused Western nations of applying a double standard, especially regarding Manchuria. As he angrily comments,

> America which under Roosevelt who personified brutalism so generously and light heartedly consented to the annexation of Korea by Japan, what face has she—America—to object to the Japanese occupation of Manchuria? Every

[307] Yun, Ilgi, August 10, 1920, 8: 118.

[308] Ibid.

> argument which Japan advanced to justify her annexation of Korea and which Roosevelt and his crowd accepted as the Gospel truth is applicable to Manchuria word for word. Was the Korean government corrupt and incompetent? So is the Chinese Government in M. Did Japan have special interests in Korea? So she has in M. Would Korea have been a menace to Japan if Russia took the Pennisula? So will be Manchuria.[309]

To Yun, Western nations' criticism of the Japanese Empire's attempt to appropriate Manchuria was duplicitous, especially considering that they never expressed concern regarding Japan's annexation of Korea. Yun argued that if Japan's claim over Manchuria was inherently wrong, the actions of all other nations with colonies were inherently wrong.[310] By the end of the 1930s, Yun appeared to have accepted that there was no hope for Korea's immediate or gradual independence, as is evident by the lack of discussion in his entries regarding Korea's independence movement. He notes and records a sermon he heard in which the preacher commented, "Japan can't live without Korea and Korea can't live without Japan."[311] Yun did not disagree with this statement, rather complimenting the speaker as "one of the finest speakers I have heard."[312]

Yun in a sense is a quintessential collaborator in that he did not object to the

[309] Yun, Ilgi, September 25, 1931, 9: 348.

[310] Yun, Ilgi, October 17, 1931, 9: 404.

[311] Yun, Ilgi, October 17, 1939, 11: 189.

[312] Ibid.

continuation of Japanese colonial rule in Korea. Although he was wary and often doubtful of Japan's intentions in Korea, he considered the Japanese more capable of ruling Korea than Koreans themselves. By choosing to refrain from active resistance, he indeed "supported and justified" the colonial government's "sustenance in Korean society."[313] However, this does not fully explain his enthusiasm and support for Japan's growing war efforts from the late 1930s to the early 1940s. The motivation underlying his stance can be found in his diaries, in which he recorded his growing bitterness towards Western powers, which largely stemmed from his personal experience with racism in the United States. When he resided in the United States as an international student, he witnessed firsthand Americans' blatant racism towards people of color, including Asians. He observes that the history of African slavery and the treatment of native peoples alone demonstrated that "if you want to enjoy the so-called inalienable right of man in this 'Land of Freedom' you must be white."[314] He found Americans' emphasis on liberal principles to be hypocritical. As Andrew Urban notes,

> Yun was a keen observer of the rituals of discrimination that preserved the boundaries of whiteness on a global scale, and in turn made full social membership always out of the reach of even the most "civilized" Korean individuals.[315]

[313] Application of Yumi Moon's definition of collaboration. See *Populist collaborators: the Ilchinhoe and the Japanese colonization of Korea, 1896-1910* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 5.

[314] Yun, Ilgi, February 14, 1890, 2: 52.

[315] Andrew Urban, "Yun Ch'i-ho's Alienation by Way of Inclusion: A Korean International Student and Christian

However, although Yun was aware of Americans' racial discrimination against non-whites, he did not attempt to challenge this discrimination. In a world in which only the fittest race survived, he found it inevitable that the stronger races would dominate the weaker ones; He laments, "for a nation no crime is greater than weakness; and among nations might is right."[316]

Even though Yun was often disgruntled with Japan's colonial policies in Korea, he defended Japan's right to expand its empire and celebrated its victories. For instance, he viewed Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor as proof of the yellow race's superiority; The yellow race could finally be acknowledged as one of the mightiest races, and Koreans could be part of it by assimilating into the Japanese Empire. To those who dreamed of Korea's independence, he advised,

> The best thing for the Korean race is to get seasoned and drilled into the Japanese mold of character tempered with Korean's love of peace and gentleness. The Korean is a good timber by nature. All he wants is to be properly seasoned.[317]

At least by the early 1940s, it can be said that the decades of disappointments and frustrations led Yun to decide it was better to bet on Korea's future with Japan than wait for Koreans to become leaders fit to lead a modern nation. However, this does not mean that Yun argued for

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Reform in the "New" South, 1888-1893," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 17, no. 3 (October 2014): 313.

[316] Yun, Ilgi, November 27, 1891, 2: 238-39.

[317] Yun, Ilgi, December 8, 1943, 11: 418.

complete assimilation, as discussed further in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Given he was acutely aware of the sufferings and woes caused by the Japanese regime, why did Yun not argue for Korea's immediate independence throughout the colonial rule? Over his life span, Yun witnessed the crumbling of a dynasty that had ruled for centuries, the coercion of his own people into becoming colonial subjects, the Japanese Empire's rise to power, and the world's endurance of two world wars. Because he lived in such a remarkable era, it would be unfair to discuss his collaboration without understanding the context of his behaviors. His activities before 1905, such as the establishment of the Independence Club, demonstrate his belief that Korea could still succeed in becoming an independent, sovereign state. However, he lost hope when Kojong disbanded the club for fear of losing power. For Yun, who believed Korea was in need of modernization, Kojong's action indicated the Korean government's unwillingness to implement progressive policies to modernize Korea. Once Japan annexed Korea, he lost faith in an immediate independence and instead began to believe that independence would be earned eventually.

Even though Yun did not completely lose hope in Korea's independence, he strongly

disapproved of the independence movement around 1919. He especially criticized the movement's activists for expecting the United States to step in on the matter. Yun rightly conjectured the United States had no intention of upsetting its relationship with Japan over Korea. For Yun, it was important that Koreans earn their own independence, reflecting his social Darwinist belief that only the fittest survive as a race. And for Yun, the obvious solution to this problem was education; He believed that a nation could not exist without education and advised Korean students that more education was what they needed, not demonstrations.[318]

During the next two decades, Yun was plagued by the question of whether Koreans could manage an independent, modern state. Also, as an intellectual who was well known within several organizations, he was keenly aware of the factions amongst the various nationalists and simply could not imagine Korea successfully maintaining a self-sufficient government with factions constantly bickering at each other. In his opinion, immediate independence was impossible to achieve.

However, Yun certainly did not advocate complete assimilation to the Japanese Empire. Rather, he was caught between realities, none of which he could be satisfied with. The inner conflict he must have felt is discernible in the following passage from his diary entry on

[318] Yun, Ilgi, May 10, 1919, 7: 305.

July 31, 1919:

> Mr. Ryang told me that he had heard they "Independents" in Shanghai are 辱ing me [embarrassing me] for not joining them believing, at the same time, that I would strengthen their cause very materially. Well, every public movement that I identified myself with proved a failure. Not only failure but brought me personal sufferings, which I haven't the courage to face again. I have an aged mother and tender children whose welfare is precious to me. To risk all for, to me, almost a hopeless enterprise—I am not heroic enough to attempt. I don't believe the Koreans, as a nation, are yet politically intelligent enough to manage and maintain an independent state in a world of turmoil like this. The pessimists say, however, that Japan will never allow the Korean people to attain that degree of intelligence. But not nation ever succeeded in keeping down the intellectual growth of another race.[319]

While some nationalists viewed immediate independence as the only way to guarantee Korea's future, Yun and others like him believed that Koreans first needed education in order to become leaders who could manage and maintain an independent, modern state. Unfortunately, this enthusiastic endeavor to enlighten the Koreans in order to gain independence from Japan was smothered by the upcoming war. And gradualists such as Yun again had to make a choice about Korea's survival as an *ethnie,* without knowing that those very actions would later be used as evidence to prove their disloyalty against their own people.

[319] Yun, Ilgi, July 31, 1919, 7:352-353.

Chapter 4: Ethnic Nationalism and *Panminjokchuŭi*: on Yi Kwangsu's interpretation of *minjok*'s survival

Yi Kwangsu (1892–?) is often described as the father of modern Korean literature. His novel *Mujŏng* (Heartless), written in 1917, is regarded as Korea's first modern novel. He had a robust career as a writer, having written numerous poems, essays, and novels. He is also known for his political activities throughout his lifetime. Like many other young Korean intellectuals, Yi actively participated in the early attempts to secure Korea's independence from Japan. He joined the Korean students' independence movement that was initiated in Tokyo, Japan, which led to the public declaration of independence on February 8, 1919. Inspired by Wilson's "Fourteen Points," Korean nationalists hoped that Koreans would have a chance to win back their independence.[320] Utilizing his talent as a writer, Yi wrote a draft declaration of independence, which members of the movement distributed to various congressmen, senators, public ministers, and diplomats in Japan.[321] Although the students attempted to hold a demonstration after publicly reciting the declaration, the Japanese police halted their attempt and arrested those who were involved. Yi escaped the arrest as he was

[320] Hatano Setsuko, *Yi Kwangsu— Kankoku kindai bungaku no so to shinnichi no rakuin* (The Father of Modern Korean Literature Branded as Pro-Japanese), (Tokyo: Chuokoron shinsha, 2016), 127.

[321] Kim, Sungsik, Kōnichi kankoku gakusei undōshi (Korean Students Anti-Japanese Activities) (Tokyo: Koma shorin, 1974), 50.

already in Shanghai, sent on a mission to gain support for Korea's independence,[322] after which he participated in the establishment of Korea's interim government in Shanghai. However, due to his deteriorating health and dwindling faith in the independence movement, which was riddled with financial struggles and internal strife between different factions, Yi decided to return to Korea in 1921.[323]

Similarly to many other Korean intellectuals in the 1920s, Yi focused on movements and projects aimed to gradually educate and enlighten Koreans within Korea, instead of working towards Korea's immediate independence. This shift can be discerned in his writing, such as *Minjok kaejoron* (Theory on Ethnic Reconstruction), published in 1922. Lee Chongsik argues that Yi transformed from an idealist to a realist by the 1920s, when "his actions were no longer based on emotions and hopes alone."[324] This transformation was predictable, considering that nationalists' efforts to secure Korea's independence was severely restricted by the Japanese police and largely ignored by the rest of the world.

Lee describes Yi's life in the late 1920s and 1930s as a period "characterized by his

[322] Ibid, 47.

[323] Hatano Setsuko, *Yi Kwangsu— Kankoku kindai bungaku no so to shinnichi no rakuin* (The Father of Modern Korean Literature Branded as Pro-Japanese), 127.

[324] Lee Chongsik, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 106.

continuing ill health and disillusionment."[325] First, he battled tuberculosis in 1927 for a couple of months. Although his condition eventually improved, he unfortunately caught tuberculosis again in 1929, which eventually resulted in him undergoing an operation to remove his left kidney due to a kidney tubercle. Although the operation was successful, he later suffered pneumonia.[326] He was imprisoned in 1937, along with An Ch'angho, for violating the *Ch'ianyujibŏp* (peace preservation law), but they were both released on bail after prison doctors determined their health to be in a hopeless condition.[327] During the Korean War, North Korean soldiers captured Yi and took him to an unknown location. North Korea claimed that he died from tuberculosis on his way to receive treatment in a hospital.[328]

Despite his poor health, Yi remained relatively active and continued to publish novels, essays, and opinion pieces. His collaboration with the colonial government was made public through his writings, in which he openly displayed his support for Koreans' assimilation into the Japanese Empire and for Koreans' role in Japan's war efforts. If measured against the so-called pro-Japanese criteria mentioned in chapter 1, he would the poster child of a traitor

[325] Lee Grant S., *Life and Thought of Yi Kwangsu* (Seoul: U-Shin Sa, 1984), 27.

[326] Ibid, 29.

[327] Ibid, 35.

[328] Kwŏn Kit'ae, "Nappuk-wŏlbuk 62in P'yŏngyang myoyŏk konggae" (North Korea Reveals Kidnapped-Defected 62 Individuals at P'yŏngyang Graveyard), *Tonga ilbo*, October 1, 2009, accessed February 12, 2018, http://news.donga.com/3/all/20050727/8213658/1.

who committed *panminjok haengwi* (a person whose actions betrayed the Korean people). However, if he is to be accused of committing *panminjok* acts, a clear definition is needed to clarify what makes an act *panminjok* or *minjok haengwi*. This leads to the following questions: Who decides which act is a betrayal of the Korean people? Is it possible to make such a distinction for acts committed 70 years ago? The belief that one can clearly distinguish an act to be either *panminjok* or pro-*minjok* demonstrates that in Korean historiography, *minjokchuŭi* (ethnic nationalism) is considered not only as a fixed term but also as one with positive connotations. In this narrative, the possible harmful aspects of *minjokchuŭi* are rarely discussed. Thus, every act of a person can be neatly categorized as either *minjokchuŭi* or *panminjok haengwi.*

However, Korean intellectuals in the late 19th and early 20th century were constantly exposed to a plethora of political and social ideologies. Thus, it would be careless to assume that Koreans' various understandings of *minjokchuŭi* in the 1900s are identical to those of 21st century Koreans. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that these intellectuals' understanding of *minjokchuŭ*i not only varied but also transformed over time. As Shin Giwook warns,

> Scholars need to specify historical and political contexts to reveal the multiple roles and functions that ethnic nationalism [minjokchuŭi] has played, rather than assuming its uniform nature or function, or making a

> priori moral judgments. Only then can a proper evaluation of both the prize and the price Korean ethnic nationalism be undertaken.[329]

This chapter examines the "prize" and the "price" of *minjokchuŭi* from the 1910s to 1945 through the case of Yi. In particular, it considers the versatile nature of *minjokchuŭi* and how it can be utilized over time to justify one's decision to collaborate with the Japanese Empire.

Although *minjokchuŭi* is often translated simply as "nationalism" in South Korea, this is inappropriate in the context of Korea under colonial rule, as Korea was not a nation state with political autonomy. Instead, the term ethnic nationalism is used in this dissertation to describe "nationalism based on common blood and shared ancestry."[330] Shin Giwook asserts that ethnic nationalism "functioned as a key mechanism to establish collectivism or a strong sense of oneness" in Korea.[331] Similarly, to indicate the fluid nature of *minjok* as an identity, *minjok* (*ethnie*) is defined in this study as a "named human group claiming a homeland and sharing myths of common ancestry, historical memories and a distinct culture."[332]

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[329] Shin Giwook, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2007), 16.

[330] Ibid, 13.

[331] Ibid.

[332] Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Milton Keynes, UK: Lightning Source UK Ltd., 2010), 32.

Accusations

According to the Pro-Japanese Dictionary, Yi, like many other collaborators, is accused of justifying Japan's "war of aggression." He is also accused of supporting and beautifying "the empire's Pan-Asianism,"[333] and criticized for giving praise to the emperor and promoting *kōminka seisaku* (imperialization). Specifically, he is condemned for supporting particular *naisen ittai* policies such as *ch'angssi kaemyŏng* (a policy that forced Koreans to Japanize their names). The Pro-Japanese Dictionary quotes several of Yi's writings, in which he encouraged other Koreans to Japanize their names.[334] His enthusiastic attitude is what led to his accusation of ultimately justifying Japan's "ethnic annihilation" of Koreans.[335] In addition, he is censured for advocating the conscription of Korean soldiers before the Japanese officially began to recruit Koreans into their army. Apparently, not only did he support this idea; He aggressively persuaded the Japanese colonial government to "allow" Koreans into the army.[336]

Compared to other pro-Japanese individuals, researchers have dedicated more attention to Yi, most likely due to the sheer amount of material he has left behind. Through many articles and books such as the Pro-Japanese Dictionary, many argue that Yi committed

[333] Yun Kyŏngro et al., *Pro-Japanese Biographical Dictionary* (Seoul: Minjok munje yŏn'guso, 2009), 748.

[334] Ibid, 749.

[335] Ibid.

[336] Ibid, 751.

crimes against Koreans as a collaborator. Even many of his novels have been accused of embodying pro-Japanese logic.[337] In a society in which the term pro-Japanese is used synonymously with treason, these accusations not only harmed his personal reputation but also discredited him as a writer.

Recently, increasingly more attempts have been made to look beyond the moral verdict of Yi's case. For instance, Park Changseung argues that Yi could easily shift "towards an emperor-centered, ultra-nationalist Japanese fascism" because he came from "national fascism predicated upon the preservation of Korea."[338] In other words, because Yi already embraced fascism, he could easily transition into supporting Japanese fascism. However, Kwok Junhyeok challenges this notion, questioning whether one can straightforwardly simplify Yi's patriotism towards the Japanese Empire as fascism. Indeed, although Yi and other intellectuals displayed characteristics of fascism, it would be misleading to argue that they became full-fledged fascists, especially given the ongoing debate on whether Japan became a fully fascist nation itself.

Another interesting concept suggested by Kwak is the idea of domination. He argues

[337] Kwŏn Hyŏkyong, "Yikwangsu sosŏre naejaehan ch'inil ŭi nolli" (Pro-Japanese Logic Embedded in Yi Kwangsu's Novels), Ŏ*munnonjip 39* (2013): 292-321.

[338] Park Changseung, "Yi Kwang-su and the Endorsement of State Power," *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 19, no. 1 (December 2006): 178.

that Yi's willingness to collaborate with the Japanese stems from his desire for domination through subordination. As Kwak argues, it is evident that the idea of domination is a core desire that Yi displays throughout his writings. However, the argument that Yi's cultural ethnic nationalism is rooted in his desire to achieve "domination through civilization rather than take a step towards *minjok*'s survival and nation-building"[339] demands further consideration. The author argues that Yi's embodiment of Friedrich Nietzsche's imperial aspirations is the only way one can explain his desire for assimilation and his willingness to renounce Koreans' ethnicity.[340] This is based on the presumption that there was only one way to preserve Koreans' ethnicity, therefore collaborating with the Japanese or supporting Japan's imperial aspirations would result in abandoning one's ethnic characteristics. It is evident that Yi does not argue for preserving Koreans' ethnicity as it is defined by Koreans in the 21st century. However, neither does he abandon the idea of ethnicity and its importance in the modern world. Instead, under rapidly evolving circumstances, his idea of Koreans' ethnicity and ethnic nationalism evolves, allowing him to justify his collaboration as a way to preserve the Korean people.

There appears to be a trend in academia to ignore the so-called elephant in the room:

[339] Kwak Junhyeok, "Domination through Subordination: Yi Kwangsu's Collaboration in Colonial Korea," *Korea Observer*, No.3 (Autumn 2008): 442-443.

[340] Ibid, 447.

the possibility that ethnic nationalism could somehow have darker sides. These darker or more ambiguous facets of ethnic nationalism are inevitably explained away as *panminjok* and therefore no longer worthy of scholarly attention. Even though a sizeable amount of Korean intellectuals supported Japan's assimilation policy and the Pacific War, their actions are regarded as anti-ethnic nationalism, and other isms take on the full blame for their traitorous acts. This chapter discusses the malleable nature of ethnic nationalism and how its fundamental desire for exclusivity and superiority allows other isms to come and go. To demonstrate this, this chapter examines the evolution of ethnic nationalism in Yi's writings, while the role of ethnic nationalism in Japan's war efforts is discussed further in the next chapter. The aim is thereby to problematize the idealized anti- or pro-*ethnie* framework that is often associated with the issue of collaboration.

Before the 1920s: the Failure of the Independence Movement

Yi, like many other pro-Japanese figures, debuted in Korea's political scene as a student activist at the forefront of the independence movement in the 1910s. He was part of the student campaign that eventually led to a nation-wide movement for independence, culminating in what is currently known as the March First Movement. Shin Giwook indicates

that earlier in his life, Yi was arguably more liberal and cosmopolitan. This is manifest in his advocacy of freedom to choose one's *chayuyŏnae* (spouse), as well as in his criticism of Korea's traditions and customs. Like many other nationalists who were influenced by Western thought, Yi believed Korea's traditions and customs were the very reason why it lagged behind other industrialized nations. However, it can be also said that he already began to embrace ethno-centric ideals in his earlier days as an independence advocate. The February 8 Declaration of Independence (1919), drafted by Yi, shows his ethno-centric understanding of *minjok*:

February 8 Declaration of Independence

> 1. We, for the reasons that not only was the annexation of Korea not carried out through the free will of the Ojok (吾族, our *minjok*), but that it threatens the very existence and development of the Ojok, and will be the cause of endangering the peace of Asia, demand our independence.
>
> 2. We demand that the Japanese Diet and Government call a Korean National Congress and that its terms of reference include the opportunity for it to decide the fate of the Ojok.
>
> 3. We demand that the principle of National Self-Determination declared at the International Peace Conference be applied to the Ojok as well, and in order to achieve this objective, we request that the embassies of all countries represented in Japan transmit our intentions to their respective governments. At the same time, we should be permitted to send two delegates to the Peace Conference where they will act in concert with the Ojok's delegates already sent there.

> 4. If the above demands are rejected, Ojok shall declare eternal war [blood-feud] against Japan and disavow all responsibility for the tragic consequences of such an action.
>
> Korea's Youth Representative[341]

It is noteworthy that the word *ojok* (our *ethnie*) is mentioned repeatedly. Yi argues that Koreans belonged to one of the ancient *ethnies* of the world, which boasts 4,300 years of history. Furthermore, he emphasizes that even in its tribunal relationship with China, Korea had always remained a unified nation and was never conquered by other nations. Yi's argument for independence is aimed at proving Koreans' unique identity as *minjok*, in which they share a common ancestry and history. Echoing Wilson's "Fourteen Points", Yi insists that, as a unified *ethnie*, Korea should be guaranteed national sovereignty. The declaration illustrates that Yi's interpretation of self-determination is inherently ethno-centric, perhaps a different take on what self-determination may have originally meant for Wilson.[342]

From 1919 to 1921, Yi remained active in the independence movement, especially through Korea's interim government located in Shanghai. As the interim government continued to struggle with internal factions, lack of funding, and failed attempts at furthering

[341] For a full account in English, see Appendix C6 in *The origins of the Korean community in Japan: 1910-1923* (Atlantic Highlands (N.J.): Humanities Press International, 1989). The original copy of the declaration in Korean can be found in: http://www.ayc0208.org/2_8/pdf/28_KR.pdf.

[342] For discussions surrounding the issue of Wilson's original intention, see Allen Lynch, "Woodrow Wilson and the Principle of 'National Self-Determination': A Reconsideration" *Review of International Studies* 28 (2002), 419-436.

its agenda for Korea's independence, Yi decided to leave the interim government and head back to Korea. During this time, inspired by his close friend and mentor An Ch'angho, he arrived at the conclusion that Korean *minjok* first needed to be reconstructed in order to ensure its survival.

The 1920s to Early 1930s: Emergence of Cultural Nationalism and Ethnic Reconstruction

Yi's theory of ethnic reconstruction came at a time when the fervor of the March First Movement had lost the momentum it had in 1919. At this time, various ideologies emerged within and outside of Korea. One of these movements, coined by Michael Ronbinson as "cultural nationalism," influenced various nationalist movements in the 1920s and early 1930s. Yi's thoughts on ethnic reconstruction largely echo social Darwinist ideals, which impacted Korean intellectuals' understanding of *ethnie* in the late 1890s and early 1900s. During this period, efforts towards modernization and enlightenment were in part fueled by the need for Koreans to become a fit race in order to survive in the social-Darwinist-derived world order. In other words, modernization and enlightenment were viewed as ways to guarantee Korea's independence from the lurking threats of possible foreign invasion. Yi's argument for ethnic reconstruction, published in 1922, again echoes this stance. He insists that Koreans must strive

to become a highly civilized *ethnie* in order to prevail in the social Darwinist world order.

Shin Giwook observes that cultural nationalists such as Yi generally criticized their own historical heritage, claiming that these traditions were outdated and backward. He notes that their idea of reconstruction was largely based on modern Western thought, especially in the early 1920s.[343] Robinson also indicates that cultural nationalists were largely influenced by Western ideas in considering what it means to become a civilized nation.[344] In this sense, it can be argued that Yi was more of a cosmopolitan than an ethnic nationalist, also as he did not emphasize shared ancestry or shared history at this time. However, I would argue that Yi was hardly a true cosmopolitan in that his thoughts often displayed ethno-centric elements; His interest still lay in the Korean people, which demonstrates that he hardly ever questioned the validity of Koreans' ethnicity based on common blood.

Yi may not have shown appreciation or respect towards Korean traditions, but this does not mean he desired Koreans to completely discard their ethnic identity. In Yi's understanding, there was room for improvement, which entailed room for ethnic reconstruction and not a complete ethnic overhaul. He explains that Korean nationality can be

[343] Shin Giwook, E*thnic nationalism in Korea: genealogy, politics, and legacy*, 46.

[344] In Cultural Nationalism, Robinson discusses how Korean enlightenment is furthered by intellectuals' inquiry into Western political theory and social development and also their critical re-examination of the Korean tradition. (30)

divided into two tiers: the primary tier included righteousness, humaneness, and valor, while the secondary tier included hypocrisy, non-sociability, the underdevelopment of science, and exclusiveness. Because of this secondary tier, he argues that Koreans needed to "reconstruct" themselves. As part of this reconstruction process, Yi insisted that Koreans needed to first eliminate China's influence on Korean culture. He felt that Koreans blindly accepted Chinese culture, including its philosophy, religion, literature and arts, and no longer had anything to call their own.[345] On a similar note, Yi was an advocate of the Korean language from early on. He argued that language was part of culture and that Koreans should use Korean rather than Chinese to express themselves; There were elements of Korean culture that Yi believed Koreans should maintain and nurture, and language was one of them.

That Yi continued to place emphasis on *ethnie* as a group is evident in his argumentation that a *danchae* (group) is more important than individuals. He urged Koreans to not limit themselves and go beyond the immediate boundary of family and revering *minjok*.[346] Even in his discussions of moral improvements, he insists that Koreans should think

[345] Yi Kwangsu, "Puhwarŭi sŏgwang" (The Dawn of the Revival)*, Ch'ŏngch'un* (1918.3) rpt in *Yikwangsu Chŏnjip* (Collected Works of Yi Kwangsu), vol. 10 (Seoul: Samjungdang, 1971), 24.

[346] Yi Kwangsu, "Minjok kaejoron" (Ethnic Reconstruction), *Kaebyŏk* (1922.5) rpt in *Yikwangsu Chŏnjip,* vol. 10, 140-141.

daily about what they can do for other Koreans.[347] He believed this commitment to the greater good was a condition for *minjok*'s survival. And ultimately, he wanted Koreans to become a strong *minjok*, morally, economically, publicly, and biologically.[348] He could not embrace Korean culture as he experienced it because for him, it had fatal weaknesses that made Koreans ill-equipped for survival, as evidenced by Japan's colonization of Korea. For Yi, becoming a "fit" *ethnie* became an ultimate prerequisite for ethnic survival. His main concern was how Koreans could achieve ethnic preservation, which is why his definition of *ethnie* and ethnic nationalism shifted and morphed over time.

Minjok Kaejoron (Ethnic Reconstruction) (1922)

The idea of *Minjok kaejoron* (ethnic reconstruction) not only captured the minds of moderate nationalists such as Yun Chi'ho and Yi Kwangsu, but also "independence activists" such as An Ch'angho.[349] It is especially intriguing to observe that An (who is still largely viewed as a patriot) and the infamously pro-Japanese Yi share many similarities, even though

[347] Yi Kwangsu, "Kaein ŭi ilsangsaenghwal ŭi hyŏngmyŏng i minjokchŏk puhŭng ŭi kŭnbonida" (A Revolution of an Individual's Everyday Life is the Foundation to Ethnic Revival), *Tonggwang* May 1926, rpt in *Yikwangsu Chŏnjip*, vol. 10, 270.

[348] Yi Kwangsu, "Chorŏp hanŭn hyŏngjeyŏ, chamaeyŏ!" (Graduating Brothers and Sisters!), *Tonggwang*, March 1932, rpt in *Yikwangsu Chŏnjip*, vol. 10, 279.

[349] Of course, there are people who criticize An Ch'angho for not doing enough for Korea's independence, that in fact, he was similar to Yi Kwangsu and other moderate nationalists. However, he repeatedly argued that independence was the only way for Koreans to go. And this left an overall positive impression of An Ch'angho in South Korea than Yi Kwangsu.

they are regarded as being positioned on opposite sides of the patriotic scale. These similarities should come as no surprise, as Yi himself states that *Minjok kaejoron* was partly inspired by An's teachings, likely referring to An's speech, titled "Kaejo" (reconstruction), which was presented in Shanghai in 1919. Yi followed soon after with *Minjok kaejoron* in 1922.

However, the similarities between the two are often disregarded, while the differences are amplified. For instance, in "Tosan Anch'angho ŭi kaehyŏk sasang kwa minjok kaejoron" (An Ch'angho's Reform Ideology and Ethnic Reconstruction), Pak Mankyu proceeds without once questioning Yi's identity as a pro-Japanese collaborator who deserves all the infamy he receives. In conclusion, he deduces from the end verdict (collaborator and traitor) that Yi's account of ethnic reconstruction was fake and not reflective of An's true intentions.[350] Cho Chŏnghŭi argues that perhaps 90% of the time Yi stayed true to An's beliefs and that it was the remaining 10% that became problematic. Cho stresses the importance of examining that 10% of the material to correct the distorted image of An and *Minjok kaejoron.*[351]

Due to the preconception that Yi was a pro-Japanese collaborator, it can be said that the similarities between Yi (and to some extent Yun) and An shed light on the fact that the

[350] Pak Mankyu, "Tosan An Ch'angho ŭi kaehyŏk sasang kwa minjok kaejoron" (An Ch'angho's Reform Ideology and Ethnic Reconstruction), *Yŏksahak yŏn'gu 61* (2016.2): 234.

[351] Cho Chŏnghŭi, "Tosan ŭi 'minjok kaejoron i Yi kwangsu ŭi kŭgŏt kwa ilch'ihandago?" (Does An Ch'angho's minjok kaejoron a match to Yi Kwangsu's minjok kaejoron?), accessed September 14, 2017, http://www.ohmynews.com/NWS_Web/View/at_pg.aspx?CNTN_CD=A0001474994.

versatile nature of ethnic nationalism is often overlooked.[352] An and Yi both agreed that ethnic reconstruction was a necessary step in reaching their goals. Regardless of the possible differences between their end goals, they both understood *minjok* within a social Darwinist framework, whereby they believed that Koreans needed to become a "fit" *minjok* to survive. This meant that Koreans first needed to eradicate the relics of their past, a sentiment that was shared amongst moderate nationalists during this era.

As previously noted, Yi, like many other nationalists during this time, especially criticized China's influence on the Chosŏn dynasty. He calls Koreans "small-Chinese" and accuses them of "losing themselves and *minjok*-awareness" to China.[353] He was especially hard on elites such as government officials, whom he blamed for China's strong influence on Korea. He compared the Korean king to a venomous insect, who (metaphorically) sucked and feasted on the ethnic mindset and Koreans.[354] Although An was not as proficient with words, he expressed similar views in that certain aspects of the past, such as corruption must be eradicated.[355] However, both An and Yi argued that Koreans had the potential to become a

[352] The central theme of ethnic nationalists is that "nations are defined by a shared heritage, which usually includes a common language, a common faith, and a common ethnic ancestry". See *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea* by Shin Gi-wook.

[353] Yi Kwangsu, "Chosŏn minjongnon" (on Theory of Chosŏn Minjok), *Tonggwang,* June, 1935, rpt in *Yikwangsu Chŏnjip*, vol. 10, 218.

[354] Ibid.

[355] An Ch'angho, "Puhŏesŏ ttŏna ch'akshillo" (Let's Stop Corruption and Become Trustworthy), *Tonggwang*,

"great" race and that this could only be realized through ethnic reconstruction. As An declares,

> Everything about Korea needs to be reconstructed. Our education and religion needs to be reconstructed. Our agriculture, commerce, civil engineering needs to be reconstructed. Our customs and habits need to be reconstructed.[356]

Both An and Yi sought ethnic reconstruction because they understood *ethnie* as an entity that was capable of improvement. They passionately advocated the following areas to be reconstructed.

Firstly, they were both passionate proponents of education. Especially An dedicated attention to increasing Korean's intellectual capabilities, arguing that the purpose of elementary schools and universities was to expand students' intellectuals capabilities.[357] He also asserted that Korea needed more professionals and people with practical skills.[358] An firmly believed that intellectual and financial power determined whether Koreans would descend as slaves or rise as independent citizens.[359] Apparently, many of those involved in the

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September 1926, rpt in *Anch'angho Chŏnjip* (Collected Works of An Ch'angho), ed. Chu, Yohan (Seoul: Hŭngsadan, 2015), 530-532.

[356] An Ch'angho, "Kaejo" (Reconstruction) (speech, Shanghai, 1919), in *Anch'angho Chŏnjip*, 643.

[357] Ibid.

[358] An Ch'angho, "Ttasŭhan konggi" (Warm Air) (speech, United States, 1924), *Anch'angho Chŏnjip*, 738.

[359] An Ch'angho, "Kyoyuk" (Education), *Tongnip shinmun*, January 10, 1920, rpt in *Anch'angho Chŏnjip*, 662.

independence movement were unemployed, a fact that An openly criticized.[360] An placed emphasis on education for an ideological and a practical reason. Ideologically, education was needed in order to become a civilized *minjok*, while practically, more employed supporters meant more funding to support nationalist movements, especially those located outside of the Korean peninsula.

Similarly to An, Yi also mentions the importance of acquiring common sense and professional skills:[361]

> We should build schools, training centers…universities, professional schools, libraries, museums, research centers. We should work on publishing businesses and establish art galleries, theaters, meeting halls, and extracurricular clubs in every thirty provinces. Korean *minjok* should become morally, intellectually, physically, socially and economically a most civilized, most distinguished *minjok* in order to acquire happiness inwardly and contribute to the world culture outwardly.[362]

One development that resulted from this emphasis on education was the effort to establish national universities. The first attempt was annulled by Japan's annexation of Korea. An attempt was made by a group of nationalist leaders, including Yun, to use the money that had been collected through the *Kukch'ae posang undong* (National Debt Movement) to

[360] An Ch'angho, "Ttasŭhan konggi" (Warm Air) (speech, United States, 1924), *Anch'angho Chŏnjip*, 738.

[361] Yi Kwangsu, "Minjok kaejoron" (Ethnic Reconstruction), *Kaebyŏk,* May 1922, rpt in *Yikwangsu Chŏnjip,* vol. 10, *YiKwangsu Chŏnjip,* vol. 10, 140-141.

[362] Ibid, 136.

establish *minnip taehakkyo* (national universities).[363] Although this attempt was halted by the GGK, another attempt was made at the end of 1922, in which nationalists rallied in public to raise funds for a national university. However, this movement was plagued again by a "failure of trust between provincial collection points and the central association,"[364] and failed to substantiate as an actual establishment.

Another similarity between An and Yi is the idea that Koreans' morals must be improved. Many moderate nationalists believed that Korea's national problems were the result of a character failure or weakness. Thus, improving one's personal character flaws would consequentially resolve national problems.[365] Even as an advocate of national sovereignty, An considered personal moral elevation to be "the foundation of national renewal."[366] He believed that Korea's life or death was dependent on young men's moral discipline and unity.[367] He especially placed emphasis on young men, asserting that if "c*h'ŏngnyŏn* [young men] die,

[363] Michael Edson Robinson, *Cultural Nationalism in Colonial Korea, 1920-1925* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 85.

[364] Ibid, 88.

[365] Kenneth M. Wells, *New God, New Nation: Protestants and Self-Reconstruction Nationalism in Korea, 1896-1937* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 40.

[366] Ibid, 41.

[367] An Ch'angho, "Ch'ŏngnyŏn ege hosoham" (Appeal to the Young Men), *Tonggwang*, February 1931, rpt in *Ach'angho Chŏnjip*, 544.

minjok dies as well."[368] He contended that the reason why Koreans were so weak was that there was no one with moral and intellectual strength or a righteous group to initiate grand projects.[369]

Similarly, Yi placed emphasis on *todŏkchŏk kaejo* (moral reconstruction). He believed that there was no point in having intellectual capabilities without moral improvements because it was a fundamental requirement one should meet.[370] Yi's emphasis on moral elevation stems from the thought that Korea deteriorated because of moral corruption.[371] He envisioned that ultimately, Koreans could become a diligent, trustworthy, courageous, harmonious, and wealthy *minjok*.[372]

Lastly, both Koreans viewed leadership training as part of the ethnic reconstruction process. An believed that in order to become independent from the oppression of other races (Japan), it was important to have a sound leader and a righteous unity,[373] emphasizing

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[368] Ibid, 547.

[369] An Ch'angho, "Kŏnjŏnhan in'gyŏkcha wa shinsŏnghan tan'gyŏl" (Sound Character and Righteous Unity) (speech, Shanghai, 1919), rpt in *Anch'angho Chŏnjip*, 748.

[370] Yi Kwangsu, "Minjok kaejoron" (Ethnic Reconstruction), *Kaebyŏk,* May 1922, rpt in *Yikwangsu chŏnjip,* vol. 10, 123.

[371] Ibid, 125.

[372] Ibid, 137.

[373] An Ch'angho, "Kŏnjŏnhan in'gyŏkcha wa shinsŏnghan tan'gyŏl" (Sound Character and Righteous Unity) (speech, Shanghai, 1919), rpt in *Anch'angho Chŏnjip*, 748.

repeatedly that they needed suitable leaders for organizations such as the Hŭngsadan (Young Korean Academy).[374] Yi also believed Korea suffered from lack of leadership.[375] Similarly to An's concern, Yi was worried that there were not enough leaders to lead organizations in Korea.[376]

Despite the criticisms and concerns, An and Yi both had a positive outlook for the future of Korea. As An articulates,

> Our *minjok*[377] should not be ignored because we do not lack basic class. Also, our *minjok* should not be pessimistic. You should reflect on how our *minjok* had high status during Goguryeo and in the East during Balhae period. If you do so, you will know how intelligent we are.[378]

For both men, ethnic reconstruction was an imperative next step. An believed ethnic reconstruction could prepare Koreans for independence, while Yi believed it could transform Koreans into a fit *ethnie.* Even with differing end goals, both individuals believed ethnic reconstruction was a necessary step in safeguarding Koreans' future. Although many of their

[374] An, Ch'angho, "Nakkwan kwa pigwan" (Positives and Negatives) (speech, United States, 1924), rpt in *Anch'angho Chŏnjip*, 741.

[375] Yi, Kwangsu, "Minjok kaejoron" (Ethnic Reconstruction), *Kaebyŏk,* May 1922, rpt in *Yi Kwangsu Chŏnjip,* vol. 10, 122.

[376] Yi, Kwangsu, "Chidojaron" (on Theory of Leadership), *Tonggwang*, July 1931, rpt in *Yi Kwangsu Chŏnjip*, vol. 10, 189.

[377] An repeatedly uses *uri* (us) *minjok* to refer to Koreans, putting emphasis on Koreans' unity as the same race.

[378] An, Ch'angho, "Nakkwan kwa pigwan" (Positives and Negatives) (speech, United States, 1924), rpt in *Anch'angho Chŏnjip*, 745.

arguments overlap, there are also a few differences between them.

An appealed to the public repeatedly, requesting more financial support to sustain the provisional government in Shanghai.[379] He did not hesitate to discuss the organization's struggles and deficiencies, and laments that the organization lacked "people, finance and unity."[380] He believed that one of the reasons why military campaigns and diplomatic attempts failed was their lack of unity. He criticized these movements for being "local, fractured and small in number."[381] Many intellectuals including An and Yun were aware of and openly critical of Koreans' factionalist tendencies. Even though An was viewed as one of the leaders of the independence movement, he was vocal about what the movement lacked and what it could improve on. However, he did not advocate violence in bringing about independence, but rather peaceful methods, such as

> Refusing to pay Japan tax as Japanese citizen (*kungmin*), and pay to Korea's interim government, try not to use Japanese currency (yen) as much as possible, don't use Japanese government's litigation proceedings or any other negotiations. All these are ways to wage a peaceful war.[382]

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[379] An, Ch'angho, "Imshi ŭijŏngwŏn hoeŭirok ch'o" (A Record of The Provisional Assembly in Shanghai), rpt in *Anch'angho Chŏnjip*, 632. Also mentioned in p. 653 and p.793.

[380] An, Ch'angho, "Mulbanghwang"（勿彷徨), *Tongnip shinmun*, December 27, 1919**,** rpt in *Anch'angho Chŏnjip*, 745.

[381] Ibid.

[382] An, Ch'angho, "Shinnyŏnsa" (a New Year's Greetings), *Tongnip shinmun*, January 8, 1920**,** rpt in *Anch'angho Chŏnjip*, 659.

Also, he was adamant about Koreans' active participation in the independence movement, placing emphasis on individuals' responsibility to support it.[383] He stressed that fighting for independence was citizens' duty[384] and that everyone should therefore participate in the effort, either financially or physically. He believed that if Koreans would try harder and be more persistent, stronger nations would eventually take pity and help them.[385] Grievously, this hope was never fulfilled.

Yi, on the other hand, placed a stronger emphasis on *jeongsin munmyeong* (spiritual civilization). Unlike An, who passionately argued for ethnic reconstruction as a way to become worthy of independence, the notion of Korean national sovereignty cannot be found in Yi's discourse from the 1920s. As Kwak notes, although Yi shared many characteristics with An, his *Minjok kaejoron* was derived from political nihilism, which was "shaped by his internalization of the loss of national sovereignty."[386] Yi is another example of an intellectual who was forced to witness Japan's annexation of Korea and experienced firsthand the shortcomings of the

[383] An, Ch'angho, "Imshi chŏngbu yuji wa ongho" (Defending and Continuing the Interim Government) (speech, 1920), *Tongnip shinmun*, April 13, 1920**,** rpt in *Anch'angho Chŏnjip*, 677.

[384] An, Ch'angho, "Chŏngbu esŏ sat'oe hamyŏnsŏ" (Why I am Resigning from the Interim Government), *Tongnip shinmun*, May 21, 1921, rpt in *Anch'angho Chŏnjip*, 694.

[385] An, Ch'angho, "Oegyo" (Foreign Diplomacy), *Tongnip shinmun*, January 10, 1920**, rpt in** *Anch'angho Chŏnjip*, 661.

[386] Kwak Junhyeok, "Domination through Subordination: Yi Kwangsu's Collaboration in Colonial Korea," *Korea Observer*, No.3 (Autumn 2008): 442-443.

independence movement. And like Yun, he appears to have eventually lost hope even in Korea's gradual independence. However, he believed ethnic reconstruction was a way to at least preserve the *ethnie*, a task that in his view the independence movement had failed to achieve.

Another fact that is rarely discussed is that An passed away in 1938. He never witnessed the full extent of Japan's aggressive war in Asia, nor Japan's attempt to coerce and persuade Koreans to join its war efforts. Would he still have worked for Korea's independence in the midst of total war? Although it is impossible to answer this question, it is helpful in considering the abnormality of war and how this might have affected the decision of whether to collaborate with or resist the colonizers.

If the focus is only on the ends, Yi and An's actions are likely to be viewed within the predisposition to determine how "patriotic" they were. When ethnic reconstruction is retrospectively judged as either *panminjok* or pro-*minjok*, its appeal to other members of various movements is often ignored. This binary perspective does not allow for an understanding of the complex nature of the collaboration between Japan and Korean nationalists. Most importantly, the disagreements between nationalists illustrate the fractured and changing nature of nationalist movements themselves, which certainly deserves more

scholarly attention.

Regardless of their end goals, nationalists such as An and Yi believed the ethnic reconstruction of Koreans was necessary. Whether for immediate or eventual independence or survival, nationalists worked within the colonial sphere (and in a sense "collaborated" with the Japanese) in an attempt to bring about social change in Korean society. This attempt derived from the idea that Koreans needed to become a better version of themselves to survive and that in their current state, Koreans would not survive. The drive for ethnic preservation (be it through independence or not) largely shaped the various moderate nationalist movements throughout the 1920s and early 1930s. The fact that the "ideology of ethnic preservation" can be used to justify independence and mere survival illustrates how versatile ethnic nationalism can be. It also demonstrates that the concepts of *ethnie* and ethnic nationalism were still in their early stages of formation in Korea. From the late 1930s to the mid-1940s, the concepts of *ethnie* and ethnic nationalism continued to evolve, as Korea proceeded into a more tumultuous era of political unrest, worldwide economic depression, imperial expansions, and of course, war.

Mid-1930s–1945: Ethnic Survival and Imperialization

Both externally and internally, much happened in the 1930s for Japan and Korea.

Outside of Korea, fascism and totalitarianism swept across Europe, giving birth to the National Fascist Party and Mussolini in Italy, and seeing the rise of the Nazis and Adolf Hitler in Germany. In the midst of this instability, Japan decided to expand its own empire by first invading Manchuria on September 18, 1931, establishing a puppet state called Manchuko. Japan furthered its imperial ambitions through the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945).

For some nations, this was an era in which people witnessed the manifestation of self-determination. Therefore, it is necessary to contemplate why some Korean nationalists refrained from jumping on the bandwagon of nations claiming self-determination in Eastern Europe. One factor that must be taken into consideration is intellectuals' disdain of other popular ideologies that swept across the world. Vladmir Tiikhonov observes that, "aside from the anarchists, most Korean critics of the Soviet state were right-wingers who were, by the mid-1920s, far removed from the mainstream of the national movement."[387] Yun in his diary illustrates this point especially in his view of bolshevism and socialism.

Yun clearly shows his disapproval of Russia, claiming that bolshevism was "bestial" and socialism was "sickening." His disapproval of bolshevism and socialism dates back to the 1920s, when both were in vogue amongst young Korean students. Especially amongst the new

[387] Vladimir Tikhonov, *Modern Korea and its others: perceptions of the neighbouring countries and Korean modernity* (2016), 37.

generation of Korean intellectuals, both bolshevism and socialism were viewed as a way to combat Japan's presence in Korea. To this hope, Yun cynically comments that bolshevism and socialism may indeed provide an alternative to imperialism, but that at the same time "it will enable them to plunder those who have some more bags of rice than they need."[388]

> Yet there are Seoul-ful of half-educated Koreans who are clamoring for Communism which can never be realized except among a people who have attained the highest degree of co-operative civilization. Even the Anglo-Saxons haven't reached that stage—leave alone [sic] the Korean.[389]

Despite Yi's fascination with Tolstoy, Vladimir argues that Yi became anti-communist after the October Revolution (November 7-8, 1917). Vladimir observes that for Yi, "the main enemy was not even the Soviet Union itself, but Korea's own Communist whom he accused of putting their allegiance to the Soviet Russians ahead of a patriotic allegiance to Korea."[390] Yi's ethnic nationalist tendencies are evident in such arguments, in which he criticizes Marxists as having "slave mindsets" and not understanding the importance of *minjok*.[391] However, he was more vocal about his growing disapproval of liberalism and individualism, as is evident in

[388] Yun, Diary, September 13, 1920, 8:135.

[389] Yun, Diary, February 20, 1920, 8:352.

[390] Vladimir Tikhonov, *Modern Korea and its others: perceptions of the neighbouring countries and Korean modernity* (2016), 37.

[391] Yi Kwangsu, "Chosŏn minjok undong ŭi segich'o saŏp" (Three Fundamental Businesses for Chosŏn Minjok Movement), *Tonggwang*, June 1932, rpt in *Yikwangsu Chŏnjip*, vol. 10, 208.

many of his writings from the 1930s. This is because he believed that liberalism and individualism went against Koreans' very nature of *uri* (the collective us).

Another pivotal event that likely influenced Korean intellectuals was Japan's crackdown on an organization called Suyang donguhoe (修養同友會, The Cultivation Association). According to its founders, the organization's primary purpose was to enlighten and reconstruct *minjok*. The Japanese police arrested several members of these organization between June 1937 and March 1938, as they were under the suspicion of breaking the *Ch'ianyujibŏp* (public order act), a law that specifically targeted anyone suspected of undermining Japanese authority. Yi was eventually released due to his deteriorating health. Hatano speculates that Yi would not have been tortured, as he was adored as an author by the Korean public. However, he would have been aware of other members' gruesome tortures, as evidenced by their screams.[392] As Yi did not leave any personal record regarding this incident at the time, it is impossible to be sure how much it influenced Yi's beliefs. Nonetheless, bearing in mind his close relationship An, it can be said that An's death and the disbandment of Suyang donguhoe are likely to have convinced Yi to seriously reconsider how Koreans could survive in the environment they were in.

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[392] Hatano Setsuko, *Yi Kwangsu— Kankoku kindai bungaku no so to shinnichi no rakuin* (The Father of Modern Korean Literature Branded as Pro-Japanese), 161.

Yi's recollection of his collaboration and the sheer amount of writings he left behind shows that he did not passively collaborate due to circumstances only. According to these materials, he appears to have been convinced that active collaboration with the Japanese was the only way Koreans could secure their survival as an *ethnie*. For instance, in *My Confessions*, he defended his collaboration by claiming that his motivation was to preserve *Chosŏn minjok*. In his recollection of the interrogation, he states that "the only reason why I talk about the emperor and *naisen ittai* is all for the Chosŏn *minjok*. If it is beneficial for Koreans to start an independence movement I would start one."[393] The problem is that he did not view independence as a feasible option:

> I thought about rebelling against Japan, but this seemed impossible. We didn't have trained soldiers, we didn't have any weapons so we could not fight back with military force. That meant we had to have a non-violent protest like the March First movement. However, we do not have an organization that would move everyone. The public spirit was too depressed to expect a nation-wide movement like one on March 1st.[394]

One of the fundamental problems that continued to be a thorn in the eye of various nationalist movements was in fact the continuous factionalism that existed within them during the 1920s and into the 1930s. Although various nationalist movements experienced

[393] Yi Kwangsu, "Naŭi kobaek" (My Confession), (Seoul: Ch'unch'usa, 1948), rpt in *Yikwangsu Chŏnjip,* vol. 7, 268.

[394] Ibid.

moments of vitality, ideological splits and personal disagreements between factions, as well as within individual factions hindered any one group from devising a long-lasting, effective movement. The colonial government's crackdown on Suyang donguhoe was an important but not necessarily the most crucial factor in Yi's transition from an independence activist to a collaborator. However, it did prompt Yi to seriously consider whether wholehearted collaboration with the Japanese was a way to move forward for Koreans.

Becoming an Imperial Subject

Yi's writings show that, gradually over time, Yi began to place increasingly more emphasis on *minjok* and the idea of Koreans as bound by the same bloodline. By the mid-1930s, rather than "modification" of *ethnie* to survive, he began to argue that Korean people needed to "go back" to their roots and embrace collectivism as a way to persevere. Many of his writings in the 1930s illustrate this significant shift. The following section examines how his rhetoric became more ethnocentric during the 1930s.

Chosŏn Minjongnon (on the Theory of *Chosŏn Minjok*) (1933)

Unlike his earlier self, who believed in ethnic regeneration, Yi placed more emphasis on the bloodline aspect of race, increasingly describing Korean-ness as something *inherent* and *irreplaceable.* He argues that all Koreans have the same *hanjok*'s（漢族, blood running through

them) and that this is proven by historical records. According to Yi, this gives Koreans a unique physicality and set of characteristics that are distinctively Chosŏn-ish and which differentiate them from the Japanese and Chinese.[395]

Another inherent element he believed Koreans shared is personality. Specifically, he argued that Koreans all share the *chŏngŭi*（情意，head pointing in the same direction). Again, like the shared bloodline, he argued that *chŏngŭi* ultimately cannot be altered or bent; It is "impossible to change so much that one cannot recognize the original pattern."[396]

Lastly, in terms of culture, he places an especially strong emphasis on language, insisting that language is the bedrock of culture.[397] He accused Korea's aristocrats of becoming Chinese because they used Chinese characters. Unlike Korea, he argued that Japan was able to maintain its unique characteristics because the Japanese read Chinese characters in Japanese.[398]

This shift towards a highly racial view of Korean ethnicity—whereby *minjok* is identified as having the same personality, culture, and bloodline—accompanied his shift

[395] Yi Kwangsu, "Chosŏn minjongnon" (on the Theory of Chosŏn Minjok), *Tonggwang*, June 1935, rpt in *Yikwangsu Chŏnjip*, vol. 10, 215-216.

[396] Ibid.

[397] Ibid.

[398] Ibid.

towards collectivism or *urijuŭi* (us-ism) as a way of securing *minjok*'s survival. His mention of *uri* (us) clearly refers to Chosŏn *minjok*. In order to rationalize collectivism, he insisted that Koreans had characteristics that made them inherently Korean. He argued that this so-called *urijuŭi* of putting Chosŏn *minjok* above all else existed since the Chosŏn dynasty and criticized Koreans for blindly accepting Western values.[399] As becomes clear by tracing his writings in the 1930s, his ethnocentric rhetoric became increasingly more racial and collectivist. Simultaneously, he demanded that Koreans put *minjok* above all else, including their individual selves. He declared that *minjok*'s way of life is greater and more timeless than any religion or ism.[400]

This sacrificial expectation towards Koreans can be detected as early as 1929, for instance in the following quote: "Even if we cannot love the collective, let us not hate but love individuals, family members, neighbors, friends, and fellow intellectuals/activists. Let's be happy for their success. Let us not resist between the same race."[401]

However, this expectation became more frequent and emphasized over time, especially in the 1930s, and clearly demonstrates his departure from ethnic reconstruction to

[399] Ibid.

[400] Yi Kwangsu, "Chosŏn minjok undong ŭi segich'o saŏp" (Three Fundamental Businesses for Chosŏn Minjok Movement), *Tonggwang,* February 1932, rpt in *Yikwangsu Chŏnjip*, vol. 10, 208.

[401] Yi Kwangsu, "Sŏn'gujarŭl paranŭn chosŏn" (Chosŏn Desires a Pioneer), *Samch'ŏlli*, December 1919, rpt in Yi*kwangsu Chŏnjip*, vol. 10, 205.

collectivism as a method of preservation. He asserted that Koreans must love Chosŏn and put it above their personal selves.[402] He encouraged young students to overcome themselves for Korea, so that Koreans could become a strong *minjok*. In a speech for an audience of graduates, he passionately appealed to the students to put *minjok* above their personal selves, so that "morally, economically, biologically and as citizen, become a *minjok* with strength. And this shall be the isms of Korea's youth."[403] These writings illustrate that he understood *minjok* within a social-Darwinist framework. Unless Koreans could become a strong *ethnie* that could survive the war between the races, Yi could not envision a future for Koreans. After decades of failed attempts, ranging from internationalism to cultural nationalism, he saw *urijuŭi* as a way to guarantee Chosŏn's survival.

Yi's obsession with *urijuŭi* (us-ism) and extreme rhetoric of sacrificing the self for the better good of *chŏnch'e* (*ethnie*) in order to become the coveted *ethnie* later transitioned into the idea of sacrificing the self to become an imperial citizen. This is why the language he uses for *urijuŭi* is dauntingly similar to the language he uses to explain why Koreans need to become imperial citizens.

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[402] Yi Kwangsu, "Chosŏn minjok undong ŭi segich'o saŏp" (Three Fundamental Businesses for Chosŏn Minjok Movement), *Tonggwang,* February 1932, rpt in *Yikwangsu Chŏnjip*, vol. 10, 209.

[403] Yi Kwangsu, "Chorŏp hanŭn hyŏngjeyŏ, chamaeyŏ!" (Graduating Brothers and Sisters!), *Tonggwang*, March 1932, rpt in *Yikwangsu Chŏnjip*, vol. 10, 279.

> If you do not have something more important (minjok) than yourself, you are no different than beasts. Therefore, if you are graduating from a professional school or a university, you must first realize that Korea is yours. Then you will be able to make a vow to give your body, your words, and your work for Korea's culture and wealth.[404]

> What should imperial citizen do. Imperial citizen shall offer national policy, inheritance and their children's life to the emperor because they were receiving this life from the emperor. This is what the spirit of Japan means.[405]

Although many isms appear and disappear in Yi's writings over the years, a key term that remains constant in his rhetoric is "survival". This is a classic case of a social Darwinist mindset, whereby he believed that only an "enlightened" race would have a place in the world. He notes that smaller nations were disappearing and large co-spheres were being established. In Yi's view, this is the new world order and he urged Koreans to join it as imperial citizens.[406] He believed Japan's assimilation policies, if used well, could become an opportunity for Koreans to finally find a place in the world.

When Yi speaks about "survival," he does not refer merely to Korean's physical survival, but rather to the social Darwinist idea of survival, which entails that Koreans as a *minjok* need to become the fittest in order to be worthy of survival. In his mind, becoming an

[404] Yi, Kwangsu, "Chorŏpsaengŭl saenggak'ago" (Thinking of Graduates), *Chosŏn ilbo*, February 26-March 14, 1936.

[405] Yi, Kwangsu, "Sasanghamkkye yŏng/mi rŭl kyŏngmyŏrhara" (We Should Despise Western [United States and Britain] Ideologies), *Shinshidae* 3 (1941.9-1942.1), 653.

[406] Yi, Kwangsu, "Insaeng kwa sudo" (Life and Ascetic Practice), *Shinshidae* 3 (1941.6-1941.8), 46.

imperial citizen does not contradict ethnic nationalism because he believed *kōminka seisaku* (imperialization) was the only way Koreans could find "happiness."[407] This happiness could only be accomplished if Koreans could become the fittest and the strongest *minjok*. He perceived the implementation of Japan's assimilation policies in Korea as an opportunity for Koreans rather than as a threat; He viewed it as an opportunity for Koreans to become a superior race by becoming part of the Japanese Empire as imperial citizens.

Yi was by no means the only person who viewed Japan's growing war efforts as an opportunity for Koreans. Mizuno Naoki offers an insight into why collaborators may have entertained this thought: 1. Some believed Korea could overcome its lack of modernization by collaborating with the Japanese, 2. Some collaborated in the hope of eradicating discrimination between the Japanese and Koreans, 3. Some collaborators were against the rise of communism in Korea and therefore collaborated with the Japanese to prevent the spread of communism, and 4. Some believed that by collaborating they could liberate Asian countries from Western powers.[408]

Yi indeed envisioned Koreans gaining an equal footing to the Japanese in the growing

[407] Yi Kwangsu, "Kungmin munhak ŭi ŭiŭi" (The Significance of National Literature), *Maeil shinbo*, February 16, 1940.

[408] Mizuno Naoki, "Shinnichiha," In *Sekai minzoku mondai jiten*, ed. Umesao Tadao (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1995), 549.

empire. He questioned what else Koreans could want other than to eliminate discrimination between the *naichiin* and *Chosŏnin*. He asks,

> What else is more important and urgent than putting our efforts in eliminating discrimination? Why are we hesitant do something as small as changing our names to achieve that? With this conviction, I created the name hyansan.[409]

For Yi, collaborating with Japan in the implementation of its assimilation policies was a small price to pay for what Koreans could gain in return: equality between Koreans and the Japanese as imperial citizens and in turn, the opportunity to become a superior race.

Unsurprisingly, Yi even condemned those who did not support imperialization. As he insists,

> If you do not realize that Chosŏn *minjok* could not live but to become an imperial citizen you are a loser. If you do recognize this, but do not actively pursue this and is being indecisive, you do not have love for *minjok* and you do not have courage. Therefore, you are self-centered and a coward.[410]

He not only enthusiastically promoted pan-Asianism and *naisen ittai*; As is evident in the quote above, he was also vocal about why he was opposed to people who were against Japan's

[409] Yi Kwangsu, "Ch'angssi wa na" (Japanization of Names and I), *Maeil shinbo*, February 2, 1940.

[410] Yi Kwangsu, "Hwangminhwa wa chosŏn munhak" (Imperialization and Korean Literature), *Maeil shinbo*, July 6, 1940.

assimilation policies. Another example can be found in a novel he wrote during this period, in which a Korean soldier who is volunteering to go to war states,

> You may call me a traitor. However, if you do not change your attitude, you will not be forgiven as a traitor, and you will become a sinner and you will be killing Chosŏn *minjok*.[411]

As previously discussed, there were various reasons to collaborate with the colonial government in Korea. In Yi's case, his focus on ethnic survival and his belief that only collectivism could guarantee Koreans' transformation into a fit *ethnie* convinced him to support Japan's assimilation policies. In his view, becoming an imperial citizen was Korea's best bet for surviving and possibly thriving in the future. He believed this was the way in which Koreans could become the "fit" race they needed to become, which meant becoming equal citizens of the Japanese Empire. He argued that not only he would become an imperial citizen but also his descendants.

Within the same logic, Yi encouraged Korean male students to volunteer as soldiers. Kim Ujong recalls to a reporter of Chōsen nippo Yi's speech to Korean students as follows:

> When you sacrifice your lives and make a contribution, our people (*minjok*) can live on without being discriminated. So, please, for Korean *minjok*, go to war.[412]

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[411] Yi Kwangsu, "Kŭdŭrŭi sarang" (Their Love), *Shinshidae* (1941.1-3).

[412] Hatano Setsuko, *Yi Kwangsu— Kankoku kindai bungaku no so to shinnichi no rakuin* (The Father of Modern Korean Literature Branded as Pro-Japanese), 195.

Kim told the reporter that when he heard Yi's speech, he felt that Yi struggled for the Korean people's survival.[413]

Yi passionately argued that he came to this conclusion in considering his children's future. His writings during this period debunk the argument that ethnic survival was the excuse he conjured up after Korea's liberation from Japan. As is observable through his writings during the 1930s and 1940s, Yi indeed passionately advocated assimilation because he believed this was the only feasible way Korean people could become the fittest *minjok*.

Therefore, contrary to popular belief, it was not *panminjokchuŭi* (anti-ethnic nationalism) that led Yi to support Japan's war in Asia through collaboration with the colonial government. Rather, it was his relentless focus on ethnic nationalism that prompted him to justify Koreans' participation in Japan's war efforts, so that Koreans could become proud citizens of the Japanese Empire based on their racial superiority (over the West). The uncomfortable truth is that he never pursued the idea of the annihilation of *minjok* that would have led to a violent genocide against Koreans; An idea that also does not make sense bearing in mind the historical reality in which Japan *needed* its imperial subjects to be part of the empire-building process.

[413] Ibid.

However, this should not blind anyone from recognizing that Yi's beliefs revolved around the idea of racial superiority, from independence to assimilation. More than anything, Yi and others who argued for assimilation show the versatile nature of ethnic nationalism and its dangerous disregard of civic values that many consider to be essential in a democratic society. Labeling him as *panminjok* will only blind people from appreciating this versatility and perhaps the danger of the ethnic nationalistic tendencies' requirement of racial superiority and exclusion of others in society. Yi could only justify Japan's war because he envisioned Koreans could join the same rank as the Japanese as imperial citizens, thereby outranking other races.

Conclusion

What is needed is not to question whether Yi "betrayed" his own people; What is needed is to understand that ethnic nationalism can be versatile and that it can be combined with different ideologies (ranging from liberalism to fascism and imperialism), thereby rendering different results. Not admitting to this blinds people from perceiving the exclusive and racist nature of ethnic nationalism, which is based on the idea of "us vs. others" (in contrast to the idea of civic nationalism). In a highly controversial text titled *My Confessions*, Yi recalls that an interrogator questioned the motivation behind the organization, to which he

answers,

> Our goal for self-improvement is to become like other distinguished ethnies; after this is accomplished, we shall become a more distinguished ethnie than these ethnies. We shall reach the highest peak and become a teacher to the humanity.[414]

Yi envisioned Chosŏn *minjok* becoming a leading *minjok*; As long as Korea could join the ranks of other so-called distinguished races, the means by which to do so were not questioned. This ethnocentric mindset explains why he was able to swing from one end to another, from liberalism to collectivism to imperialism.

Yi's journey as an ethnic nationalist shows that over the years, his ideology became increasingly more ethnocentric. Observing this thread of ethnic nationalism through his writings helps in questioning the tendency in Korea's nationalist historiography to praise ethnic nationalism and its tendency to accept only "right" ethnic nationalism (and to ignore or criticize all forms of ethnic nationalism that appear to portray Koreans in a negative light), while labeling all "wrong" ethnic nationalisms as *panminjokchuŭi*. Without a critical understanding of ethnic nationalism's evolution as dependent on which ideologies influenced it, one cannot identify and be cautious of the faults existing within the ideology.

[414] Yi Kwangsu, "Naŭi kobaek" (My Confession), (Seoul: Ch'unch'usa, 1948), rpt in *Yi Kwangsu Chŏnjip,* vol. 7, 270.

Chapter 5: Pan-Asianism and *Naisen ittai*: Pro-Japanese's Wartime Collaboration

Ultimately, those who advocated ethnic reconstruction and gradual independence failed to attain results with a lasting impact and as the growing war engulfed nations, Korean intellectuals and activists had to reconsider how to respond to the larger political climate. The last three chapters focus mostly on collaborators' activities in the 1920s and mid-1930s in order to question the notion that these collaborators experienced an obvious turning point in their lives. A closer study of Helen Kim, Yun Chi'ho, and Yi Kwangsu reveals that their decision to collaborate was constantly influenced by multiple factors. This chapter discusses various reasons why these intellectuals chose to justify and support Japan's war efforts, specifically by examining Korean intellectuals such as Yun and Yi's motivation to support and advocate pan-Asianism and *naisen ittai* (Japan and Korea as one). I believe it is insightful to compare these two individuals because doing so enables appreciating the diverse reality of motivations behind the act of collaboration under wartime circumstances, even though in hindsight they appear to perfectly represent typical pro-Japanese figures.

Regarding collaboration under wartime circumstances, there is a sentiment in Korea that the country failed to criminally charge collaborators. Often, Korea is compared to other countries that are believed to have succeeded in purging collaborators. Notably, France is

highly regarded for how it dealt with Nazi collaborators after World War II.[415] However, these sources rarely address how scholars have challenged these alleged successes over the years. Furthermore, no one has questioned whether it is a fair to compare French collaborators to Korean collaborators, even though their circumstances were vastly different: the former acting in occupied territory and the latter in colonized territory. In addition, no one has questioned the definition of *chŏnjaeng hyŏmnyŏk* (collaboration under wartime circumstances). For instance, can the dissemination and participation of propaganda constitute *chŏnjaeng hyŏmnyŏk*? If so, does this mean that all forms of propaganda, even those of Allied forces, be considered as crimes against peace?

War crime became a key issue after World War II when the Allied forces held military tribunals, notably the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials, to persecute war criminals. Kearney argues that these trials clearly showed that propaganda for war "constituted an essential tool for the preparation of crimes against peace."[416] However, Kearney also observes that there were still unclear aspects:

> It is somewhat unclear from the judgment whether for propaganda for war to be criminal it was necessary that it directly incite to specific acts of

[415] Yun Kyŏngro et al., *Ch'in'il Inmyŏng Sajŏn* (Pro-Japanese Biographical Dictionary), (Seoul: Minjok munje yŏn'guso, 2009), 19.

[416] Michael Kearney, *The prohibition of propaganda for war in international law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 53.

> aggression, or whether a defendant who had been a member of the conspiracy and who engaged in propaganda for war could have been held individually criminally responsible for propaganda which was directed at creating a warlike atmosphere conducive to the exercise in future of propaganda directly inciting to a specific act of aggression.[417]

It is noteworthy that criminality is limited to individuals who either "directly incite[d]" violence or were part of group or organization that conspired and disseminated propaganda materials. As colonial subjects, Koreans were not those who conspired or executed the Japanese Empire's war propaganda; They were at the receiving end, not the other way around. This is why the International Military Tribunal for the Fast East mostly convicted military and government officials who were accused of conspiring to wage an aggressive war and actually waged an aggressive war.[418]

Secondly, it would be extremely difficult to prove whether a person is "criminally responsible for propaganda which was directed at creating a warlike atmosphere."[419] As Oberschall observes,

> There is a temptation of overreach when it comes to criminalizing behavior that has many and complex causes. Extreme negative stereotyping of an ethnic group is found in conversation, literature, politics, international

[417] Ibid.

[418] Ibid, 50.

[419] Ibid, 53.

relations, and in media but does not necessary incite to violence.[420]

Lastly, scholars have questioned the legitimacy of the trials themselves: whether they were a mere consequence of the victor's justice and allies were exempt from the same scrutiny as the victors of World War II. As David Crowe comments, "The Tokyo IMT stands as an example of the flaws of victor nations attempting to try leaders of a defeated nation based on an inadequate focus on generalized legal concepts and weak precedents."[421] He further argues that it would be inappropriate to apply the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal's (IMT) model to Japan, as it would be difficult to prove that a "similar mind set [as the Nazis] drove Japanese policy during the long years of Japan's expanding interest in China and Asia."[422]

In terms of the criminality of collaboration under wartime circumstances for Koreans, thousands of Koreans and Taiwanese were convicted as class B and C war criminals. The Japanese government mobilized most of these young men to guard the Allied forces' prisoners of war (POWs). After 1945, trials were held across Asia to persecute these men as war criminals for their mistreatment of the Allied forces' POWs. A total of 148 Koreans and 173 Taiwanese

[420] Anthony Oberschall*, Propaganda, War Crimes Trials and International Law: From Speakers Corner to War Crimes* (S.l.: Taylor & Francis, 2013), 193.

[421] David M. Crowe, *War Crimes, Genocide, and Justice, (*New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 241.

[422] Ibid.

were found guilty.[423] Out of the 148 Koreans who were convicted, 129 served as guards for POWs.[424] Utsumi Aiko illustrates through in-depth interviews with those who survived the trials that many of these young men unknowingly volunteered simply because doing so presented them with better opportunities. Some were coerced, some were lured by a monthly payment of 50 yen, and some volunteered simply to avoid the conscription process.[425] She also poignantly illustrates that these men felt neglected by Japan, their Japanese nationality having been stripped away after the Treaty of San Francisco (1952), which disqualified them from receiving any governmental aid from Japan as veterans, even though they were convicted as war criminals *because* they were considered to be Japanese.[426] South Korea also showed no interest in these men because they are perceived as pro-Japanese collaborators who deserved the punishment.[427] Sandra Wilson challenges Utsumi's sympathetic view of these men, arguing that "like Japanese and Taiwanese military personnel, the prospect of investigation and prosecution where their actions were likely to have been criminal under international law."[428]

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[423] Utsumi Aiko, C*hōsenjin BCkyū senpan no kiroku,* (Tokyo: Iwanamigendaibunko, 2015), 4.

[424] Ibid.

[425] Ibid, 118.

[426] Ibid, 266-270.

[427] Ibid, 316.

[428] Sandra Wilson, "Koreans in the Trials of Japanese War Crimes Suspects," in *Debating Collaboration and Complicity in War Crimes Trials in Asia, 1945-1956,* ed. Kerstin Von Lingen (S.l.: Springer International PU, 2017), 35.

She observes that these men were noticed only when "their distinctive individual initiative as brutal guards drew attention to them."[429] From Wilson's study, it can be said that the Korean men's brutal treatment of POWs is what makes them war criminals. However, as Utsumi discusses in her study, it is important to discuss the extent to which these men are responsible for their actions as oppressed colonial subjects.

Without resolving these concerns, it would be a far stretch to argue that Korean collaborators should be reprimanded for their "wartime collaboration," a term that clearly demands clarification. Especially, it needs to be considered whether promoting propaganda that leads to participation in war efforts can be defined as criminal. However, a large amount of studies in Korea make this accusation without considering the issues mentioned above.

> First and foremost, we often overlook or forget the fact that they (chin'il'pa) are criminals. They oppressed Korean minjok's independence movements, plundered the public's material goods and laborers. While doing so, they committed various inhumane acts and they shouted in unison: *naisen ittai*, tongjodonggŭnsŏl (a theory of same root), kōminka movement (Imperialization), ch'angssi kaemyŏng (an assimilation policy which enforced Koreans to change their names to Japanese names) and they chanted/promoted the use of Japanese. These acts illustrate their intention to annihilate Korean minjok, which makes them a criminal.[430]

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[429] Ibid.

[430] Kim Samung, *Ch'inilp'a, kŭ in'gan kwa kŭ nolli* (Pro-Japanese Collaborator and Their Logic), (Seoul: Hangminsa, 1990), 19.

This argument illustrates how problematic the issue of collaboration is and how many assumptions are made without further inquiry. Firstly, the argument jumps from independence movements to collaboration with the Japanese Empire's war efforts, thereby ignoring 20–30 years of people's lives under colonization. Secondly, it assumes that collaboration with Japan's propaganda efforts proves these individuals were criminals, without bothering to explain how their collaboration led to the "annihilation of Korean minjok." Did collaborators indeed have ethnic annihilation in mind when they decided to collaborate with the Japanese? Can all collaboration under wartime circumstances be categorized as *panminjok*? These are some of the questions that are considered in this chapter.

Pan-Asianism and *Naisen ittai*

Japan's push for *naisen ittai* (Japan and Korea as one), its effort to assimilate Koreans into Japan, became more apparent in the late 1930s and into the 1940s. As any colonial policy, *naisen ittai* was designed to primarily benefit the colonizer, Japan. Japan advocated *naisen ittai* as a way of persuading and coercing its colonial subjects to participate in its growing war efforts. Many historians note that *naisen ittai* was full of contradictions and that it would be naïve to take its rhetoric at face value. Miyata illustrates how fictive *naisen ittai* was and that

reality did not reflect what Japan itself advocated through *naisen ittai*.[431] Caprio also identifies this discrepancy between Japanese rhetoric and policy, remarking that both the Japanese and Koreans were aware of this flaw in Japan's administration in Korea.[432] However, even with its obvious flaws, *naisen ittai* gained new momentum in the later years of Japan's colonial rule in Korea, as it expanded its territorial claims in Asia.

One of the reasons why *naisen ittai* gained momentum is because it was coupled with the resurgence of pan-Asianism. While *naisen ittai* consisted of specific policies geared towards Koreans' assimilation into the Japanese Empire, pan-Asianism was an ideology used by Japan as a way to cast a vision that would not only persuade Koreans but also other (present and future) colonial subjects of the Japanese Empire. Hotta describes it as an ideology that "highlights the fundamental self-awareness of Asia as a cohesive whole, be this whole determined geographically, linguistically, racially, or culturally."[433] *Naisen ittai* needs to be viewed within this context of building a larger Asian community.[434] Park asserts that Japan advocated *naisen ittai* along with *senman ittai* (the corporeal unity of Korea and Manchuria), whereby "the bodily imaginaries of Asia construe all parts of the empire as one communal

[431] Miyata Setsuko, Chōsen minshūto kōminka seisaku (Korean People and Imperialization), (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1985).

[433] Eri Hotta, *Pan-Asianism and Japan's War 1931-1945* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 11.

[434] Park Hyunok, *Two dreams in one bed: empire, social life, and the origins of the North Korean revolution in Manchuria* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 47.

body." [435] However fictive this imagery was, the idea of creating a transnational Asian community played a crucial role in rallying the Japanese Empire's colonial subjects to join Japan's war against the West.

Therefore, it would be unfair to place Korea or Taiwan in the same category as territories occupied by Japan during World War II, such as Indonesia and the Philippines. Japan needed Koreans and the Taiwanese to get on board its mission to expand its empire in Asia, which it justified through the pan-Asian rhetoric. It needed to convince Koreans and the Taiwanese to become model imperial subjects who would sacrifice their lives for the empire. Brute force and coercion alone would not have achieved this objective, which is why pan-Asianism and *naisen ittai* combined, despite their shortcomings and glaring discrepancies, provided sufficient incentives for some Korean intellectuals to consider collaboration as a way of becoming part of the growing empire.

The picture nationalist historiography paints is Japan brutally and unilaterally forcing Korean men and women to join the war. Certainly, it is undeniable that Japan's war in Asia was brutal and that it was the harshest for Koreans, who had to face blatant discrimination both within and outside the military. Furthermore, the brutality that the Japanese military unleashed in foreign lands was well documented by the Allies during the war, Japanese

[435] Ibid, 48.

atrocities included: "massacres of noncombatants, the maltreatment and killing of prisoners, routinized torture, forced labor, and institutionalized murder in the form of lethal medical experiments." The latter was revealed some time after the war.[436] However, this unilateral narration fails to tell the story of Koreans who joined the war effort voluntarily and also hinders the attempt to understand why, for example, so-called pro-Japanese figures could possibly support such an "atrocious" war.

Different Aspects of Pan-Asianism and *Naisen Ittai*'s Appeal

In Korea, pan-Asianism and *naisen ittai* policies served as a tool to convince Koreans to jump on the bandwagon of Japan's growing war efforts. The pro-Japanese are vehemently criticized especially for showing support of Japan's effort to persuade and pressure the Korean public to be part of Japan's growing war efforts. Vilifying and generalizing their motivation to collaborate hinders the opportunity to understand the complex relationship between the colonized subjects and the colonial authority. Therefore, it is essential to delve into and further explore what these individuals saw in pan-Asianism and *naisen ittai*, and how that influenced their decision to collaborate with the Japanese Empire. Their varying responses and

[436] John W. Dower, *War without mercy: race and power in the Pacific war* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 42.

interpretations illustrate that these policies were not set in stone and that they were viewed, however slightly, as an opportunity for Koreans. Of course, there were nationalists who believed this would endanger Korea's identity; However, simultaneously, there were others who believed it could be an opportunity for Koreans to shed their status as colonial subject.

Changing Perceptions Towards Western Values and Totalitarianism's Appeal

Many reasons contributed to the rise of fascism and totalitarianism's popularity in Japan and Korea. Firstly, they gained popularity and support because they were viewed as a remedy to liberalism's failure in nation building. This growing anti-Western sentiment and mistrust towards liberalism and individualism as championing ideologies became prevalent not only in Japan but also in Korea.

As voices against liberalism and individualism grew, so did the support of totalitarianism. For instance, the United States and Britain were accused of "ruling the world."[437] The author argues that now they had the opportunity to "smash and re-build a totalitarian state with limits."[438] Although it is arguable whether the Japanese Empire and its colonies became a full-fledged fascist empire with a totalitarian propensity, at least in the early

[437](Shikajika Toneri ?) (然然舍人), "Chŏnch'ejuŭi wa pŏpch'isasang" (Totalitarianism and the Rule of Law), *Shinshidae* 4 (1941.9-1942.1), 283.

[438] Ibid.

to mid-1930s, many Korean nationalists used the word *chŏnch'e* (collective) to express "us" or the idea of *uri* (Korean people). This is precisely why Yi criticized individualism: because he felt that it could be prioritized over the identity of "us" or *uri*:

> Anglo-American individualism, so-called liberalism, was imported into our Chosŏn society, and many people became focused on themselves and their happiness (or, more precisely, on their own pleasure and enjoyment); if they went so far as to look outside themselves, they extended their concern to no more than their family's happiness. The spirit of self-sacrifice, the spirit of service for the sake of others, for the sake of the collective to which the self-belongs, in other words for 'them' for 'us' was nowhere to be seen."[439]

In simpler terms, he viewed individualism as selfish and self-serving, while totalitarianism in his view was a way to sacrifice oneself for the greater good. In addition, words such as "public" appeared more frequently in media such as newspapers and magazines. Some argue that Koreans should "do away with liberal way of business and put in place functional public duty, in other words, focus on public interest"[440] above individual interests.

Yun Chi'ho on the other hand did not specifically criticize liberalism or individualism; His criticism was based on the practical assessment that the United States, or other countries for that matter, would never help Korea achieve independence. As noted at the beginning of

[439] Yi Kwangsu, "Yet chosŏnsŏnin ŭi kibon todŏk" (The Basic Morals of a Traditional Virtuous Man), *Tonggwang,* June 1932, rpt in *Yikwangsu Chŏnjip* (Collected Works of Yi Kwangsu), vol. 10, 210.

[440] (Takayama Shuno ?) (鷹山峻男), "Shinilbon ŭi ch'ulbal" (The Start of the New Japan), *Shinshidae* 1 (1941.1-1941.2), 46.

the previous chapter, Yun did not believe the United States would reprimand Japan's colonization of Korea, let alone support nationalists rallying for Korea's independence. Unfortunately, his observation was true. For Yun, Japan's colonization of Korea was no different than that of other world powers, such as France and England's colonization of Africa and Asia. For Yun, Western nations' criticism of Japan's territorial expansion seemed groundless; It only exposed their hypocrisy towards colonization:

> I supposed the robber-nations of the West will have the sense of humor enough to see that Japan has as much right to seek a breathing space for her population in Manchuria as Spain in Morocco, Italy in Tripoli; England in Australia, Canada and Africa; France, in Annam and Algeria etc.[441]

Yun could not accept Western powers' righteous attitude towards Japan's territorial invasion, especially given they were also empires with colonies. After all, Japanese leaders spent a considerable amount of time studying the colonial models of European nations, especially that of France. For Yun, if Western powers were to condemn Japan for its desire to expand its empire, they themselves must declare their empires to be illegitimate, which, unsurprisingly, none of them were willing to admit.

> by patting on the back of W. Wilson, made him father a silly peace machine called the League of Nations just to protect and perpetuate the status quo to the benefit of the biggest grabbers. With all my admiration for the great

[441] Yun, Ch'iho, *Yun Ch'iho ilgi* (Seoul, Korea: National History Compilation Committee, 1974), October 17, 1931, 9:404 (hereafter cited as Yun, Diary).

> qualities of the Anglo-Saxon nations I can't help feeling that they are suffering awfully from the disease of superiority complex.[442]

Unlike Yi, Yun's disagreement with the West was deeply rooted in his personal experience of racism in the United States and his practical assessment of world politics, whereby he did not see the West living up to its own so-called moral standards. Unsurprisingly, Yun's dissatisfaction with Western nations and especially the United States dates back to before this particular decade. Therefore, he was painfully aware of Westerners' racism against Asians, including Koreans. When he was a student in the United States, he often witnessed unabashed racism against people of color, including Asians like him. He notes in his diary that "the different classes in every society discriminate against each other, wherever human beings are found," and that unfortunately, "no government, no philosophy, no religion, has, so far, succeeded in correcting this evil of human nature."[443] In a pensive tone, he concludes that there was "no use complaining."[444] This attitude of resignation to racism later transformed into one of his reasons for supporting Japan's war against the West; He viewed the war as an opportunity for the yellow race to finally have a place in the world.

In addition, both Yi Yun observed with fascination fascist leaders such as Mussolini

[442] Yun, Diary, October 17, 1931, 9:404.

[443] Yun, Diary, August 8, 1928, 9:180.

[444] Ibid.

and Hitler rise to power in Europe. In their view, these leaders possessed qualities that Korean leaders lacked: they were charismatic and visionary, and brought sweeping changes in their nations, which were initially cheered and supported by the public. Yun and Yi watched leaders such as Mussolini with a sense of awe and amazement. Yi observes that Mussolini was the "leader of a great movement towards unity, revered by the entire nation."[445] This largely reflects Yi's emphasis on collectivism focused on one's *ethnie*, and in order to preserve one's *minjok*, unity and collectivism were a must. Yi viewed Mussolini as a leader who unified the people to work towards the greater good, an attitude Yi wished Koreans would emulate. Yun also reacted positively to Mussolini, praising him for his ability, integrity, and common sense. He saw Mussolini as someone who could "rescue" others. As he contemplated,

> China, Russia, India and Korea desperately need Mussolini to deliver them from the abominations of sentimental internationalism, bestial Bolshevism, sickening Socialism. But a Mussolini is possible only among a war-like race, hence he is an impossible article in Korea. By the way his autobiography reads like an enlarged Nehemiah with modern background and modern problems.[446]

He compared Mussolini to a chapter in the bible, Nehemiah, which is a story about the Israelites rebuilding and reestablishing Israel as a nation. This reflects Yun's desire for a strong,

[445] Yi Kwangsu, "Musollini ŭi ch'ŏt kyŏlshim" (The First Resolution of Mussolini), *Chosŏn Ilbo,* October 19, 1933.

[446] Yun, Diary, February 7, 1929, 9:197.

charismatic leader to lead Korea, which he believed did not exist.

He even defended Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia, comparing Korea's inability to defend itself to that of Ethiopia:

> Italy is determined to Koreanize or Manchurianize Ethiopia. Mussolini is sending troops, airplanes etc. to Ethiopia to be ready to bounce upon the black kingdom to make it a protectorate. That race or nation which refuses or fails to adapt itself to the changing conditions of the world so as to make itself strong enough to defend its rights - as Japan has done - that race or nation simply invites to be Koreanized or Manchurianized. Why blame Italy? If she doesn't annex Ethiopia some other Power will do it."[447]

This passage makes clear that even though Yi and Yun both supported Mussolini's growing fascist regime, it was for slightly different reasons. Yi admired the unity and collectivity that Mussolini displayed in Italy, while Yun admired Mussolini's charismatic leadership, which he believed made Italy strong enough to defend itself in the current world order.

Although the discussion on whether Yi and Yun became full-fledged fascists is inconclusive, it is clear that they both found certain fascist or totalitarian values attractive, such as unity and the idea of a strong nation (race). Within the larger shift in the world's political climate, *naisen ittai* and pan-Asianism came into play.

[447] Yun, Diary, July 9, 1935, 10:461.

Korea's identity within the Japanese Empire

One perception was that Koreans could continue to maintain their regional identity within the Japanese Empire. This argument was based on the logic that the assimilation and preservation of Korean culture were not in conflict, which was likely a response to concerns regarding Japan's hastened execution of *naisen ittai* policies in Korea. At a *Shigukyuji wŏnt'ak'oeŭi* (roundtable discussion on current affairs), intellectuals who supported this idea reassured the public that the GGK himself stated that the government would respect Koreans' uniqueness.[448] They asserted that assimilating into a "new Japanese race" did not mean Koreans had to eliminate their distinct cultural elements. In fact, they argued that Koreans needed to "preserve and develop Korean minjok's inherent language, culture, custom, and minjok spirit."[449] Similarly to this argument, some asserted that Japan's effort to enforce the usage of Japanese in schools was not an attempt to completely abolish the Korean language in Korea.[450]

[448] "Shigukyuji wŏnt'ak'oeŭi" (A Roundtable Discussion on Current Affairs), *Samch'ŏlli* 19 (1938.12-1939.1), 354.

[449] Ibid, 351.

[450] Kim Jipt'ae, "Hŭngajŏk taesamyŏng ŭro pon naesŏnilch'e" (*Naisen ittai* as the Calling of Greater Asia), *Samch'ŏlli* 21 (1940.3-1940.4), 55.

Along these lines, Governor Minami reaffirmed this argument by stating that it would be simply impossible to completely exclude the Korean language from Korea.[451] Yun found Minami's comment to be pretentious, claiming he had "no idea that Koreans were forced to adopt Japanese names." However, at the same time, Minami implied how much the government would appreciate Koreans' effort to change their names, thereby putting pressure on those present at the meeting.[452] Regardless, considering the nature of the assimilation policies, this argument alone cannot explain the enthusiastic reaction towards Japan's war propaganda or the hastened assimilation policies. This begs finding an answer to the following question: What did Japan promise its colonized subjects that persuaded many prominent figures to collaborate?

Achieving Equal Treatment

Another incentive was that finally, through pan-Asianism and *naisen ittai*, Koreans could be treated equally to the Japanese and become citizens with the same status. There were two areas in which vocal supporters of pan-Asianism and *naisen ittai* especially expected equal

[451] "Chosŏnŏ paech'ŏk pulga" (It is Impossible to Eliminate the Korean Language), *Samch'ŏlli* 17 (1938.5-1938.8), 380.

[452] Yun, Diary, January 4, 1940, 11:251.

treatment between Koreans and the Japanese: one was education and the other was work. Notably, these advocates expected Japan to finally provide compulsory education to Koreans.[453] Following the colonial government's announcement to implement compulsory education in the future, Helen Kim urged it to build more schools in order to provide students with equal opportunities to learn.[454] Similarly, Yun suggested that as Japan was attempting to abolish discrimination against Koreans, it should admit an equal number of Korean students to government schools and colleges.[455]

In addition, some argued that more Koreans should be allowed to work, especially in government positions. For instance, Yi Hongjong, a Korean lawyer, complained that "we do not have one Korean judge" and that this was "not fair."[456] Yi made a similar demand, declaring that when Koreans attain the same level of national ideology, habits, and intellectual ability, they can also "become a cabinet prime minister, a military general, and an ambassador,"[457] all of which were reserved for the Japanese at that time. Some even went as far

[453] In Jŏngshik, "Tonga ŭi chaep'yŏnsŏng kwa chosŏnin" (Reformation of Asia and Koreans), *Samch'ŏlli* 19 (1938.12-1939.1), 373.

[454] Helen Kim, "Sohakkyowŏn udae rŭl yomangham" (Request of Preferential Treatment for Primary School Teachers), *Maeil shinbo*, August 28, 1940.

[455] Yun, Diary, March 3, 1939, 11:161.

[456] Yi Hongjong, "Sabŏppujanggwan ŭi munho kaebang ŭro" (The Secretary of the Judicial Branch and the Open-door Policy), *Samch'ŏlli* 17 (1938.5-1938.8), 32.

[457] Yi Kwangsu, "Musollini ŭi ch'ŏt kyŏlshim" (Mussolini's First Resolution), *Maeil shinbo,* October 19, 1933.

as to demand equal political rights with the Japanese. The author asserts that this was the only option if the Japanese Empire wanted "Koreans to be 100 percent behind this and collaborate with Japanese."[458]

Moreover, Yi believed that not even a controversial *naisen ittai* policy such as *ch'angssi kaemyŏng* should be a problem for Koreans because nothing was more important that eliminating discrimination against Koreans. As he passionately appealed,

> What else is more important and urgent than putting our efforts in eliminating discrimination? Why are we hesitant do something as small as changing our names to achieve that? With this conviction, I created the name hyansan.[459]

Coupled with hostility towards Western nations in both Japan and Korea, pan-Asianism and *naisen ittai* appeared to provide a solution to a problem that troubled even moderate nationalists and cultural nationalists such as Yun and Yi: Japan's refusal to treat Koreans equally as their Japanese counterparts. As a result, these intellectuals attempted to utilize the situation to demand equal opportunities between Koreans and the Japanese, especially in terms of education and work. For some Korean intellectuals, this implied that Koreans needed to become imperial subjects of the Japanese Empire.

Becoming an Imperial Subject and Obtaining Co-Leadership

[458] In Jŏngshik, "Tonga ŭi chaep'yŏnsŏng kwa chosŏnin" (Reformation of Asia and Koreans), *Samch'ŏlli* 19 (1938.12-1939.1), 373.

[459] Yi Kwangsu, "Ch'angssi wa na" (Japanization of Names and I), *Maeil shinbo,* February 20, 1940.

Over the 35 years of colonial rule, many nationalists transitioned from being independence fighters to being avid supporters of Japan's assimilation of Korea. To comprehend this transition, it is essential to understand the underlying current of the social Darwinist worldview and that becoming an imperial citizen was viewed as an ultimate opportunity for Koreans. As imperial citizens, Koreans were no longer colonized subjects, but citizens with a nation to belong to and rights to exercise.

For instance, Yi believed that as imperial citizens, Koreans could have an equal footing with the Japanese. And this equality should not be understood as equal rights for *everyone*; It was exclusively reserved for imperial citizens of the Japanese Empire:

> Chosŏnin will become the owner and the leader of building Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. We will become a teacher to Asian minjok. Did we ever have such a grand calling as Chosŏnin before? We can only gain this co-prosperity status only if we become one with the emperor. Now is the best time for that.[460]

Yi's struggle for Koreans to become a "fit" race finally ended when he felt that Koreans were accepted as imperial citizens. Now Korean people could become owners and leaders of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, a *minjok* that not only survives but also thrives. This meant it was in Korea's best interest for Japan to win the war. And this could only be

[460] Yi Kwangsu, "Shinshidae ŭi yulli" (The Morality of the New Era), *Shinshidae* 1 (1941.1-1941.2), 33.

accomplished if "citizens [of the Japanese Empire] have a unified heart, loyalty, patriotism, and a determination to work hard."[461]

Yun also celebrated Japan's victory as a victory the yellow race. Similarly to Yi's arguments, Yun believed that Koreans were no longer second-rate citizens; They were to become part of the superior "yellow race." The day after he heard that Japan had launched an attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, he exclaimed, "a New Day has indeed dawned on the Old World This is a real war of races—the Yellow against the White."[462] Both Yi and Yun's attitude aptly illustrate that ethnic nationalism can be used to justify various political ideologies. As long as Koreans were the co-leaders of the new order, both Yi and Yun willingly supported Japan's aggressive war against other nations.

An excellent example of Yi's attitude of "joining the superior race" is his eagerness for Koreans to adopt the Japanese language. Not only does he implore Koreans to learn and use Japanese; He also reveals how hard he works on his Japanese.[463]

This stands in contrast to his earlier view on language, whereby he argued how "excellent" the

[461] Yi Sŏnghwan**, "**Aeguk ŭi chisŏng kwa ch'agihoe**"** (Patriotic Devotion and Opportunity), *Samch'ŏlli* 27 (1941.9-1932.1), 241-242.

[462] Yun, Diary, December 8, 1941, 11:407. He mentions a similar sentiment in *Samch'ŏlli* 27 (1941.9-1932.1), 257-258.

[463] Yi Kwangsu, "Na wa kugŏ" (The Mother Tongue and I), *Kyŏngsŏng ilbo*, November 26, 1942**.**

Korean language was. Previously, the purpose of preserving the Korean language was to prove that Koreans had the potential to become a "fit" race. Because it was a means for self-preservation, when it no longer served this purpose, he easily transitioned into advocating Japanese as a national language. Fluency in Japanese represented a litmus test to become an imperial citizen, which he eagerly pursued.

Some even went as far as to argue that Koreans were already Japanese, as Japan had already colonized Korea. In "Chōsenjin no susumu beki michi" (a road Koreans must pursue), Hyŏn Yŏngsŏp argues that Koreans already became Japanese when Japan and Korea unified.[464] This argument serves as a basis for him to argue for equality between the Japanese and Koreans. He asserts that whatever Koreans are lacking or struggling with, the Japanese should consider it as their own problem. Hyŏn states that if "something unfortunate happens to Chosŏn, which is part of Japan, then *all* Japanese people are responsible for it."[465] Furthermore, anything of which Japan should be proud, such as Mount Fuji, Koreans should also be proud, as their own.[466] Although he advocated equality between Koreans and Japanese through complete

[464] Hyŏn Yŏngsŏp, "Chōsenjin no susumu beki michi" (The Road Koreans Should Take), *Senjitaiseika chōsensōtokufu gaikakudantai shiryoushū* (A Collection of Materials of Government General of Korea and Extra-Governmental Body Under Wartime Circumstances) 13, 534.

[465] Ibid, 539.

[466] Ibid, 541.

assimilation, he contradicts his own argument by refusing to acknowledge Japan's discrimination against Koreans.

Conclusion

As previously discussed, there were various reasons for supporting Japan's assimilation policies. For Yi, it was his focus on *ethnie*'s survival and his belief that only collectivism could guarantee Koreans' transformation into a fit *ethnie,* for becoming *hwanggukshinmin* (imperial citizen) was Korea's best bet for surviving and possibly thriving in the future. He believed this was the way in which Koreans could become the "fit" *minjok* they needed to become. Yun, as evidenced in his diaries, was a pragmatist in that he did not have faith that any Western nation would step in on behalf of Korea, especially not the United States. Also, from years of personal experience of racism abroad, he found it hypocritical that Western nations condemned Japan for expanding its territory. In addition, both Yi and Yun believed this period presented an opportunity for Koreans to finally demand equality with the Japanese, especially in terms of education and employment.

Both Yi and Yun lived through a tumultuous historical era. As colonial subjects without a territory or a government to claim their own, they learned to navigate the

dangerous terrain of colonial experience. Yun's post-liberation reflection on pro-Japanese collaborators provides a more intimate insight into the complexities behind these individuals' decision to collaborate with Japan:

> Indeed it is absurd to stigmatize anybody for having been pro-Japanese. During the 34 years of Japanese annexation (from 1911-1945), what was the status of Korea? Was she an independent Kingdom? No, she was a part of Japan, and so recognized by other Powers including America. If so, the Koreans were Japanese, willy nilly. Then, as the subject of Japan, what alternative could we, *who had to live in Korea*, have but to obey the orders and demands, however arbitrary, of the Japanese regime? If we had to send our sons to battlefields and our daughters to factories, could we refuse to do anything that the militarists commander? Therefore, it is nonsense to denounce anybody for what he did under the status of a Japanese subject.[467]

It is thought provoking to see that Yun did not apologize for or express shame about his decision to collaborate with the Japanese. Perhaps at his old age he did not feel the need to defend his reputation. Or perhaps this document was written to justify his decision to collaborate with the Japanese. Whatever his reasons, I wonder how many people could

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[467] *Yunch'iho Sŏhanjip* (The Collected Letters of Yun Chi'ho), (Seoul: Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe [National History Compilation Committee], 1980), 264-265.
According to Kinoshita Takao in *Hyōden Yun Ch'iho* (A Critical Biography of Yun Ch'iho), "An Old-man's Rumination" was forwarded to general John R. Hodge through Earnest E. Fisher, who served as an advisor for USAMGIK (軍政庁顧問). Furthermore, allegedly a copy of this was circulated to Rhee, Syngman, who later became the first president of South Korea. Kinoshita analyzes that these writings reflects Yun's political and personal intent. (434-435)

provide a convincing answer to his question: which alternatives did Koreans *really* have, after living as colonial subjects for 30 or more years? In examining the diverse reasons behind these intellectuals' willingness to support and advocate pan-Asianism and *naisen ittai*, this dissertation hopes to develop a better understanding of the complex nature of wartime collaboration, especially for Koreans who were inevitably subjugated to Japan's imperialism as colonial subjects.

Conclusion

On August 14, 2017, a day before South Korea's Independence Day, president Moon invited former independence patriots, their family members, and former comfort women to the Blue House. At this meeting, he pledged he would expunge a well-known Korean saying, which goes as follows: "if a person fights or works for the independence movement, the person's family remains cursed for the next three generations. However, if a person collaborates with the Japanese, the person's family will become prosperous for the next three generations."[468] From president Moon's action, it can be said that the issue of collaboration has become a political tool for the progressives to appeal to the public.

Because the issue of collaboration is politically charged, more attention has been dedicated to showcasing collaborators' alleged pro-Japanese acts. The continuous publication of works, from the Pro-Japanese Dictionary in 2009 to *Maegug ŭi yŏksahakcha, kŭdŭlman ŭi sesang* (Traitorous Historians and their World) in 2017, testifies to the ongoing trend of a witch-hunt, in a sense, to discover and shame collaborators publicly and permanently. Often, ambiguities are overlooked or hardly mentioned. The verdict is clear: these individuals committed treason against the Korean race and should be treated and remembered as

[468] Lee Sŭngchun, "Munjaein chŏngbu 100irŭl pinnaen t'rchintcha chuyŏndŭlt'" (The Real Heroes of the First 100 Days of Moon Jaein's Government), *Han'gyŏrye*, September 16, 2017. http://www.hani.co.kr/arti/politics/polibar/806989.html.

criminals. However, a closer look at these collaborators' lives shows how equivocal and complex collaboration is in reality. Furthermore, much of the discourse surrounding the issue is understood as being based on absolute truth, while in actuality it is mostly built on mere assumptions that require further clarification, which is precisely why this study focuses on challenging these assumptions.

Chapter one examines various attempts to define collaboration in post-liberation Korea. Korea's interim legislative assembly's attempt to pass the special law on pro-Japanese collaborators, national traitors, and profiteers in 1947 marks the emergence of pro-Japanese collaboration as a national discourse. Although this law never saw the light of day due to the USAMGIK's veto, it became the basis for *Panminjok'aengwi ch'ŏbŏlbŏp* (the national traitor law), which was passed on September 7, 1948 by the Constituent Assembly of Korea. The discussion surrounding the drafting process of both laws provides insight into how Korean intellectuals and political activists attempted to define collaboration. Despite the lengthy discussions regarding the law, the 1948 law remained almost identical to the 1947 draft in terms of content and many of the ambiguities questioned regarding the 1947 draft remained unresolved. Some uncertainties were never even questioned. For instance, even though many members insisted that collaborators committed a vicious act, they did not clarify what makes

an act vicious. Nevertheless, the law was eventually passed, though lawmakers never succeeded in prosecuting hundreds of pro-Japanese collaborators, as they originally intended.

Although the issue of *chin'il'pa* experienced a resurgence in the 1990s due to South Korea's democratization, much of the rhetoric remained the same. In fact, the criteria became more vague, covering a broader scope and adopting a more nationalistic tone over the years. Many of the criteria that were formulated in 1947 and 1948 were left unchallenged and unquestioned. This study aims to illustrate that there needs to be a serious reconsideration of these criteria, which are often readily used with no questions asked. To avoid making the same mistake, this dissertation does not focus on proving or disproving whether individuals are pro-Japanese collaborators but rather on exploring the various reasons behind their decision to collaborate with the Japanese colonial rule over the span of 35 years. Specifically, it forms an attempt to deconstruct various assumptions associated with the issue of collaboration through particular individuals labeled as pro-Japanese collaborators.

Chapter two examines the notion that all Koreans should have had an unwavering loyalty towards the Korean people. It challenges this notion through the lens of gender and by considering how gender mattered in people's decision to collaborate with the colonial government through the case of Helen Kim. Kim was as prominent educator, a devout

Christian, and a new woman. First and foremost, as an educator, she advocated education for women and children in rural areas, throughout the colonial era. Her priority lay in creating opportunities to educate Korean children and if the colonial government provided such opportunities, she was willing to collaborate with the government. Furthermore, her gender adds another layer to her motivation to collaborate.

It could be argued that it is unreasonable to demand Kim's absolute loyalty to Korean *minjok* while Chosŏn society did not value women as much as men. The patriarchal practices of Chosŏn society seamlessly continued throughout the colonial era. Although Korean history often depicts Japan as the sole oppressor, this does not reflect what historical materials portray. The new women of this era openly criticized men and especially Korean men for oppressing women for centuries. These women used mediums such as magazines and novels to express their anger and fear towards Korean men. In addition to other injustices, Kim also endured a form of inequality between men and women, especially from other Korean male intellectuals and supposed fellow compatriots. She repeatedly demanded equal opportunity and recognition for women in society, arguing that women could contribute to nation building as much as men. This demand for equal opportunity appears constantly in her support of women's participation in the war efforts. Therefore, the nationalization of women's

roles was embraced and celebrated by women such as Kim as a step forward for Korean women to finally directly participate in society. Kim's case illustrates that people's colonial identity is not solely determined by their ethnic identity. Bearing this in mind help to better understand why most female intellectuals, including Kim, chose to collaborate with the colonial government rather than resist its rule.

Another assumption that underlines the issue of the collaboration is the idea that everyone in Korea longed and fought for Korea's independence. This is a classic example of *resistanism*, whereby the object of memory is constructed and the 'resistance' and its "significance transcend[s] by far the sum of its active parts."[469] Although it is important to acknowledge the significance of resistance (or independence) movements, it is also important to note that many of such movements struggled and did not substantiate into lasting movements. In the earlier years, many young activists in Korea initiated and participated in independence movements with the hope of liberating Korea from Japan. Although some continued to advocate Korea's independence until 1945, many were discouraged and were persuaded to devise other means.

Unlike nationalists who were born into colonized Korea, Yun Chi'ho witnessed

[469] Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian myth nationalism, resistance and collaboration in modern China*(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 51

firsthand Korea's failure to modernize and defend itself from lurking neighbors such as Japan. Yun, influenced by Western and Japanese thinkers, believed modernization was the only way to protect Korea's statehood. As a leading member of the Independence Club, Yun had high hopes for Korea's modernization between 1895 and 1905, and believed the Independence Club could play a pivotal role in modernizing the Korean government. Kojong's decision to disband and arrest members of the Independence Club was a devastating blow to Yun and the impact this incident had on Yun is evident in his bitterness towards it. For Yun, Kojong and his government ultimately failed to become leaders capable of leading and managing a modern nation.

One of the most common criticisms against Yun is his decision to not support the March First Movement privately and publicly. Although he was sympathetic towards students who participated in this movement, he was adamant that it would not succeed. He insisted that Western powers were not interested in Korea's independence and that it was futile to appeal to countries such as the United States to assist Korea. As he predicted, none of the Western governments showed interested in Korea's independence.

Nonetheless, he did not completely abandon his hope for Korea's independence. However, he argued that Koreans needed to become leaders with capabilities to lead a nation

before asking for independence. In his opinion, Koreans were not ready to do so. For him, unless Koreans had abilities to build and manage a modern nation, it was useless to shout "*mansei*" in the streets. His diary entries clearly show how conflicted he felt between a *minjok* that he believed was not sufficiently capable to sustain a modern nation and a colonizer whom he admired and criticized simultaneously. This conflicted inner voice illustrates that a person's decision to not support Korea's immediate independence did not result from a desire to betray Koreans and become completely Japanese. Therefore, it would be a gross simplification to assume that such a decision is an act of *panminjok* (betrayal of the Korean people). Furthermore, in examining collaborators' cases and their decision to collaborate with the Japanese, it is essential to consider their thoughts and actions, which extended to over 35 years under colonial rule, in order to have a fuller understanding of their so-called pro-Japanese behaviors in the later years. It is difficult to demand Yun's absolute and unwavering faith in Korea's independence if one considers how much discouragement he experienced over the years.

The next assumption discussed in this dissertation is the fact that ethnic nationalism is understood as an ideology that cannot evolve. In Korea's case, there is a way to differentiate between pro-ethnic (correct) nationalism and anti-ethnic (incorrect)nationalism

(*panminjok*). Especially regarding the issue of collaboration, collaborators are accused of *panminjok* (anti-*minjok*) acts. However, anachronistically defining an act as either pro- or anti-*minjok* blinds people from appreciating how versatile ethnic nationalism can be as an ideology and that it can be used to support variety of agendas. The case of Yi illustrates this well.

Yi, like many young intellectuals, started as an independence activist in a student movement. After experiencing disappointments with the independence movement's activities, he shifted his focus towards the theory of ethnic reconstruction. He argues in *Minjok kaejoron* (1922) that what Korean people needed most was enlightenment through education, moral elevation, and leadership training. Like An Ch'angho, another influential independence activist at that time, Yi believed ethnic reconstruction was the next step Koreans must take. Yi's thoughts echo the ideas of cultural nationalism, which arguably was one of the most mainstream intellectual movements in the 1920s. However, imperial Japan's shift towards total war in the 1930s eventually engulfed the Korean peninsula. Yi no longer argued for ethnic reconstruction as a way to ensure Korean *minjok*'s survival; He slowly but surely gravitated towards fascist ideals, such as totalitarianism.

In Korean, he calls it *urijuŭi.* He demanded the public's absolute loyalty towards the

Korean people, encouraged Koreans to put the wellbeing of *minjok* above all other needs, and became increasingly more ethnocentric in his arguments. By the end of the 1930s, he argued that Koreans must become imperial citizens in order to not only survive but also to thrive as an *ethnie*. For Yi, imperialization was an opportunity for Koreans to finally become citizens of the empire and demand the same rights as the Japanese. He sincerely believed that becoming an imperial citizen was the best way to guarantee Korean *minjok*'s place in the world. Yi's growing emphasis on ethnocentric values and his willingness to sacrifice individual rights for the greater good challenge the notion that ethnic nationalism is inherently good and that anything that discredits it should be regarded as *panminjok*. Yi's transition from a young, enthusiastic independence activist to a passionate supporter of Japan's assimilation policy illustrates the many facets of ethnic nationalism and how ethnic nationalism can be utilized to legitimize vastly different ideologies. As Shin Giwook observes, ethnic nationalism's effect can only be felt when it is combined with other ideologies.[470]

The last chapter addresses the most controversial aspect of the issue of collaboration: individuals' participation in the Japanese Empire's war propaganda and war efforts. I hope that all three previous chapters are taken into consideration in proceeding into

[470] Shin Giwook, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 2007), 15.

this chapter. It has already been over two decades since Japan annexed Korea. Korean intellectuals were split into different factions, influenced by a plethora of ideologies, ranging from socialism to communism and fascism. Some nationalists still believed in independence, some believed in a proletariat revolution against the imperial power, and some believed in working within the boundary set by the colonial government to improve Koreans' livelihood. Especially for the latter group of nationalists, the coupling of *naisen ittai* and pan-Asianism was viewed as an opportunity for Koreans to demand a variety of agendas. One of the reasons why *naisen ittai* and pan-Asianism gained an audience in the late 1930s to early 1940s is related to a larger political climate in which totalitarian and fascist ideals were gaining popularity across the world. The idea of unity through collectivism, strong leadership, and a strong nation appealed to intellectuals such as Yun and Yi. However, this does not necessarily mean these intellectuals had a unified idea of what it would mean for Koreans to become imperial citizens of Japan.

Some argued that Koreans could still maintain their distinct regional identity within the empire and believed that Japan's assimilation policy did not threaten Koreans' survival as an *ethnie*. In fact, they argued Koreans could still preserve their unique ethnic qualities and simultaneously become imperial citizens. A sizeable group of intellectuals and influential

Korean figures believed that if Koreans agreed to assimilate into the Japanese empire, Japan had to guarantee equal rights for Korean and Japanese subjects. This particular group of people supported the idea of *naisen ittai* as long as Koreans had equal opportunities in education and employment. Along a similar line, for some, *naisen ittai* and pan-Asianism meant Japan would finally let Koreans become co-leaders in its growing empire. Koreans would no longer be treated as colonial subjects, but as equal subjects of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. In a way, this would finally fulfill Yi's dream for Koreans to become a superior race in the social Darwinist jungle.

Helen Kim, Yun Chi'ho and Yi Kwangsu's cases show how complex and ambiguous the issue of collaboration is. The assumptions discussed in this dissertation illustrate that much of the discourse on the issue of collaboration is dependent on ideas about what should have been. This dissertation questions whether it is fair to shame and accuse collaborators for failing standards set 70 years later and without taking into consideration the various circumstances behind such acts.

Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that until the early 1940s Japan was winning the war and that perceived victory was essential for Korean intellectuals. Whether Japan would consider their demands depended on its victory in the Pacific War. The focus was

rarely on becoming Japanese; Rather, it was on what they could achieve by assimilating into the Japanese Empire. However, Japan lost the war and Korean intellectuals were permanently branded as pro-Japanese collaborators who did the unthinkable: support Japan's atrocious war.

This project is largely limited to individuals who are accused of having an influential position in the social and cultural realm of colonial Korea. It acknowledges that there were other collaborators with a wide range of occupations, from local governors to policemen, which is certainly a topic that requires further attention. Nevertheless, this dissertation hopes to contribute to the growing discussion on the issue of collaboration between colonized people and the Japanese Empire.

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APPENDIX I

"Puil hyŏmnyŏkcha, minjok panyŏkcha, kansangbae e taehan t'ŭkpyŏl chorye" (The Special Law on Pro-Japanese[471], National Traitors and Profiteers (July 2nd, 1947)[472]

Section I National Traitors

Article I. Those who have worked against the interests of the nation or hindered the movement for national independence in conspiracy or cooperation with Japan or other foreign powers and who shall be applied to any of the following items are defined as national traitors:

1. Those who have planned and negotiated for, or signed, Korean-Japanese Protective Treaty, Korean-Japanese Annexation Treaty, and any other documents which may have infringed national sovereignty.
2. Those who have been selected peers by Japan.
3. Those who have been appointed members of Japanese Parliament.
4. Those who have undermined and hindered the cause of independence by destroying public utilities, by committing murder or arson, or by instigating masses to commit such crimes.
5. Those who have collaborated with the Japanese, forsaking integrity and principle.
6. Those how have persecuted, murdered, inflicted punishments on those who have worked for the cause of independence or those who have given instructions or commanded others to commit such crimes.

Article II. Those who may be answerable for any of the above shall be sentenced to death, imprisonment, sino die, of less than ten years; all or part of their property shall be confiscated or they shall be deprived of their citizenship for the duration of less than fifteen years.

Section II Japanese Collaborators

Article III. Those who have worked against the interests of the nation by compromising themselves in sinister activities, utilizing themselves of the Japanese influence during the Japanese domination over Korea shall be defined as Japanese collaborators.

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[471] While the English translation uses the word Pro-Japanese collaborators or Japanese collaborators, the Korean title does not say *ch'inil* (親日). Instead they use the word puil hyŏmnyŏkcha. (附日協力者) However, during the discussions regarding this law, members used these two words, buil and *ch'inil* interchangeably. Currently, *ch'inil* used more often.

[472] Provided in Internal Affairs of Korea, 1945-1949, vol 3. Arŭm Ch'ulp'ansa, 1995.

A. They are as follows:
    1. Those who have inherited peerage under the Japanese Administration.
    2. Vice-Chairman, advisers, councilors of Privy Council.
    3. Those who had been officials above the rank of Cho-kuninkan.
    4. Those who have undermined the cause of independence by spying activities.
    5. Those who have been of important functionaries of organizations, the objective of which had been to undermine the cause of independence.
    6. Those who have been responsible for war industry for Japan on a big scale.
    7. Those who have contributed voluntarily more than 100,000 yen or war materials worth the above mentioned sum of money.
    8. Those who have committed sinister activities in other ways.

B. Those who are answerable for any of the following items with undoubtful evidences of crime:
    1. Those who have been members of "gun," provincial and other organizations on higher level, the aims of which were to consult or decide policies for the Japanese.
    2. Those who have been officials on and above the rank of soninkan or who had been officials on or above the rank of hanninkan in the army, and police, and those who had positions in the high departments of the police.
    3. Those who had been in leading positions of economic, social, cultural, press organizations, whose aims were to promote Japanese policies.

Article IV. Those who are answerable for any of the above shall be imprisoned for less than five years or shall be deprived of citizenship for less than ten years. According to the nature and degree of their crimes, part or all of their property should be confiscated.

Section III

Article V. Those who have disturbed economic stability and caused economic distresses by unscrupulous activities and who are answerable for any of the following items are defined as profiteers.

1. Those who have accumulated wealth by illegally utilizing themselves of Japanese property—individuals or national.
2. Those who have made money by making use of influence of authorities or others.
3. Those who misused ration materials.
4. Those who have smuggled goods.

Article VI- Those who are answerable for any of the above items shall be sentenced to imprisonment of less than five years or to a fine of double the sume of accumulated money.

Section IV

Punishments to be increased or reduced

Article VII. Those who are answerable for any of the above mentioned laws and who show and evident repentance or who will confess on his own accord shall have lighter punishment or be exonerated.

Article VIII. Those who will plot to injure others by making false reports shall be punished by the same laws, which apply to those who have actually committed the crime.

APPENDIX II

"Panminjok'aengwi ch'ŏbŏlbŏp" (the National Traitor Law)[473], (August 7th, 1948)

Section 1 The Crimes

Article I. Those who conspired with Japan and actively collaborated with Japan's annexation of Korea, or have signed a treaty or a document which has resulted in an infringement of Korea's sovereignty, shall be sentenced to death or receive a life-sentence without parole and have more than half of their property and inheritance confiscated.

Article II. Those who have been selected peers by Japan or those who have been appointed members of Japanese Parliament shall receive a life sentence without parole or receive a sentence for at least more than five years. Furthermore, their entire or more than half of their property and inheritance will be confiscated.

Article III. Those how have persecuted or killed independence activists or their family members with a vicious intent; or those who have led these persecutions shall be sentenced to death or receive a life-sentence without parole or receive a sentence for at least more than five years.

Article IV. Those who are answerable for any of the following items shall be imprisoned for less than ten years or shall be deprived of their citizenship for less than fifteen years.

1. Those who have inherited peerage under the Japanese Administration.
2. Those who served as a Vice-Chairman, advisers, councilors of the Privy Council.
3. Those who had been officials above the rank of ch'igimgwan (the highest ranking government official).
4. Those who have undermined the cause of independence by spying activities.
5. Those who have been of important functionaries of organizations, the objective of which had been to undermine the cause of independence.
6. Those who have been responsible for war industry for Japan on a big scale.
7. Those who have been responsible for various war industries including airplanes, arms and ammunition.
8. Those who have been members of a provincial or district counsel who buttered up to the Japanese government and left a clear evidence of one's ethnic crimes.

[473] Translated from Hŏ Jong, *Panmint'ŭgwi chojikkwa hwaltong* (A Special Investigative Committee of Traitorous Activities' Organization and Activities) (Seoul: Sŏnin), 142-143.

(Minjokchŏk choe).

9. Those who worked as government officials and used their position to harm the Korean people and left a clear evidence of their vicious intent.
10. Those who have worked as a head and led with a vicious intent in organizations established to strengthen Japan's national policies.
11. Those who had been in leading positions of economic, social, cultural, press organizations, that betrayed the national spirit and belief and used *panminjok* press and other means; so that, they could collaborate [with Japan] to implement Japan's policy of aggression.
12. Those who personally committed sinister acts and buttered up to the Japanese and caused harm against the Korean people.

Article V. Those who have been 고등관 [J: 高等官, an government official position in the colonial government] above level three, government and public officials above level five, military police, 헌병보 [J: 憲兵補], or special police, cannot work as a public official until the statue of limitations on this law is expired. Engineers will be exempted.

Article VI. Those who show sincere repentance and have a change of heart shall have lighter punishment or be exonerated.

Article VII. Those who falsely report, commit perjury, or temper with evidence shall be punished accordingly.

Article VIII. Those who has committed any of the act mentioned above cannot establish any organizations; if they do so they shall be imprisoned for less than a year.

APPENDIX III

Ch'inilp'a Kunsang (A Group of Pro-Japanese), (1948)[474]

1 Those who volunteered to do pro-Japanese activities with a sincere heart

1.1 Those who knew that *ch'inil* and especially wartime collaboration was not right but did it for his or her own benefit such as finance, status, or safety of one's own life

1.2 Those who believed that *ch'inil* would lead to *naisten ittai* and wartime collaboration would lead to securing Koreans' well-being (they were unable to predict Japan would lose)

1.3 Those who, as *ch'inil* and wartime collaboration, gained government officials' favor and by using this authority the person exerted power and obtained privileges. Those who aimed to be promoted as member of the House of Representatives or high official for personal gains

1.4 Those who, as a high official or a leader of *ch'inilp'a*, believed that since everything was already in motion, this was a chance to actively show loyalty and patriotism; and in the future, Korean *minjok* and individuals will have an advantage

1.5 Those who committed fanatical *ch'inil* or passionate collaboration

2 Those who passively pretended to collaborate

2.1 Those who were obliged to collaborate in order to avoid the police's persecution and protect one's safety, status or businesses

2.2 Those who originally held a favorable view towards American and England but not Japan. Or, those who held pro-America and anti-japan thoughts but because of threats they felt fear and in order to keep their jobs, took on an excessive pro-Japanese attitude and blindly obeyed

2.3 Those who served as a government official at a *ch'inil* organization such as Kungmin ch'ongnyŏng Chosŏn yŏnmaeng (國民總力朝鮮聯盟) and any other wartime collaboration organizations. Or, those who were selected as presenters to lectures but could not refuse. They chose to either leave their name on the list or participated but did not actually give a presentation

2.4 Those who, at press conferences, did not address what is right or wrong but rather tactfully only discussed topics that would not cause any trouble. However, on the actual print, despite your intentions, something completely different was written in

[474] *Ch'inilp'a Kunsang* (A Group of Pro-Japanese), Samsŏng munhwasa, 1948.

the articles. However, since you could not ask for revisions you let them be.

APPENDIX IV

Ch'inil inmyŏng sajŏn (Pro-Japanese Biographical Dictionary), (2009)[475]

1. A person who was involved in Japan's seize of Korea's national sovereignty
2. A person who participated in one of the colonial government's organizations (the ranks are specified)
3. A person who disrupted the independence movement
4. A person who collaborated with Japan's war of aggression
5. Intellectuals, religious leaders and artists who cooperated with Japan's colonial rule and its war of aggression
6. Other Pro-Japanese persons

   - A person who received rewards or exploits for cooperating with Japan's colonial rule and its war of aggression and showed a clear intent of collaborating with the Japanese

   - A person who collaborated with Japanese who destroyed, annihilated Korean culture and took part in illegal transfer of cultural heritage and damaged these items

   - A person who has a history as an independence fighter but who defected and chose to collaborate with the Japanese

   - A person who committed the above acts while living abroad
7. A person who may not fit into above categories but have a clear evidence that his or her committed pro-Japanese actions
8. A person who fits into above categories can be exempted if one can prove that he or she became anti-Japanese later on.

[475] Yun, Kyŏngro et al., *Ch'inil inmyŏng sajŏn* (Pro-Japanese Biographical Dictionary) (Seoul: Minjok munje yŏn'guso, 2009) 21.