The Japanese Colonization of Korea, 1910-1945
AND THE RISE AND DEFORMATION OF KOREAN NATIONALISM
Today’s Lecture

• Overview of the Colonial Period (1910-1945).

• Major Themes of the period (Assimilation, economic change, nationalism, status of women).
Issues to think about

• Origins of National Division.
• Origins of Korean Capitalism.
• Problem of Historical Memory.
Theodore Adorno and the Problem of Memory

“We will not have come to terms with the past until the causes of what happened then are no longer active. Only because these causes live on does the spell of the past remain, to this very day, unbroken.”
반일감정 and the Ghost of Japanese Colonialism
General Government Building
Ahn Jung-geun
Soedaemun Prison
Dokdo Island
Yasukuni Shrine
Monument to the Victims of Hiroshima
Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal
친일파 (Japanese Collaborators)
친일파 후손별 쇼공제기 현황

김연수
30명

민명희
30명

김정태
14명

융정현
11명

이달용
10명

조성근
9명

박철회
6명

고일홍
5명

이정식
5건

나수연
5명

이건준
5명
Japan and the Great Global Partition
Uniqueness of Japanese Colonization of Korea?

• “Late” empire. Compressed colonialism.
• Heavily Bureaucratized.
• Colonization of a familiar object.
• Proximity and integration into Japanese state economy.
• “Colonial Modernity”.
The Three Phases of Japanese Colonization

• Military Rule: 1910-1919.
• Cultural Rule (1919-1931).
• War-time mobilization (1931-1945).
The Advent of the Colonial State

• Authority Rooted in the Governor General
Terauchi Masataki
The Advent of the Colonial State

• Authority Rooted in the Governor General (1911 Company Law).

• Mass expansion colonial bureaucracy (10,000-87,000 officials). 246,000 Japanese and 63,000 Koreans. 42%.

• Penetration of provinces and counties. Production of knowledge.

• Duel legal system (Koreans under colonial law, Japanese residents under Japanese law).

• Police as central coercive force. (1/400).
Military Rule “암흑기” (1910-1919)

• Problem of elite and social resistance.
• Purge and pension off bureaucrats and scholars.
• Retain the aristocracy, but subordinate it to the colonial state.
• Ban political organizations and newspapers.
• Show trial and mass repression.
• 1910 Cadastral Survey.
Megata Tanetaro
Tawara Magoichi
Characteristics and Effects of Cadastral Survey

- Codified land system under modern state.
- Governor General becomes largest landowners.
- Further stratification of Korean society.
- Oriental Development Company.
- Increase in tenancy (average of 50% of harvest).
Military Rule (1910-1919)

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• Retain the aristocracy, but subordinate it to the colonial state.
• 1910 Cadastral Survey.
• Mass Militarized Education
March 1 1919 Independence Movement
Understanding the March 1 Independence Movement

• Two streams of Korean Nationalism.
• Education within colony and abroad.
• 1918, Rice Riots.
• Jan 1919, King Kojong’s death.
• Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points and the Paris Conference.
The March First Demonstrations

• Over 1 million Koreans.
• 대한 통립 만세 (Taehan tongnip manse, Long live an independent Korea).
• Japanese brutality (7,500 deaths, 45,000 arrests).
• Blow to Moderate nationalists.
Ch’oe Nam-san
Saito Makoto
Cultural Rule

• Tutelage for direct independence. Mollify grievances through selective reform.
• “Cultural Nationalism” flourishes.
• Divide and rule?
Cultural Policy and Cultural Nationalism (1919-1931)

- Equality of education.
- Korean papers return (circulation of 100,000 by end of decade).
- Spread of Hanŭl
- Development of “Minjok” nationalism.
Cont....

• Mass rise in organizations (985-5,728 in two years). Civil society?
• Youth Culture.
• Gradualist approach. Contradictory.
Yi Kwang-su
Cont....

• Mass rise in organizations (985-5,728 in two years).
• Youth Culture.
• Gradualist approach. Contradictory.
• National University Movement, Economic Development (Korean Production Movement).
• Leftism.
Total War Period (1931-1945)

• “One head two bodies”
• Total war mobilization.
• Destruction of Korean identity.
Rationalization of Japanese Empire

• False Pretext in Manchuria.
• Protectionism and importance of Manchuria.
• Militarists, nationalists, Zaibatsu.
• “Greater East-Asian Co-prosperity sphere”.
Total War Mobilization

- Korea integrated in larger empire, centered on Manchuria.
- Mass mobilization of Korean labour.
- Shifts in landlord structure.
- Export of rice, import of barely.
- Forced assimilation (cultural genocide?).
- Koreans do not achieve their own independence.
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkM_LXUCM
The Colonial Pressure Cooker

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN COLONIAL KOREA
Assimilation

• Full assimilation stated goal. Borrow from existing models.
• Contradictory Japanese attitudes.
• Korean response?
Japanese Travelogue

• “I feel as though I were living three thousands years back...so sedate, so dignified, so finely chiseled, and yet so void of expression...They belong not to the twentieth century or the tenth—or indeed the first century. They belong to a prehistoric age. Death presides over the peninsula.”
Arakawa Goro

• “They all look like Japanese...but appear to be a bit vacant, their mouth open, their eyes dull, somewhat lacking”.

Japanese Economist, 1935

• The Korean worker has no desire to advance, is lazy, has no desire to use intellect in work and has a very weak sense of responsibility”
Head of a Korean Bank, 1938

• “Think of (us) Koreans as your younger brothers or followers and be big enough to accept us as such. And if we make mistakes, guide us, teach us, and forgive us. In other words, please be generous...I would like the Japanese to become big brothers or patrons and treat Koreans with great tolerance”
The Fate of Koreans?

• Bourgeoise morality.
• Assimilation to be tied to economic policy.
• “Inept Government”.
1938-1945 Eradication of Korean Culture

• Increased Shinto Shrine attendance.
• Increased Japanese fluency (tied to military).
• “National” education policy. (tension between equality and racism).
• Forced adoption of Japanese names.
• Forced and voluntary integration in military and education.
• Failure?
Korean Attitudes Towards Assimilation

• Resentment as catalyst for nationalism.
• Assimilation as opportunity.
• Shifts in “moderate” intellectuals.
Yi Kwang-su
“National Character is something which has developed from a variety of centers, but in all the world, the only people to have been formed through the development of a true center as the Yamato people. Their national character is deep-rooted, strong, and has come down from high above. I do not think, however, that either the Korean people or the Chinese people have been formed from such a center.” Ch’oe Nam-san, author of the March 1 independence declaration. 1940
Korean Attitudes Towards Assimilation

• Resentment as catalyst for nationalism.
• Assimilation as opportunity. (Mundane Assimilation)
• Shifts in “moderate” intellectuals.
• Peasant resistance?
• Feelings of Rejection?
Economic and Social Change

- Colonial state brought into existing class structure.
- Korea becomes an export and import economy directed towards Japanese needs.
- Heavy industrialization in the North, farming and textile industries in the South.
- Mass displacement of the peasantry.
- Wealthy capitalist “collaborator” class emerges through Korean firms. (class over nation).
King Seong Su
Economic Change

• Communications and transportation networks.
• Mass migration within and outside of Korea.
• Intense repression of labour (capitalist paradise).
• Police state. 50% are Koreans.
Class over Nation and the failure of the Bourgeoise

• Key Reason for 1946-1953 Civil War.
• Legacy of Sadea?
• Development and dependency.
• Cooption
• 1938 Industrial Commission.
• “More Japanese than Korean, in both interests and ethos”.
• Colonialism was the catalyst, cradle, and death bed of bourgeoisie nationalism.
Nationalism and Communism 1920-1945

• Nationalists: Domestic and international.
• Gradualist and focused on cultural development and autonomy.
• Tied to Religious organizations.
• Split internationally. Legalists and resistance.
• Generally a middle class and elite movement and Seoul-based.
• Limited cooperation with the communists.
Syngman Rhee
Kim Ku
Nationalism and Communism 1920-1945

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Leftism under Colonialism

• Korea exiles and students abroad. Fractured.
• Clash with moderate line of working within colonial structure.
• Severe repression.
• 1925, Korean communist party forms (United Front Line).
• 1927-1931: Sin’ganhoe.
Park Heon-Young
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Manchurian Guerrillas

• 1931, Manchurian Incident. 200,000 guerrillas form.
• Kim Il-Sung.
• Vicious counter-insurgency tactics from Kwangtung army.
• Manchurian academy and anti-communism.
• 1939, mostly defeated, and 1941 Kim is in hiding in Russia.
Kim Il Sung
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Park Chung Hee
Manchurian Guerrillas

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• Colonialism is not overthrown by Koreans.
Korean Women Under Japanese Colonialism

- Traditional Confucian gender roles.
- Education and Christianity.
- 1920s onwards, reformers vs radicals.
- Solidarity as survival.
The “Comfort Women” in History and Memory
Kim Hak Sun
Comfort Women System 1932-1945

• Response to problem of “disorganized rape”.
• Evolves out of existing system.
• Recruitment process: State, Japanese contractors, Korean pimps, debt patronage, kidnapping, complicity of the family.
• Who were they? 80% Koreans, lower-class.
• Culprits?
Struggle for Recognition
Decades of Silence 1945-1988

- 1946-1948 Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal.
- Cultural Factors.
- 1988, first academic conference held on the issue.
1990s: Comfort Women Make a Stand

• 1990, brought up in Japanese Diet. Lawsuits follow
• 1993: Kono Statement.
• 1995 Asia Women’s Fund Set up
• Japanese Revisionists.
Official Narrative

• Ethnicized. “Halmoni” (grandmother).
• Typically decontextualized.
• Emplotted within larger narrative of Japanese decimation of Korea.
• “Sexual Slavery”.
The Present Impasse

- 2011, women’s groups build statue outside of Japanese embassy.
- Dec 2015, governments reach final agreement.
- Outstanding issues with survivors.
- Problems of memory within Korea.