



Neo-Nationalist Interpretations of Japan's Annexation of Korea: The Colonization Debate in Japan and South Korea

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This is the first in what we hope will be a continuing series of articles on the one hundredth anniversary of Japan's annexation or colonization of Korea and the subsequent colonial experience. The coordinators.

Did in Meiji 43 [1910] Japan annex Korea, the Empire of Korea (J. Daikan teikoku, K. Taehan chéguk)? Do you call this Japan's colonizing the Empire of Korea? If so, [Mr. Education Minister], I would like to ask, is Scotland an English colony? Please, could you answer this question for me? Are Northern Ireland and Wales English colonies? Please let me know. Before World War I, was Hungary an Austrian colony?

....

Japan did not want to annex Korea. Koreans came to Japan and asked to be annexed. This was expressed in the Korean Emperor [Sunjong]'s last Imperial Rescript, where it is written, "From now we have no choice but to request the Emperor of Imperial Japan's protection." Also, in 1910 a demonstration took place in Seoul, the capital. Those leading this demonstration were from the Advance in Unity Society (J. Isshinkai, K. Ilchinhoe). Do you know what kind of demonstration this was? It was one that requested Japan to merge with (J. gappei), or annex (J. heigō) Korea.

Why Murata Haruki, a salaryman active in a number of conservative causes,² chose August 7, 2009 and the offices of Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (*Monbukagakushō*) as the time and place to deliver his speech is not clear. His posting of a recording of his monologue on [YouTube](#), however, has drawn him an audience—as of October 28, 2010, close to 17,300 viewers—that far exceeds that of his live presentation.³ The Internet, and particularly YouTube, is one of a number of popular venues that neo-conservative groups have used to more efficiently disseminate their messages, which frequently address such Japan-Korea issues as the Dokto/Takeshima controversy, North Korea-Japan relations, and Japan-based Koreans.⁴ Their agenda is consistent: to "correct" interpretations of recent Japanese history that they deem to be unpatriotic. These presentations thus supplement other efforts by Japanese determined to write a "new history" that instills national pride to replace the shame-ridden interpretations of Japan's colonial and wartime history.⁵



Murata discussing his views opposing foreigner voting rights.

Murata's presentation, which on this occasion targeted Japan's annexation of the Korean peninsula, is simple, low cost, and easily accessed. Unlike his other YouTube uploads that capture him lecturing before an audience, neither he nor anyone else appears in this presentation. Instead, viewers are offered only the audio portion of Murata's speech, with his key points summarized in white Japanese text against a black background. Choruses of gruff jeers from his cohort enliven his rather bland diatribe. His message on this particular day, centering on the nature of Japan's occupation of Korea, was first that it represented a case of annexation (as opposed to colonization), and that it was the Koreans who requested a reluctant Japanese to annex their country.

Close geographic proximity, a history of checkered diplomatic relations, and an active Korean voice that protests attempts by Japanese to revise this history have encouraged neo-conservatives. Japan's incorporation of the Korean peninsula in 1910 occupies a central part of its agenda. Arguments such as those put forth by Murata demonstrate that differences of opinion stubbornly persist even after six decades of Korean liberation from Japanese rule. These differences exist primarily, but not exclusively, between Japanese and Koreans. Murata's choice of venue—a Japanese rather than a Korean government building—suggests such differences also exist among Japanese groups. His views on Japan's occupation closely resemble those frequently expressed in Japan's conservative circles: 1) the equal status of Koreans and Japanese within the empire; 2)

Japanese benevolent contributions to Korea and the Korean people; and 3) Korean support for Japan's annexation of their country. Additionally, Murata joins others in rejecting charges that Japan committed crimes against the Korean people, such as its campaign to encourage Koreans to adopt Japanese names, its labor mobilization policies (including comfort women and forced laborers), and its ambition to "erase" Korean identity.⁶

The existence of a strong conservative voice is hardly unique to Japan, as witnessed at the gathering of European and Japanese extremist groups held in Tokyo this past August. The existence of groups jealously seeking to guard and guide the national narrative, particularly to repulse external or internal criticism of it, can be found in all modern nations. The United States, Germany and China, for example, illustrate some of the different ways in which this is manifest. Japan's case is interesting in that outside forces have joined internal pressures to criticize its attempts to "revise" its colonial and wartime history. This criticism has encouraged conservative groups to address areas of its imperial past that the histories of other former colonial powers have either omitted or glossed over. If, for example, Filipinos actively protest United States interpretations of its pre-World War II colonial occupation of their country, their demands hardly receive the attention that Koreans and Chinese gain by attacking Japan's attempts to "normalize" its historical interpretations of the less attractive areas of their past relations.⁷ Criticism of Japan's perceptions of this past, in turn, has reawakened a conservative voice in Japan that believes sovereign states reserve the right to script a national narrative that elicits pride rather than shame among its people.⁸ The resulting conflict creates a divide at a time when China, South Korea, and Japan grope for ways to promote closer ties. Questions that Murata raises in his diatribe strike at the heart of Japan's thirty-six year occupation of the Korean peninsula, and thus are too important to leave unattended. They leave us wondering why Japan finds more problematic than other former colonial powers the shedding of this history, a question which this paper will examine in its conclusion.

Murata Haruki's primary goal is clear. By challenging the idea that Japan greedily colonized Korea, he aims to narrate Japan's occupation of Korea as an act of benevolent annexation, one similar to England's unions with Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland rather than its aggressive incorporation of colonies such as India and Burma (Myanmar). Drawing this distinction thus distances Japan from Europe's late-nineteenth century land grabbing activities in Africa and Asia, and defends its stated mission of freeing these enslaved peoples from oppressive Western colonial rule. Japan annexed Korea to unite Japanese and Koreans as fellow national subjects. Indeed, this "union" was welcomed by the Korean people themselves, as called for in demonstrations organized by the Advance in Unity Society (Ilchinhoe), and indicated in the Korean Emperor Sunjong's final Imperial Rescript. One additional justification, that this marriage delivered peace to an East Asia region that had recently endured a series of wars centered on the Korean peninsula, was heard both at the time of annexation and in more recent arguments put forth by the Association to Create New History Textbooks (J. *Atarashi rekishi kyōkasho o tsukurukai*).⁹

Murata's arguments simplify rather complex issues in an extreme way and thus offer a skewed narrative of Japan's colonial history. Japanese debates on the wording of this expansionist activity, as Hilary Conroy's groundbreaking study in 1960 revealed, resulted in the creation of a new word, "*heigō*," one that Japanese saw as a softer derivation of *heidon*—to "annex, devour, [or] swallow up."¹⁰ Most Japanese writing in 1895 and 1910 would have agreed with Murata's characterization of Japan's absorption of Korea as an act of annexation. To them, the close cultural and geographic proximity that Koreans shared with Japanese required the two peoples forming a much more intimate relationship than that advanced by colonizers in distant colonies, such as between the British and Indians or Burmese.¹¹ This discourse further advised the Japanese administration to follow what Japanese perceived to be a fraternal English-Scot/Welsh example, but avoid the estranged English-Irish one. The University of Tokyo's inaugural holder of the chair in colonial studies, Nitobe Inazō, for example, wrote in December 1919, months after the Japanese battled a major challenge to their rule, that "to an English student of colonization it will be highly interesting to watch the development of Korea to a Wales or – to an Ireland."¹²



Nitobe Inazō, Educator, appeared on Japan's 5000 yen bill

Nitobe's use of "colonization" to represent both English and Japanese incorporation of peripheral territories reflects the scholar's views on the term "*shokuminchishugi*" (colonialism). This term, he argued, could be rendered as either "to plant people" or "to increase people," depending on the initial Chinese character. In Nitobe's mind, the former more closely reflected Japan's assimilation policy, to develop the Korean people as imperial subjects.¹³ His explanation suggests that one century ago colonization and annexation shared a more synonymous meaning than Murata may be willing to accept.

植民 (plant) vs. 殖民 (increase)

Others, such as the future prime minister, Hara Takashi, contrasted the English example that permitted self-rule ("colonization"), against the French (Algeria) and German (Alsace and Lorraine) examples that adopted assimilation (annexation). He advised Japan to adopt the latter policy in Taiwan.¹⁴ One of Japan's most passionate supporters of assimilation, Hara repeated this argument after Japan

incorporated Korea into its empire, advising that its success hinged on the degree to which it successfully incorporated the peninsula into the archipelago's existing political, cultural, and economic institutions.¹⁵ Hara's argument followed those frequently heard at this time that divided colonial policies into the English (association) and French (assimilation) approaches, a division Murata correctly suggests to be simplistic.



Hara Takashi, Japanese Prime Minister (1918-1921)

As suggested in Murata's monologue, the English pursued two distinct policies: an inclusive policy that it introduced in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, and segregative policies that it practiced in overseas colonies such as India and Burma. While the English government granted peoples in both cases self-rule, only its United Kingdom possessions sent representatives to the British Parliament. Hara apparently considered the United Kingdom examples to be limited in the English offering their subjects only political rights. Japan's possessions required a more comprehensive assimilation policy that integrated people politically, but also culturally and economically.

Though seen as "annexed" (J. *heigō sareta*) territory in 1910, Korea is today regarded as "colonized" (J. *shokuminchika*) territory, with some adding the qualifier that Japan's action was "unique" when compared to other colonizing powers. Only Japan incorporated territories at its periphery that were inhabited by peoples who were racially similar to the colonizers.¹⁶ Similar to Murata's reasoning, this expansionist activity held little in common with Western colonial activities on the African continent or in present-day Southeast Asia. Rather, it better resembled a more intense form of occupation where states absorbed territories on their periphery to strengthen national security. This expansion may have been unique in its time, but not within the broader history of territorial expansion. A primary concern in such cases, which included the examples of French Algeria, German Alsace and Lorraine, and England's formation of the United Kingdom, was fear over an enemy, or potential enemy, getting there first. Conroy, for one, argues that Japan's ambitions to annex Korea were driven by this realist thinking.¹⁷ The same argument could be made for its incorporation of Ezo (present-day Hokkaido) and the Kingdom of Ryukyu (present-day Okinawa Prefecture), which acted to buffer Japan's two extremes, and later Taiwan, incorporated in part to protect Okinawa.¹⁸

Contemporary historiography on expansion appears to have drawn a rather consistent line to separate "colonized" states from "annexed" territories based on their present status, rather than their historical development. Annexed territories tend to be those that remain under the jurisdiction of the expanding entity, colonized territories being those that have for the most part successfully gained their independence. Murata's omission of Ireland, which gained its independence from England in July 1920,

and his inclusion of Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, which have retained their United Kingdom membership, suggests his understanding of this distinction. His attempt to depict the Korean peninsula as an annexed territory reflects an attempt to break from it.

Perceptions on Korea's status appear to have shifted just prior to its liberation. Visitors to Korea under Japanese rule recognized the peninsula as annexed territory. California Representative Henry Z. Osborne, who led a Congressional tour in 1920 through Northeast Asia, characterized Korea in his report as "now as fixedly a part [of the Japanese Empire] as California, Arizona, and New Mexico are a part of the United States."¹⁹ Stanley K. Hornbeck, then a professor but during World War II a key advisor to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, suggested as much in 1924 when he wrote that with Korea's incorporation into the Japanese empire it "passed" or "disappeared as a state."²⁰

Attitudes change with circumstances. Following the outbreak of the Pacific War the United States altered its thinking toward Japan's possessions. We see

this revised attitude in the December 1943 Cairo Communiqué drafted by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Chiang Kai-shek, which suggested Korea was now being seen as territory that had been colonized by force. Here the Allies vowed to expel Japan “from all...territories which [it] had taken by violence and greed” while seeking to protect their own, or add new, colonial territories. This, of course, included the Korean peninsula, which was to be granted its independence “in due course,” after an undetermined period of Allied occupation. May we conclude that from this time Korea’s status, as viewed by outsiders, changed from being “annexed” to “colonized” territory?

“Korean People became Japanese National subjects”

I have another question. Are you familiar with what is written in the Imperial Rescript of Showa (sic) 43 [1910]? It said, “From today all Korean people of the Empire of Korea have become national subjects of Imperial Japan.” From this day the 13 million poor and starving people in Korea became Japanese Imperial subjects (shinmin). From the next day they received Japanese passports. Did Indians and Burmese receive British passports? Please let me know.

[Background calls] Answer! Answer now!

....

In other words, they were the same national subjects (as Japanese).

Murata continued his diatribe by addressing an important point, that the expanding entity’s image of the people it incorporated is critical to determining the territory’s status as either colonized or annexed. But is his interpretation of Japanese images of Koreans correct? Did the colonizers truly view the “13 million poor and starving people of Korea” as the “same national subjects” (J. *kokumin*, K. *kungmin*) from August 1910? Murata cites the Meiji Emperor’s Imperial Rescript on Annexation that, he informs, identified the Korean people as such, as evidence that Japanese viewed Koreans as such. This view reflects the idea that Koreans were permitted Japanese nationality with annexation, and had it taken from them in 1946, when they were excluded from participating in Japan’s first postwar election. Both views, however, require further investigation. Murata’s claim does not coincide with the published version of this document, or any other document drafted for this occasion. Nor does it reflect any of the active discussions that took place in the Japanese media around this time.

Most problematic is his claim that the colonizers regarded Koreans as “*kokumin*,” in other words, as Japanese. The closest the Meiji Emperor’s Rescript comes to using this word is in paragraph four, where it declared that the “people of Korea will enjoy enhanced blessings under Our immediate guardianship...” However, here the Japanese text renders “people” as *minshū*, and the Korean text *minchung* (both translatable as “people” or “masses,” but—unless qualified as such—distinct from “[Japanese] national”). Resident General Terauchi Masataka’s statement comes closer. He declared, “As for the people of Korea, in general, all of them shall become subjects of the Empire of Japan...” “Subjects” is rendered here as *shinmin* in the Japanese text and *sinmin* in the Korean. Indeed, the word *kokumin* in reference to Koreans does not appear in the official government texts carried by the media on this day.²¹

国民 (*kokumin*) vs. 臣民 (*shinmin*)

Murata later refers to Koreans as *shinmin*. Only he can reveal whether this shift was intentional or accidental. Unlike Murata, during Japan’s tenure in Korea most Japanese writers maintained a strict distinction that separated the Japanese as *kokumin* from the Korean as *shinmin*. They included Koreans as *kokumin* only when both peoples acted as the subject of their thought, and then in the context of both peoples “becoming national subjects” (*kokuminka*). The Japanese-language media on at least one occasion explained the necessity of maintaining a distinction between the two peoples. Within a month after annexation the *Keijō shinpō*, a private Japanese newspaper in the Korean capital, argued the following:

Korea, in fact, has become Japanese territory. Koreans have become subjects of imperial Japan (*teikoku no shinmin*). But we cannot accept that the Korean, in becoming an imperial subject, has also directly become a Japanese (*Nihonjin*). Today, those who are entitled to claim the [status of] Japanese are the 50 million or so people of the homeland (*naichijin*). This does not include Koreans, who have yet to fulfill the conditions required of this status. Their ethnicity, language, and customs history (*fūzoku rekishi*) may share the same lineage, but there still remain huge gaps [between the two people]. Even if both are subjects of imperial Japan, a distinction must be maintained between Japanese and Korean.

The editorial next cited the British example. England, it claimed, did not incorporate the Irish, the Scots, or the Welsh into the United Kingdom as “English.” It coined the term “British” to maintain distinction between Anglo and Celt. Japanese must also follow this example by integrating Koreans as *shinmin*, but not as *Nihonjin*.²² Other discussions carried by the Japanese media appeared to justify this distinction by arguing that while the Korean and Japanese peoples shared similar roots of origin, the separation of the two peoples over the past several centuries required that Koreans catch up to their Japanese cousins to prepare for their assimilation. Before 1938, when Korean cooperation in the war effort became critical, many writers added that the “catching up” process should not be hurried. For the foreseeable future, gradual assimilation would suffice.²³

Japan’s administrative practices reflected the division of Japanese and Korean identities rather than both being considered as Japanese nationals. From the 1930s Japan-based Koreans were given voting rights in accordance with Japanese suffrage laws (males over 25 years of age), and were allowed to volunteer for military service from 1938. Military conscription began from 1944. However, those residing in Japan were not permitted to transfer their residency papers to Japan, and had to return to Korea whenever they needed to amend this document or obtain a copy of it, such as when Korean boys applied for voluntary military service. Socially, there are many examples that demonstrate the fact that Japanese considered Koreans as foreign rather than fellow countrymen and women.

Indicative of this lower status is the segregated education system in Korea. A state’s education system provides a useful gauge to measure colonizer intentions due to the institution’s importance in nation building, as well as in creating the level playing field needed to provide its recipients with equal opportunity in employment and social status. The structure of Japan’s education policy offers a telltale sign as to the extent to which Japanese believed their own assimilation rhetoric. Required of the Government-General was a bold statement indicating its intention to provide for Koreans an education system of equal quality to the Japanese system, followed by an education policy that developed this intention. The Government-General’s statement would necessarily have included Japan’s ambition to enforce compulsory education. To draw links with Meiji Restoration education policy, the administration might also have quoted the ambitious vow that Japan included in its 1872 Fundamental Code of Education, that “there shall, in the future, be no community with an illiterate family, or a family with an illiterate person.”²⁴ Laying the infrastructure to accomplish this goal would, as the pledge suggested, take time. Even by the turn of the century, Japanese elementary schools enrolled by world standards a high percentage of its people (91 percent of males and 72 percent of females) but still less than its total population.²⁵ However, compulsory education remained its goal. Another institution—universal military conscription initiated in 1873—further encouraged education development as the Japanese government realized the need to fill its military’s ranks with literate and patriotic men from all prefectures across the archipelago. Educating females provided children with capable instructors to direct their home education (J. *katei kyōiku*) that eased their transition into elementary school education.

Japanese articulation of Korean education policy fell far short of this intention. Like Japan’s education institutions in Hokkaido, Okinawa, and Taiwan, in Korea the administration initially established a dual education system that instructed Japanese and indigenous children in separate school facilities under unequal conditions. The first Education Act, which the Government-General introduced in 1911, made no mention of this education as compulsory. Indeed, we find no

such mention until 1938, the same year that the Japanese military began to accept Korean volunteer soldiers (J. *shiganhei*, K. *chiwŏnbyŏng*). At this time, the Government-General announced that it would advance compulsory education in Korea, but only after another decade. The administration later expedited this plan by two years, to commence in 1946, after it began drafting Korean boys into its military from 1944. Even then it estimated that the schools would be able to accommodate but 90 percent of Korean males and 50 percent of Korean females.²⁶ Different from Japan, where compulsory education was instituted prior to universal military conscription legislation, Japan promised Koreans compulsory education after it began drafting Korean youth into its military.

We see differences between Japan's peninsula and archipelago education policies in the Government-General's dual education policy that segregated the peninsula's Japanese and Korean residents,²⁷ with schools for the latter being decidedly inferior. The first Education Act limited Korean elementary school education to four years, two less than their Japanese counterparts. Korean children wishing to advance to higher education had to complete a two-year preparatory course to make up for this deficiency. Also, the Korean school curriculum, with its high concentration on Japanese language classes, offered Korean students less training in science, math, and history. The fact that most of their instruction was conducted in Japanese, a foreign language, and in classrooms holding far more students than Japanese classrooms, further inhibited Korean scholastic development.²⁸ The administration could correctly claim that time and resources prevented its providing space for all Korean children to study. The operative word here is *intention*. Unlike Japan's 1872 education legislation, prior to the outbreak of war in 1938 the Government-General spoke of, but did little to implement, a system equal to that enjoyed by Japanese *kokumin*, both those residing in Japan and on the peninsula. Without equality in education, the thought that Japanese regarded Koreans as their equals, regardless of whether they indeed issued them Japanese passports, remains remote.

Systemic inequalities between Japanese and Koreans, which appeared throughout their daily lives, did not go unnoticed. The most important critique of these inequalities appeared in an opinion paper (J. *ikensho*) submitted by Hara Takashi (Japan's Prime Minister from 1918 to 1921) in 1920. Here the statesman attacked the generally negative attitude that Japanese held toward "inferior" Koreans, as reflected in the Government-General policies that nurtured segregation. Administering a people as fools, he warned, would hardly encourage them to change their attitudes toward Japanese. Hara advised the Government-General to seek a comprehensive Japanese-Korean unity that integrated the classrooms, but also the home (through intermarriage), the neighborhood, and the work place.²⁹ His influence is reflected in the reforms that ushered in the period of "cultural rule" (J. *bunka seiji*) that characterized the 1920s, particularly those reforms that allowed Koreans to study in schools for Japanese and eased the regulations for miscegenation.

The Government-General regularly increased the number of schools on the peninsula. But, as one Korean complained, it placed higher priority on control than education. How else, Chu Yosŭp challenged, could Japan justify employing over three times as many spies as teachers (30,000 to 8,111)?³⁰ Japanese assimilation rhetoric often demonstrated its limitations, as seen in the discussion surrounding the failed efforts in 1929 to increase Korean political participation.³¹ Even as Japan prepared to initiate its most ambitious effort to unify the two peoples, the *Naisen ittai* (Japan-Korea, one body) strengthening plan of 1938, Japan's most passionate Korean supporters found room to criticize Japanese failure to follow their assimilation slogans with policies that encouraged integration.³² As Yi Sŭngu, a Korean attendee of meetings convened to evaluate the *Naisen ittai* plan, complained Japanese repeatedly advertise *Naisen ittai* but then respond to Korean efforts to identify themselves as Japanese by refusing to accept them as such then people.³³

"Korea Squeezed Japan"

One more thing, Mr. Education Minister. I need for you to tell me one more thing. After annexation, Imperial Korea's royal family remained. Japan gave to that royal family Prince Nashimoto's oldest daughter as a bride. What does this mean? Can you tell me? What does it mean for a country to give a princess to another country?

How about the Burmese? Did they ever offer a princess to the English royal family? Did the British Empire ever provide Burma with a princess?

.....

The taxes that Japan charged Koreans or this Regional Financial Grant system (chihō kōfukinsei), which amounted to more?... Japan contributed much more through the Regional Financial Grant system than it took from Koreans in taxes. How can you call this a colony? It was Korea that squeezed (sakushu) Japan.

(Background calls) Return it! Give it back!

Japanese conservatives often cite the benefits that Japanese rule contributed to Korea and wonder why Koreans to this day refuse to acknowledge the more benevolent side of Japanese rule. Murata's statements reflect the disappointment that many Japanese feel when Koreans characterize this period as harsh and cruel. His attempts to counter Korean criticisms, however, either neglect entirely or offer a positive spin to the more oppressive elements of Japanese rule. What, Murata might consider, did the Korean people gain by their last crown prince being provided with a Japanese bride? To what extent did Japan's financial assistance directly assist the Korean people under Japanese rule? To what extent did it contribute to Japanese control of land and industry in Korea?

Messages appearing on another [YouTube](#), titled in English as "The Korean File of Korea Under Japanese Rule" and in Japanese as "Nikkan heigō no shinjutsu" (The Truth Behind the Japan-Korea Annexation),³⁴ advertise this benevolent side of Japanese rule more directly. Its anonymous authors borrow a technique often employed by the Government-General that compared pictures purported to have been taken before and after Japan's arrival to document Korea's progress under Japanese rule. One example placed pictures of a one-room Korean schoolroom alongside a grand school building erected by the Japanese. This example displayed student seating arrangements, the apparently random seating arrangement of Korean students against the orderly seating patterns in Japanese schools, to illustrate progress.³⁵

Its contemporary YouTube counterpart used street scenes in a similar way. It featured a pre-colonial Korean dirt road lined with quaint traditional one-story "mushroom-roofed" houses³⁶ against the modern paved road lined with multi-storied shops of the Japanese era. Rather than oral commentary, this presentation offers bilingual (Japanese and English) text explanations to augment the pictorial essay's intended message. Scenes from pre-annexation Seoul are followed by a passage from Isabella Bird's 1897 travelogue, *Korea and Its Neighbors*, in which she describes Korea's capital as "the dirtiest city in the world." Similarly, the post-annexation pictorial essay is interlaced with captions advertising Japan's successes: Japanese policy lengthened the average Korean lifespan, and doubled its population; Japan's education system greatly improved Korean literacy rates; Koreans in China requested permission to use Japanese names to escape discrimination; there were no so-called "sex slaves" but "mere prostitutes" who answered help-wanted advertisements.

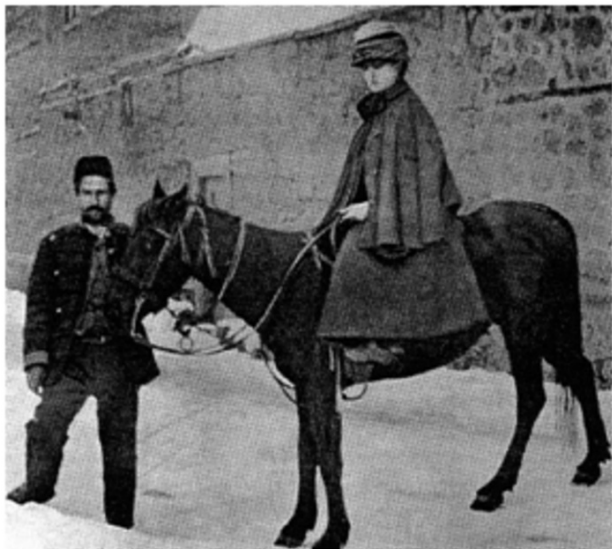
As with Murata's presentation, arguments presented in "Korean File" are misleading. Its only presenting Japanese rule as positive encourages viewers to accept their messages as the complete truth, which of course they are not. We have little reason to doubt the authenticity of the photographs themselves, for they do not appear to have been doctored. Likewise, the data that supports the presentation's messages regarding literacy, name changes, and the comfort women can also be substantiated. Verification of authenticity, however, does not necessarily eliminate questions of accuracy.

The before-and-after pictorial sequences raise several suspicions. First, the undated pictures prevent us from verifying the temporal and spatial accuracy of the comparison being made. While it is clear that the pictures depicted traditional Korean scenes, we cannot determine, for example, whether they were taken before or after Japan's arrival. Nor do they tell us whether the Korean situation improved under Japanese rule. These photos also reveal little about representation. Did they properly represent the entire system of pre- and post-annexation schools and streets, or were they simply exceptional examples of

the two? Finally, displaying in simplistic terms the sequence of traditional Korean and modern Japanese aims encourages—but falls short of earning—the viewer's conclusion that Japanese annexation was essential for Korean modernization.

A more careful reading (and a more accurate citation) of Bird's travelogue, from which "Korean File" quotes to demonstrate Korean backwardness, suggests a contrary argument—that Koreans were capable of modernizing without direct Japanese rule. Her actual impressions of Seoul in 1895 read as follows: "I shrink from describing intra-mural Seoul. I thought it the foulest city on earth till I saw Peking, and its smell the most odious, until I encountered those of Shao-shing! For a great city and a capital its meanness is indescribable."³⁷ Compliments did not easily flow from Bird's pen, but impressions of Seoul that she registered during her visit to the Korean capital in 1897 suggest the city's remarkable advance.

Seoul in many parts, specially in the direction of the south and west gates, was literally unrecognizable. Streets, with a minimum width of 55 feet, with deep stone-lined channels on both sides, bridged by stone slabs, had replaced the foul alleys, which were breeding-grounds of cholera. Narrow lanes had been widened, slimy runlets had been paved, roadways were no longer "free coups" for refuse, bicyclists "scorched" along broad, level streets, "express wagons" were looming in the future, preparations were being made for the building of a fine French hotel in a fine situation.... Seoul, from having been the foulest is now on its way to being the cleanest city in the Far East.³⁸



Isabella Bird, World Traveler

Angus Hamilton offered similar observations in 1905, thus suggesting that progress continued up through the time when Japan forced a protectorate relationship upon Korea.³⁹ South Korean scholars such as Yi T'aejin argue that it was Japanese interference that squelched Korean efforts to modernize.⁴⁰

The argument could be made that these improvements were only possible with foreign, including Japanese, assistance. Much of Seoul's communication and transportation infrastructure developed from the concessions that the Korean government sold to foreigners. Yet, the same argument applies to other cases of modern development, including that of Japan. Tokyo, which bloomed from the late 1880s, received healthy assistance from foreign experts recruited by the Japanese government.⁴¹ Assistance in this case did not presuppose occupation as a condition.

The pictorial essay also tells us little about accessibility. Who benefitted from the modern facilities that the Japanese administration introduced to Korea? "Korean File" trusts that its viewers will accept the photo and text display as evidence of Japan's direct contribution to the Korean people. Reports on this progress, however, suggest that the Government-General favored Japanese neighborhoods over Korean neighborhoods. As discussed above, Koreans eventually did gain access to Japanese schools after 1920. Likewise, the shops situated along the modern street did solicit (and were probably dependent upon) Korean patronage. Travel literature and fiction, however, described the uncomfortable psychological effect that the two peoples experienced when crossing into the other's zone.⁴² Koreans who crossed into modern zones did so as a minority entering a

foreign culture within the borders of their own land. The Korean people may have inherited an advanced infrastructure after its August 1945 liberation from Japanese rule. But the reality of the colonial period more closely resembled a two-tier society that segregated the majority of Koreans and Japanese both physically and psychologically, as Hara Takashi criticized in 1920. Save for the small percentage of affluent Koreans, it was Japan's sudden defeat in 1945 rather than its benevolent rule that allowed the majority of Koreans access to the advancements introduced by Japan's colonial administration during this period.

Many Koreans recognized Japanese strengths and the potential value they held for assisting Korea's modern development. The scholar Yun Ch'iho, for example, frequently noted these strengths in his criticism of Korean shortcomings. His diary entry for May 14, 1920, is illustrative: "One of the material benefits of the Japanese rule in Korea is the good roads. They show they have brains. Yet most Koreans haven't brains enough to appreciate good roads when they see them." Yun, however, also criticized Japanese duplicity in that their policy of segregation often contradicted their rhetoric of unity. Public works projects provided one illustrative example, as Yun noted in his July 21, 1923, diary entry:

So far as Korean residents...are concerned, there is neither more nor less reasons today to have the electric car lines between Chongno and the Angukdong square, than there were say, 3 years ago. But no sooner [than] the Industrial Bank...built its official residences in Angukdong than the line is laid. Thus in every sort of improvement, the first and last question with the Japanese authorities is "Will it benefit the Japanese" and not "Will it benefit the Koreans."The Japanese and foreign apologists point to the introduction of modern facilities of transportation and of communication as the great blessings Japan have conferred on the Koreans. The neglect or absence of these improvements will hurt the Japanese infinitely more than the Koreans.⁴³

The "Korean File" also includes a picture of an electric car as an example of Japan's contribution to Korean modernity. Yet, Yun's observations remind us of the limitations in relying solely on photographs to depict advancements in Korea under Japanese rule.

Another important aspect emphasized in the neo-conservative agenda is the correction of negative charges levied against Japan's rule in Korea, particularly the policy decisions that sought to assimilate Koreans as Japanese.⁴⁴ This agenda could justifiably cite the failure of Japan's critics to contextualize their more negative claims against the Government-General. Its harsher measures, rather than being characteristic of the entire period, reflect the total war atmosphere that Japan sought to create from the late 1930s. They might also argue that these policies were hardly as total as they are often depicted. The Government-General downgraded Korean language instruction to an elective class in 1938, and banned it from the school curriculum in 1943. However, it continued to permit publication of periodicals in Korean up through Japan's defeat.⁴⁵ The campaign to pressure Koreans to Japanize their names, begun in 1940, encompassed the majority, but not the entire Korean population.⁴⁶

Attempts by Japanese to argue that these administrative measures were benevolent, that they were policies advanced by Koreans, misrepresent aspirations of the minority as the will of the majority. Among Koreans there were some who, for various reasons, considered it advantageous to adopt a Japanese name. Ken C. Kawashima, for example, discovered Japan-based Koreans using Japanese pseudonyms in order to hide their Korean identity when dealing with landlords who

Yun Ch'iho

refused to rent to foreigners.⁴⁷ The example presented in “Korean File” reveals a similar need: Korean peasants hoping to assume a Japanese identity to escape discrimination, here at the hands of the Chinese. It is also conceivable that pro-Japanese Koreans requested that the Japanese adopt such a policy to expedite assimilation. Korean literacy rates no doubt improved as Japanese increased the number of schools on the peninsula. Likewise, among the “comfort women,” while the vast majority were kidnapped or deceived into service, there apparently were “prostitutes” recruited through advertisements.⁴⁸

While acknowledging that Japanese policy benefited pockets of Korean society,⁴⁹ a responsible argument must also acknowledge that Japan’s colonial policies systematically excluded the majority of Koreans from these institutions of modernity. Reliance on a minority sample to explain the entirety of Japan’s colonial rule grossly neglects the fact that Japan’s administrative decisions forced a large number of participants to act against their volition.⁵⁰ It turns a blind eye to the many people who were harshly punished for opposing Japan’s occupation of their country. As Michael Robinson has shown, Japanese media policy that allowed the Korean people access to indigenous newspapers and radio broadcasting ultimately strengthened Korean national identity, suggesting a will by many Koreans to resist the colonizers’ assimilation overtures.⁵¹ Finally, neo-conservatives neglect to consider that Japan’s history of expansion in East Asia did not end with the emperor’s declaration on August 15, 1945, nor did it end with treaties of normalization. This history lives within the people it affected. Denial and beautification of this history disturbs the efforts of its surviving victims to distance themselves from this past, and serves as a painful reminder of Japan’s unwillingness to accept responsibility for the injustices that Japanese rule inflicted upon them.

“Normalcy” and the Neo-Conservative Agenda

I learned a completely different history [from Murata’s presentation] than that which I studied in school. Young people definitely need to watch this.

As a Japanese who didn’t know this history, I was shocked.

I hope that young Koreans definitely understand this reality.

The above comments, all written in Japanese, demonstrate the impact that such YouTube presentations have had on their Japanese viewers, thus suggesting the need to examine conservative messages more closely.⁵² This analysis has concluded that this conservative agenda, rather than disseminating false information, produces a misleading narrative that exploits examples supporting its claim that Japan crafted expansionist policies beneficial to the Korean people. Indeed, it contends, Koreans encouraged Japan’s actions. The Korean-Japanese relationship thus resembled that enjoyed by territories annexed by England that remain a part of the United Kingdom, rather than those colonized by force into the British Empire. If there was a colonizer in this relationship, Murata further argues, it was the Koreans who from after 1930 migrated to Japan in greater numbers than Japanese migrating to Korea. As with many points made in his presentation, Murata here neglects the power dimension of the colonizer-colonized relationship that influenced their migration to Japan, but also to Manchuria, and which controlled their movements upon arrival.⁵³

Understanding the passion behind Japanese conservative efforts, and the influence it has on Japanese people, requires an understanding of Japan’s postwar conflicts over how to write its modern history. These conflicts date back to the early years following its defeat, when the United States occupation administration instructed Japanese to black out textbook information that it deemed militaristic. The primary question facing Japanese at this time, as put forth by Ienaga Saburō, remains the essential question facing Japanese at the core of their present conflict with Koreans and Chinese over textbook content: “How do we search for the correct knowledge of Japanese history that should be the content of correct teaching of the national history?”⁵⁴

Post-World War II geopolitics have left Japan between a rock and a hard place in terms of the goal of becoming a “normal state” (*futsū no kuni*). The term is generally used by Japanese of conservative persuasion to argue the need for Japan to abolish Article 9 and expand its global military responsibilities. Here I extend it to mean a state also capable of defending its national narrative. The victors in the war, and particularly the United States and Great Britain but also France and Russia, quickly established as “normal” the omission or beautification of national narratives by either changing or omitting the less attractive aspects of their colonial and wartime histories. On the other hand, the economic and military influence wielded by these states over the postwar period has prevented the vanquished from challenging the victors’ colonial and wartime historical narratives. This influence requires, for example, Japan to not only compensate atomic bomb victims, but also to remain silent with respect to the bomb in the dominant US World War II narrative: that they were ‘necessary’ for ending the war and saving (American) lives.

The 1980s saw Japan reach a pinnacle in economic strength and national self-confidence, which encouraged it to seek to revise its colonial and wartime histories at the very time when the national sentiments and economies of its victims, notably China and South Korea, blossomed. Japanese attempts to develop a heroic national narrative centered on colonialism and war faced criticism that the victors have escaped. These are the very examples of “normalcy” that Japan sought to emulate. The frustration provoked by this predicament has encouraged neo-conservatives like Murata Haruki and the authors of “Korean File” to address, and attempt to justify—albeit in a rather skewed way—historical events that “normal countries” have succeeded in ignoring.

This article has sought to understand and critique messages promoted by Japanese conservatives by examining their treatment of Japan’s annexation of the Korean peninsula and the history of Korea under Japanese authority. Their dilution of truth in the name of national pride and honor scars Japan’s relations with its neighbors at a time when more productive voices call for regional unity, calls that will only grow louder as the influence of China grows. Should the two Koreas resolve the issues separating them, Japan could find itself the odd state out, a hostage to a “normal” historical perspective that denies its historical responsibilities, amid a tighter East Asian community.

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*Recommended citation: Mark E. Caprio, “Neo-Nationalist Interpretations of Japan’s Annexation of Korea: The Colonization Debate in Japan and South Korea,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 44-4-10, November 1, 2010.*

Notes

¹ This is a revised version of my presentation, “Reexamining Japan’s Annexation of Korea: Extending the Parameters of Colonial Histories” delivered on March 27, 2010, at the Association for Asian Studies conference held in Philadelphia, PA. An earlier version appeared as “New Interpretations of Japan’s Annexation of Korea: A Conservative Agenda Groping for ‘Normalcy,’” *Acta Koreana* 13 (1) (June 2010), 113-34. It benefited from comments by Jay Lewis, Kenneth Robinson, and Mark Selden.

² Murata Haruki is an executive committee member of the Deliberation Committee for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Koreans (Kita Chōsen ni rachi saretā Nihonjin o kyūshutsu suru tame no zenkoku kyōgikai) and the Conference against Foreigner Voting Rights (Gaikokujin sanseiken ni hantai suru kai), among other organizations. Many of his lectures appear on YouTube. See, for example, his lecture expressing concerns over foreigner voting rights in local elections [here](#). (Accessed October 9, 2010).

³ [Murata Haruki](#), “The Annexation of Korea was Decidedly not a Case of Colonial Rule,” (accessed October 9, 2010).

- ⁴ See also Kaya University professor Ch'oe Kiho's three-part lecture on why he supported Japan's decision to annex Korea in his book *Nikkan heigō: Kanminzoku o sukutta "Nittei 36 nen" no shinjutsu* (Japan-Korea Annexation: The Truth Behind the 36 Years of Imperial Japanese Rule), (Tokyo: Shodensha, 2004). The [video version](#) of Ch'oe's lectures has proven to be very popular, drawing close to 120,000 viewers. (last accessed March 17, 2010).
- ⁵ In addition to textbooks such as *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* (The New History Textbook), (Tokyo: Fusōsha, 2001), conservative groups have published a large number of monographs, as well as a comic book series *Kenkanryū* (Hate Korea Wave), dedicated to "correcting" liberal Japanese and Korean views on issues involving Japanese and Korean history. For a critique of this series see [Rumi Sakamoto and Matthew Allen](#), "Hating 'The Korean Wave' Comic Books: A Sign of New Nationalism in Japan?" *Japan Focus* (October 4, 2007). On the Korean side, see the bilingual (Korean and English) *Hanguk ūi yōksa munhwa* (Korean History and Culture) series, particularly volume 3 titled *Hanguk chōnjaeng kwa kūndaesa* (The Korean War and Modern History), which covers the period from late Chosŏn to the present. Nakano Toshio labels such debates "Wars of Memory" (*kioku no sensō*) in his "Tōhoku Ajia de 'sensō' o tou koto" (Questioning "War" in Northeast Asia), in *Keizoku suru shokuminchishugi: Jendā, minzoku, jinshu, kaikyū* (Colonialism without End: Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Class), ed. Iwasaki Minoru, Ōkawa Masahiko, Nakano Toshio, and Yi Hyodōk, (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2005), 13.
- ⁶ As we shall see below, this last point is addressed more comprehensively in another YouTube video, ["The Korean File of Korea Under Japanese Rule."](#) (last accessed October 9, 2010).
- ⁷ The coverage of the American "annexation" of the Philippines in one American textbook resembles that offered in Japan's *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*. This textbook details the debate over the decision to annex, but provides little information on the bloody battles that the U.S. fought to crush Philippines insurgents and secure control over the colony. Its coverage ends with discussion of the U.S. development of Filipino schools, the literacy rates it improved, and U.S. guidance to lead the islanders to independence. Winthrop D. Jordan, Miriam Green Watt, and John S. Bowes, *The Americas: A History*, (Evanston, IL: McDougal, Littell and Co., 1994), 518-519, 523.
- ⁸ One example is the U.S. handling of the atomic bombings during World War II, which it justifies as being necessary to end the war and save lives. Conservative elements in the U.S. had little reason to be active on this issue until it was challenged by the Smithsonian Museum's plans to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the *Enola Gay's* mission by displaying the aircraft along with scenes from below the mushroom cloud, in other words, pictures and artifacts of the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Edward T. Linenthal describes the conflicts that arose over this plan in his "Anatomy of a Controversy," in *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*, ed. Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, (New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 1996), 9-62.
- ⁹ See Nishio Kanji and the Atarashi rekishi kyōkasho o tsukurukai, eds., *Kokumin no rekishi* (The People's History), (Tokyo: Sankei Shinbunsha, 2000). This group has also authored the history books that have caused anger among Koreans and Chinese. Many Japanese writers in 1910 cited the peace dividend as justification for Korea's annexation. See, for example, Prime Minister Katsura Tarō's announcement of Korea's annexation as carried in the August 30, 1910, edition of the *Japan Times*.
- ¹⁰ Another word, *gappō* (merger), as popularized by the Kokuryūkai (Black Dragon Society)'s *Nikkan gappō hisshi* (The Secret History of the Merger of Japan and Korea), was deemed too intimate to represent the Japan-Korea relationship imagined by the Japanese government at this time. See Hilary Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea, 1868-1910: A Study of Realism and Idealism in International Relations*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), 415-417.
- ¹¹ Much conservative Japanese writing on the Korea-Japan colonial relationship in 1910 filled their essays with examples of what I call peripheral colonization—territories having close geographical and cultural proximity to the colonizers, but avoided examples of the more distant external colonization. Their images of the Koreans as lazy and dirty, and the Korean (Chosŏn) government as inept, mirrored those that the British, and others, held toward colonized peoples. See Mark E. Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 82-92.
- ¹² Nitobe Inazō, "Japanese Colonization," in *Nitobe Inazō zenshū* (The complete works of Nitobe Inazō), vol. 23, edited by Yanaihara Tetsuō, (Tokyo: Kyōbunkan, 1983-1987), 120. Ukita Kazutani made a similar comparison earlier using Scotland and Ireland as examples in his "Kankoku heigō no kōka ikan" (What Are the Effects of Korean Annexation?), *Taiyō* (October 1, 1910), 2.
- ¹³ Alexis Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea: Discourse and Power*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 136-137. Nitobe Inazō's article, published in 1911, was titled "On the Term 'Colony'" (Shokumin naru meiji ni tsuite).
- ¹⁴ Hara Takashi, "Taiwan mondai futa an" (Two Proposals for the Taiwan Problem), in *Hisho ruisan, Taiwan shiryō* (Classified Collection of Private Documents, Taiwan Materials), ed. Itō Hirobumi, in *Meiji hyakunenshi sōshi* (Meiji Centennial History Collection), vol. 127, (Tokyo: Hara Shobō, 1970), 32-34.
- ¹⁵ Hara Takashi, *Hara Takashi nikki* (Hara Takashi Diaries), edited by Hara Keichirō, vol. 4, May 31, 1911, (Tokyo: Kengensha, 1950), 276.
- ¹⁶ See Gregory Henderson, *Korea: The Politics of the Vortex*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 72; Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 7; and Carter J. Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, *Korea Old and New: A History*, (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1990), 256. Among Japanese historians, see Eguchi Keiichi, *Nihon teikokushugishi kenkyū* (Research in the History of Japanese Imperialism), (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1998), 31, 122. Bruce Cumings later suggested similarity with the England-Ireland relationship in his *Korea's Place in the Sun: A History*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), 140.
- ¹⁷ Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea*.
- ¹⁸ Frederick R. Dickinson suggests that Japan also sought to control China's Fujian province soon after it annexed Taiwan to protect its new colonial acquisition. See his *War and National Reinvention: Japan in the Great War, 1914-1919*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 89.
- ¹⁹ Congress (House), 66th Congress, third session, *Congressional Record* 60 (December 23, 1920), 707-728.
- ²⁰ Stanley K. Hornbeck, *Contemporary Politics in the Far East*, (New York: D. Appleton, 1924), 214, 215. Hornbeck also contributed to one of the first reports assessing Korea's capacity for self-rule after Japan's defeat. The Joint U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee, "Recognition of a 'Free Korea' Organization," in *Haebang chōnhusa charyōjip 1: Mi kukchōng chunbi charyō* (Collection of Historical Documents before and after Liberation I: Materials of United States Administration Preparation), ed. Yi Kilsang, (Seoul: Wŏnju Munhwasa, 1992), 7-13.
- ²¹ Translations taken from the August 30, 1910, editions of the *Tokyo Asahi shinbun* (Japanese), the Seoul Press (English) and the *Maeil sinbo* (Korean).
- ²² "Nihonjin to Nihon shinmin to no kubetsu" (Differentiating between Japanese Nationals and Japanese Subjects), *Keijō shinpō* (September 13, 1910). We see a similar distinction maintained by the French in their West African colonies, where they referred to the assimilated indigenes as "native" rather than "French," citizens. See Raymond L. Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa*, vol. 1, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), 946.
- ²³ See Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea*, 86-92, for discussion by Japanese, and 100-105 for discussion by Koreans.

- ²⁴ Quoted in Kenneth B. Pyle, *The Making of Modern Japan*, second edition, (Washington, D.C.: D. C. Heath and Co., 1996), 91.
- ²⁵ Byron K. Marshall, *Learning to be Modern: Japanese Political Discourse on Education*, (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1994), 62.
- ²⁶ Takahashi Hamakichi, "Gimu kyōiku jissai no igi" (The Significance of the Implementation of Compulsory Education in Korea), *Chōsen* (June 1944), 2-8.
- ²⁷ Schools on the peninsula were strictly segregated through 1920. The post-March First Movement reforms altered policy to allow Koreans capable in Japanese to attend Japanese schools. However, individual classes tended to limit the number of Koreans to approximately 10 percent, or three to four students per class. Japanese enrollees in Korean schools averaged about three to four percent.
- ²⁸ Dong Wonmo, "Japanese Colonial Policy and Practice in Korea, 1905-1945: A Study in Assimilation," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Georgetown University, 1969.
- ²⁹ Hara Takashi, "Chōsen tōchi shaken" (A Personal Opinion on Korean Administration), in *Saitō Makoto kankei monjo*, reel 104 (1919), Tokyo: Japanese Diet Library, 1998.
- ³⁰ Chu Yosōp, *Chosŏn kyoyuk ūi kyōrham* (Deficiencies in Korean Education), (Keijō: Segye Sōwōn, 1930), 1-7.
- ³¹ This involved a proposal to the Diet to allow Koreans suffrage and representative rights. See "Chōsen ni tai suru sanseiken jissai ni kansuru seigansho" (A Petition Regarding the Effectuation of Political Participation Rights in Korea), *Saitō Makoto kankei monjo*, reel 76 (February 1929). Koreans in Japan gained suffrage rights from 1931 and elected the first Japan-based Korean to the Japanese Diet the following year.
- ³² This was evident in the meetings convened to gather Korean and Japanese views on ways to strengthen Japanese-Korean unity. See Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 188-193*. Transcripts of these meetings can be found in "Daiichi bunka kaigi jiroku" (Transcripts of the First Subcommittee), in *Ilcheha chibae chōngch'aek charyojip* (Compilation of Materials on Control Policy under Imperial Japan), vol. 16, ed. Sin Chubaek, (Seoul: Koryō Sōrim, 1993), 341-483.
- ³³ Sin Chubaek, ed., *Ilcheha chibae chōngch'aek charyojip*, vol. 17 (Seoul: Koryō sōim, 1993), 365-7. See also Carter J. Eckert, *Offspring of Empire: The Koch'ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 240.
- ³⁴ "The Korean File of Korea Under Japanese Rule—Nikkan heigō no shinjutsu" (The Truth Behind the Japan-Korea Annexation) [link](#) (last accessed March 10, 2010). This presentation, which has drawn over 19,300 viewers, has also received five-star ratings from 162 people. A [longer version](#) of this presentation has attracted over 40,000 viewers. (last accessed March 17, 2010).
- ³⁵ These photo-comparisons appeared often in the Government-General's monthly magazine *Chōsen* and in the annual reports it issued in Japanese and English.
- ³⁶ L. H. Underwood described the streets as follows: Upon entering the gates, "we saw narrow, filthy streets, flanked by low mud houses, either thatched with straw, or tiled. It has been aptly said that the city looks like a vast bed of mushrooms since none of the Korean houses are built more than one story high." L. H. Underwood, *Fifteen Years Among the Top-knots or Life in Korea*, (New York: American Tract Society, 1904), 39.
- ³⁷ Isabella Bird, *Korea and Her Neighbors*, (London: KPI, 1985 [1897]), 40.
- ³⁸ Bird, *Korea and Her Neighbors*, 435. This tends to be a general impression of other Westerner travelers who witnessed the city's progress.
- ³⁹ Angus Hamilton, *Korea*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), 25.
- ⁴⁰ For Seoul's development see Yi T'aejin, *The Dynamics and Modernization in Korean History*, (Ithaca, NY: East Asian Program, Cornell University, 2007), chapter 10.
- ⁴¹ Even buildings on the grounds of one of Japan's most sacred shrines, Yasukuni Shrine, including the original war museum (Yūshūkan), were designed by non-Japanese. T. Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 37.
- ⁴² We see one example in Kajiyama Toshiyuki's novel *Gei no naka* (Inside the Rainbow), in which his main character, Kaji, "refused to walk in [Koreatown]," a part of Seoul that "strangled him in depression." Quoted in Kawamura Minato, *Sōru toshi monogatari: Rekishi, bungaku to fūkei*, (The Story of Seoul: History, Literature, and Landscape), (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2000), 106. Kajiyama, who grew up in Seoul, often wrote about conflict in Korean-Japanese relations. For the psychological reaction of a Korean crossing into Japantown see Peter Hyun, *Man Sei! The Making of a Korean American*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 62-66.
- ⁴³ Yun Ch'ihō, *Yun Ch'ihō ilgi* (Yun Ch'ihō diaries), July 21, 1923, (Seoul: Kuksa P'yōnch'an Wiwōnhoe, 1973-1986).
- ⁴⁴ For example, see Kim Sam'ung, *Ch'inil chōngch'i 100 nyōnsa* (The One Hundred Year History of Pro-Japanese Politics), (Seoul: Tosō Chulp'an, 1995), 164, 176-177.
- ⁴⁵ One example is the Government-General's newspaper, the *Maeil sinbo*, which continued to publish in Korean to August 15, 1945. A number of Korean-language magazines also managed to continue operations throughout the duration of Japanese rule.
- ⁴⁶ It is estimated that 80 percent of Koreans officially Japanized their names, many to allow their children to enter schools. Even after this campaign had begun, Koreans who had changed their names used their Korean names on certain occasions, particularly when participating as instruments of Japanese wartime propaganda, such as in the media and cinema. For discussion on Japanization of Korean names see Miyata Setsuko, Kim Yōngjūi, and Yang Taeho, *Sōshi kaimei* (Name Changes), (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1994), and Mizuno Naoki, *Sōshi kaimei: Nihon no Chōsen shihai no naka de* (Name Changes in the Context of Japan's Rule Over Korea), (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 2008).
- ⁴⁷ Ken C. Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble: Korean Workers in Interwar Japan*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 106.
- ⁴⁸ See C. Sarah Soh's *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).
- ⁴⁹ Carter J. Eckert documents the rise of Korea's conglomerates (K. *chaebōl*) under Japanese rule in *Offspring of Empire: The Koch'ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876-1945*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991).

⁵⁰ Soh, *The Comfort Women*. Tessa Morris-Suzuki, describing “coercion and the comfort women,” depicts the enormous variety of approaches to recruiting women for this job as follows:

Some were Japanese women who had worked as prostitutes previously, some were “volunteers” in a sense, although often driven to “volunteer” through pressures of poverty, debt and desperation. A very large number were women from Korea and China. Many had been lured away from their homes with promises of work in factories or restaurants, only to find themselves incarcerated in “comfort stations” in foreign lands. Other women...were rounded up at gunpoint....

[Tessa Morris-Suzuki](#), “Japan’s ‘Comfort Women’: It’s Time for the Truth (In the Ordinary, Everyday Sense of the Word),” *Japan Focus* (March 8, 2007).

⁵¹ Michael E. Robinson argues this on two occasions. See his “Colonial Publication Policy and the Korean Nationalist Movement,” in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*, ed. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 312-343; and “Broadcasting in Korea, 1924-1937: Colonial Modernity and Cultural Hegemony,” in *Japan’s Competing Modernities: Issues in Culture and Democracy, 1900-1930*, ed. Sharon A. Minichiello, (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1998), 358-378. The following two Government-General reports, issued in the late 1920s, warned that Korean national sentiment would continue to develop as long as the Japanese administration permitted Koreans exposure to their culture. Chōsen Government-General, Keimu kyoku toshoka, “Ri denka no shikyo ni saishi ‘shinbunshi o tōshite mitaru’ Chōsenjin no shisō keikō” (Tendencies in Korean Thought ‘as Seen through Newspapers’ at the Time of the Death of the Yi Monarch), (Keijō: Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1926), and Chōsen Government-General, “Dokuritsu undō ni okeru minzoku undo no kōgai” (A Summary of the People’s Movement from the Cessation of the Independence Movement) (January 1927), *Saitō Makoto kankei monjo* (Official Papers Regarding Saitō Makoto), reel 97, (Tokyo: Japanese National Diet Library).

⁵² I should add that comments written in English were rather critical of Murata’s message.

⁵³ Ken Kawashima’s *The Proletarian Gamble* provides one lucid example of Korean migration to, and living conditions in, Japan.

⁵⁴ Ienaga Saburō’s essay, titled “Sengo no rekishi kyōiku (The Future of National History Education),” was published in October 1946. See Yoshiko Nozaki, “Education Reform and History Textbooks in Occupied Japan,” in *Democracy in Occupied Japan: The U.S. Occupation and Japanese Politics and Society*, ed. Mark E. Caprio and Yoneyuki Sugita, (London: Routledge, 2007), 127. Nozaki’s chapter provides a good review of textbook editing from the days following the Emperor of Japan’s August 15, 1945 announcement that ended the Pacific War.