

Living under Japanese colonial rule

October 16, 2014

Review:

- What was the impact of colonial rule on the Korean economy, including agriculture?
- What was the impact of colonial rule on Korean culture?
- What was the impact of colonial rule on Korean women?

The Comfort women issue

- There has been a tendency to focus on the Korean women who served in “comfort stations” for Japanese soldiers. That didn’t happen until the last years of colonial rule. Moreover, most of the women were not kidnapped by the Japanese. Instead, they were often tricked by Koreans who promised them jobs.

Numbers of comfort women

- There may have been as many as 50,000 to 200,000 women working as prostitutes for the Japanese military. Of those, maybe as many as 35% were Koreans. That means the majority of the women in those “comfort stations” were Japanese, not Koreans.
- The vast majority of Korean women under Japanese rule were not “sex slaves.” Look at the whole picture, not just “comfort women.”

Ordinary Women under colonial rule

- There was a new concept of marriage, signified by a new marriage ceremony, in which husband and wife were treated as equally willing partners to their union.
- A new discourse emphasizing the need for a woman to be a “wise mother and good wife” (Hyŏnmo yangch’ŏ). This led to conflict with women who wanted to take advantage of the new occupational opportunities the colonial economy offered.
- What were those new occupations? Factory worker, clerk, nurse, school teacher, etc.
- Some women adopted the life style of a “new woman,” which included short hair, short skirts, and a rather free love life.
- Life for most Korean women was better under Japanese rule rather than worse than it had been before 1910.

Reactions to Colonial Rule

- ◆ What is collaboration?

Working for the colonial government?

Working with Japanese businesses?

Using colonial police power for personal benefit?

- ◆ The tension between nationalism and a modernizing drive: what was the best way to improve the lives of ordinary Koreans?
- ◆ Torn between the ethics of intent and the ethics of consequences.
- ◆ Why did some early resisters become collaborators?

Famous collaborators

- ◆ Collaborators or cultural nationalists?
- ◆ Yi Kwang-su --literature as a way to awaken and enlighten the Korean people (What is a “cultural nationalist?)
- ◆ Ch’oe Namsŏn--history as a way to instil pride in Korean heritage.
- ◆ Kim Sŏngsu--success in business as a way to win the respect of the Japanese
- ◆ Park Chŏnghŭi (Chong Hee) --military service as a way to win the respect of the Japanese.(Was known as Lt Masao in the Japanese army in Manchuria)

Non-Communist Resistance to colonial rule

- ◆ Syngman Rhee (Yi Sŭngman)

Resistance through diplomacy-

Sources, pp. 341-43

- Kim Ku (and Sin Ch'aeho)

Resistance through violence and terrorism

Sources, pp. 346-49

- An Ch'angho: resistance through education and then military force. Sources, pp.344-46.

Communist Resistance

- ◆ Why Communism? What was its appeal?
- ◆ Who was Yi Tonghwi? What sort of Communist was he? (Sources, pp.354-57)
- ◆ Communism within Korea. Why do those Communists sound so angry? (Sources, pp.357-360)

The Partisans

- What is a United Front? (Sources, pp.361-65)
- ◆ The rise of Kim Il Sung
 - What was his real role in the armed anti-Japanese movement?
- ◆ The Yanan faction: Mu Chǒng, Kim Tubong

How were they different from Kim Il Sung's group?

- The domestic faction: Pak Hǒnyǒng

Resistance through emigration

- ◆ Movement into Manchuria: Is Kando (Jiandao) Korean?
- ◆ A few Koreans move to Hawaii, and even fewer to the US mainland
- ◆ Over two million Koreans end up in Japan
- ◆ A Korean community grows in Russia
- ◆ Involuntary emigration: the Comfort Women.

Village life under the Japanese

- In the southern part of the peninsula, there were many tenant protests demanding a drop in rent. These protests were usually against Korean landlords. To head off such protests, in the 1930s the government often sided with peasants against landlords.
- In the northeast, owner-cultivators formed red-peasant leagues, often to protest special tax assessments to pay for irrigation projects.
- Throughout Korea, there were also everyday forms of resistance.
- By 1932, over half of the peasants owned no farm land.

Japanese religious policies

- The Shinto Shrine issue---required Christian schools to honour the Emperor with ritual
- Buddhism won support from the Japanese but also came under pressure to follow the Japanese example of married monks.
- Confucianism was also supported by the colonial government.
- Ch'öndogyo and other new religions were treated by the Japanese as “pseudo-religions.” The Japanese were especially harsh on the Chŭngsan religions.