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# Generational Struggle: Postwar Korean Views of Anti-colonial Violence in *Minshu Chōsen* and *Hinawajū no uta*

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But your liberation
But the liberation of your homeland
Oh, how short! Oh, how unsatisfying!
A liberation
Not won through one's own fight,
A liberation
Given to you by another,
Oh, what a precarious thing
Oh, what an unreliable thing
Is that kind of liberation
Your grandmother
Learned this lesson right down to her bones
-From *Hinawajū no uta* (The song of the musket) by Hŏ Nam-gi[1]

Koreans living in the Japanese Empire, whether in occupied Korea or the over two million in the Japanese archipelago itself at war's end, longed for freedom from colonial oppression and believed that Japan's 1945 defeat would restore the Korean people to their rightful course of self-determination and independence.[2] By 1950 the dream of independence was transformed into a blood-soaked nightmare as the Korean peninsula descended into a war largely shaped by the interests and ideologies of the two Cold War superpowers. In the five-year window between these conflicts many intellectuals and cultural workers grappled with Korea's colonial exploitation and the nation's inability to defeat Japanese occupiers with its own power. Outside of Korea itself, one of the most vibrant sites of this debate was in Japan, where over half a million Koreans would remain after waves of mass repatriation, and where a large number of Korean writers used the Japanese language to engage their former

oppressors in a dialogue aimed at unpacking the colonial past and shaping Koreans' future both within Korea and without.[3]

Considering a variety of historical incidents, this study examines how one segment of liberated Koreans living in postwar Japan and writing in Japanese conceptualized resistance movements of the colonial period. I argue that as part of the mission to develop a new founding mythos for the modern Korean nation (envisioned as a robust and unified Socialist state) several of these authors focused on establishing the necessity for violent anti-Japanese resistance, valorizing the historical incidents of it, and tying these acts to the development of Marxist political consciousness. By juxtaposing the agitprop editorials of a Korean-centered postwar magazine, *Minshu Chōsen* (民主朝鮮, Democratic Korea, 1946–1950), with Hŏ Nam-gi's 1951 epic poem *Hinawajū no uta* (火縄銃のうた, The song of the musket), I connect the efforts of political activists with the budding movement of postwar Koreans using the Japanese language as a medium for literary creation. In both cases, Koreans voiced their anti-colonial critique directly to the former colonizer and situated Korean resistance movements within a broader and ennobled historical context. Below I describe how a significant group of *Minshu Chōsen*'s contributors asserted that violence was justified and necessary in colonial era anti-Japanese resistance and by extension in future anti-imperialist conflicts.

As these Korean writers, working in the Japanese language, looked back on the history of the colonial era they described tensions manifesting as violence, ranging from sporadic clashes among groups of students and peasant uprisings, to the prolonged guerilla conflict that took Korean freedom fighters to join distant Chinese armies in their struggle against Japanese aggression. I begin with two representative examples of articles depicting outbreaks of violence and rebellion in colonial Korea that were published in *Minshu Chōsen*. These articles describe the Gwangju Student Incident (1929) and the Wanpaoshan Incident (1931).[4] Then I juxtapose these non-fiction depictions of historical resistance with *Hinawajū no uta*, which retraces Korea's modern history as a series of battles against oppression culminating in the Korean War. Framed as not simply anti-Japanese resistance, but rather as proletarian liberation movements, this coterie of Zainichi writers ascribed an ideological class-based dimension to these episodes that further differentiates them from non-violent modes of resistance, such as the March First movement of 1919, which theretofore had been the most impactful and well-known mass resistance movement.

## *Minshu Chōsen* and its Historical Moment

*Minshu Chōsen* was published entirely in Japanese and ran for thirty-three issues from April 1946 until the outbreak of the Korean War (1950–1953). It presented political editorials primarily by Koreans but also sympathetic Japanese writers, and it featured creative writing and cultural criticism by Koreans writing in Japanese. Founder and editor Kim Tal-su (1919–1997), whose editorial vision and passion for literature as a vehicle of social change were essential to the magazine's success, went on to have a distinguished career in both fiction writing and activism. Eventually Kim and Hŏ Nam-gi would develop an antagonistic relationship over ideological differences, but Hŏ's works regularly appeared in *Minshu Chōsen* throughout its entire run.

The magazine appeared during a time of profound upheaval as Japanese society underwent a radical transformation from a nominally multi-ethnic empire incorporating diverse peoples (albeit by force) to a nation-state with a narrow view of who belonged in Japan and who deserved basic rights and political representation. The shifting legal status and social position of Koreans in Japan became a flashpoint that both informed the self-image of postwar Japan as well as revealed the outlines of a new phase of global conflict. With the collapse of the Japanese Empire, Koreans in Japan lost the minimal protections that had come with imperial citizenship (including suffrage for males) and became the targets of vitriol and rumor-mongering by Japanese lawmakers.[5] Moreover, while the U.S. Military Occupation was originally directed to consider Koreans as "liberated peoples," implicitly including them among the victorious powers that had defeated Japan, within a few years they would come to see Koreans as a dangerous destabilizing element, in particular as they agitated against the Japanese government's suppression of Korean ethnic schools and because of the close association of the League of Koreans in Japan (在日本朝鮮人連盟 *Zai Nihon Chōsenjin renmei*) with the Japanese Communist Party.[6]

The Korean community that persists in Japan today is commonly referred to with the shorthand Zainichi (在日) meaning literally simply 'being in Japan' and I deploy the term in this study advisedly. To use Zainichi as a name for the postwar Korean community in Japan is in fact mostly anachronistic; however, as discussed below, scholars have been interested in understanding the development of a postcolonial Korean identity specific to Japan and have utilized this term effectively to draw

connections across different historical periods. A further danger is that "Zainichi" carries a pejorative association for some speakers of Japanese. This may be in part because of an ambiguity that makes it possible for this word to refer to Koreans who associate themselves with either North or South Korea, or who choose to reject both polities. As Cindi Textor writes in a longer exploration of the connotations and pitfalls of the term: "In short, although 'Zainichi' has become the predominant nomenclature in English-language discourse on this group, its usage implies the existence of an internally cohesive group for which there is no name in Japanese, or even Korean."[7]

Relatively little scholarship directly addresses the content that appeared in *Minshu Chōsen*, especially among English-language sources, with a stronger interest in the more polished literary production of second-generation Korean authors (those born in Japan). For example, Melissa Wender frames her groundbreaking study, *Lamentation as History*, beginning in 1965 when Japan normalized relations with South Korea.[8] By focusing on works by second-generation Korean writers Wender describes the formulation of a Zainichi identity that is largely defined by life in Japan rather than close links to the peninsular Korean states. At the same time her study mirrors the Japanese literary establishment's trajectory of largely ignoring the contributions of first-generation Korean writers, with a series of accolades marking the recognition of Zainichi Koreans' literary achievements beginning with a 1966 literary prize for Kin Kakuei from the magazine *Bungei*, and Ri Kaisei (Yi Hŏe-sŏng) winning first the *Gunzō* new writer's prize in 1969 and then in 1971 literary society's highest honor for new writers: the Akutagawa prize.[9]

Textor's *Intersectional Incoherence* mentions *Minshu Chōsen* in her discussion of Kim Saryang, a writer active during the colonial period: "At least according to standard narratives, Zainichi literature as a genre was emerging, if not yet fully formed, in the late 1940s and 1950s, primarily in the pages of *Minshu Chōsen* under the editorship of Kim Talsu, the so-called 'father' of Zainichi Literature."[10] Although Textor identifies Kim Tal-su as one of the founders of Zainichi literature and criticism, her study does not analyze his work or deal with the content of *Minshu Chōsen*.

*Minshu Chōsen*'s mission statement, published in its inaugural issue, neatly encapsulates the goals and motivations of the coterie behind it:

> In the process of a progressive democratic revolution, from what angle do Koreans grasp historical realities, and how can they fulfill their historical mission? In other words, what do Koreans think, what do they say, and what

> are they trying to do? In particular the objective state of affairs and subjective currents of opinion on the problems of trustee [Soviet/U.S.] rule have become the focus of the world's attention. Here we wish to show the world the proper direction forward, and at the same time correct the Japanese understanding of Korean history, culture, and tradition, etc., the essence of which has been denied for the 36 long years of colonial rule. By so doing we hope to present the materials in this small volume as our thoughts on the foundation of a developing politics, economy, and society to all those who wish to understand Koreans.[11]

In other words, the purpose of writing such a magazine in Japanese was specifically couched in terms of its usefulness as a guide to Korean perspectives for non-Korean readers.

Jonathan Glade has analyzed the work of *Minshu Chōsen* using the frame of decolonization and deimperialization. He identifies the magazine as a site where "Japanese and Koreans alike worked towards the goals of dismantling imperial structures and constructing new subjectivities free from colonial hierarchies" and he sees the above mission statement as a clear articulation of this intent.[12] Moreover, in contrast to Wender's approach, Glade sees the era of *Minshu Chōsen*'s publication as the crucial beginning to the formation of Zainichi subjectivity and ties this development to the struggle over Korean ethnic schools, spearheaded by the League of Koreans in Japan which funded the schools and with which *Minshu Chōsen* was closely affiliated.

> As the League [of Koreans in Japan] directed their attention to the immediate everyday concerns (such as education) of Koreans residing in Japan, shifting from their earlier focus on nation building and assisting repatriation to Korea, the resolve to join forces with like-minded Japanese people in a unified project of decolonization and deimperialization only increased in the pages of *Democratic Korea*.[13]

Koreans in Japan felt strongly motivated to assert their ethnic identity and resist assimilation through education, in particular due to past imperial policies aggressively forcing Koreans to use the Japanese language and Japanese names. While these schools were tolerated at first, a crackdown began in 1948 which triggered mass protests by Koreans and their allies and eventually resulted in the total suppression of the League, thereby crippling *Minshu Chōsen*.[14]

The fight over ethnic education marked a significant escalation of tensions between the Korean community and the occupation force's

General Headquarters (GHQ), which censored *Minshu Chōsen* aggressively in the magazine's final years. Sakasai Akito has presented an analysis describing the unique position of Kim Tal-su as he attempted to anticipate the GHQ's objections and avoid publication delays by self-censorship. Sakasai notes that Kim himself was not subject to the forced revisions or deletions that GHQ demanded of many of *Minshu Chōsen*'s contributors, including Hŏ Nam-gi, speculating that as the magazine's editor Kim "was in a unique position to understand what GHQ considered dangerous, and how much censors would tolerate amid the changing political atmosphere."[15] Despite this apparent proficiency in dealing with the them, Kim complained often about the harsh approach of censors, and Sakasai argues that these sort of remarks were meant to "legitimize his acts of self-censorship" in the face of peer pressure from within the Zainichi community itself.

## The Gwangju Student Incident

> Our Korean national liberation movements can be divided into movements for ethnic independence and movements for the liberation of the proletariat. There are cases in which these lineages have both acted separately and in which they have operated as two facets of the same movement. Of course, there are areas in which the doctrines and fundamental principles of each cannot be reconciled, but here we must consider the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the Korean people. To achieve the liberation of the Korean people we needed first to defeat Japanese militarism and then to completely expel it from Korea. In general, dividing these movements by era, we find a shift from the era of independence thought to an era with a sudden burst of passion for education, following which was a period of awakening to socialism and ultimately entering into the period of Communist development. -WŏnYong-dŏk[16]

Wŏn Yong-dŏk's depiction of the 1929 Gwangju student incident appears in *Minshu Chōsen*'s second issue. Along with Kim Tal-su, Wŏn was a founder of *Minshu Chōsen* and remained involved with it until the end, penning the magazine's rebuttal directed at Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru's actions in suppressing the League of Koreans in Japan (of which he was also an officer) in its penultimate issue.[17] He was an avowed Marxist and close friend of Kim Tal-su, who writes that the contents of *Minshu Chōsen*'s first issue were almost entirely the work of these two men (including works by both of them presented under pennames).[18] In total he was published in *Minshu Chōsen* seventeen times.

Wŏn begins by describing what he calls "a historical mission" (歴史的一大使命 *rekishiteki ichi dai shimei*) for Koreans to defeat Japanese militarism and wipe out its remnants, including all the "antidemocratic and antinational reactionary forces that impede our sovereign independence."[19] In the context of this overarching mission, he situates the function of recording and remembering Korea's anticolonial resistance:

> While we of course believe that the proximate cause of [Japan's defeat] was the force of justice of the allied nations and at the same time wish to convey our greatest respect for their heroic fight, we must not forget for a moment the equally heroic battle waged for half a century by our predecessors, continued through a long history of blood and tears. […] At this stage fraught with the difficulties of founding our new nation, and facing a rough path ahead, it is the hidden history of our predecessors' fight for freedom, bound in their blood and tears that comprises the basis for our liberation today and promises to give us the energy to make the leap into tomorrow. To this end I would like to introduce the Gwangju student incident.[20]

According to Kim, the incident began between Japanese and Korean commuter students attending the segregated schools in Gwangju, the capital of South Chŏlla province. When a male student of the Gwangju Japanese Middle School "took disrespectful actions" (無礼な行動をした, *burei na kōdō o shita*) towards a female student of the Gwangju Korean Girls Normal High School, her younger brother, a student of the Gwangju Korean Normal High School sitting next to her on the train, rose in protest.

> The moment they saw this, other students of the Japanese middle school shouted "You uppity Korean!" and instantly jumped him, beating him senseless. This was the true form of the so-called "education" in colonial Korea of a barbarous and beastly Japanese ideology of conquest. The hearts of these young middle school students, which should still have been pure and innocent, had already been stained by the narrow-mindedness and inhumanity that caused their leaders to believe that "Koreans are not people, they are great beasts that exist to serve us, the mighty Yamato race."[21]

Thereafter the violence escalated. According to Wŏn, a group of four to five Korean students traveled to Naju to await the original Japanese instigator and took revenge by returning their friends' beating in kind. As news of this second incident spread, Japanese and Korean students began to clash over the entire area. Eventually, on November 3, 1928, the fighting culminated in a single large confrontation between the student bodies of

the Korean schools (Gwangju Normal High School, Gwangju Girls' Normal High School) and the Japanese schools (Gwangju Middle School, Gwangju Girls' High School), causing injuries on both sides and drawing the surrounding townspeople into a large-scale brawl.

Wŏn continues that police conducted mass arrests of the combatants, but the Korean populace was further incensed when the Japanese students were immediately released while the Korean students (including young women) not only remained imprisoned but also were subjected to further violence while incarcerated. As a result, more students from area Korean schools marched in protest to the police station, demanding the students' release, but were themselves arrested and stuffed into already overfull cells. "Several days later the students who remained, including all the children of the elementary school, mobilized in a show of force and advanced on the police, shouting for the end of Japanese imperialism and the liberation of Korea, but the monsters even arrested these innocent children."[22] Again, the news of these events only further inflamed Korean rage and indignity at Japanese rule, and student-led protests began to take place all over the country. Wŏn writes that such protests continued until March of the next year (1929), with over two hundred schools participating and more than sixty thousand students arrested.

Wŏn states repeatedly throughout the six-page article that the Gwangju Student Incident had the effect of pushing the Korean independence movement "towards leftwing thinking."[23] The appearance of such assertions begs the question: why did Wŏn view these developments as necessarily leftwing (左翼, *sayoku*)? For example, after detailing the second round of arrests, in which the students from surrounding schools demanded the release of the original brawlers of the Korean side, only to be themselves imprisoned, Wŏn writes: "Having progressed so far already, the incident seemed to be worsening even further. Then, propelled by the issues raised by this explosion of emotion, the incident began to move in a leftist direction, taking as its rallying cry our long-cherished hope of those days: 'down with Japanese imperialism!'"[24] However, rather than explain the underlying ideological change implied by the statement that the "incident began to move in a leftist direction," Wŏn moves directly to describing the student protests' spread to the larger region and then to the peninsula generally.

In this context I surmise that Wŏn would characterize any grassroots movement as "leftwing," provided it emerged outside the manipulative instigation of the elite (such as the Shanghai government-in-exile) and

advocated an end to imperialism. In other words, Wŏn's usage of "leftwing" and perhaps even his statement above that Korean independence movements had "progressed to a point of Communist development" may be better understood as an assertion of the spread of anti-Japanese activism to the masses who were being made increasingly destitute by colonial economic policy; Wŏn may wish to claim every worker or tenement farmer as a member of his awakened proletariat, but it is he who is projecting his own political consciousness onto them, rather than demonstrating that they were motivated by an awareness of Marxist theories.[25] Such a revision in our understanding of the valence associated with "leftwing" in these writings opens up the possibility that mainstream descriptions of the postwar Zainichi community as militantly communist have been overdetermined by an explicit reading of their leftism as a statement of allegiance to a single concrete political faction rather than as a reaction to their material circumstances.

On the other hand, while actual ideological discussion is limited to generalities, Wŏn does pay closer attention to the act of political organization in his article about the Gwangju student incident:

> Upon seeing the birth of the Singanhoe as the only legally sanctioned Korean social movement, consisting primarily of Korean intellectuals—with 142 branches throughout the country and twenty thousand members—the remaining activists of the Korean Communist Party and *Koryŏ* Communist Youth League (despite being decimated in their numbers by mass arrests in both 1925 and 1926) planned the establishment of a third Communist Party under the auspices of the Singanhoe and began to organize. Upon being discovered they were all arrested between March and July of 1927, and in 1928 students took up the baton and became the center of the movement.[26]

The Singanhoe (J. 新幹会, *Shinkankai*,) was a kind of unity effort, forming a coalition of disparate Korean activists' forces both nationalist and leftist, though necessarily comprised of only relative moderates of these groups. It took the stance of promoting Korean advancement and autonomy within the colonial system rather than advocating for immediate outright independence. "The Japanese encouraged it," Cumings writes "hoping thereby to corral, co-opt, or simply moderate independence activists of left and right."[27] Although it is clear that the members of this group were not wholehearted supporters of Japanese rule, given their philosophy of collaboration and compromise with Japanese authorities, it

should come as no surprise that Wŏn Yong-dŏk lists their dissolution as a positive step and the result of an increased political consciousness among proletariat Koreans.

Wŏn Yong-dŏk wraps up his summary of the Gwangju incident this way:

> The above is nothing more than an abbreviated history of the Gwangju student incident and the social and economic environment that created it. Those young children, who should have been enjoying their growth under the warm love and protection of their parents, and those hot-blooded and passionate young male and female students, who took to action when they should have been busy enjoying the process of increasing their knowledge and honing their individual skills for the good of the humanity of tomorrow, had this time of their lives cursed by malicious devils. The historical truth of their brave and heroic fight for national liberation, whether from underneath iron-barred windows or atop frozen hills, even as they continued to be persecuted, will forever cast its radiant light on the history of Korean liberation, and indeed the history of the fight for liberation of people all throughout the world.
>
> But this was not the only contribution the Gwangju student incident left to the history of our liberation. Triggered by this incident, Korean class-based movements rapidly moved in the direction of extreme leftist underground movements. In May 1930 the Shinganhoe was dissolved, and the Seoul Workers Alliance, as well as a labor union in Pyongyang and a general Korean laborers union in Japan were established. In the area of the agricultural movements, which would become the center of future Korean liberation movements, there had been a Korean tenant farmers cooperative, but this was being employed by the ruling class to utilize farmers toward their own political ends, therefore it was eradicated, and in its place the General Alliance of Korean Farmers and Laborers became central. Tenant farmers were organized in Gwangju and the dramatic increase in poverty caused by agricultural panics continued to drive Korean peasants to the leftwing.
>
> In this way, despite the violent oppression of Japan's feudal militarism, domestically and overseas, in the factories and on the farms, in the mines and the coal pits, beneath iron-barred windows and in the streets, the foundation of our national independence continued to be put in place piece by piece.[28]

In contrast to the mass participation of the March First movement, Wŏn focuses on the central role of a particular group in this account. Although he does state that the incident prompted protests that spread

across the whole of Korea, the core of this particular incident was the violent action of students. This is significant insofar as Wŏn identifies students as "taking the baton" of the communist movement in Korea after two waves of mass arrests in 1925 and 1926. Hence, Wŏn has identified students writ large as a political body; and in so doing he ascribes a political meaning to their action.

These students are portrayed as particularly brave for daring to meet colonial violence with resistance also in the form of violence; a deliberate choice made even while presumably aware that in the fundamentally unequal power relationship of colonizer and colonized they were likely to face severe punishment. Such a portrayal is somewhat at odds with another element of Wŏn's description: that these students (and the various townspeople later drawn into the brawling) were spontaneously overcome by an emotional reaction to the violent treatment of first a single innocent student and subsequently the large numbers of students arrested. When Wŏn emphasizes the cruelty of the Japanese arrests against innocent students who ought to have been allowed to focus single-mindedly on their studies, he engages in a discursive sleight-of-hand: Wŏn wishes to describe the students simultaneously as thoughtful agents taking an action that is deeply rooted in the political consciousness of leftism and at the same time treat their arrest as an overreaction by Japanese authorities to an incident that was little more than an "outburst of emotions" (感情の激発, *kanjō no gekihatsu*). Were the students as truly nonthreatening as Wŏn seems to suggest, their political leftism would have less significance.

Considering the forethought involved in committing an act of violent retaliation, Wŏn has implied that it was at least in part the progressive mood and leftist mentality of students in this period that led them to do violence. Extrapolating from this we can consider a gradient of political consciousness in which participation in such mass movements as the March First protests requires only a general sense of national identity; however, with the greater devotion to liberating the proletariat that attends a high degree of political consciousness comes a willingness to imperil one's own life through the use of force against one's aggressors. This is the implication of Wŏn's statement at the head of this section that over time there is a shift from "independence thought" (独立思想 *dokuritsu shisō*) to an embrace of communism at the heart of Korean liberation movements.

Further, the justification of a more confrontational and ideological mode of resistance offers a potential explanation for *Minshu Chōsen*'s

writers' willingness to declare the peaceful March First movement a failure. *Minshu Chōsen* founder and editor Kim Tal-su, whose subsequent writing career was singularly successful among the coterie's participants, wrote that despite having affected a major change in Japanese colonial policy, "the records of this movement are of a crushing defeat."[29] Moreover, as I describe in the next section about a conflict between Korean and Chinese farmers in Manchuria, Chŏng Tong-mun comes to a similar assessment, and points to the way Koreans looked outside their home for freedom, writing, "After the failure of the March First revolution of 1919, Manchuria became a site of longing for the Korean people."[30] While *Minshu Chōsen*'s writers recognized the March First movement as a remarkable achievement in that it put on public display a Korean nationalism that had gone unexpressed for the first decade of the colonial period, in the interests of actually throwing off the yoke of Japanese rule a more drastic action was called for.

## The Wanpaoshan Incident

> When the incident began to develop into its unfortunate form, the leaders of both Korea and China readily identified the true shape of things behind the scenes. As such, this incident, which had begun in the state of a clash of the people against one another, over the course of its development resulted in the uniting of the Chinese and Korean peoples and transformed into a struggle against the imperialists. - Chŏng Tong-mun[31]

The Wanpaoshan Incident (Kr. *Manbosan sagŏn*) was a July 1931 attack on Korean immigrant farmers in Southern Manchuria by Chinese farmers in the area, precipitated by a dispute over water rights and the Koreans' construction of an irrigation canal. Although the incident itself only involved a relatively small number of Korean farmers, it prompted significant retaliation against Chinese nationals living in Korea, and it gave the Japanese a pretext to denounce Chinese attacks on (nominal) citizens of the Japanese empire. As Japan already had an eye on military action in Manchuria, this incident allowed Japanese leaders to ratchet up anti-Chinese propaganda efforts and tensions between the two countries. Chŏng Tong-mun asserts that the events of the incident were a direct result of a devious scheme on the part of Japanese authorities to provoke such skirmishes on the border as a justification for military intervention in Manchuria. Then Chŏng reframes the incident to emphasize how it raised the consciousness of the Korean proletariat (always referred to by Chŏng

as *minshū* 民衆 meaning "the people"), and how anti-foreign sentiment resulting from the incident eventually spread to its proper target: the Japanese occupiers.

Chŏng begins his argument with an appeal asserting Korea's traditional ties to Manchuria. He states that "surely everyone accepts" that southern Manchuria was territory held by the ancient Korean kingdom of Koguryŏ (37 BCE–668 CE), and that upon Koguryŏ's demise it was Koreans who founded the new state of Parhae (also known as Balhae and Bohai, 698–926 CE) in that region. Although later political developments had variously kept the territory under Manchu and Mongol control, mass Korean immigration had resumed at the end of the Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1910). "Originally the border between Manchuria and Korea was not clear, and the Korean people regularly thought of Manchuria as part of their own homeland and had lived their lives accordingly."[32]

In Chŏng's view it was the interference of the Japanese empire that resulted in rigidly defining a border between Korea and Manchuria. This created an impediment to the natural movement of peoples in the area, and thereby promoted conflict between Korean and Chinese farmers. In particular, after the Russo-Japanese war (1904–1905), Japan ceded all territory north of the Tumen River:

> At the time, despite the fact that Korea, weak though it was, maintained its independence and had a government of its own, the Japanese government let their military power speak for them, not brooking a single word of protest. Then they surpassed even this act of contemptible thievery.
>
> While in name it had become Chinese territory, southeast Manchuria was in fact agricultural land cultivated by the Korean People. When the Japanese government achieved its ambition and absorbed Korea, it made use of every manner of oppressive tactic to rob the people of their land and exploit them. The history of misrule at the end of the Chŏson dynasty was a favorite target for criticism by the Japanese government, but even in this period, taken to be an unparalleled example of despotic rule by a class of privileged power holders, half of Korean peasants were independent farmers; however, by 1929 [under Japanese rule], as many as seventy percent of peasants had fallen to the status of tenant farmers.[33]

This article's inclusion in *Minshu Chōsen* is useful in problematizing our understanding of colonial paradigms. Rather than the binary of Japanese colonizers oppressing Korean subjects, and Korean resistance against them, the introduction of Chinese aggression in this incident presents a context in which Koreans looked to Japanese authorities for

protection. The failure of the empire to provide that protection in turn led to even greater disillusionment on the Korean side, and a disinclination to cooperate with the Japanese in this marginal territory. Further, although the motivation of Korean violence in this incident (like that of the Gwangju Student Incident) is revenge, in this case Koreans are seen directing violence against a group other than their occupiers. Such an understanding of the event suggests that in this instance Japanese colonial policy had succeeded in turning Koreans into their surrogates, directing their force not at the Japanese but at the enemies of the Japanese—these displaced Korean farmers had in fact become a kind of protective barrier at the margin of Japanese territory.

Given that such a narrative of Koreans revenging themselves upon Chinese expatriates would reflect the conventional interpretation of these events, it is unsurprising that Chŏng's article first asserts that Japanese authorities took no action to protect Koreans, and then reframes the violent reaction to the Wanpaoshan Incident as only directed at Chinese residents in the initial stages, later redirecting the violence to its more proper target, Japanese occupiers:

> Motivated by the desire for revenge, their actions were chaotic. However, the people knew, even if only intuitively, who their true enemy was. The anti-Manchurian actions did not stop merely with expelling the Chinese, but led directly to resistance against the Japanese military and government. In both Inch'ŏn and Pyongyang, the people attacked the Japanese shopping district adjacent to the expatriate Chinese area. The police and military officers, who had only watched from the sidelines while the people took action against the Chinese, did not hesitate for even a moment to fire into the crowd and to kill the protesters when they perceived a threat to the Japanese, suppressing the riot by brutal force. But the people, empty-handed against the police, continued to fight haphazardly destroying everything. This movement for revenge was, in other words, a revolutionary movement, a people's liberation movement, as well as a Korean independence movement. It may have been a spontaneous eruption of mass violence, but even so, it forced the occupiers to recognize just a fraction of the suppressed true power of the Korean people.[34]

This paragraph recalls in particular the terms of Wŏn Yong-dŏk's historical analysis presented in the opening to the prior section, and it is ever-clearer the degree to which this group of writers shared a clearly defined worldview that valued consideration of these different categories of resistance and their respective significance. Moreover, the evidence

suggests that the emergence of this particular discursive style was the product of conscious editorial decisions, not just about word-choice or journalistic conventions, but forming a coordinated message. If *Minshu Chōsen* can be variously described as a medium for Koreans' Japanese-language outreach, or more critically as propaganda, it was a carefully coordinated and unified messaging apparatus, which utilized a number of emotional arguments but was also dedicated to the principle of explicating a sophisticated Marxist worldview to its readers and informing them about colonial history in those terms.

Chŏng takes great pains to reframe the historical narrative around this incident, just as other members of the coterie were working to destabilize established Japanese narratives surrounding the March First movement, the Gwangju Student Incident, and countless other acts of colonial era Korean resistance. In the case of this article in particular, Chŏng's version of events is constructed as a vigorous rejoinder to the (in his opinion) incorrect and predominant interpretation that Koreans were merely pawns used by Japan and were simply passive victims of that exploitation. In the next section I connect these non-fiction depictions of colonial era events to the Zainichi literature movement. We shall see a number of themes that will reappear with an almost uncanny resemblance to the descriptions above: the hardship of the agricultural class, deafness of authority to righteous criticism, peasantry pushed to enact vigilante justice, and the development of leftist political consciousness through traumatic historical events, as well as other similar parallels.

## *The Song of the Musket*

-To the many sad wives and mothers, and the daughters of Korea-

Oh Chŏn-u
Right now you are
Polishing the gun,
Right now you are polishing
The gun made of wood from Mun'gyŏng Pass evergreens
And pig iron brought from the Ch'ungju Mountain Range
That gun bought with a hundred paper *ryō*
For which I, your grandmother,
Sold all the trinkets from my dowry,
Along with my clothes,
And my silver ring and silver hair ornaments,

And was finally able to put in the hands of your grandfather,
You're polishing that musket.

Oh Chŏn-u
Right now you are
Polishing the gun,
Right now you are polishing,
The gun that, in the Tonghak rebellion,
And then again in the incident of 1919,
Served your grandfather, and then your father,
In two uprisings
That gun covered in rust
Soaked in blood and tears and sweat,
That gun that has been immersed in the wind and rain and earth,
The only memento of your father and your grandfather
You're polishing that musket,

Oh Chŏn-u
Right now you are
Polishing the gun,
Right now you are
Using the scraps of the clothes
Of your grandfather, and your father and your mother
To polish that gun,
Oh Chŏn-u
You will bear it on your shoulder
Oh Chŏn-u
Right now you are about to
Take the last memento of your grandfather,
Take the only inheritance left by your father,
And even take with you
All my memories of them
And follow your father's footsteps
And follow your grandfather's footsteps,
The road your father took
And the road your grandfather took
Now you too are about to disappear
And leave this grandmother behind you.[35]

The above comprises the first three stanzas of Hŏ Nam-gi's (1918–1988) epic narrative poem *Hinawajū no uta* (The song of the musket). Originally published in 1951, the long form poem first appeared in a poetry collection with the same title published by Asahi Shobō. It is fifty-two pages as

reprinted in Hŏ Nam-gi's volume of the authoritative *Anthology of Zainichi Literature*, divided into twelve chapters. Hŏ was the third most frequent contributor to *Minshu Chōsen*, having been published there eighteen times. He was a leftist hardliner who would remain in the good graces of North Korean affiliated Zainichi organizations when Kim Tal-su would be alienated from them (discussed below).

In this poem the titular musket is passed between generations as Korean peasants take up arms against various forms of oppression. The story begins with Chŏn-u's grandfather joining the Tonghak rebellion in the 1890s, followed by Chŏn-u's father's involvement in the March First movement of 1919 and then subsequent attempts to free political prisoners and form a guerilla resistance movement as the Japanese military and police were mobilized to violently suppress the mass independence movement. Both men come home in defeat and are then captured and executed. Each time the narrator buries the musket in the ground as she mourns first her husband and then son. Along the way, *Hinawajū no uta* explores the complete history of Japanese colonialism in Korea, from the first invasion of Japanese soldiers, nominally entering to suppress the Tonghaks, through the annexation and thirty-five years of colonial rule, to Japan's 1945 defeat and the liberation of Korea. The narrative concludes with a repetition of the opening above, as Chŏn-u prepares to take on the mantle of freedom fighter as his father and grandfather did before him:

> What your grandfather said:
> "A fight to make a country where every peasant can live at ease,"
> What your father said:
> "A fight to take back the independence and freedom of our homeland,"
> And now what you say:
> "To chase out from this land
> The traitors and evil landlords and capitalists
> And join the fight to make
> The workers and the oppressed the masters of this land."
> This wish that three generations bet their lives on
> That I've sacrificed my husband and child and grandson for
> How could it still not come true?[36]

The very year of the poem's publication, 1951, and by extrapolation the likely timing of its composition, demands that we contextualize this work with the outbreak of the Korean War. From the perspective of Hŏ, the Korean War is one more in a series of lamentable, but ultimately

necessary conflicts. The paratextual frame dedicating this work to the wives, mothers, and daughters of Korea, as well the identification of the narrator in the first stanza above as Chŏn-u's grandmother, invite the reader to consider such conflicts from a dialectical perspective alternating between the fighters and those they leave behind, these roles being figured along gendered lines.

The excerpt at the head of this section comprises approximately one third of the first chapter; however, the length of stanzas and chapters varies considerably. For example, the remainder of Chapter One includes two more stanzas only slightly longer than those presented above, and it concludes with a final stanza running more than two full pages. The second chapter is approximately three times the length of the first, and subsequent chapters continue to vary, with long chapters detailing historical events and shorter framing chapters punctuating the events, with an emotional refrain repeating key passages such as the opening above, with the narrator often calling to and directly addressing Chŏn-u by name as seen in the excerpt above.

Additional pacing is established by spaces opened within the individual lines of the poem, as I have represented with large spaces in my translation. Standard Japanese is written without any spaces, so the single spaces breaking up individual lines of this text, even when the grammatical structure makes it clear that the divided portions are contiguous clauses, creates the clear sense of an intentional pause.[37] While the spacing, calls out to Chŏn-u, and repetition create an aural rhythm for the reader, it is very difficult to imagine any non-Korean reader of Japanese being able to fluently read the poem aloud without significant preparation. It is packed with kanji names for both famous as well as obscure Korean people and place names without phonetic guidance for the reader, so much so that I suspect even well-read Koreans fluent in both languages would have great difficulty in parsing much of the text.

The poem's opening already begins the work of invoking a multi-generational struggle and constructing this story around the musket itself. In the context of Japan, and therefore for most Japanese readers, the musket might most readily connote the introduction of advanced weapons technology by sixteenth century Portuguese traders, and the subsequent effect of that technology on the wars of unification eventually leading to the Tokugawa era. However, in *Hinawajū no uta*, Hŏ Nam-gi largely reverses this set of associations. The musket is not foreign, but Korean, with two famous locations in Korea named as the sources of the raw

material: “wood from Mun’gyŏng Pass evergreens” and “pig iron brought from the Ch’ungju Mountain Range.”[38] The musket does not represent new technology and advancement in warfare as it did in late-medieval Japan, but rather is now a primitive and outdated weapon “That may not be able to match up to the carbines // and machine guns fired by the enemy.”[39] In Japan the legacy of the musket is also associated with the powerful warlord Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582), whose embrace of this technology is commonly thought to have changed the face of medieval warfare in Japan.[40] The single weapon at the center of this narrative was purchased through the sacrifice of the only items of value possessed by this peasant family: the clothing and other items that were part of the narrator’s dowry.

In addition to localizing the Korean manufacture of the musket, the two place names given in the first stanza invoke additional symbolism as well. Both the Mun’gyŏng Pass and Ch’ungju Mountain Range place the narrative frame of reference in South Korea. The overwhelming majority of Koreans living in Japan both during the colonial period and after have their roots below the thirty-eighth parallel. This poem, with its unavoidable connection to the Korean War, makes an appeal to those individuals by describing a southern peasant family taking up arms once again against an all-powerful oppressor. The location given as the source of pig iron for the musket, the Ch’ungju Mountain Range, was the site of a military defeat of Korean forces by Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s (1537–1598) invading army in 1592.[41]

As Chŏn-u polishes the musket his grandmother laments that he will leave home to fight and likely die like her husband and son before him, but she will not stop him: “If this is the only path for // those who are born and raised in this land // Oh Chŏn-u // your grandmother will // send you on your way again in tears.”[42] Whereupon she recounts their family history of resistance and the provenance of the musket.

## The Tonghak Rebellion

The Tonghak (meaning literally ‘Eastern Learning’) Revolution (1884–1895) was a response to unreasonably oppressive levels of taxation by the government and the exacerbation of rigid class divisions between peasants and the privileged *yangban* gentry in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Tonghak movement itself begins about twenty years earlier when a failed bureaucrat named Ch’oe Che-u (1824–1864) channeled the rage of Korea’s agricultural masses into a series of uprisings clad in

religious fervor. As Cumings puts it:

> After a period of wandering he [Ch'oe Che-u] originated a millenarian, syncretic doctrine combining what he thought were the best ideas of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism into a potent mix that would protect Korea against the influx of Western learning (*sŏhak*). Ch'oe was also influenced by Catholicism in spite of himself, but above all by native Korean beliefs in spirits and mountain deities. His main idea was the unity of heaven and mankind and thus the universal equality of all people, which he mingled with magical chants and the usual village hocus-pocus, accumulating disgruntled and tax-avoiding peasants as he went along.[43]

Although Ch'oe was captured and executed in 1864, the movement continued underground, with small-scale sporadic uprisings and the appearance of bandits raiding government convoys becoming frequent in southern provinces by the 1880s. Then in 1892 regular demonstrations began in Ch'ungch'ŏng province that threatened a major destabilization. In mid-1893 four Tonghak leaders presented a petition at the palace in Seoul demanding the amelioration of the various hardships endured by the peasants and the posthumous exoneration of Ch'oe Che-u. Their rhetoric called for 'benevolent kingly rule' and begged for royal intercession. When King Kojong bid them to disperse, they obeyed, and for about one year a tense peace was maintained until large-scale rebellion was set off by the corrupt practices of Cho Pyŏng-gap, the new district magistrate of Chŏlla. Cho put peasants to work on land that he promised to exempt from tax, and subsequently taxed anyway, as well as on a major reservoir project where he embezzled the compensation of laborers. The resulting uprisings spread over much of the country, and now the Tonghaks were better armed and more than a match for government forces. It was purportedly to suppress these rebels that Chinese and Japanese troops ultimately entered Korea *en masse*, and that war broke out between these rivals, in 1894, over who would exercise a dominant level of influence in the peninsula.[44]

The narrative of *Hinawajū no uta* follows each of these developments in sequence. It begins with the desperation of the peasants "suffering under wicked taxation and misrule," "dying of starvation, collapsing of epidemic diseases," and "rumors spreading of those who sold their children sold their wives." The narrator contrasts these hardships with the luxurious lives enjoyed by the elite:

> In Seoul

With every year the palace is renovated
The bell and drum sound across the inner gardens
The coming and going of perfumed women in beautiful make-up never ceases
The armies bearing trays piled high never cease,
And in the provinces while each and every official
Is busy with new construction,
The houses of the poor
The houses of regular people The houses of the peasants
Every year lean a little further and rot from their foundations,
And even roofs that could be re-thatched
If they had a mere five *ryō*
Go un-thatched
And even these houses they must sell[45]

In response to these strained circumstances, "Some people hung themselves // Some people went out begging // Some people left // on a wandering journey without a destination // looking for a country without oppression a country without starvation."[46] While others took to the hills and became bandits.

As corrupt bureaucrats continued to cruelly squeeze the people, Chŏn-u's great grandfather is taken away without charge and locked up in an attempt to extort five hundred *ryō* from his family. He is whipped thirty times and dies shortly after being brought home on an improvised stretcher. Thereafter, his son, Chŏn-u's grandfather, leaves home and disappears for over three months. When he suddenly reappears at home, he pulls out a candle and whispers a mysterious prayer over his infant son.

The narrator suspects this of being a prayer from Tonghak mysticism. Whereupon the narration switches to quoting Chŏn-u's grandfather at length:

So you know it as well?
Yes this is indeed a Tonghak prayer
I have become a member of the Tonghaks
Those nobles say that Tonghak is
An evil teaching that misleads the people and confuses the world
That the principle of the unity of heaven and mankind
Will bring about the downfall of our kingdom
That it presages a traitorous insurrection
And they have declared it a forbidden religion
So your husband too is a traitor
Sometime my life will be taken

Please I want you to be ready

You must have heard
The rumors too
In March last year, in front of Kyŏngbok palace in Seoul
The high priest Ch'oe Si-hyŏng with
Son Min-ch'ŏn, Son Pyŏng-hŭi, Sŏ In-jū and more
Prostrated themselves before the palace gate for three days and three nights
Crying out for the pardoning of the founder and protesting the taboo against Tonghak
But now that method
Won't save so much as a mouse,
It doesn't matter the teaching
We must make a country where the people the peasants can be at ease,
The time for begging and petitioning
That time is over[47]

In Chŏn-u's grandfather's narration there is an implicit criticism of the Tonghak leaders who made a show of strength in appearing *en masse* before the royal palace, only to withdraw at the behest of the King. The thinking of these spiritual men, that after so many countless indignities the powers that be could be moved to redress their plight by words alone, is derided as naiveté that "won't save so much as a mouse." Here we see the emergence of a dynamic tension between non-violent protest and the actual violent uprising the poet believes necessary to accomplish the single goal, variously articulated by the three successive generations—first in the pre-colonial era as "to make a country where every peasant can live at ease," then during Japanese colonial rule "to take back the freedom and independence of our homeland," and finally as Chŏn-u prepares to do battle in the Korean War, "to make the workers and the oppressed the masters of this land." The word "revolution" (革命 J. *kakumei* K. *hyŏngmyŏng*) does not appear in this text, but it is never far from the mind of the reader, who can readily recognize that the goals of these freedom fighters all involve toppling the current ruling order.

Chŏn-u's grandfather next details how the Chŏlla magistrate Cho Pyŏng-gap's abuses had freshly incensed the people, leading them to break into government offices, granaries, and armories, destroying tax ledgers, distributing food to starving peasants, and arming a growing insurgency under a new leader named Chŏn Pong-jun. And now the uprising was continuing to spread in spite of Ch'oe Si-hyŏng and Son Pyŏng-hŭi's entreaties, thus defying the less confrontationally inclined leaders who had

backed off at Kojong's command. Having fought off the government forces initially sent to suppress them, the time had come for a final confrontation. It was to join this battle that Chŏn-u's grandfather was preparing to depart and had now made what he expected to be his final visit home. The narrative continues in the grandfather's voice as he outlines the Tonghak's ultimate goal, including the expulsion of meddlesome foreign powers, and he expresses the sorrow of leaving his young wife, but the necessity of this sacrifice for the greater prosperity of all Korea:

> And now Chŏn Pong-jun's army
> Is preparing to march on Seoul
> They will chase out those very Yangban
> Perpetrators of this misrule and this evil taxation,
> And the king who would sell his own country
> Who worships the Qing, who have no connection to this land,
> As a parent to Korea
> And himself calls Korea 'Little China'
> As he offers them tribute,
> And chase out
> The king who sells his own country as he turns a blind eye to
> The unbearable insolence of the Japanese
> And who even fawns over them
> As they blindly follow the lead of the Western powers
> And attempt to invade Asia through military strength
> And set up their foreign settlements
> In ports of Pusan, and Masan, and Chemul and more
> And claiming to protect their own citizens
> They send in their armies
> And poke their noses into our national affairs
> […]
> And you alone remain behind
> After I have died in battle
> You'll have to raise this child with just the hands of one woman
> When I think of it as your husband it's not that I don't feel
> As if my insides are being torn out but
> That is the unhappiness of the wives born in this land,
> That is the unhappiness of the husbands born in this land
> Before we can wish for the happiness of our one family
> We have to fight for the happiness of all the people
> Of all the innumerable families
> Who make up our nation of Korea[48]

Chŏn-u's grandmother is shocked by the announcement that her husband intends to leave and never return. She is twenty and Chŏn-u's infant father has just turned two. Although the poet has established the pattern that the men go off to fight while the women remain behind, Chŏn-u's grandmother is not ignorant of the need for revolution: "Of course I knew that we needed to // reform the evil politics // that only made the innocent and the poor suffer" but to send off her beloved husband was too much to bear.[49] However, she comes to a kind of peace with this unavoidable reality in a lament that will repeat throughout the work as an articulation of the particular fate of the Korean people. While not directly invoked in this poem, in many Zainichi works such as those by Yi Hoesŏng (Ri Kaisei) and Yi Yang-ji there are common references to a culturally specific notion of "*P'alch'a*" as referring to a fate that is universally tragic and inevitable for Koreans in particular. In turn the characters lament this whenever they deploy the particular Korean word *P'alch'a* for "fate" or engage in several Korean story-telling practices such as *p'ansori* (an operatic story-telling format) and *sinse t'aryŏng* (narrative lamentations of grief). The causal connection between being Korean and being subject to a particularly cruel kind of destiny is typified by Chŏn-u's grandmother's resignation:

But if this is the only path
But if this is the way for our homeland
For all the young people
Born and raised in this land
How could I
Try to stand in the way?
How could I say
For the sake of my sadness
Forget about
All the great sadness of this land?[50]

Chŏn-u's grandfather leaves home with his wife urging him to hurry and make a country "that won't have to accept the demands of foreign nations // where heaven and mankind have been unified."[51] She wants more than anything to prepare him a final meal with white rice and fish, but rather than that, he fervently wishes to pull together enough money to buy a musket to take with him to fight, as the majority of the Tonghaks are armed only with "hoes, kitchen knives, and clubs."[52] Whereupon his wife

gives him the money from selling her wedding trinkets and clothes from her dowry, and he sets off, disappearing into a rainy night.

The narrator records the rumors of Tonghak victories, in particular the battle of Hwangt'ohyŏn, followed by an extended list naming the various leaders of Tonghak groups and the towns where they raised the peasants in rebellion. However, the great uprising proves abortive as Japan and China (especially the former) send in troops to suppress the rebels. Chŏn-u's grandfather makes it home one more time after the campaign is suppressed, bringing the musket with him, but is subsequently captured and executed for his involvement with the movement. The narrator raises Chŏn-u's father alone as she describes the continually greater toll of Japanese colonialism: the formal annexation of Korea, the loss of land to Japanese organizations such as the Oriental Development Corporation, continuous economic stagnation, and the insult of aristocratic Koreans cooperating with the Japanese.[53]

## Establishing the Necessity of Violent Means

The events of the Tonghak rebellion through the annexation and first years of Japanese rule comprise approximately the first half of the *Hinawajū no uta*. Thereafter the plot is focused on Chŏn-u's father's involvement with the March First movement and its aftermath. Hŏ Nam-gi critiques the movement as toothless. Through the voice of Chŏn-u's grandmother, he repeatedly derides the movement as "gentlemanly" (紳士的 *shinshiteki*), "defeatist" (敗北的 *haibokuteki*), and "disorganized" (非組織的 *hisoshikiteki*), and the declaration of independence as "reserved" (控え目 *hikaeme*), and "conciliatory" (妥協的 *dakyōteki*).

> Aah! "We the Korean people
> Stand for justice, therefore
> We must adopt the practice of pacifism
> When faced with any enemy,
> Those who would face our enemies with violence
> It is they who are the enemy of the Korean people," they said
> That declaration of independence, signed by 33 leaders
> That gentlemanly
> Even religious declaration of independence
> For the sake of that declaration
> Was it alright for red blood to flow helplessly
> Over this precious land?[54]

Ultimately the poem makes it clear that the looming conflict alluded to is the Korean War, and that it is the only path available to liberate Korea from foreign interference.

In the past  threatened
By military dogs,
And in the past  threatened
By the bayonets of the Japanese gendarmerie,
And in the past  threatened
By the Japanese state police and special inspectors
In this land today
There is a new Japanese,
He speaks the same Korean as us
And though he may be Korean like us
His blood  he has sold so a foreign country
And now we are threatened by
These men who act as foreign agents.

It's  just
The continuation of
1937, 38,
It's  just
The extension of
1919,
It's nothing more than
The extension of
1894
That year, so rich in  blood and death.[55]

## Hŏ Nam-gi and Kim Tal-su

Hŏ Nam-gi explicitly and continuously supported North Korea. According to Kawamura Minato, Hŏ's unwavering devotion to the leftist cause was more exception than rule for prominent Zainichi literary figures in the schism caused by North Korea's terrifying authoritarianism. Consider the following characterizations from Kawamura, beginning with his description of the eventual radical divergence of figures who worked closely together on *Minshu Chōsen*, including the magazine's official publisher Han Tŏk-su, who occupied a prominent role in the Ch'ongryŏn (General Association of Korean Residents in Japan), the successor to the original League of Koreans in Japan, when it was outlawed in 1949.

If [Publisher] Han Tŏk-su, the figure who long served as chairman of the

> Ch'ongryŏn, is a representative example of the group of North Korea (DPRK) supporters, then [Editor in Chief] Kim Tal-su, who left the Ch'ongryŏn (being forced out), is a more representative example among Zainichi literary figures. Looking at it today, to see these two men with their names lined up in such a friendly fashion sharing space in the magazine's imprint, it feels like seeing an alternate world. In the table of contents for this [July 1947] issue, Hŏ Nam-gi's "The Poet" sits next to Kim Tal-su's essay "Notes about a Certain Day." This too seems like an impossible combination with the perspective of time.[56]

Despite the initial impetus of the League of Koreans in Japan to engage in cultural outreach that involved strategically utilizing the Japanese language, Kawamura points out that the official position embraced by the Ch'ongryŏn in particular was that Koreans should not be writing in Japanese, and that supporting the new Korean regime meant foisting off the yoke of the Japanese imperial project in all respects, in particular in the case of language.

With such pressure from the largest Korean resident group, the authors who did wish to write in Japanese, whatever their personal or professional reasons for doing so, found themselves isolated. These, the majority of postwar Zainichi writers to achieve prominence, carved out for themselves what might be described as a fourth space: they were not affiliated with (1) North Korea, nor did they feel any special affinity for (2) South Korea, or its Japan-based expatriate support organization, the Korean Residents Union in Japan (在日本大韓民国民団 Zai Nihon Daikan Minkoku mindan, usually known by the shortened Mindan), nor again did they feel loyalty to or acceptance within (3) Japan itself. Therefore, what I am calling in this context a "fourth space" describes treating Zainichi-ness itself as its own potential type of national identity, that of the politically non-aligned expatriate Korean who uses Japanese and lives in Japan, but still rejects Japanese identity and assimilation.

Japanese and Korean scholars both within and without the community have approached this notion of a non-Japanese and non-binary-Korean identification, constructed on the basis of Zainichi life, from a number of perspectives. Takeda Seiji expressed the idea in the title of his study of three prominent writers: *"Zainichi" as Foundation – Yi Hoe-sŏng (Ri Kaisei), Kim Sŏk-bŏm, Kim Hak-yong*.[57] In the case of Kawamura Minato, the author uses this stance to address the question of whether works written by Zainichi authors should be classified within the broader categories of Japanese or Korean literature, concluding that the only sensible path is to

reject such labels and instead categorize these works simply as "Zainichi Korean literature." Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of categorizing the early development of Korean literature in Japan using this perspective is the degree to which it demonstrates the alienation of the most prolific and prominent authors of the community from North Korea and the Ch'ongryŏn. Kawamura describes the situation this way:

> After the war, that so many of the literary figures who can be thought of as creating the true form of "Zainichi Korean Literature," which is to say Kim Tal-su, Yi Hoe-sŏng (Ri Kaisei), Kim Sok-bom, Kim Tae-saeng, Ko Sa-myŏng, Kim Si-jong, An U-jik, Yun Hak-chun, etc., had left or been purged from the ethnic support organizations signals that Zainichi Korean literature had been born with an extraordinarily political character. In fact, it was so political that we can think of this literature as a whole as the production of Zainichi Korean literature groups that had been strongly influenced by a particular ideology (that of Marxism). Aside from Kim Hak-yong who was affiliated with the Mindan, almost all of them were aligned with the Ch'ongryŏn and had experience working on the Korean rights movements and in various cultural activities. They created their own "Zainichi Korean literature" out of their discord and conflict with (or from the organizations' perspective, their betrayal or abandonment of) the "politics" of those ethnic organizations.[58]

Kim Tal-su's works most clearly veered away from violence. For example, his Akutagawa Prize-nominated novella *Paku Tari no saiban* (朴達の裁判 The Trial of Pak Tal) articulated a mode of resistance through self-sacrifice and education. Kim's work described a deep fear of socialism, but through a protagonist who could be described as "apolitical" as far as ideology is concerned, and anything but apolitical in terms of the material issues affecting his community. The humor and warmth of *Paku Tari no saiban* is nowhere present in Hŏ Nam-gi's *Hinawajū no uta*, in which the emotional modes of pathos and rage are overwhelming. While they may have shared the pages of *Minshu Chōsen*, just as leftists, Christians, and Japanese collaborators originally shared leadership of the League of Koreans in Japan, later Kim Tal-su and Hŏ Nam-gi would come to represent a major divergence in the activist community between literary figures and the major *Zainichi* support organizations. The same pattern applies in the case of Kim Tal-su and Hŏ Nam-gi's attitudes towards the March First movement and its nationalist organizers. While the group of staunch DPRK-advocates, represented by Hŏ, can only see it as a failure, even going so far as to deride its non-violence, Kim saw the March First

movement in an aspirational light, and praised the spirit of its participants. The most ardent leftists had a vested interest in dismissing the efforts of the nationalists, thereby positioning themselves as the true inheritors of the independence movement.

Yet for all these contrasts, the fact that the two men worked together in the early postwar period is itself logical, as the commonalities underlying their works are also plain to see. All the writers featured in this study, Wŏn Yong-dŏk, Chŏng Tong-mun, and Kim Tal-su writing in *Minshu Chōsen*, and Hŏ Nam-gi in his epic poem, sought to reframe existing narratives surrounding historical incidents of colonial resistance. Just as some prewar Zainichi authors believed that writing in Japanese was the only means by which to reach a broad readership and make known the destitute conditions of the colony, so too did these postwar Zainichi writers believe that they must write in Japanese in order to correct long-established narratives that had minimized the significance of Korean resistance and described Koreans as disorganized trouble-makers, or at the most sympathetic, as victims of Japanese aggression with no agency of their own. Instead, there was a unified goal shared among this coterie to reclaim that agency and assert the role Korean resistance played in the defeat of the Japanese. Further Hŏ Nam-gi's *Hinawajū no uta* represents an example of an expatriate Korean writer in postwar Japan grappling with contemporary historical events through literature, and drives home the idea that, for the substantial body of Zainichi Koreans sympathetic to the DPRK, America (and this is to say specifically the US only and *not* the USSR or the PRC) had come to occupy the same role as the imperial Japanese as a foreign interloper inserting itself in Korean affairs.

## NOTES

[1] Hŏ Nam-gi, *Hinawajū no uta* in *"Zainichi" bungaku zenshū* 2 (Tokyo: Bensei Shuppan, 2006), 54. (All translations in this study are my own unless otherwise noted.)

[2] Deokhyo Choi, "The Empire Strikes Back from Within: Colonial Liberation and the Korean Minority Question at the Birth of Postwar Japan, 1945–47," *American Historical Review*, 126.2 (June 2021): 556.

[3] Ibid.

[4] I have chosen the naming and Romanization for these two incidents (in particular the choice to refer to the later incident by the Chinese rather than Korean place name) on the basis that, to the extent these events have been discussed in English language scholarship, these versions have been common, but by no means universal.

[5] Choi, "The Empire Strikes," 558–9 and 574–5.

[6] Ibid., 569–570 and Changsoo Lee "The Politics of Repatriation" in *Koreans in Japan: Ethnic Conflict and Accommodation,* Changsoo Lee and George De Vos (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 80–81.

[7] Cindi Textor, *Intersectional Incoherence: Zainichi Literature and the Ethics of Illegibility* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2024), 2.

[8] Melissa Wender, *Lamentation as History: Narratives by Koreans in Japan*, *1965–2000* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

[9] Ibid., 23.

[10] Textor, *Intersectional Incoherence*, 62.

[11] "Sōkan no ji," *Minshu Chōsen* 1 (April 1946): 3. (unsigned) Reprinted in *Fukkoku "Minshu Chōsen" GHQ jidai no zai Nihon Chōsenjin-shi*. 5 vols. (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1993), Vol 1. All subsequent articles from *Minshu Chōsen* are also found in the 1993 reprint.

[12] Jonathan Glade, "Caught between empire and occupation: censorship, deimperialization, and Koreans in postwar Japan," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 20.3 (2019), 399.

[13] Ibid., 405.

[14] Ibid., 407.

[15] Sakasai Akito, "Kim Talsu's Self-Censorship Conundrum: Early Postwar *Zainichi* Literature Caught Between GHQ Censorship and Resident Korean Community Politics" Sera Palmer, trans., *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 35 (Published electronically December 12, 2024), 11.

[16] Wŏn Yong-dŏk, "Kōshū gakusei jiken to wa nani ka," *Minshu Chōsen* 2 (May 1946), 11.

[17] Wŏn Yong-dŏk, "Yoshida seifu e no kōkaijō," *Minshu Chōsen* 32: 20-35.

[18] Kim Tal-su, "Waga-bungaku to seikatsu (6): *Minshu Chōsen* to *Shin Nihon bungaku* no koto" in *Kim Tal-su shōsetsu zenshū* 5 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1980), 340.

[19] Wŏn Yong-dŏk, "Kōshū gakusei jiken," 11.

[20] Ibid., 11–12.

[21] Ibid., 13.

[22] Ibid., 14.

[23] For example, Ibid., 14–15, 左翼的に前進するやうになった and 左翼化せしめた。

[24] Ibid., 14.

[25] While the Japanese government invested heavily in colonial Korea, including building railways and the development of heavy industry, the benefits of economic growth were profoundly unequal, and the rural populace was greatly displaced. Japanese agricultural policies in particular were a root cause of Koreans' impoverishment and immigration to the Japanese mainland. The Oriental Development Company (東洋拓殖会社 *tōyō takushoku kaisha*), for example, came to control over 20% of Korea's arable land. As Japan conducted a massive cadastral survey and implemented new contract laws shortly after annexation, the *yangban* landlords were able to utilize their resources to navigate the new system, thus retaining legal control over their lands, but the same process "led to the dispossession of traditional tenancy rights and land rights for many illiterate peasants." Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun* (New York: Norton, 2005), 148–151. See also Michael Weiner, *Origins of the Korean Community in Japan*, *1910–1923* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 38–43.

[26] Wŏn Yong-dŏk, "Kōshū gakusei jiken," 12.

[27] Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun,* 156. Cumings provides the following numbers for 1929 participation in the group: 138 branches, 37,000 members.

[28] Wŏn Yong-dŏk, "Kōshū gakusei jiken," 15.

[29] Kim Tal-su, "3.1 no giseisha ni meimoku suru," *Minshu Chōsen* 9 (Mar./Apr. 1947): 1, reprinted in *Fukkoku Minshu Chōsen*.

[30] Chŏng Tong-mun, "Manpōzan jiken to sono haikei," *Minshu Chōsen* 3 (June 1946): 14–18, reprinted in *Fukkoku Minshu Chōsen* 1: 152–156. This article is Chŏng's only contribution to *Minshu Chōsen*.

[31] Chŏng Tong-mun, "Manpōzan jiken," 14.

[32] Ibid., 15.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., 18.

[35] Hŏ Nam-gi, *Hinawajū*, 8–10.

[36] Ibid., 58.

[37] For example その　火縄銃を磨いている from the opening excerpt, which I have rendered as 'You're polishing that　Musket'

[38] Hŏ Nam-gi, *Hinawajū*, 9.

[39] Ibid., 11.

[40] Conlan describes the orthodox view this way: "Oda Nobunaga […] has been characterized as a military genius whose concentrated use of firepower allowed him to 'revolutionize' warfare, crush his most potent rival, the Takeda of Kai province, and consolidate power from 1570 until his assassination in 1582." However, Conlan disagrees with this perception, and argues that the use of guns did not make as much of a tactical impact as such a statement implies. Thomas Conlan, "Instruments of Change: Organizational Technology and the Consolidation of Regional Power in Japan, 1333–1600" in *War and State Building in Medieval Japan,* eds. John A. Ferejohn and Francis McCall Rosenbluth (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 124. The conventional view Conlan describes can be found, for example, in Delmer M. Brown, "The Impact of Firearms on Japanese Warfare, 1543–98" *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 7.3 (May 1948): 236–253.

[41] Stephen Turnbull, *The Samurai Invasion of Korea, 1592–98* (New York: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 2008), 57.

[42] Hŏ Nam-gi, *Hinawajū*, 10.

[43] Cumings, *Korea's Place*, 116.

[44] Ibid., 115-120.

[45] Hŏ Nam-gi, *Hinawajū*, 12.

[46] Ibid., 13.

[47] Ibid., 15–16.

[48] Ibid., 17–18.

[49] Ibid., 19.

[50] Ibid., 19–20.

[51] Ibid., 20.

[52] Ibid., 21.

[53] The "Oriental Development Company" is a standard translation for the *Tōyō Takushoku Kaisha* (東洋拓殖会社). See Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun,* as well as Weiner, *Origins*, for information on the origin and practices of this entity.

[54] Hŏ Nam-gi, *Hinawajū*, 44.

[55] Ibid., 55.

[56] Kawamura Minato, *Umaretara soko ga furusato* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1999), 59.

[57] Takeda Seiji, "*Zainichi" to iu konkyo*: *Yi Hoe-sŏng (Ri Kaisei), Kim Sok-bom, Kim Hak-yong* (Tokyo: Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 1983).

[58] Kawamura, *Umaretara*, 16.

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