


RESEARCH ARTICLE

Anti-Japanism as a strategy for reshaping national identity in post-liberation South Korean fictions (1945–1948)

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(Received 15 June 2022; revised 22 June 2023; accepted 30 June 2023)

Abstract

This article argues that South Koreans' anti-Japanism in the post-liberation period can be regarded as an ideological construction, which was inevitably required to reshape their national identity, rather than as a reasonable and serious critical consideration of colonial Japan. Anti-Japanism functions as an identification framework in an era when Koreans needed to develop a new discourse which reflects the rapid politico-socio-cultural changes of that period. Under military control of the United States and the Soviet Union, Koreans made Japan the other in a number of ways in order to unite their nation state and national identity, relying specifically on racial difference and hierarchy. First, Korean intellectuals, who once cooperated with colonial Japan in the political sphere or in their ordinary lives, explicitly revealed their anti-Japanese sentiments in their writings right after liberation. Second, after liberation, anti-Japanism emerged from a process that Koreans would exploit, after demarcating the moral difference between themselves and the remaining Japanese migrants, to exclude the Japanese from their community. Finally, anti-Japanism in the post-liberation period can be detected in Koreans' tenacious attitude, as they tacitly restricted the articulation of filial or cultural hybridity with the Japanese people in order to reconfigure their national identity.

Keywords: anti-Japanism; Korea; national image; post-liberation Korean fictions; racial division and exclusion

Introduction

It is frequently supposed that the Korean and the Japanese people could share one single origin anthropologically, genetically, and culturally.¹ Also, during the colonial period of 35 years by the Imperial Japan, most Korean social and cultural factors were inextricably commingled with Japanese ones, to the extent that Koreans seemed in jeopardy of losing their own national identity. After liberation from Japanese rule, South Koreans encountered demands that they should construct a proper and separate national identity, reconfiguring themselves as a pure ethnic group. Under these circumstances, anti-Japanism might be conceived as an ideological apparatus that Koreans needed to enunciate in order to protect their own identity from external contaminations, at least through the immediate post-war era. In its everyday meaning, anti-Japanism refers to Koreans' resentment and disdain toward colonial Japan or the Japanese people who violently exploited and victimized the Korean people. However, from a different angle, anti-Japanism could be defined as an ideological construction that Koreans needed to imagine for themselves collectively and unconsciously to construct their own "pure" national identity.

¹Hideyuki Seki 2007, pp. 24–27; Yun 2003.

Strictly speaking, anti-Japanism in the post-liberation period is quite different from the righteous protest and critical charges that Koreans have continuously raised against Japanese anti-humanistic crimes such as comfort women who served in Japanese military brothels. In my argument, the notion of anti-Japanism will be constrained to an ideological orientation that Koreans needed to develop to distort, ignore, and criticize all association with anything recognizable as Japanese, including the Imperial Japan, Japanese Government-General of Korea, and the Japanese people. Such an orientation shows the unconscious desire of Koreans who struggled to reconfigure their own national originality and identity as a homogenous nation state. At that time, Koreans' anti-Japanese images of the Japanese people were neither formed by a political propaganda nor produced by an enforced coercion. Roughly speaking, Koreans already had a certain pre-determined self-image that they are fundamentally different from the Japanese. From the Korean perspective, the Japanese appeared to be an evil, selfish, inferior, filthy, and sinful villain. On the other hand, Koreans started to reconfigure themselves as a disparate ethnic group who are entirely different from their counterpart, the Japanese. They presumed themselves to be a good, altruistic, superior, pure, and righteous ethnic group.

Originally, anti-Japanese sentiment referred to a tendency Korean people had to level negative emotions toward Japan. This process manifested itself in various forms throughout medieval and modern times.² During the Joseon Dynasty, it was influenced by the ideology centered around Joseon and the Imjin War. In the era of enlightenment and modernization, it was fueled by Japan's colonial ambitions in Korea. During the colonial period, it emerged as a result of Japan's oppression and discrimination of Koreans, which led Koreans to perceive Japan's supporters as collaborators with imperialism and colonialism. However, never before had anti-Japanese sentiment resurfaced as dramatically as it did immediately after liberation. During this period, Japan, which many Koreans had imitated before liberation, suddenly became associated with negative images such as badness, superiority, inferiority, filth, guilt, and conspiracy. This sudden reversal implies that anti-Japanese sentiment was part of a decolonizing nationalism as Korea sought to form its own unique national identity. In post-World War II Asia and Africa, regions that shared colonial experiences, the process of decolonizing nationalism involved vilifying and antagonizing the empire.³ In the Korean Peninsula, both South and North Koreans, occupied by the United States and the Soviet Union respectively, developed their own versions of decolonizing nationalism and negatively perceived Japan in accordance with their own circumstances.⁴ In particular, one of the most significant ways in which South Koreans imagined the nation was by emphasizing the logic of distinction, highlighting unity and strength within the group while asserting that both nations were distinctly different from other ethnicities. However, for this logic of distinction to operate, it required the presence of the other, the well-known "Japanese." In this regard, the process of exploring and analyzing post-liberation anti-Japanism is closely tied to pro-American and anti-Communist sentiments. Unlike their anti-Japanese sentiment toward Japan, immediately after liberation, Koreans also sought to imagine and be recognized as a distinctive national identity while simultaneously being colonized by the US military administration.⁵

To examine post-liberation anti-Japanese sentiment, it is necessary to consider the South Korean literary figures who represented the literature of that era and whose works continue to be critically discussed today. With particular attention to South Korean fictions from 1945 to 1948, I will mainly examine how they represent Koreans' daily experiences and anti-Japanism in the post-liberation

²Lee Chae-yeon 1996, pp. 3–25; Ha Woo-bong 2006, pp. 25–63.

³Fanon 1952; Baek Nak-cheong 1979; Ngūgī wa Thing'o 1986; Spivak 1988; Anderson 1991; Bhabha 1994; Joint History Compilation Committee of Korea, China, and Japan 2012.

⁴Kim Jae-ung 2014, pp. 209–47.

⁵Immediately after liberation, Koreans aimed to conform to the policies of the US military administration while envisioning and seeking recognition for their national identity. Furthermore, the representation of the United States in post-Korean War novels manifests itself as a reliance on a certain truth, namely Americanness. This Americanness emerges and permeates the lives of the Korean people at the connecting point between the pro-American strategies pursued by the United States after liberation along with the understanding of the ruling powers and elites in Korea who had embraced and utilized those strategies in their own way (Kang Jeong-gu 2014, pp. 423–55; 2016, pp. 169–92).

period. The post-liberation Korean fictions vividly portray how Koreans did recollect, deal with, or work through their experience with the Japanese between politics in general and their ordinary life. Thematically, they are classified with the following three types: (a) the recollection of Koreans who in fact collaborated with the Japanese in their political and daily lives as shown in “The Sinner Against the Nation (*Minjokui Joein* 민족의 죄인)” by Chae Man-sik (*People*), October–November 1948. The first manuscript was written in May 1946, “Before and After the Liberation (*Haebangjeonhu* 해방전후)” by Yi Tae-jun (*Literature*, August 1946), and “A Traitor (*Banyeokja* 반역자)” by Kim Dong-in (*People*, March 1947); (b) Koreans’ attitudes toward the Japanese migrants who still lived in Korea even after the liberation, in examples “The Faint Lamplight (*Jandeung* 잔등)” by Heo Jun (*Spring Tide* vols. 1–2, January–July 1946), and “The Yalu River (*Aprokgang* 압록강)” by Kim Man-seon (*New World*, February 1946); and (c) cultural and ethnic hybridity between Korea and Japan as shown in “A Journal of Homecoming (*Guihwanilgi* 귀환일기)” by Eom Heung-seop (*Our Literature*, February 1946), “The First Step (*Cheosgeolum* 첫걸음)” (*Neo-Literature*, November 1946. It was published under the title “The Son of Liberation (*Haebangui Adul* 해방의 아들)”), and “A Footprint Left in the Bottom (*Eongdeongie Namun Baljaguk* 엉덩이에 남은 발자국)” (*National Salvation*, January 1948) by Yeom Sang-seop, and “A Liquor Story (*Sul Iyagi* 술 이야기)” by Hwang Sun-won (*New World*, February–April 1947. It was published under the title “Liquor (*Sul* 술”).

In this regard, the examination and analysis of anti-Japanism in the post-liberation period is indispensable for understanding how Koreans would construct their own national identity under control of both the US and Soviet military administrations shortly after the liberation. From 1945 to 1948, the US army administration admitted and almost retained the Japanese colonial system, treating the remaining Japanese people better than the Soviet military administration, and establishing a trusteeship through pro-American public opinion, and anticommunism. Under these chaotic circumstances, Koreans could not reasonably solve the urgent issues such as how they would deal with pro-Japanese collaborators, the Japanese who still stayed in Korea after the liberation, or the legacy of Japanese colonization, and whether they would reinstate the citizenship of mixed children between Korean and Japanese parentage. Furthermore, much more serious was that Koreans could not build up their own independent country by themselves. Accordingly, the huge burden of composing their national identity anew falls on Koreans. They set up the logic of differentiation that they are an entirely homogenous ethnic group different from any other ethnic groups. It helps to strengthen out their collective identity and national solidarity. In other words, they need to appropriate the familiar yet strange other, the Japanese people, in order to act out the logic of differentiation.

Many literary studies concerning Korean national identity basically put a considerable weight upon the ideological conflict between the right and the left wings over nationalism or a nationalist’s self-conscious reflections and confessions. In those approaches, the dichotomous confrontations of the right and the left wings are sharply emphasized. This standpoint is chiefly suggested in the works of the well-known critics like Kyeon Yeong-min and Kim Yong-zik. Their arguments have a strong influence on Sin Hyeong-ki and Kang Kyeong-hwa, shaping a basic perspective for grasping chaotic social realities in the post-liberation period.⁶ Since the 1990s, literary critics such as Park Yong-chan, Yu Cheol-sang, Yi Ki-seong, Oh Tae-yeong, Kim Jun-hyeon, and Kim Yun-sik deal with their guilty conscience and the implicit meaning of becoming a member of the nation, reading out confessional writings with a tone of conscience, or a self-criticism by pro-Japanese writers who once collaborated with the Imperial Japan.⁷

Few studies explored Koreans’ national identity, dealing with the issue of the Japanese. Prior studies regarding Japan and the Japanese people are primarily concerned with two factors: one has a tendency to depict a miserable life of the remaining Japanese minutely and appeal to Koreans’ compassions for them; the other focuses on Koreans’ warning against and casting a critical eye upon Japan and

⁶Kyeon 1986, pp. 9–26; Kim 1989; Sin 1988; Kang 2003.

⁷Park 1995, p. 93; Yu 2006, p. 367; Yi 2009a, p. 155; Oh 2007; Kim 2009; Kim 2006, pp. 3–130.

Japanese people, counting the Japanese culture, viewpoint, or manners as evil and wrong. The former belongs to Yim Ki-hyeon, Yi Jeong-suk, Kwak Keun, Choe Kang-min, Yu Cheol-sang, and Yi Byeong-sun whose works reveal harsh and dismal realities of the Japanese people, contrasting with Koreans' ethics and humanism.⁸ The latter lies with works of Kim Seung-min and An Mi-yeong, which illuminate a strong hatred to anything Japanese secretly hidden in the psyche of Koreans. Also, Kim Cheol, whose work tends to be somewhat radical, contends that a Korean "I" fantasizes himself as "pure and good" through projecting negative images to a Japanese.⁹ Among these, no studies have examined the ideological dimension of anti-Japanism that plays an important role in shaping Korean national identity in the post-liberation period.

Beyond literature, inquiry concerning anti-Japanism has been widely conducted from a sociological standpoint as well as a philosophical one. However, those approaches failed to make explicit the interrelation between Korean national identity and anti-Japanism. In Korean academic groups, it is commonly supposed that Koreans' anti-Japanese sentiment and anti-Japanism basically spring from Koreans' national trauma, resulting from the Japanese colonization and Japan's discrimination against Koreans. On the other hand, Japanese academic groups consider anti-Japanese sentiment as the result of Korean sovereignty tightening in its transition to an independent Republic, or the consequence of strong anti-Japanese education in Korea.¹⁰ Jeong Dae-kyun pointed out that anti-Japanese sentiment and anti-Japanism are brought about by education and media rather than by the Japanese colonial reign. Tak Seok-san, Seo Jung-seok, and Yi Kil-jong elaborated the argument that anti-Japanese sentiment and anti-Japanism are boosted as an instrument of nationalism by Rhee Syngman and Park Chung-hee. From a different angle, Choe Kil-seong provided an analysis that anti-Japanese sentiments and anti-Japanism arise from internal factional strife aggravated by domestic pro-Japanese groups in Korea.¹¹ As of today, a lot of further studies have been ongoing, but there have been no studies that draws attention to how anti-Japanism took place right after the liberation or what significance anti-Japanism hold in the post-liberation period. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze and examine what functions anti-Japanism perform in the process of rebuilding Koreans' national identity after liberation.

In order to examine some aspects of anti-Japanism in the post-liberation period, first we need to take note of how anything related to Japan or the Japanese is represented, structured, and organized in post-liberation South Korean fictions. According to Michel Foucault, when a representation (language) becomes discursive, a specific mode of thinking that transcends the subject's will is operating. Discourse is the process of organizing the perceptions of various individuals into a specific form and directing their modes of thinking in a uniform manner.¹² He argues that during its formation, discourse is constructed through a process of exclusion. As Foucault asserts: "I am supposing that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers, to cope with chance events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality."¹³ These processes are the external and internal processes of exclusion. In this context, this article focuses on the external processes of exclusion, which are delineated by prohibition, division, and rejection, as well as the will to truth. Prohibition means that we cannot speak about anyone or anything (the object) in any situation (convention). Division and rejection refer to the act of dividing and distinguishing between this and that, and rejecting the speech and actions of the other as meaningless behavior. The will to truth expresses the continuous operation of an invisible, coercive force that distinguishes between truth

⁸Yim 2010, pp. 259–88; Yi 2011, pp. 45–76; Kwak 2000, pp. 495–511; Choi 1995, pp. 113–30; Yu 1995, pp. 201–23; Yi 1997, pp. 327–46.

⁹Kim 2007, pp. 243–74; An 2010, pp. 279–300; Kim 2008, pp. 52–67.

¹⁰Han 1995; Takasaki 1993, p. 14.

¹¹Joeng 1999, p. 9; Tak 2001, p. 143; Seo 2005, pp. 421–41; Yi 2006, p. 56; Choi 2004, p. 32.

¹²Foucault 1994.

¹³Foucault 1972, p. 216.

and falsehood. The will to truth permeates the processes of prohibition, division, and rejection, and is considered to be constantly reinforced, fundamental, and inevitable.¹⁴

It is supposed that most post-liberation Korean fiction is not free from the discursive order's tendency toward the exclusion of the Japanese and mixed Koreans from the imagined homogenous Korean ethnic groups, if the order of post-liberation discourse is subjected to the process of exclusion. Thus, this article aims to analyze how anti-Japanese sentiment in South Korea immediately after liberation functioned as a specific form of nationalist thinking that manifested itself collectively and unconsciously, transcending the subjectivity and will of any particular entity, whether speaking of left- or right-wing groups. In the second section, centering around "A Traitor (*Banyeokja*)" by Kim Dong-in, "The Sinner of the Nation (*Minjokui Joein*)" by Chae Man-sik, and "Before and After Liberation (*Haebangjeonhu*)" by Yi Tae-jun, I will reveal how a certain pro-Japanese collaborator would reveal his will or thought toward anti-Japanism, recollecting and reconstructing his pro-Japanese experiences or behaviors in the post-liberation social context. Section three explicates how mixed Koreans with the Japanese would be separated and excluded from the other Japanese ethnically through "The Yalu River (*Aprokgang*)" by Kim Man-seon and "The Faint Lamplight (*Jandeung*)" by Heo Jun. Through a reading of "A Journal of Homecoming (*Gwihwanilgi*)" by Eom Heung-seop, "The First Step (*Cheoskeolum*)," and "A Footprint Left in the Bottom (*Eongdeongie Namun Baljakuk*)" by Yeom Sang-seop, section four examines how the taboo emerged against expressing familial affiliation or cultural hybridity with the Japanese and how a homogenous national identity as a Korean would be produced. Through the close reading of the above-mentioned fictions, this article explores how anti-Japanism as a kind of an ideological apparatus serves to construct Korean national identity in the post-liberation period.

Koreans' antagonism toward the remaining Japanese migrants

Shortly after liberation from Japan, Koreans needed to reconsider the implication of their past political and ordinary cooperation with Japan under the colonial system. This mission was a kind of prerequisite for rebuilding the nation of Korea after liberation. Koreans' antagonism to Japan is strongly activated, especially when they try to negotiate or deny the memory of their pro-Japanese collaboration. During the Japanese colonial period, there might be few Koreans who could be exonerated from all charges of pro-Japanese collaboration. To merely survive during the atrocious colonial period, most Koreans cooperated with the Japanese colonial system directly or indirectly. As soon as Korea liberated from the colonial Japan, Koreans started to confess their cooperation with colonial Japan. And they took a self-defensive stance to their past, professing that their pro-Japanese works in fact contained an antagonism to Japan. These anti-Japanese sentiments are vividly portrayed in "A Traitor (*Banyeokja*)" by Kim Dong-in, "The Sinner of the Nation (*Minjokui Joein*)" by Chae Man-sik, and "Before and After Liberation (*Haebangjeonhu*)" by Yi Tae-jun.

What is at stake in these fictions is that the antagonism of the Koreans to Japan was directed against Japan imprinted in their memories rather than Japan as the nation state in the real world. In other words, anti-Japanism seems to be the secondary product brought forth by a nationalistic project of building up Korea as a pure homogenous nation state. To carry out the project, the Korean needs to imagine the Japanese as an impure, immoral, detestable, and filthy other, i.e., the counterpart who could contaminate or corrupt the purity of the Korean. Consequently, anti-Japanism can be thought as a kind of an ideological apparatus which absolutely needs to be constructed in order to accomplish the project of building up a nation state. In the post-liberation period, Koreans start to invent Japan and the Japanese as an imaginary other who is opposed to themselves, affirming themselves as the members of an imagined nation state.¹⁵ In this regard, the antagonism of the Koreans to Japan is deeply linked to the formation of a national identity as the Koreans. Just before liberation,

¹⁴Foucault 1972.

¹⁵Anderson 1991.

Kim Dong-in and Chae Man-sik took the political position that Koreans should collaborate with the Japanese colonial system, tacitly agreeing to the participation of Japan in the Pacific War. How would they change their political stance after liberation? Let's take a look into how their anti-Japanese thoughts were embodied in their post-liberation fictions.

- (1) (Japanese Soga criticizing Baekje people): "Whether it is our Yamato (Japan), Kudara (Baekje), Silla, or Mudo (King Munju), should the emperor who rules over the territories of Yamato and your highnesses bow down to the Chinese emperor? Even if our Yamato humbly submits, Yamato reigns over the heavens and the earth, and your sacred status should not be compared to the newly established country, Sui Dynasty, considering its emperor as his junior and child."¹⁶
- (2) Throughout the past 2,600 years, mothers in the homeland have consistently sent their sons to the battlefield for the sake of the nation, instilling them with unwavering devotion, training, and self-awareness. As a result, Japanese women have dedicated their loved ones to the country without any lingering attachment or displaying weak, sorrowful behavior. Their noble spirit remains unyielding and steadfast – a testament to their mental fortitude¹⁷
- (3) (To Japan,) "I will kill you with your sword. I will overthrow you with things that I learned from you."¹⁸
- (4) "When Japan was struggling desperately, there might be a chance to get out of the Japanese bonds if Chosen has a little bit of armed forces. ... Instead, if Chosen may give a little bit of cooperation with Japan, the influence of great virtue might flow into Chosen in the morning of the victory. Let's cooperate with Japan for the sake of happiness of Chosen people without missing this chance."¹⁹
- (5) "Entirely, I'm sick of the discrimination (A Japanese's treatment of a Korean) and I can't stand it."²⁰
- (6) "I want to advise you not to participate in [the Pacific War], if possible and whatever method you try." ... "Our unhappiness today came from our national defects. As far as we don't fix the defects, we will be destroyed as a nation or we will be unhappy forever as today. What we need today especially for the young people desperately is the firm spirit to fight without yielding."²¹

In the pre-liberation novels, as seen in the cited passages (1) and (2), Kim Dong-in portrays the Japanese Soga's negative perception of the national identity of Baekje people, thus revealing the logic of Japan's dehumanization of its own people. Similarly, Chae Man-sik demonstrates the notion that Japanese mothers naturally expect their sons to participate in wars for the sake of Japan. Both works suggest that Koreans should learn from and imitate the Japanese, but their novels take a different turn after liberation. Prior to liberation, Kim Dong-in and Chae Man-sik had been collaborators within a colonial system that prioritized the Japanese and treated Koreans as inferior, or even positively supported the Japanese colonial policy regarding Koreans' forced labor or military service in the Pacific War. However, immediately after the liberation, they changed their pro-Japanese attitude into anti-Japanese hostility. Straightforwardly, they started to articulate animosity or antagonism toward Japan. Notably, they do not depict the colonial Japan as an ideal identification model of a nation that Koreans would like to imitate or mimic.²² In their works, anything related to the colonial Japan is always detestable, repulsive, and obscene. More roughly speaking, they designate all the factors

¹⁶Kim 1942.

¹⁷Chae 1989 [1944–1945], p. 310.

¹⁸Kim 2004 [1947], p. 419.

¹⁹Kim 2004 [1947], pp. 422–23.

²⁰Chae 1989 [1948], p. 437.

²¹Chae 1989 [1948], pp. 438–39.

²²Pro-Japanese authors felt the need to distance themselves from Japan more than dissident intellectuals in the post-liberation period. See Kang's essay (Kang Jeong-gu 2018, pp. 371–94).

related to the Japanese colonial system as wrong and inappropriate. Kim Dong-in, who once enunciated himself as a Japanese subject, later reveals his detestation for Japan in (3) and (4).²³ Chae Man-sik, who used to advocate Japan as a native mother, reveals his hatred and resistance to the discrimination between Koreans and the Japanese, opposing the participation of Koreans in the Pacific War as shown in (5) and (6).²⁴

Anti-Japanese attitudes of these political collaborators do not simply reveal sheer hatred or animosity toward Japan. Rather, it could be regarded as their strong intention to participate as a member in a single nation state that they would shape into imaginatively. Since the liberation, Koreans had the nationalistic project that they had to build their own single nation state. So, pro-Japanese writers such as Kim Dong-in or Chae Man-sik start to contend that their cooperative support to the colonial system was in fact indispensable for the establishment of a nation, rationalizing their mistaken past career. Defensively, they assert that they would politically cooperate with the colonial Japan only for the imagined nation state. As shown in (4), they think that their cooperation would contribute to the stability and peace of the nation. Also, as represented in (6), they put the blame for the harsh and desolate reality under the colonial system on our defective nationhood. So, they think that Koreans nationally must arm themselves with tenacious and unyielding fortitude. Kim Dong-in and Chae Man-sik employ an absurd sophistry that their pro-Japanese political conducts were a sort of disguised camouflage purely for the imagined nation, even if they could not be logically and reasonably explained.²⁵

The pro-Japanese collaborators revealed their anti-Japanese sentiments or attitudes to Japan in an ordinary life as well as the political sphere. The colonization of Korea by the Imperial Japan for 35 years led all the Korean socio-politico-cultural factors to be intermixed with the Japanese ones. However, even if trying to disregard all socio-politico-economic policies under the colonial regime, Koreans were only the colonized subject from the perspective of the Japanese colonizer. As the colonization became gradually accelerated, they could not help but accommodating themselves even to atrocious and merciless colonial policies. Moreover, starting from 1938, the Japanese Government-General of Korea commanded the National Mobilization Law and dashed into a war regime. Owing to the law, all the resources including the manpower or other natural resources like the food or mineral on the Korean peninsula could be enforcedly mobilized for the war. Notably, in “Before and after liberation (*Haebangjeonhu*)” Yi Tae-jun describes that the ordinary men, who once had cooperated with the colonizer, did not stop criticizing and resisting against the oppression of the Imperial Japan.

- (7) “Hyun whose eyes and ears became simple by seeing crucian carps and hearing orioles felt the savagery of a fascist nation once again in this rally (Hyun was supposed to give a lecture at the rally of writers sponsored by *Muninpokukhoe* [Writers’ Patriotic Circle]. Without recognizing that he left his hat, he stealthily came out of the meeting where all eyes threw snares.”²⁶
- (8) “What is the use to us, the old men, even if we meet the New world? The youth like you should stay alive, so you should take a lead in the future.”²⁷

By bringing out their anti-Japanese sentiments and standpoints explicitly, Korean cooperators with the colonial system tried to demonstrate that they would be leading and independent members of the nation state to be built after the liberation. At the end of the colonization, Yi Tae-jun wrote a travelogue of the shipyard in order to persuade the Korean that to serve in the workplace like the shipyard or other factories was really to give a hand for reforming the country and human society. Also, he

²³Kim 1942.

²⁴Chae 1989 [1948], p. 310.

²⁵Pro-Japanese writers like Kim Dong-in, compared to those who were anti-Japanese but pro-China, created a more hostile perception toward Japan and socialism immediately after liberation (Kang Jeong-gu 2018, pp. 371–94).

²⁶Yi 2005 [1946], pp. 357–58.

²⁷Yi 2005 [1946], p. 355.

translated Documentary of the Great East Asia War (*Daedongajeonki*), which idealizes Japan's Pacific War.²⁸ His supports to the colonial policies belong to a sort of soft everyday cooperation, unlike a strong political cooperation of publicly instigating people to participate in the war through propagandas. As a writer, he emphasizes that to work in factories or mines is ultimately the way for putting patriotism and humanity into action, not simply a private work of earning a livelihood. And, he thinks his translation work as an objective document to record a historical event.

As in quotations (7) and (8), ordinary cooperators endeavored to denounce and break away from the colonization rules or and the colonial system. Their stinging denunciation and evasion appear to be a strategic judgment for building up a single nation state right after the liberation from Japan. Hyun, as the writer's alter ego, strongly criticized Japan as a totalitarian, violent, and savage nation in the rally of writers sponsored by Writers' Patriotic Circle (*Muninpokukhoe*). In quotation (8), the writer suggests that they had to comply to the persistent demands of the colonial power, for they thought that they should play an important role in order to build a nation state after the liberation from Japan. To put it roughly and blatantly, Koreans' recollection upon the colonial period by the Imperial Japan might be not intended to confess the shameful memory that they would cooperate with the colonial power without any critical judgment. Rather, it could be intended to profess that they belong to the member of the imagined community called as the Korean people. Accordingly, Yi Tae-jun, as an ordinary cooperator, reveals his anti-Japanese sentiment in the same way of political co-operators like Kim Dong-in or Chae Man-sik. His hostility toward Japan could be designed to identify himself with a member of a single nation state as Korea after the liberation.

The division and exclusion of the remaining Japanese migrants

Immediately after the liberation, Korea was governed by the military governments of the United States and the Soviet Union. In the meanwhile, Koreans came to know that they might be controlled by two foreign powers for a long time. Accordingly, Korean had to proclaim internationally that they had retained the national power to establish their own nation by themselves. In doing so, Koreans found out the realistic cause that they must invent their own national identity, only to slough off the past of their colonial experiences. Strictly speaking, the project to set up a national identity demands a great deal of time and prolonged effort. However, instantly after the liberation, the remaining Japanese, who used to be a role model to the Korean, start to be depicted with the negative image that they are quite nasty, vulgar, mean, and crude. Such an anti-Japanese framework enters into the formation of the national identity as a Korean. "The Yalu River (*Aprokgang*)" by Kim Man-seon and "The Faint Lamplight (*Jandeung*)" by Heo Jun delve into the problems of the ethical hierarchy and division between the Korean and the Japanese people.

Kim Man-seon's "The Yalu River (*Aprokgang*)" clearly shows how the remaining Japanese migrants were separated from the Koreans by a moral hierarchy. Prior to the liberation, the military governments of the United States and the Soviet Union had given a skeptical response to the initial plan of a unified Korea's self-government. So, they proposed to put Korea under the trusteeship, leading to the establishment of the separate two governments. Finally, Korea, as a scapegoat of escalated cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union, was ideologically divided into two political entities of South Korea and North Korea. Under this intricate circumstance, the Koreans confront the necessity to emphasize their proper identity or uniqueness. To singularize their ethnicity, the Koreans adopt a method to imagine that they are ethnically and culturally superior to the Japanese, who were the colonizing subject in the colonial system. They start to revile the remaining Japanese migrants as an impure contamination, despising them for being so filthy, mean, and brutal. By doing so, the Koreans raise themselves to a higher moral, cultural, or intellectual level. In the post-liberation fictions, the remaining Japanese migrants are presented into a degraded character who arises a moral filth or an ethnic aversion.

²⁸Yi 1999 [1944], p. 295; Yi and Yi 1943.

- (9) “After 8.15, the Japanese people who Won-sik had saw became filthy both in heart and life overnight. He looked down on the Japanese people because they perished not only as a state but also as a nation. Furthermore, Won-sik trembled with indignation when he found a Jap locomotive engineer who had ran away leaving about two thousand people in the mountain. ...‘Were there any people in that compartment?’ he said.
- (10) suggested the town leader to gather some money to bury the kid like other dead kids without any situation whether the man couldn’t because he didn’t have any money or not.”²⁹
- (11) “The young man with trousers and coat begged a meal, but Won-sik didn’t ask anything and gave him some pieces of paper money in his hands. ...The middle aged [Japanese] man suddenly changed directions and the young man passed him by before he would greet the middle-aged man. Won-sik intuitively felt something from the middle-aged man. At that time, a young woman said, ‘That man, who looks like a Japanese, wasn’t there a short while ago....’”³⁰

Quotations (9) and (10) directly show how Koreans’ viewpoints to the Japanese are changed and different right before and after the liberation. Despite the military control by the United States and the Soviet Union, Koreans had the plan that they would establish their own autonomous government and build up a unified nation by themselves. So, they need a nationalistic narrative to unify themselves as a single unity. With the recourse to anti-Japanism, they designate the remaining Japanese migrants as the impure and ugly other to be excluded from their own homogenous community. Koreans think that the Japanese people are the totally different ethnic group with impurity and filth. Yet the Japanese migrants had once been depicted with a role model who Koreans would like to follow up with, for the mainland Japan has more advanced and modernized political and economic system than the colonized Korea. Now, from the viewpoints of Koreans who think that they have the more superior cultural gene than the Japanese people, the Japanese people, who were defeated in the Pacific War, are just as a filthy and inferior ethnic group. As shown in quotation (9), a locomotive driver ran away to avoid a life-threatening situation under the Soviet Union’s military control. Yet, he came back to his place owing to an occupational responsibility.³¹ Nevertheless, the narrator describes his conduct and motif grimly and unkindly. He puts an emphasis upon the racial prejudice that the Japanese people are irresponsible and mean, not taking account of their wretched situations under Soviet Union military control. Indeed, the viewpoint of the narrator rebounds the different aspect of anti-Japanism in the post-liberation period.

In quotation (9), we can see how anti-Japanism is rhetorically operated; the remaining Japanese migrants are depicted as a culturally filthy and mean ethnic group, as shown in the case of a locomotive engineer who would run away, after abandoning about 2,000 passengers. Also, as in quotation (10), they are described as grim or rude to the point of being reluctant to accept the good will of the others and cutting the line. Strictly speaking, what is the stake in those descriptions is the matter of who is watching the remaining Japanese migrants. It is a Korean who watches them and describes them as such is. With the stark comparison with the mean behaviors of the remaining Japanese people, the Koreans are depicted as the ethnic group with higher moral standard, who is willing to help each other for the poor man whose family members were dead or accept the good will of the other. The relation between the subject and the other is inversely propositional. The more the other becomes immoral and unclean, the more the subject moral and pure. Shortly, the narrator imagines the Korean as the more cultivated and civilized racial group than the Japanese people. Exactly, this is the way how anti-Japanism works in the post-liberation fictions. In them, the remaining Japanese people are described with negative images. They function as an imaginary agency, when Koreans would imagine themselves as the subject with a pure national identity.

²⁹Kim 1988 [1946], pp. 152–54.

³⁰Kim 1988 [1946], pp. 155–56.

³¹Yi 2009b, pp. 205–71.

“The Faint Lamplight (*Jandeung*)” by Heo Jun shows how the remaining Japanese migrants are excluded as an inferior other in the post-liberation Korean society. They are represented as an uncivilized barbarian, a nasty coward, or a foul villain in the process that Koreans would imagine themselves as the autonomous subject with essentially unadulterated ethnic purity. What is so noticeable in the post-liberation fictions is that the ugly, barbarian, and inferior Japanese people more frequently appear in the narrative otherwise than in that of previous Korean fictions. This means that the way Koreans imagine their self-image is entirely changed to the previous times. Right before the liberation, Koreans imagine themselves the hybrid subject who mimics the more-advanced Japanese.³² On the other hand, in the post-liberation period, Koreans do not see the Japanese as the object of envy any more. For them, the Japanese is simply the disgusting other to be excluded or marginalized from their pure national community.

- (11) “For he was deeply offended, he [a Japanese person] set a fire and ran away.”³³
- (12) (A boy talking about the Japanese) “They didn’t want their money to be taken, so they hid the money and ran to Seoul, but got caught and hit up and taken away to Aoji and Komu Mountain. There are a lot of them. I also caught some.”³⁴
- (13) (Her son had heard from Kato (加藤) and told it to her mother and she said it to me) “Then, what is a sin! I just said that Japanese people could live well only if they fish anchovies from the sea and eat them. Is it a sin? Mother, can you understand when I said they could live well only if they catch anchovies and eat them?”³⁵
- (14) (The old woman said) “How cannot I shed tears when I see them, carried on the back, caught! The poor things! A lot of them... I can’t say I don’t know they are an offspring of Kaodo’s...”³⁶

It is worth taking notice that the remaining Japanese migrants rarely describe a main event or narrate a story in the post-liberation fictions. Koreans regard the dictions and conducts of the remaining Japanese migrants as the bundle of meaningless noises or an explosion of madness. Quotations (11)–(13) demonstrate the narrative strategy that Koreans adopt to make the Japanese the other in their imagined community. The remaining Japanese are so brutal as to set a fire in a school, even when they run away at the end of the war. Also, they tried to run away to Seoul, yet they were caught, not getting back to their home land. For Koreans, such a conduct seems to be dishonorable or recreant. Similarly, Koreans consider the Japanese as the other who committed a very serious crime, the colonization of the Korean peninsula, even though they could live a rich life in their homeland. In fact, those anti-Japanese representations do not manifest possible another story of the remaining Japanese migrants, in other words, the brutal reality that their lives are threatened in the age of decolonization, or the devastated lives of ordinary Japanese civilians during the expansion of Imperialism. Quotations (12) and (14) clearly demonstrate that Koreans extraordinarily imagine the remaining Japanese as the evil or contemptuous other. A Korean boy said that he had caught Japanese migrants and sent them to Aoji. Also, the old woman shed tears after watching the remaining Japanese migrants live an impoverished life. Both of them imagine themselves as being in the more superior social position than the Japanese migrants and as having a national identity with higher ethics than theirs. Koreans construct their own identity by revealing anti-Japanism through which they try to exclude the Japanese from an identical national community, remarking the difference between themselves and the Japanese.

³²Bhabha 1994, pp. 121–31.

³³Heo 2005 [1946], p. 144.

³⁴Heo 2005 [1946], p. 148.

³⁵Heo 2005 [1946], p. 185.

³⁶Heo 2005 [1946], p. 185.

Hybridity vs. purity as a national identity

To imagine their national identity as pure or unadulterated, Koreans created a taboo against revealing their cultural hybridity or close affiliations with the Japanese, as soon as they were liberated from Imperial Japan. This means that they would like to conceal their colonial experience. Unconsciously, Koreans do not enunciate their disgraceful past stained by the colonial experiences and the violence of the Imperial Japan. For Koreans, the colonial experience belongs to the impure contamination of their proper ethnicity. So it might be natural that in the post-liberation period they try to consider and imagine themselves an entirely different ethnic group from the Japanese. These motives are well presented in “A Footprint Left in the Bottom (*Eeongdeongie Namun Baljakuk*)” and “The First Step (*Cheoskeolum*)” by Yeom Sang-seop, “A Liquor Story (*Suliyaki*)” by Hwang Sun-won, and “A Journal of Homecoming (*Guihwanilgi*)” by Eom Heung-seop.

Considering the 35-year-old colonial period by the Imperial Japan, it might be inevitable that traditional Korean culture was intermingled with Japanese culture. The cultural hybridity between Korean and the Japanese culture tended to be acquiesced or overlooked before the liberation. On the other hand, in the post-liberation period the outward manifestation of cultural hybridity becomes tacitly prohibited in the Korean society. Lots of Korean intellectuals or writers do not issue an analytical criticism or a comprehensive cultural theory regrading hybridity as the cultural phenomena. Rather, they strongly insist that the hybridity itself had to be eliminated or prohibited to restore their proper national identity. In “A Footprint Left in the Bottom (*Eeongdeongie Namun Baljakuk*)” by Yeom Sang-seop and “A Liquor Story (*Suliyaki*)” by Hwang Sun-won, all of association with the Japanese represents extremely negative features of filthiness, indecency, and wickedness. Accordingly, if they can get rid of such a contamination in the mixed society, Koreans would be reborn as a pure ethnic group and a unified Korea would be identical and homogenous.

- (15) “(Chang-Keun) He suddenly came up with an idea that first of all he should be reborn as a Chosen person again. He thought that he should clean up Japanese remnants out of his head.”³⁷
- (16) “(Chang-Keun said to a Japanese Hotta (堀田) – author’s note) ‘The insult you gave me wasn’t to me individually, was it? Isn’t it the insult that you gave to the whole Chosen people nationally?’”³⁸
- (17) “‘We should wipe out all things related with Japan!’ Jun-ho shouted so that (Japanese) the women at the houses could hear him saying ‘Where is an ax?’”³⁹
- (18) “(Jun-Ho thought) He thought that the furniture doesn’t belong to what Keon-Seop said when he said that they should wipe out the things related with Japan.”⁴⁰
- (19) “(Keon-Seop suggested that all employees should invest in the brewery and manage it together. Yet Jun-Ho didn’t agree with him and he wanted to be the owner of the brewery) He unwittingly spoke to himself, ‘This is a band of conspirators! This is a band of conspirators just like a band of conspirators that I saw last night!’”⁴¹

Shortly after the liberation, the idea that Koreans are culturally different from the Japanese is posited in their collective unconscious. Presumably, it aims for reconfiguring and recasting the national identity as Koreans. Their transformed awareness turns into the reality: they recognize the actual difference between them and the other Japanese, as if they belonged to the disparate ethnic group. As in quotations (15) and (16), Chang-Keun manifests the transformed attitude or awareness of the national identity as Koreans. He is acutely aware that the Korean culture was indistinguishably intermingled

³⁷Yeom 1987 [1948], pp. 53–54.

³⁸Yeom 1987 [1948], pp. 51–55.

³⁹Hwang 1992 [1947], p. 17.

⁴⁰Hwang 1992 [1947], p. 21.

⁴¹Hwang 1992 [1947], p. 34.

with the Japanese one during the colonized 35 years. Nevertheless, he believes that he could be reborn as a pure “Korean,” or Korea could be reestablished as a pure nation state through clearing off the vestiges of Japanese Imperialism and wiping out the cultural hybridity which has been already permeated into the Korean culture. He presupposes that the genuine national identity as Koreans must be extracted from impure cultural mixtures, for every association or affiliation with Japanese Imperialism is indecent and inappropriate. Internalizing such a presupposition, he figures out himself as a member of a pure nation state, which is disparately different from the nasty Japanese.

One of anti-Japanese aspects is to put an emphasis upon an image of a homogeneous nation state, strictly prohibiting the articulation of the cultural hybridity. In other words, anti-Japanism, i.e., the negative representation of the Japanese, is mobilized for inventing a new image of Koreans as a pure ethnic group or Korea as a unitary nation state. In the post-liberation fictions, most of Korean narrators feature as the subject of the power in their discourses. As in quotations (17)–(19), they configure the image of Japanese negatively, regardless of their own nature. At first, Jun-Ho thinks that the private properties of the Japanese migrants, which were left behind Korea, belong to the Japanese. Yet, soon after that, he secretly omits a piece of furniture from a Japanese’ possession list for the sake of his own interest and convenience. Furthermore, in quotation (19), Jun-Ho accuses Keon-Seop of actions that go against his own interests as being part of a “Japanese Conspiracy Group.” In the discourse of the post-liberation period, the articulation of the cultural hybridity, which has been shaped during the colonization period, is prohibited. Also, Koreans arbitrarily regulates the nature of the Japanese. They think that their pure and homogeneous national identity could be made by the elimination of impure elements, i.e., the property of the Japanese, in the cultural hybridity.

Aside from the fact that Koreans anthropologically and genetically share the same origin with the Japanese, some problems regarding half-Korean and half-Japanese children, who were born of the mixed parentage, newly comes out as a social issue in the post-liberation period. Until just before the liberation, to maintain the social status as the Japanese in the colonized Korea as well as the mainland Japan was advantageous for biracial children. However, immediately after the liberation, any ethnic group does not welcome them. Especially when making a choice to stay in Korea, they are, in turn, pressured into identifying themselves with Koreans. For them, the articulation of blood affiliations with Japanese parents or kinships is not allowed. Also, they bear a burden to invent a pure national identity as Koreans. “A Journal of Homecoming (*Guihwanilgi*)” by Eom Heung-seop and “The First Step (*Cheoskeolum*)” by Yeom Sang-seop deal with the problem of half-Korean and half-Japanese children.

- (20) (Suni thought it alone) “If I have got the seed of a dirty enemy and return to Chosen, which is going to become independent, what a great sin it could be!”⁴²
- (21) (A Daegu woman, who is a real mother, said) “Don’t take care of the baby, please! He is an ill-bred child of the enemy. I don’t know why I have got with a foreign fellow! I think I’m just like a crazy bitch.’... [A woman talks about Korean–Japanese hybrids] ‘I don’t care whether he is born to the enemy (a Japanese father) or not. What the little baby do the wrong thing! If you bring him up well, he will grow up to be a member of our people. His Japanese father won’t take him back!’”⁴³
- (22) (A Korean–Japanese hybrid talks about himself) “But I am now Cho Jun-sik and not Massuno.”⁴⁴
- (23) (A Korean–Japanese hybrid said, receiving Taegeukki (the national flag of Korea) which Hong-kyu gave to him) “Thank you. ... As I have it now, I think I am really coming back to Chosen and I feel I became a Chosen person.”⁴⁵

⁴²Eom 2010 [1946], p. 242.

⁴³Eom 2010 [1946], p. 260.

⁴⁴Yeom 1987 [1946], p. 24.

⁴⁵Yeom 1987 [1946], p. 41.

The above excerpts exemplify the way or the process that Korean–Japanese biracial children are included as a member of the Korean society. They are very helpful for us to take a glimpse of Koreans’ attitudes or responses to filial hybridity. As in (20) and (21), most of Koreans think of a Korean–Japanese biracial baby as “the seed of their enemy,” considering that it is a great sin to give birth to such a baby. So, they are intentionally silent about who is the father of a baby. In other words, Koreans include children of Korean–Japanese mixed families as a member of a nation state that they imagine as pure and homogenous, not allowing the articulation of their blood hybridity with Japanese parents. This means that there is an impure hybridity which has been “already always” inscribed in their imagined community. Koreans’ imagined community, just like an unadulterated ethnic group or a nation state, is made possible only through repressing or eliminating heterogenous hybridity. However, hybridity like a stain or a contamination cannot be removed in their imagined community. So, in fact the pure and homogenous community exists only in a fantasy. More specifically, Koreans think as if an ethnicity or national identity as a Korean has a pure form as such. Consequently, they make a decision to deny a sort of cultural and blood hybridity between Koreans and the Japanese. As in (22) and (23), the reason why a Korean–Japanese mixed child can be included in a member of a Korean community is not because the writer tries to show generosity toward the presence of hybridity but because he fantasizes the vision that Koreans has a single proper ethnicity or an undivided national identity, denying the notion of hybridity already inscribed in a Korean community. Accordingly, the pure national image or identity can be thought as a sort of an ideology which is constructed as a strategy of denying, prohibiting, hiding, and ignoring cultural hybridity or filial hybridity in the Korean culture and society. Anti-Japanism, as an ideological orientation to distort, criticize, hate, and ignore anything Japanese, results in prohibiting the articulation of filial hybridity in the Korean society. In this way, Koreans construct their national identity in reliance on an ideological form of anti-Japanism in the post-liberation period.

Conclusion

Anti-Japanism as an ideology refers to a tendency to reveal a strong anti-Japanese sentiment to Japan and the Japanese people. Koreans’ anti-Japanese attitudes have a far-reaching history. Most Koreans regard anti-Japanism as a sort of an ideological apparatus which is necessary for them to keep, develop, and unite Korea as a nation. However, sometimes it functions as a veil that precludes Koreans from self-examination or self-reflection toward what they are or stimulates only their nationalistic sentiments, blinding the possibility to improve the authentic relationship between the Korean and the Japanese people. As shown in this article, anti-Japanism in the post-liberation period works as an ideological construction on which Koreans are forced to rely in order to reshape their national identity rather than as a critical consideration about colonial Japan’s ruthless oppression or atrocious maltreatment upon Koreans. In other words, anti-Japanism belongs to a kind of discursive framework that reflects the sudden change of politico-socio-cultural landscape in the post-liberation period. Under the military control of the United States and the Soviet Union, Koreans employ anti-Japanism as the means for uniting themselves as a single ethnic group and reshaping their national identity by strengthening the racial or ethnic difference through making the Japanese the other.

First of all, Korean intellectuals, who once cooperated with colonial Japan in a political sphere or in their ordinary life, explicitly reveal their anti-Japanese sentiments in their writings right after the liberation. Kim Dong-in, Chae Man-sik, and Yi Tae-jun are representative pro-Japanese writers who supported and collaborated with the colonial Japan to greater or less degrees until just before the liberation. After that, they took an entirely different stance toward the post-liberation circumstances. In their post-liberation fictions, they start to enunciate that their pro-Japanese conducts were camouflage for anti-Japanese resistance. In their fictions, anti-Japanism strategically plays a huge role in making Koreans imagine their national identity as pure and homogenous rather than in manifesting hostile antagonism toward Japan or the Japanese. More specifically, anti-Japanism comes out of the

process that, after demarcating the moral difference between themselves and the remaining Japanese migrants, Koreans would exclude the latter from their community. The way that Koreans can invent their national identity anew is to imagine themselves as a superior ethnic group to the Japanese. Depending on the ethnic hierarchy that they set up imaginatively, Koreans think of the Japanese as an inferior ethnic group with a low moral consciousness. Kim Man-seon describes the remaining Japanese people as irresponsible, mean, and brutal in his fiction. Heo Jun depicts them barbaric and full of greed. These kinds of descriptions are made from an imagination that Koreans would be more ethical than the remaining Japanese migrants. Finally, anti-Japanism in the post-liberation period can be detected in the tenacious attitude of Koreans that they would tacitly restrict the articulation of filial or cultural hybridity with the Japanese people in order to reconfigure their national identity. In the post-liberation fictions by Yeom Sang-seop, Hwang Sun-won, and Eom Heung-seop, such an attitude is redoubled through delimiting the enunciation of filial or cultural hybridity and regulating the ethnic property of the Japanese arbitrarily. In most of the post-liberation fictions, Japanese properties are negatively represented. Also, they are described as heterogenous elements that Koreans must eliminate from their community imagined as pure and homogenous. Koreans' pure national identity or national image is formed through the representation mechanism of the racial difference and hierarchy.

After the liberation, anti-Japanism can be seen as the response or strategy of Koreans to the demand of an era in which they had to survive and sustain themselves through times of the political upheaval under the military control of the United States and the Soviet Union. Through anti-Japanism, Koreans come to recognize that they are not the dependent colonized but the autonomous subject. Also, Koreans might imagine and invent a single nation and a unitary national identity, after demarcating the boundary between themselves and the Japanese by means of binary opposition and racial hierarchy. Future research is needed to further understand the complex dynamics and developments of post-liberation anti-Japanese sentiment as a significant force in subsequent history, the patterns emerging in North Korea, and the ways in which Japanese society after liberation has perceived and represented both South and North Koreans.

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