

“Impure in Their Motive for Establishment”: Mission Schools as the Unintended Catalysts of Nationalism  
and Culturally Relevant Education in Colonial Korea

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**Abstract:**

From 1884 when the American Presbyterians arrived on the Korean peninsula, until 1910, when the Japan-Korea treaty was signed, there was a surge in the establishment of Protestant mission schools. Upon annexation, these schools conflicted with the Japanese standardized education system and were subsequently targeted by the colonial government. My study will analyze these events through the lens of education being a colonial force. While the Japanese colonial government, and missionaries both sought to impart new morals and culture upon the Korea, the friction of their competition, and the methods of missionaries instead allowed for the growth of Korean nationalism. Missionaries too brought methods of printing, and taught in Korean, specifically the *hangul* script, thus promoting Korean literacy. Through my study, I attempt to provide a discussion of important events regarding education in Korea under Japanese occupation as well as discuss the intersection of missionary activity, colonialism, and education.

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### **Introduction: The Unique Nature of Missionaries and Education as a Colonial Force:**

The “Jerusalem of the East”, Pyongyang, was a place permanently changed by Protestant missionaries. While North Korea (the DPRK) today bans any non-state sanctioned religious activity the history of the Korean peninsula as a whole is one heavily influenced by missionaries. Korea went through a great many transitions in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and missionaries played a crucial role in shaping the outcome, leaving a permanent mark which is readily visible in both North and South Korea today.

Missionaries like those who travelled to Korea are a truly unique force in history. As outsiders in a society, they possess the power to permanently alter society for both the better and worse, travelling outside of their comfort zone with the mission of spreading their religion and “saving” the souls of native people. This missionary impulse to proselytize (an impulse largely unique to Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism) was not necessarily born out of altruism, but certainly required great sacrifice without any promises of monetary gain. Most missionaries devoted years of their lives to working in foreign place for the purported benefit of a people other than their own countrymen and women.

With proselytization as their main goal missionaries then followed a general strategy in order to meet with the most success. In much of the Pacific for example, missionaries first learned the language of the people they sought to reach, in many cases creating a Romanized or written script.<sup>1</sup> Missionaries then offered a system of education, and a translated bible to educate people and disseminate native languages. To fulfil their goal of proselytization

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<sup>1</sup> Notable examples could include the creation of the Hawaiian and New Zealand scripts. In both instances missionaries devoted innumerable hours, with the help of residents of these islands to create a written script for the purposes of translating their languages. This same script us used today. Walch, David B. "THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HAWAIIAN ALPHABET." *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 76, no. 3 (1967): 353-66.

missionaries could devote their lives to teaching, or founding hospitals, translating and publishing in native languages. These institutions were then able to be utilized by native people producing sometimes surprising, and truly beneficial results for the native people.

The missionary goal of proselytization, carried out through justifiable means still inevitably clashed with any native culture. In bringing their religion, missionaries offered a new world-view and faith, thus often imposing that the native culture was backwards. The end results of missionary activity differ, but the reality of proselytization was the same. If a native people chose to embrace a new religion, they also needed to give up elements of their indigenous culture.

Of the aforementioned methods used by missionaries, education then serves a crucial role. Education carries with it the power to shape a person's worldview, unfortunately not always for the better. The formative years of school are where an individual learns language, and the power to communicate; the history and literature of the country they reside in; the morals and values they are expected to uphold; math, science, and the arts; and methods of communication alongside the normative ways to treat fellow people. In offering an education, missionaries then teach native people to not be like others in their culture, and to embrace the dominant culture of the missionary.

Missionaries however do not always come with the backing of a military or government to enforce colonial rule. That means, to an extent native people are often free to choose if they want to join a religion, or religious school. State sponsored colonization however does not offer a choice. Education is a crucial element of any colonial regime part of the same way it was important for missionaries; it could teach a new set of language, morals and history, with the

ultimate goal of assimilating the native people into the dominant culture of the colonizing force.

Often in history, the goals of a governmental colonial force and missionaries aligned. Notably in the United States, where boarding schools helped the American government carry out its policy to “kill the Indian in him to save the man.”<sup>2</sup> Such a notion is important in the idea that education was the force that could “kill the Indian” implying the possible destruction forced education could bring upon a culture. Mission schools in the United States were backed up by the US government and if needed military, leaving no choice for many Native Americans. Thus, it led to the attempted erasure of native heritage to be replaced with Euro-American culture; violence with the justification of benignity.

One sees similar themes in the goals of the Japanese colonial education system in Korea. The key difference however, is that in Korea these foreign forces seeking to impose their views upon the Korean people and using education to aide them were distinctly different. On one side, there were the Christian missionaries from Western countries, largely Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries from America (and Australia and Canada), and on the other was the Japanese Colonial Government (which will hereafter be called the Government General) who brought Korea under an occupational regime and established a public education system for Koreans.<sup>3</sup> While both forces can be viewed as broadly “imperialistic” in their endeavors, their

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<sup>2</sup> He later stated in his speech that “then the Indian will quickly demonstrate that he can be truly civilized, and he himself will solve the question of what to do with the Indian”. *Official Report of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of Charities and Correction* (1892), 46–59. Reprinted in Pratt, Richard H. “The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites,” *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the “Friends of the Indian” 1880–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 260–271.

<sup>3</sup> The name which will be used for the colonial government of Korea from 1910-1945 is the Government General. In speaking of 1905-1910 however, the colonial government will be called the Residency General since Korea was deemed a protectorate, and not annexed as a colony of Japan yet.

goals were quite different and their techniques of reaching Koreans were miles apart, yet both turned to the establishment of schools. In marketing themselves as altruistic, Protestant missionaries used education as an important element of their larger endeavor to win over converts and spread Christianity in Korea. The Japanese common school system in turn was predicated on the subordination of the Korean peninsula and the Japanization of the Korean people, while also providing the guise of benignity. Since both school systems wound up inhabiting the sphere of education, they were ultimately at odds with one another. Their competition caused friction which created an environment where Koreans could use the Protestant education system to instead preserve and spread their language and culture.

While the Japanese education system fits the mold of most colonial education systems seeking to destroy the indigenous culture and teach them its own, the Protestant education system offered a chance at resistance rather than imposing itself as an entirely destructive force. In this situation it was critical that the real invading force, the one with a military and seeking to impose a violent hegemony on the Korean people was Japan, not America. Moreover, while Japanese missionaries did travel to Korea seeking to convert Koreans, they were champions of Buddhism, a religion that while having fallen into decline was not a “foreign” religion like Christianity. In the face of Japanese military aggression, Protestant missionaries came to be viewed as defending the Korean heritage, while the Protestant mission schools ended up being effective in the purpose behind their establishment.

Even today, in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the influence of Protestantism persists, a testament to the importance of American missionaries and the schools they founded. Despite severe constraints on freedom of religion, there is a licensed

Protestant Church in Pyongyang dedicated to the mother of Kim Il Sung.<sup>4</sup> In the Republic of Korea, that emerged in the South post-liberation, Protestant Christianity only grew in influence as historians in the post-liberation period wrote about Christians as a force of anti-Japanese resistance. As of 2010, the population of South Koreans who identified as Protestants was roughly 29%, the highest percentage for any country in Asia.<sup>5</sup> It is through such a lens, and acknowledging this historic achievement, that I begin my study.

I will argue that it was the nature of proselytization inherent in the mission schools, along with the community they fostered that caused them to be bastions of Korean nationalism. Missionaries learned Korean customs and language in their efforts to best reach the Korean people, and then inadvertently used these methods to continue a culturally relevant Korean education, at least when compared to the Japanese Common School system. Through connections with institutions in the US, a country that was not currently enacting a violent colonization upon Korea, Korean people were able to congregate with a modicum of protection from a country Japan sought to not antagonize. The Japanese government on the other hand established a standardized school system and made quite clear their goal of assimilating the Korean people. In such an environment, missionaries and their schools then found themselves promoting an education that resisted the Japanese rather than eroded Korean culture.

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<sup>4</sup> While the constitution of the DPRK formally sanctions religion, the opposite is the real truth. Anyone found with a Bible, or to be praying to the Christian faith outside of the small congregations sanctioned to attend the few licensed churches are publicly executed in order to deter others. Even these 4 officially licensed churches are largely Potemkin Churches to display to the outside world the religious freedom of the DPRK more than they are to really be used for worship services. Yet in the face of harsh measures, the reality that Kim Il Sung was brought up a Christian is not entirely obscured. Hawk, David, "Thank you Father Kim Il Sung", (2005), 66.

<sup>5</sup> This number is according to a 2010 Census. Winston, Diane, "For many South Korean Christians, reunification with the North is a religious goal", *The Conversation*, June 1, 2018. <https://theconversation.com/for-many-south-korean-christians-reunification-with-the-north-is-a-religious-goal-95845>



It was this unique position of mission schools that could prove so vital to the continuation of Korean language and heritage in them. After one abortive attempt, Japan could not risk a strong and prolonged persecution of missionaries, as they sought to make a relationship with Christian western countries, but at the same time could not allow them to work completely outside of their jurisdiction for fear of them fostering Korean nationalism and resistance. Japan instead relied on the creation of regulations and the slander of missionary activity in attempting to curb their importance. Such tactics instead led to their reputation, despite fervent denial by missionaries, of being hotbeds of Korean nationalism. Prior to the 1919 March First Movement, mission schools and missionary institution provided a moderately protected community which could be used by Koreans to resist the Japanese. In their perception of providing an ideological base for the March First movement, mission schools came to be viewed by Koreans as instrumental in resisting the Japanese, yet making such waves in the resistance movement caused a shift in the colonial policy against them, as the Governor General sought in response to the perceived threat to create more common schools rather than close mission schools. This essay then will look closer at the way this developed, as while it was not the intent of most missionaries, their work in Korea built a foundation for the preservation of Korean customs reinforced by Korean nationalism in the face of hostile occupation, and laid the groundwork for the education system post-liberation.

## **CHAPTER 1: Early Missionaries:**

### **Protestant Roots in Korea:**

In 1884, Dr. Horace N. Allen arrived in the “Hermit Kingdom” of Korea, and although not yet allowed to proselytize, he became an ambassador for the American Presbyterian church, hoping to spread Protestant Christianity. The ban on Protestant proselytization which was a result of the Korean King Kojong’s perception of Catholicism and thus all of Christianity as incompatible with Korean nationality, prevented Protestants from entering the interior of the peninsula under threat of death.

Korean mistrust of Christianity dated back to the 1700s, when adherence to Catholic customs came into direct conflict with loyalty to traditional Korean customs. Some sources note that the first contact Korea had with Catholicism came when Japan invaded Korea in the Hideyoshi Invasions of the late 16<sup>th</sup> Century and brought a Catholic priest by the name of Fr. Gregorio de Céspedes.<sup>6</sup> The first documented appearance of a Catholic priest was thus associated with foreign aggression. While Catholicism like Buddhism was in fact a world religion, it was natural for Koreans at the time to see it as a foreign imposition. Moreover, during the Choson (1392-1910) dynasty in Korea, Neo-Confucianism took a central importance for governance, and other religions, and even the deeply entrenched Korean Buddhism was repressed.<sup>7</sup>

Catholic missionaries from Europe were forbidden from entering the Korean peninsula during the Choson Dynasty as Korea used its ties with China under the tribute system to stay

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<sup>6</sup> An, Jieun, and Rausch, Franklin. ‘The Society of Jesus and Korea: A Historiographical Essay’. In Jesuit Historiography.

<sup>7</sup> Buddhist monks were not allowed to enter the gates to the capital in Korea during the Choson Dynasty, and many Buddhist temples fell into disrepair. Kim, Hwansoo Ilmee. *The Korean Buddhist Empire: A Transnational History (1910-1945)*. (Harvard: Harvard East Asian Monographs, 2018), 32.

isolated. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries however, on tributary missions to Beijing, Korean envoys would periodically return with Christian writings translated into Chinese.<sup>8</sup> The written language used at the time by the yangban, educated elite class, was this Chinese script, known as *hanja* in Korean, which meant such Bibles were accessible for literate Koreans at the time. Biblical and Christian religious works, which were however more often studied for their educational value rather than probed for their religious importance. In 1783 however, a Korean named Yi-Sung Hun converted to Catholicism while in China, and returned to take an active role in preaching the Catholic gospel. He gained followers through his preaching, but the dominance of deep-rooted religious practices especially Neo-Confucian ancestral worship impeded the spread of Catholicism.<sup>9</sup>

Early Christianity in Korea highlighted two important points: Catholics had to remain subject to a foreign body, and that foreign body did not care for Korean converts' Confucian heritage. In 1791, two Korean Catholics Yun Chi-ch'ung and Kwŏn Sang-yŏn publicly burned their parents' ancestral tablets to support their Catholic beliefs, since the Vatican had determined that ancestor worship constituted a sin for its similarity to idol worship.<sup>10</sup> These two men were executed and Catholicism was swiftly banned in Korea, punishable by death. Forced into hiding, another Korean Catholic Hwang Sa-yŏng wrote a letter to the French Bishop in Beijing requesting the Qing to appoint a new ruler of Korea and send an army to invade, along with a request to the French to send 50-60 gunboats to forcefully occupy the peninsula

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<sup>8</sup> Matsutani, Motokazu. *Church over Nation: Christian Missionaries and Korean Christians in Colonial Korea*. Doctoral dissertation, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University 2012), 30.

<sup>9</sup> According to Matsutani, it was not necessarily that Koreans viewed Catholicism to be incompatible with Neo-Confucianism, but rather were cautioned by the Church in Beijing that the continuation of ancestor worship was a sin. *Ibid*, 32.

<sup>10</sup> Underwood, Horace G., *The Call of Korea*, (New York, Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1907), 127-129.

and thus force the king to allow missionaries to enter.<sup>11</sup> His letter was intercepted, and he was deemed treasonous, providing further tangible proof of the dangers the Korean royal family at the time believed Catholicism would incite. The decades following this incident were marked by anti-Catholic riots and the pervasive belief that that Catholicism made Koreans loyal to a foreign institution, a presumption which was applied to American Protestants when they arrived in Korea in 1884.

Despite this historic hostility to Christianity, by 1884, Korea was not only in the midst of becoming more open to foreigners as Korea had recently and violently been thrust into the world sphere, but Protestant missionaries presented their beliefs in a way that added value to Korean society. Despite the encroachment of European powers on China during the 1800s, Korea was able to use its position in the Sinocentric tribute system to maintain a degree of isolation, hence the nickname the Hermit Kingdom. Korea's isolation was brought to an abrupt and forceful end in 1876, when after a humiliating battle with Japan, Korea was forced at gunpoint to sign the Kanghwa treaty, opening it up to foreign relations and trade to Japan. This unequal forced treaty, which set a precedent for other foreign countries seeking similar treaties, highlighted the technological weakness of the Koreans causing many to question their earlier policy of isolation. The Korean king, King Kojong signed a treaty with America in 1882 along with Britain and France in 1883. From 1882 realizing that Korea would soon be a viable option for missionary work and believing that Koreans had been deprived of Christianity for centuries, Protestant missionaries from America began eagerly preparing to send missionaries to Korea. The two largest groups at first were the Northern Presbyterian mission board, who

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<sup>11</sup> Kim, Young-Sik, "A Brief History of the US-Korea Relations Prior to 1945" (Oregon: May 15, 2003).

sent Horace Underwood, and re-assigned Horace N. Allen from China, and the Northern Methodist mission board which sent Henry Appenzeller.<sup>12</sup> While these first Protestant missionaries were still forbidden from preaching Christianity, in 1884, the year of their arrival, they were allowed to live in Korea and began making inroads to prepare for eventual proselytization.<sup>13</sup> Missionaries focused on founding institutions that could ingrain them beneficially within the Korean Society before more conversions took place.<sup>14</sup> Dr. Horace Allen first established the Royal Hospital, Rev. Underwood established an orphanage which was later converted into Gyeongsin High school, and Rev. Appenzeller founded a school for Koreans with physical disabilities.

While still not formally allowed to spread Protestant Christianity even in the late 1880s, due to the clause of extraterritoriality Reverend Horace Underwood and Henry Appenzeller were emboldened to establish institutions that disseminated Christian teachings.<sup>15</sup> Despite negative responses to Protestant Missionary work including the multi-week “Baby Riot” in 1888 so called due to a rumor that Christians were kidnapping Korean children and killing them for

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<sup>12</sup> They were later joined by the Southern Presbyterian Mission Board, and Southern Methodist Mission Board. Other Protestants included Australian and Canadian Presbyterians, and a minority of British Anglicans. Matsutani, Motokazu. *Church over Nation: Christian Missionaries and Korean Christians in Colonial Korea*. Doctoral dissertation, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University 2012), 59-60.

<sup>13</sup> At this time missionaries were only allowed to be in Seoul, and the three treaty ports of Chemulpo, Pusan, and Wonsan. Kwon, Andrea Yun, “Providence and Politics: Horace N. Allen and the Early US-Korea Encounter, 1884-1894”, (University of California Berkley, 2012), 102.

<sup>14</sup> This was through adhering to the Nevius plan which became the prevalent theory behind proselytization in Korea. Nevius method will be discussed further in the next section, but for further discussion see: Clark, Charles Allen. *The Korean Church and The Nevius Methods*, (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago), 1929.

<sup>15</sup> Section four of this treaty established that in cases where the law was broken, they would be “tried by the proper official of the nationality of the defendant”. “Article IV” *Treaty Between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Chosen*, May 22, 1882.

ritual purposes, more Protestant missionaries began to arrive and find audiences for their preaching.<sup>16</sup>

Aside from their fortuitous timing, the main difference between Presbyterian and Methodist work, and that of the Catholics that preceded them lay in public institutions that they established. Even before they began preaching, the earliest Protestant missionaries made themselves a beneficial part of the community, not just founding schools and hospitals for the ruling family, but also establishing them for the poorest Koreans, especially catering to rural areas.<sup>17</sup> Thus, Protestant Christians positioned themselves to have an audience among those most susceptible to conversion, before proselytization began in force. The institutions that the first Protestants founded in Korea reinforced the message that their goals were noble, which allowed some to overlook the fact that much like the critique on Catholicism, Protestants too had to be loyal to a foreign institution.

While Japanese had begun encroaching on Korean territory from the nineteenth century, the Protestant missionaries coming from the U.S. did not appear interested in annexation and this afforded them a *de facto* legitimacy in Korean eyes relative to the

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<sup>16</sup> Regarding these riots, Lillian Underwood related that “The wildest stories were told. Babies, it was said, had been eaten at the German, English, and American legations, and the hospital, of course, was considered by all the headquarters of this bloodthirsty work, for there, where medicine was manufactured and diseases treated, the babies must certainly be butchered.” Underwood, Lillias H. “A Letter of Lillias Horton to Dr. Ellinwood (August 13, 1888),” Underwood Material Book, vol. 1, ed. M.Y. Lee and S.D. Oak (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2005), 470; Underwood, *Fifteen Years among the Top-Knots*, 16.

<sup>17</sup> The backing of Protestantism in rural areas has a double meaning. On the one hand, this was a base of generally poorer Koreans engaged in agriculture, which was certainly a base more susceptible to Christian gospel. Less straightforward however is the fact that such rural areas, especially in the north had been subjected to huge devastation in the First Sino-Japanese war. This made many peasants more desperate as their livelihood was destroyed, and as Protestantism later began to appear as a means of resistance to the Japanese, those who had been subjected to the devastation in this war were more likely to seek out Protestant Churches. Park, Albert L. *Building a Heaven on Earth: Religion, Activism, and Protest in Japanese Occupied Korea*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press: 2015), 43.

Japanese. In the first decade of the American Protestant missionaries' arrival on the peninsula there had been simultaneously both the marginal spreading of Protestant Christianity through conversions, and a Korean backlash against this illegal activity. One of the most important cases of backlash against Protestants was the so called "Pyongyang Persecution" of 1894 which began in the months preceding the Tonghak Rebellion.<sup>18</sup> In the Pyongyang Persecution, a group of Korean converts to Christianity were arrested for aiding missionaries in carrying out their illegal conversions. The missionaries themselves were immune from prosecution due to treaty extraterritorial provisions so enjoyed impunity in this episode. Most importantly for the Korean perception of the Presbyterian and Methodist religions however was the fact that missionaries put pressure on the American government to fight for the release of the Koreans who had aided them in proselytizing. Although this decision was met with anger, most of the Koreans who had aided American Protestants were actually released, ultimately displaying that not only were missionaries subject to extra privileges and the protection of the United States, but Protestant converts too could be subject to American protection. Horace Allen acknowledged that extraterritoriality had led to "cases wherein a native desires to profit off his Christian connection and obtain foreign protection", also admitting that "the hope of this sort of assistance sometimes induces people to flock to the church".<sup>19</sup> At a time of national crisis then, America was able to be viewed as the lesser of two evils as far as foreign influence was concerned.

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<sup>18</sup> Matsutani, Motokazu. *Church over Nation: Christian Missionaries and Korean Christians in Colonial Korea*. Doctoral dissertation, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University 2012), 74.

<sup>19</sup> Allen, Horace N., *Things Korean*, (New York, NY: Fleming H Revell Company, 1908), 181.

After 1895 missionaries felt emboldened to continue proselytization, since it seemed the Korean government was powerless to stop them. In the long term however, as Japan steadily exerted further control over the Korean peninsula, Protestant Christianity seemed a way to resist what was rightfully deemed as violent aggression. It was the opposing force of Japanese imperialism that then caused a surge in conversion amongst the Korean people, and emergence of the belief that American Presbyterian church was a positive force.

Japan's victory in the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895 sent shock-waves through Korean society, shaking people's faith in Confucianism, and providing a visceral display of the terror which could be inflicted by the Japanese military. To many Koreans, Japan's victory symbolized both the success of their incorporation of western ideals, and the failure of the Confucian system in China. The Qing Dynasty, with which Korea had maintained close economic and ideological ties via the tribute system was thereby eclipsed by a more modern Japan. It was shortly following that war, that a group led by Japanese soldiers, entered the royal palace, and in a premeditated attack murdered the Korean queen, Queen Min.<sup>20</sup> Her death was not only mourned for her importance to the Korean people, but in the weakness of Korea in the face of Japanese aggression. Thus, the image of Protestant Christianity as facilitating the spread of Western influence could be viewed positively, causing some to welcome missionaries as an alternative to Japanese influence.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the weakening of

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<sup>20</sup> Orbach, Danny. "THREE PUFFS ON A CIGARETTE: General Miura Gorō and the Assassination of Queen Min." In *Curse on This Country: The Rebellious Army of Imperial Japan*, 101-28. ITHACA; LONDON: Cornell University Press, 2017, 114-115.

<sup>21</sup> Park, Yong-Shin. "Protestant Christianity and Its Place in a Changing Korea." *Social Compass* 47, no. 4 (2000): 507-24, 514.



the long-established Confucian tradition compounded by the Kabo reforms which encouraged modernization in Korea, which provided an opening for Christianity.<sup>2223</sup>

Much of the permeation of Protestant mission schools in Korea came after the defeat of the Qing dynasty at the hands of the Japanese. Not only did this defeat strike a blow to Confucianism in Korea, but it galvanized support throughout the peninsula for a strong, independent, and technologically modern Korea, best expressed by the aforementioned Kabo Reforms. Seeing Japan as having achieved military and technological strength through embracing western norms, many Koreans came to believe that it was through the same embracing of Western ideals through which Korea could strengthen herself.<sup>24</sup> Towards this end, radical groups such as Tongnip Hyopheo (The Independence Club) began actively working on the Korean Peninsula, professing a goal of an awakened, independent and educated Korea.<sup>25</sup> Despite being against Christian proselytization as a whole, their pro-education message had a positive effect on the growth of Protestant schools, and some of their leaders, such as Yun Chi Ho, who had studied at Emory and Vanderbilt Universities in the United States, were Christians themselves. The Independence Club was able to harness the power of the printing press brought by Christians to spread their message. Even after their forceful dissolution in 1898, the

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<sup>22</sup> It is worth noting that the Kabo reforms, in focusing on education actually were meant to reform the Civil Service Exam. As this exam had been the ultimate goal of most education to this point, and was deeply intertwined with Neo-Confucian values, its reform too had a large impact on a changing Korea during this time. Additionally, while Confucianism was not a religion per-se, but the strict neo-Confucian system had historically limited religions, thus its weakening helped the spread of Christianity. Quinones, C. Kenneth. "The Impact of the Kabo Reforms upon Political Role Allocation in Late Yi Korea, 1884-1902." *Occasional Papers on Korea*, no. 4 (1975), 1-2.

<sup>23</sup> It is important that around this time as well, the royal family gave a number of Protestant institutions their blessing. Early in the founding of Ewha university the Queen visited providing it the name "ewha" meaning pear flower, the symbol of the monarchy. Ogan, Yoon "KOREAN COLLEGE FOR WOMEN IS 70: EWHA UNIVERSITY, FOUNDED BY U.S. MISSIONARY, MARKS BIRTHDAY THIS MONTH." *New York Times (1923-Current file)*, Jun 17 1956, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 512.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 515.

idea of expanding education as a means to create an independent Korea, lived on through government reforms.<sup>26</sup>

As time passed, Christian Missionary presence was welcomed by an increasing number of Koreans, which allowed for the founding of hundreds of mission schools. Methodists established Ewha girl's school, which later became Ewha University, and the Paejae school which included a printing station to publish newspapers, used by the aforementioned Independence Club. Presbyterians established a great many primary schools, along with Sungsil Academy, which later turned into Union Christian College, Sungdok Academy, and Sungin Academy.<sup>27</sup> They also established secondary schools for girls such as Sungui Girls Academy, and institutions to train indigenous Korean religious leaders such as Pyongyang theological seminary headed by Samuel Austin Moffet.<sup>28</sup> As the number and legitimacy of mission schools grew on the peninsula, religious education in Korea provided a viable means of societal advancement.

While proselytization was paramount in the hundreds of schools founded by Presbyterians and Methodists over the next decade, they nonetheless provided a chance for education for many Koreans that had not previously been afforded access to educational facilities. Students with disabilities, orphans, lower income Korean men, and women, Koreans who had been excluded from the aristocratic Confucian education system which had been dominated by the yangban in the previous centuries, could now attend schools, with the caveat that they would be learning Christianity. Such methods proved effective in garnering new

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<sup>26</sup> Chandra, Vipin. "The Independence Club and Korea's First Proposal for a National Legislative Assembly." *Occasional Papers on Korea*, no. 4 (1975): 29.

<sup>27</sup> Park, Albert L. *Building a Heaven on Earth: Religion, Activism, and Protest in Japanese Occupied Korea*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press: 2015), 41.

<sup>28</sup> Moffet, Samuel Austin, Letter to His Brother, Moffett Korea Collection. Series 1: Samuel Austin Moffett. Subseries 2: Letters and Papers. Box 8, Folder 6. January 29, 1901.

Protestant converts, especially in the teaching of women, who would later be the teachers of their children.

Of particular mention should be the Korean Bible Women, who proved instrumental in aiding missionaries in proselytization, and helping form the image of the Protestant church as not only foreign, but also native Korean by nature. Many Christian converts in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were women who then aided missionaries in translation, and dissemination of Christian teachings. The possibility for high social positions in the Protestant Church served as a draw to women in Korea at a time when other such positions were unavailable.<sup>29</sup> Korean Bible Women proved to be teachers not just of their own children, but able to reach the “inner quarters” where others were not allowed, and could carry a great amount of sway in their communities.<sup>30</sup> Bible Women in Korea did a great deal to promote literacy among other women concurrently with religion, significantly aiding in two of the most important goals of Protestant missionaries.

As Protestant Christian education permeated throughout the Korean peninsula, so too did the influence of the religion, with an increasing number of Koreans converting to Christianity and building churches in their villages and towns.<sup>31</sup> This expansion of both influence and Christian institutions was so rapid in the early 1900s that by the year 1910, there were 805 Christian private schools, serving 41,000 students.<sup>32</sup> Considering that the public education

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<sup>29</sup> For more on this see the work of Lee-Ellen Strawn, who wrote “The deliberate and active reaching out to women for inclusion in church work and functions communicated a message of female worth and equality that was new for women oppressed by class domination, patriarchal authority or both.” Strawn, Lee-Ellen. “Korean Bible Women's Success: Using the “Anbang” Network and the Religious Authority of the Mudang.” *Journal of Korean Religions* 3, no. 1 (2012), 119.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 118-119.

<sup>31</sup> Thanks in part to its similarities to Korean Shamanism, as well as Confucianism. Many Koreans, even Confucian Scholars converted to Christianity from the years 1885-1905.

<sup>32</sup> Kim, Young-Sik, “A Brief History of the US-Korea Relations Prior to 1945” (Oregon: May 15, 2003).

system of the time, still modeled on the Confucian style, had only 81 schools serving around 20,000 students, religious education had firmly taken root, especially for Koreans residing in rural areas.<sup>33</sup>

While Protestant educational organs and influence grew in the late 1890s and early 1900s, so too did Japanese influence over Korean affairs. When Japan emerged victorious from its second international conflict taking place on Korean soil of the modern era, the Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905), Korea was pressured into signing the Japan-Korea treaty and designated a protectorate of Japan. While this pertained mostly to external matters at first it catalyzed the steady loss of Korean autonomy, as a new treaty was signed in 1907 requiring domestic decisions to be sanctioned by the Japanese government, led by the Resident General.<sup>34</sup> By 1910, Japan formally annexed the Korean peninsula, placing all Korean affairs under the jurisdiction of the Government General of Chosen (Chosen being the Japanese romanization of Choson, denoting Korea), a Japanese appointed colonial government ruling over Korea.

### **Early Missionaries' work in Korea:**

Missionary work in Korea, especially in the establishment of churches and mission schools was aimed first and foremost at proselytization. In order to most successfully reach the Korean populous missionaries set about diligently learning Korean culture, and studying the Korean language. Many of the earliest missionaries then drew upon their knowledge and published books and articles to raise awareness of their work in Korea to Americans back home.

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<sup>33</sup> Park, Yong-Shin. "Protestant Christianity and Its Place in a Changing Korea." *Social Compass* 47, no. 4 (2000): 507-24, 518.

<sup>34</sup> United States Department of State, *Catalog of Treaties: 1814-1918*, (Washington: 1919), 304.

While largely self-serving in nature, the work of these early missionaries and their adaptation to and promotion of Korean culture set the stage for missionaries showing an appreciation of Korean heritage that was passed on in their teachings, and permeated into the education provided in mission schools.

Initial missionaries in Korea and their successors mainly adhered to the Nevius plan for mission work, outlined by Rev. John L. Nevius a missionary to China in the 1800s.<sup>35</sup> His plan involved a focus on developing churches to be self-supporting and governed by local Koreans rather than completely dominated by missionaries, thereby allowing Koreans to take a greater role in the foundation and support of the church, and work towards proselytization alongside missionaries. In his book, *The Planting and Development Missionary Churches*, Nevius emphasized the importance of devoted study of the native language in order to best be able to communicate and reach any native people, writing “Whatever department of work he may devote himself to in the future, there is no room for doubt that his first duty is to give his time and energies to the thorough acquisition of the language as a necessary prerequisite to usefulness in work of any kind”.<sup>36</sup> This also then meant translating the Bible to said language as a crucial goal of instruction, which missionaries quickly did for *hangul*, the Korean phonetic script, producing what became known as the “Ross” version of the New Testament in 1887.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Nevius himself was a missionary in China, and created his book *The Planting and Development Missionary Churches* to detail what he believed to be the most effective way forward for Christian proselytization in China. Hunt, Everett N. "The Legacy of John Livingston Nevius." *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 15, no. 3 (1991): 120-24, 123.

<sup>36</sup> Nevius, John, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 1958). Fourth Edition. First published as *Methods of Mission Work*, 1886, 71.

<sup>37</sup> The main translators are said to be John Ross and John McIntyre, but it is important to note that they also relied on a team of five Koreans in their translation, Eung Chan Lee, Sung Hah Lee, Jin Ki Kim, Hong Joon Paek, and Sang Yoon Seo. It is important to the discussion that on the one hand this was seen as the “Korean” version, but most importantly this version would go on to be available and used in mission schools all across the Korean peninsula. That means, that the foremost tool of teaching in mission schools was written in *hangul*, furthering the

The Nevius plan proposed to allow natives to take an active role in the development of the religion, yet they would still need to rely on missionaries. From the beginning, missionaries followed the Nevius plan, and according to Charles Allen Clark who himself conducted missionary work in Korea for many years, “In those early years, when a new missionary arrived on the field, he was at once handed a copy of Dr Nevius’ “Methods” book, and he was expected to master it thoroughly.”<sup>38</sup> The strategies proposed by Nevius were central to many missionaries, who considered adoption of the Korean language a central element of their identity as a missionary. Accordingly, in an article published in 1914, titled “The Foreign Missionary is a Man of Two Languages”, one missionary wrote that:

It is the first business of the foreign missionary to acquire the vernacular of the people among whom he is to work. Until he does this he is unfitted really to begin his distinctive work. He must not only be able to read it, but to speak it and to think in it. This being true, the missionary will acquire it, if it is a possible thing, and as well, as possible; and, as a matter of fact, he does acquire it, and some acquire facility in it equal to what they have in the language to which they were born!<sup>39</sup>

Centering their missionary work around promoting Koreans to take an active role in learning and teaching the Korean language would then prove vital to the success of early Protestant Missionaries, while at the same time enabling the spread Korean literacy, in *hangul*.

Many of these first missionaries logged their efforts and musings in thick memoirs and journals. For example, the first missionary to gain acceptance on the Korean peninsula, Horace Allen, published his journals along with an expository book titled *Things Korean: A Collection of Sketches and Anecdotes Missionary and Diplomatic*. Allen, was the first American missionary to

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popularization brought by missionaries. Yi Hwan-Jin and Jeon Moo-Yong, “Yesu-seonggyo-jeonseo” (예수성교 전서), The Korean Bible Society News 33:1 (June 1987), 8-18.

<sup>38</sup> Clark, Charles Allen. *The Korean Church and The Nevius Methods*, (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago), 1929, iiiii.

<sup>39</sup> “The Foreign Missionary is a Man of Two Languages”, *Korea Mission Field*, (Seoul: June 1914), Vol. X No. 6, 155.

arrive in Korea, and proved vital to initiating the acceptance of more Protestants in Korea.

Trained as a doctor, he was called to the Korean court during the Gapsin Coup in 1884, saving the life of Min Young-ik, the nephew of the Korean queen Min. Through displaying his usefulness, he was allowed to establish a Royal Hospital and import other missionaries, yet was careful not to proselytize without permission.<sup>40</sup> His work laid the foundation for later missionaries, as he not just increased the reputation of American Protestants, but he also studied the Korean court and culture to share his observations with incoming missionaries.

Horace Allen also translated and published a collection of Korean stories titled *Korean Tales: A Collection of Stories Translated from Korean Folk Lore*. In the preface of this publication, Allen made note that his purpose in publishing such a book was “to correct the erroneous impressions I have found somewhat prevalent that Koreans are a semi-savage people. And believing that the object could be accomplished best in displaying the thought, life, and habits of the people as portrayed in their native lore, I have made these translations, which, while they are so chosen as to cover various phases of life, are not to be considered as especially selected.”<sup>41,42</sup> In translating these folk-tales to English, he displayed a sophisticated

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<sup>40</sup> Allen reportedly came into conflict with Horace Underwood and Henry Appenzeller in that he urged caution when they sought to proselytize into the interior and set up schools while it was still illegal in Korea. Allen felt that through developing the hospital he could win over the hearts of the Koreans first, while other missionaries thought that would take too long. Kwon, Andrea Yun, “Providence and Politics: Horace N. Allen and the Early US-Korea Encounter, 1884-1894”, (University of California Berkley, 2012), 69.

<sup>41</sup> Allen, Horace Newton, *Korean Tales: Being a Collection of Stories Translated From the Korean Folk Lore*. (New York: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1889), 3-4.

<sup>42</sup> As an example of the ideas Allen believed Americans felt about Korea, Horace Underwood in a written piece for the Korea Missionary Review wrote, ““ The lazy Korean,” “ a decadent people,” “ a nation of loafers,” “ a moribund nation,” are some of the epithets applied to the people of the sometime “ Hermit Nation.” Yet the marvelous progress of missionary work in that land, the activity of the Christians, their zeal for the cause, their self-sacrificing energy in church work, have challenged the attention of the whole world, until the eyes of all Christendom are riveted on that little despised land of which John R. Mott, just after his return from visiting Korea, said, “ It will be the first nation in modern times to be Christianized if the church will take advantage of her present opportunity.””

understanding of Korean culture and language. He went on to mention examples of American ignorance over Korean geography and the penchant to assume that they were uncivilized.<sup>43</sup> Thus, in professing this as his goal as to spread awareness, he was promoting Korean culture and language on the international scale.<sup>44</sup>

Another of the first American missionaries was Horace G. Underwood, who in his turn did a great deal to translate and promote the Korean language, yet his publications displayed an even more negative view about the Korean people. He, too, was looking foremost to proselytize and spread Protestant Christianity, and his methods of first learning the Korean customs and language set the stage for missionaries to come. Horace G. Underwood actively promoted newspapers and published material in *hangul*. Underwood created a society in 1888 called the Christian Literature Society which according to his son, “has contained a continuous and useful existence in the production of literature, the greater part of which has been in the native script.”<sup>45</sup> The promotion of Korean literature and *hangul* (aptly termed the native script) showed the power that missionaries had in their ability to disseminate Korean language. Adversely however, The Christian Literature Society exemplifies that missionaries such as Underwood were willing to promote the Korean language through means that also promoted

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Underwood, Horace G., “Korea’s Crisis Hour” *Korean Mission Field*, (Seoul, Korea: September 1908) Vol IV Number 9, 130.

<sup>43</sup> “People in Washington have asked me if Korea was an island in the Mediterranean; others have asked if Korea could be reached by rail from Europe; others have supposed that Korea was somewhere in the South Seas, with a climate that enabled the natives to dispense with clothing.” Allen, Horace Newton, *Korean Tales: Being a Collection of Stories Translated From the Korean Folk Lore*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's sons 1889), 3-4.

<sup>44</sup> Regarding Christianity and education however, Allen stated in his work, “Christianity came into disfavor through the indiscretion of its early teachers. The distrust is slowly passing away now, and missionaries are openly employed in doing the educational work that must precede any successful attempt to secure the adoption of beliefs.” Allen, Horace Newton, *Korean Tales: Being a Collection of Stories Translated from the Korean Folk Lore*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's sons 1889), 12.

<sup>45</sup> Underwood, Horace H., *Modern Education in Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926), 21.



Christianity and therefore served their own goals. Motivations aside, missionary work spurred published materials to be more widely circulated, and catalyzed the opening of an era where more Koreans were afforded access to an education which could provide literacy to thereby allow them to read such material.

Here it must be noted however though that it was not out of an altruistic understanding of Korean heritage that the missionaries promoted Korean, specifically *hangul*, but rather pragmatic and philosophical reasons. There was certainly some discussion amongst missionaries of the beauty of the Korean language, yet their mission was to spread Christianity, a religion which conflicted with many elements of Korean heritage. Many missionaries who on the one hand saw Korean language as an art form and Korean history as interesting, also saw Korean practices as backwards and uncivilized. The aforementioned Horace G. Underwood for example published in his book that “As has been seen, the Koreans are a primitive people and their furniture is also primitive and meagre.”<sup>46</sup> Horace Allen too used disparaging rhetoric to imply that Koreans were not making use of the land, and even made connections with American capitalists to try to profit off of Korean gold mines.<sup>47</sup> Missionaries in their pursuit of spreading religion could justify looking down on Koreans as backwards yet provided tools to promote literacy and development of the native language.

Missionaries chose *hangul* specifically, even knowing that *hanja*, the Chinese characters, were more popular among elites at the time. It was not the elites that many mission schools

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<sup>46</sup> Underwood may have been surprised to know that 100 years later Korean Hardwood furniture is considered a luxury. Underwood, Horace G., *The Call of Korea*, (New York, Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1907), 52.

<sup>47</sup> Horace Allen wrote, in his book *Things Korean*, “Speaking of cheese, it is re-markable that in Korea where are to be found such fine large cattle, there is no use made of milk, and this too in a land of such poverty that it would seem that all proper foods would be cherished as such.” Allen, Horace N., *Things Korean*, (New York, NY: Fleming H Revell Company, 1908), 121.

sought to reach in their initial years. Many missionaries had already studied Chinese, therefore knowing *hanja*, yet missionaries took the time to learn *hangul*, the underused indigenous alphabetic script, as they believed it would allow them to reach more Koreans. Historian Yong-Shin Park for example noted that “The whole church rejected the old social distinction and fostered the commitment to egalitarian beliefs and values. In short, there was a homology between communicative opening and social levelling. To value *hangul* was to value communicative and social equality.”<sup>48</sup> Protestant missionaries understood the connotation of *hangul* as being easier to understand and therefore more accessible, but more importantly *hangul* appealed to commoners and women, two of the main groups that mission schools sought to recruit.

Missionaries studied and published extensively on the conditions of Korean women and commoners in order to proselytize, and in the process of disseminating what they believed to be important knowledge, concurrently disseminated a negative view regarding the conditions of both groups. It was all too easy for outsiders to look at Korean women during the Choson period and view them as oppressed; confined to their home, denied an education, expected to put their husband and family above themselves. If the missionaries expected to be received in Korea as the emancipators of women, they misjudged the situation. The missionary view in this sense faltered by viewing these Confucian norms as backwards rather than lending them credibility as an alternate way of life lived by the subjects they sought to convert. Missionary rhetoric was almost universally disparaging of such customs, using phrases such as bringing the

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<sup>48</sup> Park, Yong-Shin, "The Church as a Public Space: Resources, Practices, and Communicative Culture in Korea.", *International Journal of Korean History* 11, (2007), 24.

Bible to “ameliorate the suffering of women” or to “raise them from their current state”.<sup>49</sup> This disparaging approach is where I most liken Protestant proselytization to ideological imperialism, in expressing the backwardness of Koreans and the desire to uplift them. Since American Protestants sent no soldiers to enforce these beliefs, missionary education was not as strongly oppressive in nature as with examples such as boarding schools in the USA, and women were free to choose to attend mission schools.<sup>50</sup>

This notion of trying to change Korea was at the heart of Protestant mission schools and proselytization. Horace G. Underwood went to great lengths to describe the domestic situation of Korean women, arriving on the point that “Christianity is, however, working a change here. Men are beginning to realize that women should not be the drudges of the house, that their comfort should be considered.”<sup>51</sup> Underwood did not attempt to try to understand the credibility of Korean cultural norms. Rather, from the beginning he made no attempt to hide that he sought to change the Koreans way of life through Christian teachings.

Another prominent missionary who shared many of his experiences in Korea through published books was Homer B. Hulbert. He, too, sought to change the Koreans and bring his vision of modernization through Christianity, but again, in doing so he promoted the Korean language and did great deal of research on it. He published a book, titled *The Comparative Grammar of Korean and Dravidian* in which he undertook an immense amount work to understand and explain the Korean language. His work furthered missionaries’ goals, but in

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<sup>49</sup> Underwood, Horace H., *Modern Education in Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926), 154, 180.

<sup>50</sup> The reality of offering a choice is crucial to offering a positive form of education rather than a negative one, and will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

<sup>51</sup> Underwood, Horace G., *The Call of Korea*, (New York, Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1907), 53.

doing so aided in the instruction of the Korean language in mission schools, again promoting the *hangul* script. Hulbert also wrote a history of Korea in 1905, delving into historical events to publish them to the western world. He read sources in both Chinese characters and *hangul* Korean, and professed to do so truly just to “give to the English reading public a history of Korea based on native records”.<sup>52</sup> In his work, Hulbert displays the contradictory nature of missionary work in Korea. More even than other missionaries Hulbert worked hard to fight against Japanese aggression in 1905. He took part in a delegation to Europe to request aid in securing independence, and he published a scathing denouncement of Japanese aggression in a book titled *The Passing of Korea* (1909).<sup>53</sup> His goal of a free Korea was left unfulfilled and he was instead banished by the Japanese Government, yet his experience is the epitome of one of the crucial elements of missionary teaching in Korea. That is, his missionary zeal to impart Christianity upon Korea led him to work to develop Korean literacy, publish his knowledge in English, and eventually resist the Japanese.

I draw contrast here between Underwood and Hulbert, because as early missionaries they maintained conflicting views on Japanese colonial aspirations. The aforementioned Allen as well, viewed Japanese aggression towards Korea negatively, as he and Hulbert proclaimed their desire for an independent Korea. Their outspoken criticism towards Japanese aggression would not go unnoticed by Korean nor Japanese officials, yet they were the exception rather than the rule. Most missionaries outwardly acted more like Underwood when Japan began exerting influence upon Korea, and did not take a strong public stance opting instead to work

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<sup>52</sup> Hulbert, Homer B. *History of Korea*. (Seoul: Methodist Publishing House, 1905), IV.

<sup>53</sup> Hulbert, Homer B. *The Passing of Korea*. New York: Doubleday, Page &, 1909.

with the Japanese to assure their work would remain unperturbed. Those strongly anti-Japanese missionaries would not be long for Korea after annexation, leaving the work of missionary education to the “moderate” voices that remained. In the years that followed, it was the teachings of these moderate missionaries however that inadvertently fostered Korean nationalism, and the communities carried on by them that became important centers of this resistance to Japanese hegemony in the Korean peninsula.

### **Growth of Christianity and Mission Schools Before Formal Annexation 1905-1910:**

Protestant missionaries and mission schools found the most success, between 1905-1910, when Japanese incursion drove many Koreans to the Protestant Church. At this time, the Japanese government did not yet have the authority to act against mission schools. The external pressure on Korea to submit both physically and culturally to Japan led to a consolidation of nationalism among many distressed Koreans, and the need for an outlet for their feelings of frustration. Many found such a community in the Protestant churches, which rapidly grew in the first few years of Japanese rule, best expressed through the Great Pyongyang Revival of 1907, where gatherings at churches both Presbyterian and Methodist numbered in the thousands every night for weeks, filling the space with a collective expression of grief at the fate of the nation.<sup>54</sup> Due to the perception of missionaries as having American protection, many Koreans joined the Protestant Church hoping that it could aid in securing independence from Japanese aggressors.<sup>55</sup> While this perception led to rapid growth of

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<sup>54</sup> The Central Church in Pyongyang reportedly could “hold fifteen-hundred people” and it was full every night. Lee, G., *Korean Mission Field*, (Seoul, Korea: March, 1907) Vol III, 33.

<sup>55</sup> According to Timothy Lee, some Koreans viewed the Protestant church as also sympathizing with their plight. Associations of the Protestant denominations with understanding the plight of Koreans, and thereby offering a solution was critical to the growth of the converts in Korea. Lee, Timothy S. "A Political Factor in the Rise of Protestantism in Korea: Protestantism and the 1919 March First Movement." *Church History* 69, no. 1 (2000), 125.

converts, which translated into growth of mission schools, it also caused the Japanese Government to take their first steps to limit Protestant institutions, worried about their potential to incite an anti-Japanese uprising. While being careful to maintain that religious freedom would be granted in Korea as stipulated by the Meiji Constitution, the Resident General in official reports set about disparaging mission schools.<sup>56</sup> Written in the *Annual Report of Reforms and Progress in Chosen 1908-1909*, Resident General Ito Hirobumi claimed:

There are several thousand private schools in Korea. Numbers of them, however, can hardly be called educational institutions as they are without adequate funds or proper equipment and have not a capable teaching force. In recent years, the establishment of private schools has become a popular fever among Koreans. People in some districts forcibly demand grants from the people, contributions or donations of properties or money, on the plea of establishing private schools, but more often for other purposes. Instead of participating in sober educational work, some of these schools often intermeddle in political agitation against the Japanese Protectorate and the new regime undertaken by the Korean Government, and use text books of seditious nature, inimical to the peace and order of the country.<sup>57</sup>

Mission schools were accused of acting against the Japanese authority and spreading ideas to undermine their regime, as well as demanding money from the surrounding areas. It is telling that many of the ideas being disseminated were of Korean language and culture, as that would indeed cause more nationalism and therefore more resistance from Koreans. Since Korea from 1905-1910 was a protectorate of Japan and not a full colony, despite the Japanese government's disapproval there were not yet as many formal actions that they could take against mission schools without conflicting with the declaration of religious freedom written into the Meiji Constitution, so for the time the number of mission schools grew.

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<sup>56</sup> "Article 28. Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious belief." Hirobumi, Ito, *Commentaries on the Constitution of the Empire of Japan*, 1890.

<sup>57</sup> H.I.J.M's Residency General; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1908-1909)*, (Seoul: December 1909), 170.

Most missionaries that remained in Korea publicly reinforced that they kept politics out of their churches and schools, so as to not come into conflict with the goals of Japan. As just one example, in 1906, 12 students of Pyengyang(Pyongyang) Academy were suspended for taking part in demonstrations against Japanese influence.<sup>58</sup> Although William Baird, the headmaster of Pyengang Academy, seemed to sympathize with the fact that his student's "feelings of shame, resentment, and hate found expressions in the determination to do something heroic in the hour of their countries need," he expressed that it was detracting from their studies, and it was only when the students demonstrating were suspended, "order was restored".<sup>59</sup> Baird here made a very public statement that he would not support Koreans protesting against Japanese influence, citing what would become a common argument, that protesting would impede students' academic work. The following year, as the Great Revival swept through Pyengyang, missionaries wrote in a publication of the *Korean Mission Field* in October 1907, that missionaries have "too sacred a calling to meddle in a petty quarrel or attempt to teach insubordination to any class of men," stating that they have taken a "strictly neutral" stance.<sup>60</sup> A neutral stance in this case, meant siding with the Japanese in order for their schools to continue. True neutrality was never an option in the face of an invading force. The need for missionaries to so fervently deny their role in fostering Korean nationalism just reinforces the perception from Japanese and Koreans alike that Protestants, and especially the

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<sup>58</sup> *Korean Mission Field*, (Seoul, Korea: October, 1906), Vol II, 221.

<sup>59</sup> Concerning this event, he went on to explain that "the remaining pupils returned to their work with increased zeal, as if to make up for the lost time". Ibid. 221.

<sup>60</sup> *Korean Mission Field*, (Seoul, Korea: June, 1907), Vol III, 1907, 155.

schools they established, were teaching ideas and creating communities which were used to resist Japanese attempts to subordinate Korea.

The belief that Christianity incited rebellion in the Korean people was reinforced in the minds of Japanese officials through cases such as the assassination of Japanese Resident General Ito Hirobumi by Anh Jung-Geun, a Catholic convert, and an attempt made by a group of Christians on the life of the Japanese Prime Minister when he visited Korea.<sup>6162</sup> The association of Protestant Christianity and their mission schools with Korean nationalism stuck, despite most missionaries working to keep politics out of their churches and schools, fervently denying political agitation in press publications, and publicly pledging support to the Japanese regime.

The attempts by missionaries to disassociate the Protestant churches from Korean nationalist politics were of little effect, as their growth in membership from 1905-1910 greatly alarmed the Japanese authorities. Out of the 360 Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries who entered Korea between 1884 and 1909, 122 came during the years 1907-1909.<sup>63</sup> According to Japanese sources, by 1908, there were 687 mission schools in Korea and by 1909 there were

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<sup>61</sup> According to witnesses Ahn Jung-Geun signed a cross after shooting Prince Ito, along with stating that "I came to Harbin for the sole purpose of assassinating Prince Ito, to avenge my country". Boston Daily Globe (1872-1922); Boston, Mass. [Boston, Mass]27 Oct 1909: 8.

<sup>62</sup> For other examples, see Chang In-Hwan, who in March 1908 assassinated D. C. Stevens, an American advisor to Japan who spoke out regarding what he perceived to be the benefits of Japanese rule in Korea, or and Yi Chae-myong, who attempted to assassinate Yi Wan-yong a Korean collaborator with the Japanese. Lee, Timothy S. "A Political Factor in the Rise of Protestantism in Korea: Protestantism and the 1919 March First Movement." *Church History* 69, no. 1 (2000), 127.

<sup>63</sup> Numbers included in: Ryu, Dae Young, "Understanding Early American Missionaries in Korea (1884-1910): Capitalist Middle-Class Values and the Weber Thesis", *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, 113 | 2001, 93-117.



829, meaning that in the span of a year, 142 new mission schools had been founded.<sup>64</sup> This surge in missionaries and mission schools displayed that Protestant Christianity held a great deal of power in Korea. Consequently, when Korea was officially colonized by Japan in 1910, the number of missionaries and missionary schools on the Korean peninsula began to decline such that by the year 1921 there were only 226 foreign Protestant missionaries in Korea.<sup>66</sup>

In their initial steps by Japanese authorities to limit the influence of mission schools in Korea, the Resident General of Chosen passed the Ordinance for Private Schools on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1908, stating that a private school must apply for recognition from the Resident General, and comply with all regulations or risk being forcibly closed.<sup>67</sup> To obtain recognition, private schools had to fulfill strict requirements such as accepting a principle appointed by the Resident General, using only Japanese sanctioned textbooks and allowing for near total oversight by Japan.<sup>68</sup> Article ten of this ordinance stated that the Resident General may close a private school for either being unsatisfactory in their delivery of education or “when it is feared that the school may corrupt public morals or disturb peace and order.”<sup>69</sup> The ability of the Japanese

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<sup>64</sup> It should be noted that these were not all Presbyterian institutions, since the number of mission schools included American Protestants, British Protestants, or French Catholics. H.I.J.M’s Residency General; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1908-1909)*, (Seoul: December 1909), 182.

<sup>65</sup> H.I.J.M’s Residency General; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1909-1910)*, (Seoul: December 1910), 153.

<sup>66</sup> The table uses the term foreign preachers. Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1918-1921)*, (Kiejo, Chosen: December 1921), 90.

<sup>67</sup> Government General of Chosen, *Ordinance for Private schools*, August 1908, As recorded in *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1908-1909)*, (Seoul: December 1909), 203.

<sup>68</sup> The Ordinance for Private schools read “Article V. A principal shall be appointed in each private school. The principal shall represent the school and transact the school affairs. ARTICLE VI. Text books used by private schools shall be chosen from those compiled by the Department of Education, or those which have received the official approval of the Minister of Education.” Ibid. 203.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 204.

Government to close mission schools while staying within a justifiable legal framework set the stage for schools to be systematically closed under the guise of reform.

With Korea under Japanese occupation as of 1910, one of the most important objectives of the Japanese as expressed by the Governor General, Count Terauchi Masatake (1910-1916), was the establishment of a common school system in Korea. Such a school system would display to the world the purported benefits of the Japanese occupation, while aiding in the indoctrination of Koreans starting from a young age. It also further allowed for the explanation that Koreans were backwards, and working to develop a new education system in Korea became “a powerful rhetorical device to contend that the Koreans could not bring about modernisation themselves and therefore needed the Japanese empire to protect and nurture them”.<sup>70</sup> In the common schools the Government General was establishing in Korea, Japanese teachers implemented curriculums which ensured that Korean history was taught disparagingly, and reinforced that the national language of instruction was Japanese.<sup>71</sup> As expressed by the Government General in the *Chosen Educational Ordinance*, the purpose of schools in Korea during this time was “the making of good and loyal subjects by giving instruction on the basis of

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<sup>70</sup> The Author who made this statement was Soon-Yong Pak, Professor of Education at Yonsei University. On the subject of Yonsei University, it is important to note that it came to be out of the eventual union of Chosen Christian College, Severance Medical School. Both schools were founded by missionaries, the latter by Horace Allen. Pak, Soon-Yong, and Hwang, Keumjoong. "Assimilation and Segregation of Imperial Subjects." *Paedagogica Historica* 47, no. 3 (2011): 377-97.

<sup>71</sup> In the proclamation of annexation by Count Terauchi Masatake when promoting the importance of educating Koreans in school system founded by the Japanese he stated “But hitherto many young men of this country have been misled by erroneous methods of education into disliking work and indulging in useless and empty talk.” “Proclamation of Annexation by the Governor General”, August 29 1910, *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1910-1911)*, (Kiejo, Chosen: December 1911), Appendix 224.

imperial rescript concerning education."<sup>7273</sup> The message was clear. The purpose of the common schools was to pacify the next generation of Koreans, while acculturating them to Japan.

The Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890 had become celebrated in Japan as a sacred text imparting learning to the masses. Applying this to Korea implied that Koreans should be thankful for the educational facilities brought by the Japanese, and more importantly the Meiji Emperor. If the Government General wanted the education system to serve the purpose of making Koreans into loyal Japanese subjects, then allowing outliers to remain separate from their jurisdiction would undermine both the regime's power, and the purpose of the education system. This was seen as an especially pressing problem since it appeared that the Korean Christian Churches were fostering nationalism among their members.

According to Governor General, Count Terauchi Masatake, the main facet of becoming a loyal citizen was "the cultivation of moral character and through propagation of the national language and therefore inculcate the quality and character becoming a loyal subject of the empire."<sup>74</sup> The focus here on the Japanese language highlights that to fulfil their goal of imparting the values of a Japanese citizen would require standardization, and would be rooted in culture, of which a main component was language.

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<sup>72</sup>The Imperial Rescript on education as pertaining to Koreans would have served a dual purpose. It would first have re-affirmed the importance of education in regards to Japan, that was purported to be applied to Korea as well. It second would have implied the Korean loyalty to Japan and the Japanese Emperor, for example stating "furthermore, advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial state". "The Imperial Rescript on Education" (October 30, 1890).

<sup>73</sup> Government General of Chosen Korean Bureau of Education; *Manual of Education in Chosen*, (Seoul, Chosen, Japan: 1920), Appendix pg1: The Chosen Educational Ordinance.

<sup>74</sup> Government General of Chosen Korean Bureau of Education; *Manual of Education in Chosen*, Appendix pg7: Proclamation concerning the enforcement of the Chosen educational Ordinance.

Even the subtext of national language carries implications in the way it would be used to teach pride in a Japanese culture. National Language (kokugo 国語) carries implications of “a Japanese language for a Japanese people”, a subject that should evoke national pride. Such an idea was deeply ingrained in Japanese education at the time, and applying it to Korea further reinforced not only the Imperial Rescript on Education that was now purported to apply to Koreans, but also that Koreans ought to be proud citizens of the Japanese empire.<sup>75</sup>

One of the major proponents of kokugo and an educational theorist for Korea was, Hoshina Kōichi. In his book *The New Wave in Education and Teaching of Kokugo* he devised a plan on how to deal with Korean assimilation looking to the model of German occupied Poland.<sup>76</sup> He saw in Poland an example of imperialist occupation aimed at assimilation, fraught with many of the same issues present in Japanese colonization of the Korean peninsula. One of his focal points was on the policies regarding the use of the German language to acculturate Polish children in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He highlighted that many of the texts used to teach German included German stories of morality especially regarding the Emperor, which could covertly work their way into Polish memory.<sup>77</sup> Moreover they were selected in a way so as to inspire patriotism in Polish children, and cultivate the idea that for centuries Prussia had watched over Poland as though they were a big brother. Taking such ideas to heart, Hoshina proposed that the education system for Koreans as established by the Japanese should:

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<sup>75</sup>According to Jinsuk Yang, Korean language was then referred to as *Jinseo*, a “regional dialect” purportedly spoken by the elderly and parents who were stuck in the past. Yang, Jinsuk. "A Historical Analysis of Language Policy and Language Ideology in the Early Twentieth Asia: A Case of Joseon, 1910–1945." *Language Policy* 16, no. 1 (2017), 65.

<sup>76</sup> In Japanese the book is titled *Kokugo kyōiku oyobi kyōju no shinchō*. Lee, Yeounsuk, and Maki Hirano Hubbard. "The Ideology of Hyōjungo." In *The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996) 161.

<sup>77</sup> Lee, Yeounsuk, and Maki Hirano Hubbard. "The Ideology of Hyōjungo." In *The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan*, 155-59. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996, 165.

mention the following topics for local education: the ancient relationship between Japan and Korea in the past, the state of transportation in Korea, China's persecution of Korea, people's constant suffering from cruelty and neglect, and Korea's disorderly taxation and exploitation of the people. And we should note that the annexation to Japan brought Korea an excellent regime and the liberation of the people and that the admirable judicial system provides complete protection of their human rights; the nationwide foundation of schools has promoted education, the transportation system has greatly developed, and such progress in humanity has renewed Korea's spirit. By promoting education that cultivates children's understanding of morals and society through such textbooks, we will be able to Japanize their thinking, and gradually replace their anti-Japan sentiment with amicable surrender.<sup>78</sup>

He furthermore proposed that such instruction should rely on Korean as scarcely as possible, and in higher grades transition to entirely Japanese instruction. Only in this way, did he believe that the Korean people could eventually be Japanized, as what they learned in school would be encoded into their memory using Japanese. His theories reinforced that assimilation was the primary function of education in Korea.

Mission schools then stood in opposition, albeit unintentionally, to the goal of Japanese common schools, as they were in a position to instill religious and western values rather than pride in Japan, and the Korean language and *hangul* script instead of the National Language. Furthermore, the Governor General believed that missionaries were inciting rebellion, and instilling U.S. Christian values and beliefs which encouraged the construction of a new Korean identity. The bottom line was that if mission schools were allowed to remain exempt from conforming to Japanese standards, it would belie the main purpose behind the establishment of the common school system by the Japanese, yet forcible closure would prove difficult especially after evoking the ideas of the Imperial Rescript on Education.

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<sup>78</sup> Cited in Lee, Yeounsuk and Maki Hirano Hubbard. "The Ideology of Hyōjungo." In *The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan*, 155-59. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1996, 163.

## **Chapter 2: Annexation and Conflict:**

### **The 105 Man Incident at Syen Chyun, and Missionary Reactions:**

The first outright conflict between the Government General and the Protestant Church after annexation was the so-called “Korean Conspiracy Case” (otherwise known as the 105 Man Incident after the number of men formally convicted) in 1911, which first manifested in the northern town of Syen Chyun. Of the 8,000 residents of this town, 4,000 of them were Christian, and the church stood at the center of town, the “largest and most conspicuous building of the place”.<sup>79</sup> Attached to this church was the Hugh O’Niel Jr. Industrial Academy, where on October 12, 1911 three pupils were arrested and subsequent extradited to Seoul, closely followed by a string of arrests of teachers students, pastors, elders and deacons.<sup>80</sup> The arrested Koreans were kept in deplorable conditions in Seoul; many tortured to produce confessions. The press was explicitly forbidden from covering these arrests, and officially licensed newspapers published in Korea were silent on the issue.<sup>81</sup>

The official government report promulgated in 1912, imparted that the arrests were a result of an attempted assassination of the Governor General Count Terauchi Masatake at the Syen Chyun train station. The report accusatorily stated that Korean “dissidents” snuck “revolvers and swords under his long cloak,” and that it was only due to the “strict vigilance of police officers and others they could not accomplish their nefarious objective,” framing the inhabitants of Syen Chyun as murderous plotters, and the police as heroes.<sup>82</sup> Accounts of that

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<sup>79</sup> Brown, Arthur Judson, *The Korean Conspiracy Case*, (156 Fifth Ave, New York: November 20, 1912), 8.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. 12.

<sup>81</sup> Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A General Assembly, *Report on the Boards*, (1913), Issue 111, 284.

<sup>82</sup> These interviews were conducted by Arthur Judson Brown. Brown, Arthur Judson, *The Korean Conspiracy Case*, (156 Fifth Ave, New York: November 20, 1912), 8.

day from Koreans however, were very different.<sup>83</sup> There were two Korean children stopped with pocket knives at the police checkpoints, but otherwise no weapons were confiscated as Koreans entered the premises.<sup>84</sup> As there was indeed a police checkpoint that the crowd had to pass through to enter, it is implausible that numerous Koreans could have not only smuggled these weapons in, but would have been discovered afterwards without making a conspicuous attempt on the Governor General's life. Moreover, as a similar story with almost identical wording was used regarding multiple other stations in Korea, this story appears more political tool than truth. These fabricated charges were then used as an excuse to arrest and persecute Christians from the surrounding area starting with the Hugh O'Neil Jr. Industrial Academy.

The arrest and later torture of so many Christians at the hands of the Japanese authorities caused a wave of fear to sweep through the Christian community in Syen Chyun and the surrounding area. American missionary Arthur Judson Brown, despite siding with the Japanese in most of his accounts, expressed these feelings in his explanation of the interaction of the Japanese gendarmes with Korean parents:

When a Japanese policeman calls upon a Korean parent and sharply asks him why he does not send his kid to the public school instead of the church School, the timid Korean is apt to conclude that he is in danger of punishment if he does not heed what he regards as a mandate; and when so many teachers and pupils of mission schools were among those who were arrested, the conclusion appears to be justified. Today the whole extensive church primary school system in Korea is in jeopardy, and rightfully or wrongfully, many Koreans believe that if they align themselves with the Church, they will incur the wrath of the police<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid. 5

<sup>84</sup> The Students were six years old. In describing this even missionary Arthur Judson Brown wrote regarding the confiscation of their knives that "It requires either some ulterior purpose or such a panic stricken imagination as the Russian naval officers had when they fired on fishing boats in the North Sea, to see dangerous assassins in trembling little boys." Ibid, 5.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 8-9.

The mass arrest of Christians in 1911-1912 served to discourage Koreans from attending mission schools for a time. As a result of these arrests, in the short term the Hugh O’Niel Jr. Industrial Academy had to be shut down, and in the long term the attendance of Protestant mission schools began its decline. While seemingly effective, such action was derided by foreign media and proved untenable, forcing the Japanese to switch tactics in dealing with Korean Protestants.

In understanding the rationale behind such heavy-handed strategies, it is worth examining the region from the context of the immense transitions taking place, as each new year seemed to bring a new revolutionary movement. In 1911, revolutionaries in China led by Sun Yat-Sen (Sūn Yìxiān) overthrew the Qing Dynasty, and many hardline Japanese advisors became worried about the Christian involvement in fostering a revolutionary spirit. Sun Yat-Sen, who presented himself as Christian, had studied in the United States similar to some of the higher-ranking Korean clergy. Moreover, only a few years prior, a Marxist anarchist group had been discovered attempting to assassinate the emperor, led by Kōtoku Shūsui, who had also studied in the United States.<sup>86</sup> The Japanese government was especially wary of the mobilizing power of societies with revolutionary ideals especially with educational or religious connections to the United States. In Korea itself mass movements such as the Pyongyang revival (1907) and the Million Evangelistic Campaign in 1910-1911 compounded by the continued spread of Christianity, deepened the fear that, “if Japan did not want a revolution in its hands then it must adopt such sternly oppressive measures that Koreans would learn once and for all that

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<sup>86</sup> Elison, George. "Kōtoku Shūsui. The Change in Thought." *Monumenta Nipponica* 22, no. 3/4 (1967): 438.



Japan did not brook opposition.”<sup>87</sup> While Christianity was not inherently revolutionary, many Christian teachings could be interpreted as inspiring resistance, and so it was the early view of many in the Japanese government that Christianity should be suppressed.

Accusations of sedition during the 105 Man Incident even expanded to American missionaries. For example, George S. McCune, a teacher at the John O’Niel Jr. Industrial school, had lectured on the Biblical story of David and Goliath arriving upon the moral that a weaker man with a justified cause can sometimes overcome a stronger man. He was later arrested and questioned as the Government General reportedly believed that this was an analogy for Korea and Japan.<sup>88</sup> Many prominent Korean teachers from mission schools were also arrested for their ideological teachings during this period, highlighting that it was also the messages that could be found in religious teachings themselves that the Government General worried might cause resistance among Koreans.<sup>8990</sup>

The association of missionaries with inciting revolutionary action, was then compounded by the claims of their foreignness. Just as the Korean ruling family had feared during the Choson Dynasty, loyalty to the church, Japanese officials now feared, would supersede loyalty to the state especially since most Koreans were far removed from the loyal subjects the Government General hoped them to be. Presbyterian and Methodist congregations were in many respects led by foreigners, and thus the growing loyalty of many

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<sup>87</sup> Brown, Arthur Judson, *The Korean Conspiracy Case*, (156 Fifth Ave, New York: November 20, 1912), 4.

<sup>88</sup> The arrest of McCune also displayed that Americans were no longer subject to extraterritoriality. Ibid. 8.

<sup>89</sup> Another pastor was arrested for preaching about the Kingdom of Heaven, as that was seen as conflicting with the official narrative that “there is only one Kingdom... the Kingdom of Japan.” Ibid. 8.

<sup>90</sup> Pastor Kil, one of the organizers of the Pyongyang Revival of 1907, spoke out against cigarettes and was consequently arrested for speaking out against the Japanese Government, since they were the largest manufacturers of cigarettes. Ellis, William T., “Christianity’s Fiery Trial in Korea”, *The Continent* (June 27, 1912), 897.

Koreans to such institutions was both a danger and an affront to Japanese hegemony. One missionary, Rev. James S. Gale, speaking on this point called the attraction to Christianity a “link between Korea and the foreigner, such as the Japanese could never hope to forge.”<sup>91</sup> Regarding missionaries in particular, many Japanese were worried about the influence that they had to “make or unmake a revolution.”<sup>92</sup> As missionaries were a tangible manifestation of foreign influence, their presence when seen as overshadowing Japanese officials, was a potential danger and could be perceived as an insult to public pride.

Missionaries were therefore implicated in the trials of many Koreans accused of taking part in the assassination attempt, blamed for implanting the idea in the minds of their students. To look for example, at the trial transcript for Kim Hyon-Sik, which displays a myriad of discrepancies in his statements day-to-day. Much of the testimony was false, and considering he had been tortured and beaten was most likely a forced confession by the Japanese authorities.<sup>93</sup> The information he put forth then, reflected what the Japanese sought to derive from this case, a case likely contrived as it was. In this case, it was his testimony about Reverend McCune that stands out; implicating him as inciting the conspiracy, as he was made out to be the ringleader who supplied the weapons and even gave the Korean students the idea to assassinate the Governor General, spurring on the feelings that had been expressed from his

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<sup>91</sup> *The Missionary review of the world*. (New York: Missionary Review Publishing Co.) Vol XLIII, 1920, 119.

<sup>92</sup> Brown, Arthur Judson, *The Korean Conspiracy Case*, 1912, 10.

<sup>93</sup> Almost every day of a new examination of him, he revises something stated in a previous day. Usually it would include lofty language such as that he “got confused and told a lie” or “last night in my prison cell I got to thinking”, and showing apparent concern over telling incorrect information. “Protocol of Examination of Kim Hyun-Sik”, Conspiracy Case Records: Box 1 Folder 9. 1913.

fellow teachers who supposedly also wanted Masatake assassinated.<sup>94</sup> In the testimony he was even portrayed as disappointed, expressing anger towards the students for failing in their duty to assassinate the Governor General. Throughout forced testimonies, McCune was made to look as though he is working against the Japanese covertly, as he supposedly “often said to the students: ‘submit in public, but act wisely in secret.’ McCune also himself is very friendly in public with the Japanese, but in his heart he is dead against them.”<sup>95</sup>

The menacing portrayal of McCune in Kim’s testimony exemplifies the Japanese colonial administration’s fears about Protestant missionaries. He was feared to be inciting this rebellion and stoking anti-Japanese fears along with his allies; purportedly acting kindly in public, as many missionaries did, while covertly working (as they believed) against the Japanese.<sup>96</sup> Such was the Japanese belief put forth throughout most of the first decade of Japanese rule in Korea, that missionaries and the schools they founded were the ones stoking anti-Japanese rhetoric while maintaining an amiable stature in public.

Such a view was reinforced through American Protestant press publicly denouncing Japan’s persecution of Christians in Korea. In 1911, William T. Ellis a Presbyterian Minister published an article in *The Continent*, a Presbyterian newspaper, criticizing Japanese treatment of Korean Protestants. Titling it “Christianity’s Fiery Trial in Korea”, he lambasted the

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<sup>94</sup> In some days of the testimony McCune is made to seem as though he is coming up with the idea, and on others “the assassination of the Governor General did not originate from McCune. The teachers insisted he be assassinated and McCune made instigating speeches to agree with them”. Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>96</sup> Although it is not clear whether this was common knowledge to the Japanese, it is worth noting that missionaries would have sometimes mentioned the phrase “be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” From Matthew 10:16. Horace Allen was known to have used such a phrase in his missionary work, and mentioned that other missionaries were told this. Kwon, Andrea Yun, “Providence and Politics: Horace N. Allen and the Early US-Korea Encounter, 1884-1894”, (University of California Berkley, 2012), 103.

Government General: for wrongly persecuting Presbyterians in the north of Korea and grossly mistreating them while incarcerated, concluding that “She (Japan) is in no position to flaunt the enlightened sentiment of the world or of her own people.”<sup>97</sup>

The public denouncement of Japan in a foreign newspaper would not have gone unnoticed in Japan. To the Japanese, this would appear as the foreign power of the Presbyterian Church working against them.<sup>98</sup> Already worried about the power of the church to mobilize, and the Korean Protestant’s adherence to a foreign government other than themselves, foreign religious publications attacking Japan and defending Korea affirmed the Government General’s fears.

At the height of arrests, according to foreign sources, up to 1,000 Koreans largely comprised of Presbyterians, were arrested, held without bail on trumped up charges, and many were tortured.<sup>99</sup> In the next few years however, most Koreans who had been detained were released, and only a few were charged and kept in jail.<sup>100</sup> Many whose charges stuck received commuted sentences and were released early. It is likely then that statements from missionaries like Ellis spreading information of these arrests had an important impact on Japanese policies moving forward. Ellis’s article highlighted that the proverbial eyes of the

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<sup>97</sup> In the article Ellis claimed that Prominent missionaries within Korea had “laid at Japan’s door the charge of persecuting even to torture the Christians in North Korea, for no other ascertainable reason than that they are Christians”. Ellis, William T., “Christianity’s Fiery Trial in Korea”, *The Continent* (June 27, 1912), 899.

<sup>98</sup> Another interesting instance of this was a “Call to Prayer” set out in the United States. Members of the Presbyterian Church set out to help the Koreans be “speedily delivered from all their afflictions, but while in the midst of them be strengthened with all power according to His glory unto all patience and long-suffering with joy.” It should be noted however that the circulation of the pamphlet announcing this was to be done privately. “Call to prayer”, Conspiracy Case Records: Box 1 Folder 6. 1913. 3-4.

<sup>99</sup> Competing sources however claim that this number is inflated by foreign accounts. According to Matsutani “123 of these men were formally prosecuted, and 105 men were convicted in Seoul court.” Matsutani, Motokazu. *Church over Nation: Christian Missionaries and Korean Christians in Colonial Korea*. Doctoral dissertation, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2012), 283.

<sup>100</sup> Chung, Henry; *The Case of Korea*, (New York, NY: 1921), 164.

world were fixated upon Japan, largely disappointed to see them abusing their power in Korea rather than uplifting them as expounded in public reports. Japan, a country which at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was still fairly new to the world stage, and vying to earn equal treatment to western imperial powers, would have sought to evoke a positive outlook towards their occupation, not gain a reputation for brutality and religious persecution. Having recently fought wars with Russia, and China, Japan also needed allies like the USA and Britain not just militarily, but economically. There is not one clearly defined reason, but it is likely all of these factors were a part of Japan's decision to develop a less heavy-handed in the years immediately following this incident.

The implications of such power being held by foreigners was still an affront to Japanese hegemony. In maintaining their own control over the Peninsula, any group that could garner support for a power which would rival the Japanese Colonial Government, would inevitably clash with the Government General and be seen as undermining their authority. It naturally followed that over the course of the next decade, Protestant missionary power on the peninsula would be limited but done so under the guise of reforms; making it more difficult for missionaries to operate by closing schools, and creating laws that would limit their power would serve to naturally expel missionaries from Korea while maintaining that it was beneficial for Koreans. Using deft political maneuvers rather than overt persecution would then allowed the Japanese government to respond to criticism from missionaries while saving face internationally.

### Japanese Justifications and Covert Methods of Closing Mission Schools 1910-1919:

In a sharp contrast to the years leading up to annexation, missionary activity on the Korean Peninsula declined during the first decade of Japanese rule in Korea. As of 1910, close to 500 Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries were active on the Korean peninsula, with 135 missionaries having arrived in 1905-1909 alone.<sup>101</sup> Just 11 years later, in 1921, there were only 226 foreign missionaries on the Korean peninsula from countries other than Japan.<sup>102</sup> It is evident by this more than 50% decrease in the number of Protestant Missionaries that the peninsula had been made a less hospitable environment for foreign missionaries. The number of American missionaries continued to decrease over time, coinciding with the Government General passing more restrictive regulations on their schools.

In the year 1910 the 805 Protestant Mission schools, ran by Methodist and Presbyterian missionaries made up over a third of the 2,225 total recognized private institutions in Korea.<sup>103</sup><sup>104</sup> Many regulations imposed on Korean private schools affected all of them, but some included special mention of provisions for mission schools. While the Government General sought to standardize the education in all schools on the peninsula, they paid specific attention to mission schools due to their large percentage of the private schools, and their foreign connections. Aligning with the explanation that the Japanese had annexed Korea in

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<sup>101</sup> Ryu, Dae Young, "Understanding Early American Missionaries in Korea (1884-1910): Capitalist Middle-Class Values and the Weber Thesis", *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, 113 | 2001, 93-117.

<sup>102</sup> The table uses the term foreign preachers, so this could pertain to Catholics as well as Protestant missionaries. Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1918-1921)*, 90.

<sup>103</sup> Many of these however were private schools opened by Koreans themselves, which were also targeting during this time as sources of Nationalism. H.I.J.M.'s Residency General; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1908-1909)*, (Seoul: December 1909), 153.

<sup>104</sup> For further discussion of Korean established private schools see: Chang, Yunshik. "GROWTH OF EDUCATION IN KOREA 1910-1945." *Bulletin of the Population and Development Studies Center* 4 (1975): 40-53.

order to “secure a more permanent peace” and to “advance the interests of the natives as well as the foreigners” private mission schools were then closed under the guise of reform.<sup>105</sup>

Even before the aforementioned Conspiracy Case in 1911, Presbyterian Missionaries began to experience difficulties in Northern Korea. In Pyongyang, a city with such a high Christian Population that it was deemed the Jerusalem of the East, a difficulty in enrollment and organization was proclaimed to be the most pressing educational issue by the *Presbyterian Reports of the Missionary and benevolent boards and committees to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Churches in the Unites States*. In this report, missionaries blamed lower enrollment numbers on, among other things, the “rapid organization of government schools”.<sup>106</sup> Missionaries were well aware that their schools would come under pressure from the officially licensed common schools, and that they would need to obtain official approval. Thus, the number of schools began to steadily decline. According to Presbyterian records, in the year 1909-1910, there were 606 schools under their establishment, but in the years 1910-1911 the number dropped to 557.<sup>107</sup> This trend continued for nearly a decade.

From 1910-1911, in their effort to, as they put it, “improve private schools, most of which were in a chronically evil state” the Government General oversaw the closure of 25 Christian institutions.<sup>108</sup> The next year, between 1911-1912, 461 private schools were closed

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<sup>105</sup> Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1910-1911)*, 1.

<sup>106</sup> *Presbyterian Reports of the Missionary and benevolent boards and committees to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Churches in the Unites States* (1911), 80.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, 291.

<sup>108</sup>The Government General wrote that “As to the private schools maintained by foreign missionaries there are about 780 schools. Most of these not only applied for government recognition, but gradually came to use the officially approved text books.” Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1910-1911)*, (Kiejo: December 1911), 230.

“on account of financial difficulties” which included 85 mission schools.<sup>109</sup> The trend continued; the number of mission schools continued to decrease, as the explanations provided by the Government General referenced the rise in common schools, disorganization on the part of private schools, and a lack of funding.

As Japanese-run common schools increased in Korea, it indeed led to a decrease in the number of students in mission schools. In situations such as in Syen Chyun, the number of students in mission schools declined as Koreans worried about the political ramifications of their children attending mission schools. Low enrollment numbers were also a result of opportunities being restricted to graduates of mission schools, as graduates of mission schools were not recognized by the government and thus could not attain government jobs, and were expected instead to engage in manual labor after graduation.<sup>110</sup> As mission school attendance declined, so too did donations from the Christian community in Korea, further decreasing funding alongside the diminishing student base.

Mission schools' closure being due to financial difficulties was not a fabrication of the Government General, but rather a result of their intervention. The *Regulations for Private Schools* enacted on October 20<sup>th</sup> 1911, forced private schools to adhere to additional oversight and onerous stipulations through 19 articles in order for a school to be recognized as proper by

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<sup>109</sup> 700 of the 1700 private schools remaining were “run by foreign missionaries.” According to the Government General. Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1911-1912)*, (Kiejo, Chosen: December 1912), 211.

<sup>110</sup> D. W Lyall stated that “A very pressing problem is the question of what is to become of the product of our church boys’ schools... Official service being practically closed to those who would remain Christians the question arises what is to become of the rank and file.” Lyall, D. W, “Church Schools: Present Conditions and Problems”, *Korea Mission Field*, (Seoul, March 1915), Vol. XI, No.2, 77.



the Government General.<sup>111</sup> Towards this end, it was required that each school in Korea, have at least three teachers of Japanese descent who would be paid roughly twice the salary of the average Korean teacher.<sup>112</sup> To stay open, private schools had to purchase new Japanese textbooks, hire Japanese teachers, and have current teachers trained in the Japanese language. All of these changes required large amounts of labor and capital which many mission schools did not have.

In writing on the hardships facing schools at the time, many missionaries reference the need for more teachers for all classes but especially teachers of the Japanese language. Others wrote on the difficulties of obtaining textbooks licensed by the Government General. The requirements for teachers imposed by the Government General were quite strict, meaning more missionaries, and potential teachers, were also being turned away. Unsurprisingly many schools referenced struggling to find a suitable number of teachers such as in the province of Haiju, where “Two day schools which have been dropped because of lack of teachers.”<sup>113</sup> This was not an isolated incident. In 1914, a teacher in Ewha Haktang stated that “The demand for

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<sup>111</sup> Article IX, for example required schools to use “textbooks compiled by the Governor General or those recognized by him” while Article VI required that private schools adapt their curriculum to align with the Japanese standards for all other school types, and that “neither morals, nor the National Language (Japanese) should be omitted from among the subjects of study.” Regulations for Private Schools, 1911, Cited from Government General of Chosen Korean Bureau of Education; *Manual of Education in Chosen*, (Seoul, Chosen, Japan: 1920), Appendix 106-108.

<sup>112</sup> Chung, Henry; *The Case of Korea*, (New York, NY: 1921), 136.

<sup>113</sup> “Some Notes of Womens Evangelistic Work in the Methodist Mission” *Korea Mission Field*, (Seoul: October 1913), Vol. IX No. 10, 275.

Christian Teachers far outweighs the supply”.<sup>114</sup><sup>115</sup> Many other schools were forced to consolidate with others in order to overcome resource or staffing issues.<sup>116</sup>

In a different case, for a Presbyterian and Methodist school for the blind and deaf, missionary leaders made specific note of needing to overcome new Japanese language requirements in textbooks. They reached out to the Government General who promised textbooks in Japanese as needed by the school.<sup>117</sup> They would not however have provided textbooks for any subject pertaining to Korea, which where expensive for this school to procure as they needed to be embossed specifically for use by students who were blind. While supplying textbooks appears to show the Government General supporting a mission school, these textbooks served to teach the Korean people Japanese customs over their own, and were another way for Japanese authorities to exert control over these schools.

Finding teachers to teach Japanese was similarly difficult for schools, yet was a crucial requirement. One mission school described that “In order to meet the requirements in the teaching of Japanese, it has been necessary to resort to various expedients.”<sup>118</sup> The leaders of Pyengyang Academy expressed that they were lucky to find a teacher, as many less prominent

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<sup>114</sup> Haenig, Huldah A., “Satisfactions of Foreign Mission Work”, *Korea Mission Field*, (Seoul: March 1914), Vol. X No. 3, 62.

<sup>115</sup> Other accounts use rhetoric such as the “plea for teachers in primary schools”. Wagner, Ellasue, “Holston Institute Graduating Exercises”, *Korea Mission Field*, (Seoul: May 1914), Vol. X No. 5, 148.

<sup>116</sup> Explained in the continuation of the report on missions in 1913, missionaries wrote, “—In order to meet the educational requirements of to-day it has been considered wise to have fewer schools and to make those in the central places of a better grade. Hence in Pyengyang, the Ku Kol school has been united with our main school having an enrollment of 180 with 4 teachers. At Chinnampo, owing to necessary changes in the teaching force, the number of pupils in regular attendance is smaller than last year but the spirit of the school is excellent.” “Some Notes of Womens Evangelistic Work in the Methodist Mission North Cont.” *Korea Mission Field*, (Seoul: November 1913), Vol. IX No. 11, 293.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*, 294.

<sup>118</sup>As one of the most prominent schools in Korea however, they were lucky, and “For this school we fortunately secured a Korean young man of excellent character, the husband of one of our Union Academy graduates” *Ibid*, 293

mission schools were unable to do so. The teaching of Japanese was required to be taught in mission schools for the same number of hours as the common schools, displayed by the proposed curriculum for a summer program in 1914, where Japanese was to be taught from 11:20 -12:10 every day in a 3 and a half hour day of learning.<sup>119</sup> Finding a Japanese teacher who was eligible having “passed the examination for private school teachers” proved to be difficult, yet failure to offer Japanese language courses meant a mission school would risk forcible closure.<sup>120</sup>

In a self-fulfilling cycle, the appearance of many mission schools being closed was then used by the Government General to justify that mission schools were offering an inadequate education. In official reports, their closure was categorized as natural, evidence of their shortcomings, frequently citing that mission schools did not have sufficient funds without attempting to “plunder their neighbors through forced contribution”.<sup>121</sup> The image constructed of mission schools in the Government General’s reports was quite negative, which was then contrasted against the supposedly problem free common schools.

As of May 1915, there were 450 foreign owned mission schools operating in Korea.<sup>122</sup> It was announced that same year that in order to bring more unity to the education system private schools would all be subject to the same regulations as common schools as established

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<sup>119</sup>“Proposed Daily Schedule of Summer Language School”, *Korea Mission Field*, (Seoul: March 1914), Vol. X No. 3, 86.

<sup>120</sup> “Regulations for Private schools enacted October 20, 1911”, included in Government General of Chosen Korean Bureau of Education; *Manual of Education in Chosen*, (Seoul, Chosen, Japan: 1920), Appendix 108.

<sup>121</sup> Government General of Chosen Korean Bureau of Education; *Manual of Education in Chosen*, (Seoul, Chosen, Japan: 1920), 86.

<sup>122</sup> This was out of a total of 1268 total private schools in Korea. Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1914-1915)*, (Kiejo, Chosen: December 1915), 183, 166 (Table VII).

in the *Educational Ordinance of 1911*.<sup>123</sup> More alarming for mission schools though was the statement that “In such schools [private] no religious teaching is permitted to be included in their curricula nor religious ceremonies can be allowed to be performed.”<sup>124</sup> Since religious education was still allowed in Japan proper, this new restriction appeared to be a targeted attack by the Government General.<sup>125</sup> Most mission schools were given a ten-year grace period to adapt, but some schools such as the boy’s school at Syen Chyun and the Girls school at Soon Chon were closed immediately.<sup>126</sup>

This new regulation was explained to the Korean people as “natural”, an unsurprising step towards the standardization of the education system; part of coordinating the schools in Korea “to the prevailing system in Japan proper”.<sup>127</sup> Yet in 1916, upon travelling to both Japan and Korea, journalist Carl Crow remarked that “In ‘Japan Proper’ the public school system leaves undisturbed room for mission schools teaching Christianity.”<sup>128</sup> His conclusion, was that the regulations in Korea were unfair, and explanation for them were hypocritical. Closing mission schools, or at least eliminating an important religious aspect of them would be most

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<sup>123</sup> To justify a renewed push to standardized schools the Government General published “unification of national education in public as well as in all kinds of private schools, necessitated by the progress of the times”. Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1914-1915)*, (Kiejo, Chosen: December 1915), 159.

<sup>124</sup> Instructions concerning the revision and enforcement of the private school regulations, issued by the Government-General, March, 1915, Cited from Brown, Arthur J., “Japanese Nationalism and Mission Schools in Chosen” *International Review of Missions*, (January, 1917), 79.

<sup>125</sup> The statement of Japanese officials was that this was to coordinate the schools in Korea “to the prevailing system in Japan proper”, but the year 1916, journalist Carl Crow travelled to both Korea and Japan remarking that “In ‘Japan Proper’ the public school system leaves undisturbed room for mission schools teaching Christianity.” “Education in Chosen”, *Missionary Review of the World*, 1916, 143-144.

<sup>126</sup> Syen Chyun did not receive an operation permit on account of apparent technical difficulties while Girl’s School at Soon Chun received a notice stating that the school had “no intention of removing religion from the curriculum and making application to establish becomes clearly disobedience to the established law. Therefore, from this time on I am ordered to forbid instructions therein.” Brown, Arthur J., “Japanese Nationalism and Mission Schools in Chosen” *International Review of Missions*, (January, 1917), 80.

<sup>127</sup> “Education in Chosen”, *Missionary Review of the World*, 1916, 143.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.* 144

beneficial to the rule of the Government General over Korea as it could slow the spread of Christianity, which they believed to be a nationalizing force.

The critique propounded by Crow was not unknown to the Japanese Government General. In fact, before his article was even published, this issue was addressed by the Director of the Bureau of Foreign Affairs of the Government-General of Chosen, M. Komatsu. In his argument that different condition in Korea required different policies, he referenced that “in Japan proper a school which does not use the appellation of Chugakko (Middle School) is not required to exclude religion, but in Chosen any schools practically giving education of the middle school grade, no matter by what name they are called, are treated in the same way as other middle schools.”<sup>129</sup> He admitted that there were mission schools allowed in Japan that teach religious doctrines in school, however according to him they could not be considered formal middle schools, and argument over semantics. If his argument were to be believed at face value however, it would be surprising to discover that in the year 1915, some mission schools in Japan were granted “the privilege of calling their departments Chu Gakabu (Middle School Departments) instead of Futsu-bu (Ordinary Department) without surrendering the right to keep religious instruction as a part of the regular course.”<sup>130</sup> This was seen as an important step for missionaries in Japan who had believed that “schools supported by private funds and teaching up to the government standard should have the same privilege as public schools and at the same time be free to give religious instruction to their students.”<sup>131</sup> This privilege

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<sup>129</sup> Brown, Arthur J., *Japanese Nationalism and Mission Schools in Chosen*, 1917 Taken from Seoul Press November 25 1915

<sup>130</sup> “New Privilege to Mission Schools”, *Missionary Review of the World*, 1915, 703.

<sup>131</sup> Missionaries in Japan further believed that “Under the new regulation it will be possible to give religious instruction freely either as a part of the regular curriculum or outside it.” *Ibid*, 704.

extended to some mission schools merely a few months before Komatsu's proclamation undermines his main argument. This is just one example of many of regulations purported to be of utmost importance, yet in practice served as bureaucratic red tape.

While the new regulations placed on private schools in 1915 were explained primarily as unifying the curriculum, the new expectations went beyond classrooms. Not all religious schooling was done during school hours, missionaries led Sunday Schools, after school hours or on weekends. While officially, it would not be against the new law to teach students outside of the school, and would not conflict with a new standard curriculum, even this was forbidden. Towards this end, The Director of Home Affairs clarified to the Chief of the Police Department "If those hearing the [religious] lectures are certainly the students of the school, I judge it a thing to be forbidden, in that it would be difficult to distinguish this from the work of the school."<sup>132</sup> Under this ruling, no student that attended a mission school would be allowed to even attend religious lectures outside of school hours. Creating a unified curriculum was never the only intention of this new ordinance. Rather, forbidding religious teachings in school was meant to decrease the power of mission schools, decrease religious influence on children, and at the same time allow for action to be taken against any institutions that disobeyed.

This new *Ordinance for Private Schools* in 1915 additionally forced teachers to be more knowledgeable on subjects pertaining to Japan.<sup>133</sup> It was difficult for teachers to meet these requirements as recorded that in "the year under review (1915-1916) an examination for

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<sup>132</sup> Brown, Arthur J., *Japanese Nationalism and Mission Schools in Chosen*, 1917, 83.

<sup>133</sup> Teachers in all private schools were required to "be well versed in the national language" and "should pass the teachers' examinations held by the Provincial Governments." Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1914-1915)*, (Kiejo, Chosen: December 1915), 160.

teachers was held 15 times by provincial governments, at which 387 sat and 3 Japanese and 113 Koreans passed.”<sup>134</sup> Less than 50% of examinees passed, and the number of teachers that passed would not be enough to staff the 422 mission schools still remaining at this point in 1916.<sup>135</sup>

By May 1917 there were 350 mission schools remaining of the 806 just seven years prior.<sup>136</sup> Over the period of 8 years from 1911-1918, roughly 450 mission schools, more than 50%, were closed. Japanese sources attributed this to financial troubles, and the “natural result of the spread of common schools,” yet the founders of these schools painted a different picture.<sup>137</sup> By the end of the fiscal year in 1919 the closing of many mission schools had tracked Koreans into the Japanese run common schools, which had 556 schools open throughout the peninsula with plans to raise that to 870 by the end of the year.<sup>138</sup> The Government General had a clear plan to continue growing common schools, and promote standardization throughout the peninsula. Despite the fact that a large portion of these schools were actually for Japanese residents of Korea, the purported improvement of education was used to justify why the Japanese had colonized Korea in the first place while concurrently assisting them in cementing their colonization.

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<sup>134</sup> Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1915-1916)*, (Kiejo, Chosen: December 1916), 157.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 156.

<sup>136</sup> The Korean government in exile in Shanghai however would contend in 1919 that there were 360 left. The discrepancy in these numbers is still unclear. Government General of Chosen Korean Bureau of Education; *Manual of Education in Chosen*, (Seoul, Chosen, Japan: 1920), 90.

<sup>137</sup> Government General of Chosen Korean Bureau of Education; *Manual of Education in Chosen*, (Seoul, Chosen, Japan: 1920), 87.

<sup>138</sup> Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1918-1921)*, (Kiejo: December 1921), 80.

### **Chapter 3: Mission Schools and Common Schools in Curriculum and Practice:**

#### **The Nature of Mission Schools:**

The nature of Protestant mission schools in Korea was paradoxical. Their administrators were aiming almost exclusively to proselytize, yet they also happened to offer a perceived avenue of resistance to the Japanese. Mission schools were not homogenous, and varied in the courses that were offered and objectives proposed for students. Some differences can be attributed to divisions between Methodist and Presbyterian objectives, but some headmasters had specific visions for their schools, while others were subjected to more intense scrutiny from the Government General.

Mission schools in their early days targeted poor Korean families, especially orphans, for acceptance to their schools. They also provided opportunities for institutional education to Korean women, who had previously only had access to private tutors, meaning education was reserved only for the wealthy.<sup>139</sup> Pertaining to girls' schools for example, Horace Underwood wrote that, "While in the beginning only the children of the poorest, little starving waifs in the city, who were considered as useless, and who would otherwise have been sold as slaves, or cast out to beg or starve, could be obtained for our girls' schools".<sup>140</sup> Missionaries used education to offer a means of proselytization to Koreans that may be open to religious influence if it also meant educational opportunities. The Neo-Confucian system would have

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<sup>139</sup> Korean Women of the yangban class however had an important history of literacy and even authorship in the *hangul* script in Choson Korea. While this was the upper echelon of Korean women, there was a precedent for literate women in Korea, however opportunities would have been severely limited. For examples of Choson Women's literature see the autobiography of Queen Hyegyong in the early 1800s where she discusses how her sister learned to read and frequently wrote each other letters. Haboush, JaHyun Kim, and Dorothy Ko. *The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyong: The Autobiographical Writings of a Crown Princess of Eighteenth-Century Korea*. (University of California Press, 2013).

<sup>140</sup> Underwood, Horace G., *The Call of Korea*, (New York, Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1907), 117.



reinforced the class hierarchy, so lower classes of Koreans were also more likely to consider taking on an ideology that would compete with the dominant one.

Many missionaries in Korea did not profess to enjoy teaching, but rather saw it as a necessary sacrifice towards their goal of proselytization. Richard Baird, son of the aforementioned William Baird, described education as a “sort of football that was kicked around at every annual meeting,” further contending that “Its oversight was a burden no one wanted.”<sup>141</sup> He went on to claim that senior missionaries with the strongest command over the Korean language and culture would actually push the educational duties upon the newest missionary arrivals. As such religion was prioritized over an excellent education, yet the reality remained that such missionaries invested substantial time and financial commitments to opening schools that would educate Korean students.

### **Language:**

One of the most readily available tools that American missionaries had to offer Koreans was the English language, yet, Presbyterians were instructed not to teach it in school lest it provide too much opportunity to Korean students. Regarding English instruction, Presbyterian leaders decided at a conference in 1895 that “the Mission does not believe in Schools for the teaching of English---at least for themselves.”<sup>142</sup> Indeed, even one of the translators of the Old Testament of the Bible to *hangul* Korean, William Reynolds, stated that to teach Korean

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<sup>141</sup> Baird, William M. Baird of Korea; a profile. Cited from Matsutani, Motokazu. *Church over Nation: Christian Missionaries and Korean Christians in Colonial Korea*. Doctoral dissertation, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University 2012), 114.

<sup>142</sup> “Annual Meeting of The Presbyterian Mission, North,” *Korean Repository*, (November 1895):444. Cited in Matsutani, Motokazu. *Church over Nation: Christian Missionaries and Korean Christians in Colonial Korea*. Doctoral dissertation, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University 2012), 155.

students English and send them to be educated in the United states would cause a rift in the Korean Church that could impede proselytization.<sup>143</sup>

The alternative to teaching the English language however, was the teaching of Korean and promotion of literacy in the native script *hangul*. In teaching *hangul* then, Presbyterian missionaries provided culturally relevant instruction. Even if educational advancement was not the main goal, teaching native Korean literacy proved crucial for the primarily lower-class students that attended mission schools in the first decade of the 1900s. Such a strong focus on Korean would provide a strong contrast to the Japanese established common schools which focused more heavily on Japanese. More than just teaching the Korean language to students, mission schools promoted Korean publications. The Paejae school in Seoul, a Methodist institution, for example established a printing press with which Koreans could publish their own material. This was the printing press used by the Independence club and Baron Yun chi-ho, in publishing materials aimed at fostering a stronger sense of Korean nationalism.<sup>144</sup> Mission schools were paramount in increasing literacy in Korea in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, spreading instruction of *hangul*, the means to amplify Korean voices.

I have already discussed why the missionaries chose to use *hangul* in an effort to invite widespread appeal, but their promotion of the native Korean script is even more significant in its popularization. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century *hangul* was less prevalent and spurned by

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid, 156-7

<sup>144</sup> Some of the materials dealt first with a perceived lack of distinct nationalism in many Koreans, with a transition to the point that it was crucial that they develop a sense of national pride. This later, interestingly became tied to King Kojong, in a model of a seemingly Japanese style. Chandra, Vipin. "The Independence Club and Korea's First Proposal for a National Legislative Assembly." Occasional Papers on Korea, no. 4 (1975), 15-17.

the yangban as the script for women and lower classes, as it was easier to read.<sup>145</sup> Some historians at the time explained *hangul* in late Choson Korea as falling into a state of disrepair, and being relegated to women.<sup>146</sup> In their use of *hangul*, missionaries in many ways gave the historic script a shot of adrenaline which played a key role in its resurrection. After all, the time when missionaries focused on teaching *hangul* coincided with the time where it became significantly more popular.<sup>147</sup> As the preferred national script as of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, missionaries played a crucial role in revitalizing and disseminating the script that would become the national script of both North and South Korea, a script of which missionaries were the first teachers of.

Methodist institutions such as Paejae Haktang were more geared towards educational advancement for Koreans than many Presbyterian institutions. Methodists expressed that they cared more about education to provide opportunities for Korean students, and this was reflected in their institutions. In Methodist schools, missionaries sought to accomplish the goal of giving “Korean students thro[ugh] training in the curriculum of western science and literature, uniting with it the essential features of the native school system.”<sup>148</sup> Paejae Haktang as the foremost Methodist school in Korea garnered a reputation for creating opportunities for

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<sup>145</sup> Writing was done in the Chinese *Hanja*, in line with the Confucian values promoted by the Choson Dynasty. *hangul* which was used by women and the lower classes, was looked down upon as easier, and less valuable, even though it was a creation of the legendary King Sejong.

<sup>146</sup>Yang, Jinsuk. "A Historical Analysis of Language Policy and Language Ideology in the Early Twentieth Asia: A Case of Joseon, 1910–1945." *Language Policy* 16, no. 1 (2017), 62.

<sup>147</sup> For further discussion on importance of missionaries in the popularization of *hangul* see Park, who stated “In this sense the spread of *hangul* was inexorably tied with the expansion of Protestant Christianity.” Park, Yong-Shin, "The Church as a Public Space: Resources, Practices, and Communicative Culture in Korea.", *International Journal of Korean History* 11, (2007): 17-37.

<sup>148</sup> “Historical Sketch of the Korea Mission,” Korean Repository, (July 1898): Found in Matsutani, Motokazu. *Church over Nation: Christian Missionaries and Korean Christians in Colonial Korea*. Doctoral dissertation, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University 2012), 172.

students, forming a deal with the Korean government in 1895 to teach 200 officials in a western style education.<sup>149</sup> The school promoted literacy in Korean, Chinese and even Japanese, and invited the most prominent western educated Korean Christians such as the aforementioned Yun Chi-Ho to teach. Methodist education followed through on the promise to provide opportunities that Korean people could use, even if the goal of proselytization was still deeply intertwined with their education.

Presbyterians on the other hand did not allow educational opportunities to extend to non-Christians, allowing religious conversion to take precedence over educational opportunities.<sup>150</sup> Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Presbyterian educational institutions had not yet gained popularity among the larger Korean populace. Presbyterian and Methodist educational institutions alike at first suffered from a dearth of students and funding, largely as a result of the proselytization that occurred at these schools. Moreover, aside from eminent schools such as Paejae, it was unclear the sort of opportunities that students would have available post-graduation.<sup>151</sup>

Though there were clear differences in the benefits truly offered by the schools established by missionaries, it was the way in which Koreans could use them to work outside of

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<sup>149</sup> Matsutani, Motokazu. *Church over Nation: Christian Missionaries and Korean Christians in Colonial Korea*. Doctoral dissertation, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University 2012), 178.

<sup>150</sup> It is important however to note, that many later missionaries displayed a seemingly genuine interest in educating the Korean people for the future. Homer Hulbert for example wrote extensively on their importance of teaching Koreans to be lifelong learners and to adapt and think for themselves. There were missionaries who worked tirelessly towards providing a positive environment for Korean students to learn. Hulbert, Homer B. *A Comparative Grammar of the Korean Language and the Dravidian Languages of India*, by Homer B. Hulbert. No Place, Unknown, or Undetermined, 1905.

<sup>151</sup> It is contended that many missionaries were actually content to limit the opportunities of students as that would purportedly make it less likely the students would just use the school as a stepping stool and immediately forsake the religion. Matsutani, Motokazu. *Church over Nation: Christian Missionaries and Korean Christians in Colonial Korea*. Doctoral dissertation, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University 2012), 172.

the bounds of the Japanese that provided an invaluable service. Many students who graduated from a mission school emerged with revolutionary ideas. One such student An Ch'ang-ho went on to found his own school, the Taesŏng School which welcomed Christians and non-Christians alike. He sought to make his school a place for Korean nationalist education, centered at his hometown. While it is not certain that his Christian education was what spurred his revolutionary ideas, he was a professed Christian, and during Japanese occupation emerged strongly nationalistic. He went further to criticize the church in its non-action against the Japanese, which wrought great scorn from most American missionaries.

An Ch'ang-Ho was not the only Korean Christian to feel this way, developing nationalistic ideas through schooling at a mission school, yet emerging to criticize the Protestants schools for siding with the Japanese. Yun Chi-Ho even, while originally having expressed his faith in the mission schools as a crucial form of educational advancement for the Korean people, eventually withdrew his daughter from the mission school she attended. Mission schools were places where students could learn ideas that would lead them to be nationalistic, yet the mission schools themselves were not a force of resistance to Japan.

Schools were not the only platform that missionaries provided. The YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), funded by missionaries, and in some cases Japanese benefactors, offered a unique vehicle for Korean expression.<sup>152</sup> At its core, the YMCA was a religious organization, yet there was not close oversight by missionaries. Without a religious requirement, a broader base of Koreans who sought to hold functions and meetings with their countrymen and

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<sup>152</sup> Ito Hirubumi made donations of 10,000 Yen per year to the YMCA, during his time as Resident General. Matsutani, Motokazu. *Church over Nation: Christian Missionaries and Korean Christians in Colonial Korea*. Doctoral dissertation, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University 2012), 277.

countrywomen attended YMCA functions.<sup>153</sup> Through offering opportunities to hold events, and without a specific focus on proselytization the focus instead could be on community. In the past, a similar community, the Epworth League, had been closed down in that it became a nationalist center and for Koreans to mobilize against the Japanese.<sup>154</sup> Such was one of the effects of missionary work in Korea, even though many missionaries sought to curtail anti-Japanese activity, missionary education and missionary platforms helped foster a strong community among Koreans which could later be harnessed for tangible resistance.

In building community, and working to preserve Korean heritage, literacy was of crucial importance, and missionaries were crucial in spreading it. Despite missionary work being self-serving, mission schools offered educational opportunities to Koreans when opportunities on the peninsula were lacking. Language then was later crucial in mobilization for the March First Movement, and further strengthening of the Korean community. With a greater proportion of literacy came the ability to circulate fliers and publish stories that could aid in the preservation of Korean heritage.

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<sup>153</sup> One good example is Yi Sang-jae who converted to Christianity in prison, but grew disillusioned with the Church. He declined a position in the Church office to instead develop the YMCA as he saw it as a place where Korean children could receive a different form of education. Matsutani, Motokazu. *Church over Nation: Christian Missionaries and Korean Christians in Colonial Korea*. Doctoral dissertation, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University 2012), 278.

<sup>154</sup> In a section of her book titled *Love of Organization*, Anabel Nisbet stated "I have heard in the U. S. A. of a man who was "a jiner" because he loved to belong to societies. Now the Koreans are "jiners." The great objection to the church had always been the unpleasant insistence upon repentance and putting away certain sinful habits; but a new condition arose. The Y. M. C. A. had been founded in Seoul, and soon after, the Epworth League, in the Methodist Church, both of which had the customary provision for associate membership. The report now spread rapidly that one could belong to the church without the objectionable features, such as believing on Jesus and forsaking sin. As a result the Y. M. C. A. and Epworth League spread like wild fire among non-Christian villages, using their names, constitution, and by-laws until prohibited by the respective organizations." Nisbet, Anabel Major, *Day In and Day Out in Korea*, (Richmond, Virginia: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1920), 93.

### **Women's Education:**

In the missionary attempts to recruit women, viewing them as both in need of educational opportunities and as the future teachers of their children, they provided opportunities that were unprecedented in Korea for the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As aforementioned, missionaries did not understand the cultural attitude of the Koreans, assuming that all women were oppressed and destitute, yet in acting on this assumption they established schools with which women were able to achieve literacy and gain new opportunities in society. The most notable school was Ewha Haktang (Ewha Girl's School) established by Mary Scranton, which started with just one student but eventually grew to thousands.<sup>155</sup> They offered classes in music, literature, and home economics; topics considered by Protestant missionaries as suitable for women.<sup>156</sup>

Many women attending Ewha university felt as though there were limited opportunities post-graduation, a symptom of the norms imposed upon women at the time, compounded by the Japanese occupation. Under the Japanese occupation (1910-1945) there was a dearth of opportunities for all mission school graduates, especially women. Even without occupation however, the subjects offered for study were insubstantial to create opportunities for women in the way purported by the Protestant missionaries. In reality, classes such as home economics only sought to reinforce the idea that women would be confined to the home managing domestic affairs. Otherwise, the main occupations open to mission school graduates

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<sup>155</sup> The first student in Ewha Haktang was reportedly a young prostitute. Indeed however, Ewha is one of the leading educational institutions in Korea today. Thomas, Murray R, *Schooling in East Asia: Forces of Change*, (Oxford: Pergamon, 1983), 15.

<sup>156</sup> Park, Jihang. "Trailblazers in a Traditional World: Korea's First Women College Graduates, 1910-45." (1990), 539.

were teaching and medical work. These were in fact sought after jobs, but took many years to reach proficiency, and thus many women at the time chose marriage over such lengthy pursuits. Missionaries took notice of this. Published in the *Korea Mission Field* in 1906, was the story of a Korean woman who reportedly went to great pains to convince parents to send their children to Ewha Haktang stating, "I lost the opportunity of going there because I was married too young and I do not want these girls to lose their opportunity."<sup>157</sup> Some Korean women may have indeed agreed with her, but that does not mean cultural norms were so easily changed as missionaries may have hoped.

Yet, to use a cliché, this was the first step in a longer journey. Missionary schools for women were a crucial step in providing widespread literacy and an expanded track for economic independence. While norms would have impeded the goals of mission schools for girls, the reverse was also true, with new opportunities beginning to chip away at norms that had for hundreds of years stood as barriers to literacy.

It may seem that in my argument I am contradicting myself in highlighting the lack of understanding missionaries showed to Korean norms while simultaneously implying that they were harmful to women. While, I certainly do not condone the missionary idea of civilizing the natives, by providing educational opportunities that women could choose to take advantage of missionaries facilitated a crucial step in the development of more widespread literacy and education in Korea. A key element then is choice. Missionaries provided the opportunity which gave many Korean women the option to attend, an option that most did not have before. This is a crucial element to my argument of the positive aspects of mission schools in Korea, the fact

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 238.



that it was voluntary. Missionaries therefore never deprived Koreans of their agency, and were not conducting a violent assimilation, even if there was violence implicit in many of their ideas. On the contrary in fact, it was the Japanese established common schools that were at one point mandatory.

Primary schools indeed grew in popularity and offered an essential first step for many Koreans. Female missionaries even opened small girls' schools in rural areas, some which served no more than ten pupils.<sup>158</sup> As a whole, mission schools in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century served as the first opportunity that most Korean women had for a formal education, and in that sense provided an important service.

#### **Higher Education offered through Mission schools:**

In discussing educational facilities established by missionaries Ewha University looms large, in reputation and legacy. In 1910, fourteen years before the establishment of the first state sponsored college for Koreans, Ewha was providing college level courses, and graduated its first class in 1914.<sup>159</sup> Ewha was actually one of a handful of Protestant schools which offered college courses in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although it stands out in offering education exclusively to females. Between 1902 and 1910 six Protestant schools began teaching college courses; Union Methodist Seminary, Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Sungshil Academy, Yon-Hee College, Union Christian College, and Ewha College for Women.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup>One teacher from Chunju wrote, "We have an enrollment of nine girls with an average attendance of 7.8+." "From Chunju Ms. Tate Writes". *Korean Mission Field*. Vol. I No. 2. (Seoul: Korea, February, 1902.), 24.

<sup>159</sup> Underwood, Horace H., *Modern Education in Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926), 143.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

These were the first institutions to offer higher educational opportunities for Koreans on the Korean peninsula, and the only ones for their time.

These colleges offered opportunities, but tracked students into specific jobs such as teacher, religious leader and doctor/nurse. Two of the aforementioned six institutions were seminaries with a religious focus. In reality, for all Korean graduates from any institution, it would have been difficult to find a job in the Japanese administration due to racial prejudice, which was only made worse by the Government General's refusal to acknowledge such institutions. Nonetheless, a college education opened some doors for Korean attendees and provided a strong knowledge base that was not yet coming from the Japanese.

It is in legacy where these universities won out, as they are still prominent long after the Japanese occupation has ended in Korea. Ewha Women's University today is ranked in the top 10 for Korean Universities, and is one of the largest solely women's university in the world providing instruction for roughly 22,000 students.<sup>161</sup> In providing higher education opportunities, even when they did not provide the platform purported by missionaries during the Japanese occupation, they established a strong foundation that South Koreans built upon in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Common Schools, and the Imported Japanese School Structure:**

Just like mission schools, the Japanese common schools sought to impart a set of beliefs upon Korean children, yet they had the backing of the Japanese Government and military. As early as 1907, the Japanese colonial government began establishing first primary and then

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<sup>161</sup> Collier, Sabrina, "Top 10 Universities in South Korea 2019" QS Quacquarelli Symonds Limited 1994 – 2021, April 19, 2021. <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings-articles/asian-university-rankings/top-10-universities-south-korea-2019>

secondary institutions for Korean students. These institutions too served a population that might not otherwise all have been afforded educational opportunities, yet insidiously sought to Japanize the Korean students and were unabashedly a tool of assimilation used to prolong the occupational regime.

By the year 1907 there were 50 primary common schools established for Korean students by the Residency General. They employed 224 teachers and accommodated 4,615 students, all males.<sup>162</sup> The number of primary common schools continued to grow, but it was not until formal annexation that they began to proliferate more rapidly. Between 1910 and 1911, the number of schools more than doubled from 101 to 235 primary common schools, which served 28,608 pupils, also doubling from 14,232 in the year prior.<sup>163</sup> By 1918 there were 450 common primary schools serving 87,379 Korean students, at this point surpassing mission schools.<sup>164</sup> It was still not enough schools to reach the entire Korean population, and only offered primary education without a clear path to secondary or higher institutions, of which only existed in a limited fashion.

Primary schools could provide the benefit for the occupying government of teaching Japanese language and morals, but aimed to not teach such a comprehensive curriculum that Korean children would question the nature of the Japanese occupation. Such a limiting closely mirrors Presbyterian ideals, in providing an education that imparted a specific idea, but did not empower Korea students in a way where they would forsake the educational institution. Primary school then prepared students to work in agricultural, or industrial fields, jobs that

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<sup>162</sup> Underwood, Horace H., *Modern Education in Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926), 248.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid*, 248.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid*, 248.

would add economic benefits to the Japanese, but not create an educated population vying for jobs, or worse, out protesting.<sup>165</sup> While the latter happened anyway, it was not due primarily to ideas learned in the common school system, rather in part due to the clear limitations of such schools.

Regarding what was termed by Koreans “limited education”, some of the schools established by the Government General were industrial schools and agricultural schools.<sup>166</sup> Such institutions more specifically focused on teaching the skills implied by the institutions’ titles, meaning even less time could be spared to learning elements of Korean culture, and other subjects save the national language. For agricultural schools for example the curriculum “required two years and its curriculum consisted of the outlines of agriculture, agrarian-politics, soil and manure, horticulture, zootechnics, plant-pathology, forestry, silviculture, veterinary medicine, etc., besides physics, chemistry, botany and natural science.”<sup>167</sup> Such coursework taught students to be most productive in farming, but did not prepare them for secondary school. Industrial schools taught a curriculum of various industrial techniques prefaced by the assertion that “In past ages Korea reached an advanced stage in various arts and industries, so that the Japanese obtained from her the arts of weaving, ceramics, metal-casting, architecture, etc. Since mediaeval days, however, Korean industry has been on the decline, and to day it is in

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<sup>165</sup> It was explained by the Japanese Governor General at the time Teruchi Masatake, that “The [intellectual] capacity of the Koreans is not at the level where they can be taught refined arts and sciences. Therefore we should concentrate on producing able workers through common education.... Vocational knowledge should be taught foremost in common school education.” Takahashi Hamakichi, *Chosen kyoikushi ko* [History of Education in Chosun] (Keijo: Teikoku chiho gyoseigakkai chosun honbu, 1927), 365. Cited from Pak, Soon-Yong, and Hwang, Keumjoong. "Assimilation and Segregation of Imperial Subjects." *Paedagogica Historica* 47, no. 3 (2011), 381.

<sup>166</sup> It was the signers of the Declaration of Independence in the March First Movement that would deem it “limited education”

<sup>167</sup> Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1911-1912)*, (Kiejo, Chosen: December 1912), 226.

a state of decay.”<sup>168</sup> Again, Japan positioned themselves as the saviors of a purportedly morally and economically decaying Korea, this time training Koreans to work in industrial fields that would put profit in Japan’s coffers.

The curriculum taught in common schools for Korean students was standardized by the Japanese government so as to assure that students were learning Japanese cultural history concurrently with the National Language. According to the *Educational Ordinance of 1911*, out of a total of 26 hours of instruction per week for students in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 10 hours were devoted to the National Language of Japanese.<sup>169</sup> Indeed, this was 38.4% of all instructional time. Korean language and Chinese literature were then combined for a total of 6 hours per week. Not only were significantly less hours devoted to the teaching of the Korean language, it was also done in the traditional Chinese characters of *hanja* or a mixed script of *hangul* and *hanja*, with scant time devoted just to *hangul*. *Hanja* was a more difficult script requiring countless hours of memorization to master, and one that shared characters with the Japanese language in the form of Kanji. *Hanja*, while also culturally valued in Korea, did not allow for the same freedom of communication that *hangul* did. The use of a mixed script too primed students to learn the counterpart of Japanese which was a mix of Kana and Kanji characters. Historically the focus on Chinese characters had made language inaccessible for the great deal of peasants not wealthy enough to afford education, thus its continuation in Japanese schools did less to promote literacy than the missionary use of *hangul*.

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 226-7.

<sup>169</sup> “Regulations for Private Schools”, 1911, Cited from Government General of Chosen Korean Bureau of Education; *Manual of Education in Chosen*, (Seoul, Chosen, Japan: 1920), Appendix 106-108.

In attempting to foster Japanese nationalism, one class each week which was mandatory was morals, which was required to be taught for an hour each week.<sup>170</sup> Morals was of such importance that it was one of the courses missionary schools were required to offer in the regulations for private schools. Morals was primarily about Japanese culture, and instilling loyalty to the Emperor, especially through the telling of folk and cultural tales. Regarding morals, Horace H. Underwood explained that:

It is embellished with moral tales of model individuals who have died or suffered for parents, feudal lords and others in authority, of great scholars and the like. The instruction is formal in the extreme and the results are probably as great, and no greater than those secured by the writing out of copy book maxims. It probably plays its part in cultivating the Japanese idea that loyalty to the emperor is the virtue to be developed above all others, and if necessary, at the expense of the others.<sup>171</sup>

Morals, was not a class unique to the Korean peninsula. It was a class taught in the school system of Japan as well, one seen as crucial to fostering Kokutai (国体), which could loosely translate to a national identity constructed around Japanese language and culture, along with, crucially, reverence to the emperor. Japanese public schools taught students to revere the Emperor, projecting that it was the emperor who should be credited with establishing universal compulsory education in the first place.<sup>172</sup> The same belief was applied to the Korean peninsula, making the assumption that Korean students were now subjects of the Japanese Empire, an identity they should take pride in. As such they were expected to show gratitude to the Japanese Emperor for bestowing education upon them, and take pride in Japanese institutions. Common schools were overflowing with the teaching of a positive Japanese

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<sup>170</sup> "Regulations for Private Schools", 1911, Cited from Government General of Chosen Korean Bureau of Education; *Manual of Education in Chosen*, (Seoul, Chosen, Japan: 1920), Appendix 106-108.

<sup>171</sup> Underwood, Horace H., *Modern Education in Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926), 224.

<sup>172</sup> This was reinforced in the Imperial Rescript on Education read by the Meiji Emperor. "The Imperial Rescript on Education" (October 30, 1890).

heritage, juxtaposing the new Japanese values against the image of the old way of the Korean peninsula pre-annexation.<sup>173</sup>

Students were served a large dose of Japanese language and morals, and a smaller dose of Korean language. The remaining 9 hours, after accounting for Japanese language, Korean and Chinese classics, and morals, were occupied by arithmetic and manual labor for boys, and sewing and handicrafts for girls. Such an education for Korean students was arguably more beneficial than none at all, but the common school system prepared students to love Japan above all else. Moreover, since the Government General set about limiting private schools, mission schools especially, common schools became in some cases the only option for Korean students. Despite this, in the first decade of Japanese occupation, there were not enough opportunities in common schools for all the school age Korean students.

The other catch was that these new Japanese common schools required a certain proportion of Japanese teachers. While it was explained that there were not enough well-trained Korean teachers, opting for Japanese teachers meant that the school could be stricter in implementing the National Language, and better assure that Korea was portrayed in a disparaging light. Japanese teachers were furthermore expected to wear traditional swords, an ornament that evoked cultural implications, but also inspired fear.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> A good example, is the story of C. Pak, who grew up reading Japanese novels and speaking Japanese, specifically mentioning Japanese author Kikuchi Kan. When interviewed, she stated that "I think I was brainwashed to identify with them. Oh, this mind game is truly terrifying, it is so effective. I knew so little about my own country. Hildi, Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*. (Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 2001), 44-45.

<sup>174</sup> Pak, Soon-Yong, and Hwang, Keumjoong. "Assimilation and Segregation of Imperial Subjects." *Paedagogica Historica* 47, no. 3 (2011), 381.

Hiring more Japanese teachers than Koreans again limited the opportunities for Korean students themselves, in available jobs post-graduation. The Government General in the Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in the first year of annexation spoke of Japanese teachers favorably, stating about private schools that “since they could not be abolished at once, some of, them were improved by appointing capable Japanese instructors, and others were gradually replaced with new common schools.”<sup>175</sup> Japanese teachers, like Japanese schools were likened to progress and modernization, while Korean teachers and Korean schools were disparaged as out of date and insufficient.

### **A Segregated School System:**

While the schools for Koreans in Korea in the first decades of Japanese rule were only sufficient to serve a small percentage of school age students, there were enough schools for Japanese families residing on the Korean peninsula. As of 1908, there were 54 primary schools for Japanese students serving 7,427 students. This number grew substantially over the next decade, and while not as rapidly as the number of schools for Korean students, the percentage of school age Japanese students able to attend primary school was always significantly higher. Moreover, despite needing substantial growth in schools for Koreans in order to serve more of the population, an unequally large portion of the Japanese budget for schools in Korea was allocated to the Japanese schools. For example, in the year 1914 out of 871,080 Yen allotted for subsidies, 326,710 Yen, or 37.5% went to the schools for Japanese students, with similar

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<sup>175</sup> Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1910-1911)*, (Kiejo, Chosen: December 1911), 223.



numbers every year from 1910-1919.<sup>176</sup> Considering that in that same year, 1914, there were a total of 264 elementary schools attended by a total of 291,217 Japanese on the Korean peninsula, when compared to the 381 for the 15,620,720 Koreans, the disparity between opportunities for Koreans and Japanese in Korea was glaring.<sup>177</sup> The Japanese population which was roughly 1/53<sup>rd</sup> the population of Koreans (albeit less of this population school age children) was allotted more than 1/3 of the budget, and about 40% of the total number of educational institutions.<sup>178</sup> The disproportionate segregation ingrained within the common school system displayed that the government general valued the education of Japanese students above the education of Koreans.

This segregation extended through all levels of the Government established education, but especially to higher institutions, reinforcing the Government General's desire to limit the full knowledge taught to Koreans to that of primary school and industrial education. At the secondary level, Japanese access to secondary schools was practically equal in terms of actual opportunities to that of Korean students despite the obvious disparity in populations. In the year 1915 there were two higher schools for Japanese and two for Koreans. Considering the number of Japanese students was substantially smaller, opportunities were ultra-competitive for Koreans, when they could be more-or-less expected for Japanese. Above the secondary school level, there was not a university sponsored by the government General which would take Korean students until Kiejo (The Japanese name for Seoul) University in 1924, which still

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<sup>176</sup> Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1914-1915)*, (Kiejo: December 1915), 171.

<sup>177</sup> Numbers were actually recorded by the Government General. Underwood, Horace H., *Modern Education in Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926), 231.

<sup>178</sup> The statistics may seem skewed, since many Japanese residents of the Korean peninsula were adults without children. However, these are the best numbers available to me.

catered more to Japanese students and had an entrance exam entirely in Japanese.<sup>179</sup> Even after Kiejo University's establishment, the most viable way for Korean students to seek university education was in Japan which also meant facing prejudice, and forcing students to master the Japanese language and further integrate into Japanese society.

### **Textbooks used:**

To facilitate instruction in the National Language, the Government General oversaw the publication of new textbooks in 1911, claiming that they were updating the outdated Korean textbooks.<sup>180</sup> All textbooks not created or sanctioned by the Government General were banned. Japanese produced textbooks, aside from being written in Japanese, included Japanese history and culture and omitted Korean history. For common school students, the history and geography of Korea was included in their own language instruction, which as aforementioned was taught for significantly less time than that of Japanese.<sup>181</sup> As students advanced in grade, the textbooks were adapted alongside them. By level 7 and 8 of the Japanese Language textbooks for Koreans, the text was written almost purely in the *kana* form, and heavier than the textbooks for Japanese students themselves so as to provide more examples and practice.

Protestant Mission schools were allowed a modicum of leeway in their textbook requirements compared to other private schools, but still faced immense scrutiny. As mission schools taught primarily in Korean or English as opposed to the National Language there was an inevitable clash. In regard to textbooks this included stricter enforcement of National Language

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<sup>179</sup> For example in the year 1934, only 32% of the total 930 students who had ever attended were Korean. Pak, Soon-Yong, and Hwang, Keumjoong. "Assimilation and Segregation of Imperial Subjects." *Paedagogica Historica* 47, no. 3 (2011), 382.

<sup>180</sup> Government General of Chosen Korean Bureau of Education; *Manual of Education in Chosen*, (Seoul, Chosen, Japan: 1920).

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid*, 99.

textbooks in schools, after submitting them for consideration would be allowed to keep their textbooks. It was mandated however that “In the case other books are used, approval of the Government General must first be obtained.”<sup>182</sup> To gain this approval meant that schools had to work closely with the Government General and the process was quite strict. Accordingly, “In giving approval the contents of books are closely examined and books containing in whatever degree objectionable material, words or phrases are prohibited use by the schools.”<sup>183</sup> What was considered objectionable could easily range from calling Heaven the Kingdom of God, to speaking too favorably of Korean History.

Textbooks created by the Government General were steeped in pro-Japanese propaganda, unquestionably tools of acculturation. Perhaps the most telling of the textbooks published were those made for the purposes of “outside reading”. Topics for suggested outside reading included, *Describing the Imperial Household, Polity of the Empire of Japan, Geography, History, Customs and Habits of Japan, Matters Helpful to the Promotion of Self-Conception of Japanese, Matters Aiming at the Friendship Between Japanese and Koreans, and Matters Describing Habits and Customs of Korea*, along with books aimed at children, about *Korean Folklore* and *Soa Huapyon* a pictorial book for children before school age.<sup>184</sup> Despite being explained as intended for home reading, the subject matter of these books were all aimed at teaching the Korean people how to better assimilate into the Japanese Empire.

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<sup>182</sup> Government General of Chosen Korean Bureau of Education; *Manual of Education in Chosen*, (Seoul, Chosen, Japan: 1920), 104.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, 104.

<sup>184</sup> Government General of Chosen Korean Bureau of Education; *Manual of Education in Chosen*, (Seoul, Chosen, Japan: 1920),102.

## Chapter 4: The March First Movement and Aftermath:

### **The March First Movement:**

The discussion so far has centered largely around policy in the first 10 years after formal annexation, as in the year 1919 an event occurred which would cause profound changes in both the education system and the occupational regime at large. Spurred on by the death of King Kojong and President Wilson's calls for self-determination following WW1, many Koreans began to vociferously push for independence from Japan in what would culminate in the March First Movement.<sup>185</sup> The Korean organizers of this movement intended it to be non-violent in order to attract positive international attention, and Koreans gathered in the streets in large demonstrations, marching and yelling "Mansai".<sup>186</sup> The Japanese response was brutal; many demonstrators were savagely beaten or killed by the occupying soldiers in a grotesque abuse of power.

Koreans living in China who had established a provisional government headed by Syngman Rhee, sent Kim Kyu-Shik as a representative to the Versailles conference to appeal for independence.<sup>187</sup> Kim Kyu-Shik carried with him the Korean Declaration of Independence which among numerous complaints of the oppression Koreans faced at the hands of Japan, decried the Japanese common school system for disparaging Korean heritage and forcing Korean children to forsake their own language to learn Japanese.<sup>188</sup> He also brought petitions

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<sup>185</sup> While it is likely that King Kojong was poisoned by Japanese assassins, it probably unknown to many Korean people. Rather, they viewed his death as a final protest to his son being forced to marry a Japanese Princess.

<sup>186</sup> Mansai is the same as the Japanese Bansai, and roughly translates to "Long Live" or "Viva".

<sup>187</sup> It is also worth noting that Syngman Rhee was another Protestant who had been educated in America. He was installed as the president of the Republic of Korea in 1948. Savage, Timothy, "The American Response to the Korean Independence Movement, 1910-1945." Korean Studies 20 (University of Hawaii Press: 1996), 195.

<sup>188</sup> In the Korean Declaration of Independence one line reads, "to single out specially the teachers in the schools or the Government officials who treat the heritage of our ancestors as a colony of their own, and our people and our

listing the grievances Japan had committed, many of which reinforced that the common school system was a tool to indoctrinate the Korean people, and restricted further educational opportunities for them in an attempt to avoid rebellion.<sup>189</sup><sup>190</sup> In this memorandum, it was surmised that “This same policy also explains the forcible suppression of 360 Christian schools and hundreds of other private institutions in Korea” professing their belief that the Japanese had forcefully suppressed mission schools to limit educational opportunities for Koreans.<sup>191</sup> Korean were not unaware that Japanese schools were insubstantial and in many ways destructive to Korean heritage, while the alternative, mission schools, were being forcibly closed.

From inside Korea, the March First Movement had been fueled in large part by Korean Christians especially those from the North.<sup>192</sup><sup>193</sup> Many Japanese officials blamed missionaries,

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civilization as a nation of savages.” “Declaration of Independence”, Cited from Chung, Henry; *The Case of Korea*, (New York, NY: 1921), 200-201.

<sup>189</sup>Grievance #7 on this petition essentially stated that the Japanese actually blocked Korean learning past a certain point so as to make it easier to control them, while prohibiting and Koreans to travel abroad to supplement this education with the only exception being Japan. Kimm, J Kiusic S. "Korean Delegation: The Claim of the Korean People and Nation, for Liberation from Japan and for the 'Reconstitution of Korea as an Independent State" – Petition Paris: April. 1919, Documents from the Korean provisional government included in Carlton, Waldo Kendall, *The Truth About Korea* (San Francisco, CA: The Korean National Association, 1919), 80.

<sup>190</sup> Leaders of the Korean independence movement listed in a memorandum concerning grievances committed by Japan that “An educated Korean, however, is a unit of protest and resistance against Japanese tyranny in Korea.” Korean Delegation, “THE CLAIM OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE AND NATION FOR LIBERATION FROM JAPAN AND FOR THE RECONSTITUTION OF KOREA AS AN INDEPENDENT STATE” 1919. Documents from the Korean provisional government included in Carlton, Waldo Kendall, *The Truth About Korea* (San Francisco, CA: The Korean National Association, 1919), 80.

<sup>191</sup> Grievance #9 from the petition stated that “ Every effort is made by the Japanese authorities—particularly through their police agents—to discourage and obstruct Christian missionary work in Korea” Kimm, J Kiusic S. "Korean Delegation: The Claim of the Korean People and Nation, for Liberation from Japan and for the 'Reconstitution of Korea as an Independent State" – Petition Paris: April. 1919. Included in Carlton Waldo Kendall, *The Truth About Korea* (San Francisco, CA: The Korean National Association, 1919), 63.

<sup>192</sup> Of these leaders were Pastor Kil Son-ju, the foremost Presbyterian minister in Pyongyang who had helped lead the Great Pyongyang Revival of 1907, and Yi Sang-Jai a prominent leader within the Y.M.C.A in Korea. Chung, Henry; *The Case of Korea*, (New York, NY: 1921), 198-199.

<sup>193</sup> Out of the 33 signers of the Korean Declaration of Independence, 16 identified as Christian, and of these Christians 11 of them were ordained ministers, graduates of Missionary run Theological Seminaries. Clark, Donald

who were subsequently attacked by Japanese newspapers for fomenting revolutionary ideas. Missionaries were questioned about inciting this movement, with Japanese media putting forth that they were the root cause, citing prior events such as missionary outcry over the arrests at Syen Chun less than a decade prior as a way to prove that missionaries were not aligned with the Government General. Japanese newspapers attacked the character of missionaries, and questioned the motives of their work. One such publication, the *Chosen Shimbun* went as far as to say about mission schools, that “this is the center of the present Korean uprising. We feel certain it is in the church schools—a certain college and a certain girl’s school in a certain compound of these foreigners.”<sup>194</sup> Likely referring to Ewha Girls school, the Japanese run media was quick to place the blame on mission schools in order to more easily project the narrative that these protests were caused by foreign influence rather than pervasive issues within the colonial regime. Furthermore, blaming mission schools would serve to undermine their power and give more justifiable cause for action to be taken against them by the Japanese government.

Some missionaries faced physical violence for their perceived role in inciting the rebellion. There were tales of missionary women being assaulted, and the story of Rev. John Thomas being beaten so badly that the Japanese government paid him a settlement of 5,000 Yen.<sup>195</sup> With threats looming over most missionary activity, there was scant participation by American missionaries in the movement itself. While missionaries were aware of the

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N. "‘Surely God Will Work Out Their Salvation:’ Protestant Missionaries in the March First Movement." (University of Hawaii Press: 1989), 53-54.

<sup>194</sup> *Chosen Shimbun* cited from Clark, Donald N. "‘Surely God Will Work Out Their Salvation:’ Protestant Missionaries in the March First Movement." (University of Hawaii Press: 1989), 54.

<sup>195</sup> Chung, Henry; *The Case of Korea*, (New York, NY: 1921), 185.

movement and did not alert the Japanese, other teachers tried to prevent their students from taking part in the demonstrations, such as Lulu Frey, the principal of Ewha girls school who barred the gate to keep her students inside only to have them climb over the gate and join the demonstrations anyway.<sup>196</sup> Far from stirring up the March First Movement, many missionaries put forth that they cared more about keeping their students safe than about the success of the anti-colonial movement.

One immediate effect of the March First Movement was the closing of both common and private schools in urban areas for the first few days of the demonstrations. The effects in rural areas, especially the north, were much more dire. Since they were seen as instigators in this conflict, many churches and schools were burned down. The destruction wrought in the north was indicative of the beliefs held by the soldiers that Christians were to blame. By the end of the movement, 47 churches and two schools were burned down in response to Christians' role in leading the movement.<sup>197</sup>

Although the damage was blamed on the Koreans themselves, it was Protestant missionaries who brought the true story to the attention of international media, one that was much more damaging to the international image of the Japanese. The horrific stories of atrocities expressed by missionaries, often accompanied by images such as the famous pictures of the rubble of Su-Chon provided evidence of the atrocities being committed by the Japanese

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<sup>196</sup> Clark, Donald N. "Surely God Will Work Out Their Salvation:" Protestant Missionaries in the March First Movement." (University of Hawaii Press: 1989), 56.

<sup>197</sup> While the Japanese sources stated that 47 Churches and two schools had been burned, an official statement from Japan in April stated that "the charge that churches, schools, and houses of riotous meetings were destroyed by the authorities is entirely unfounded" and blamed the Korean rioters for the destruction instead. *The New York Times*, April 25, 1919.

in Korea.<sup>198</sup> Not only were their stories different from the Japanese narrative, but they were exceptionally brutal. Most notoriously, a group of Americans including Rev. Underwood saw the ruins of a burned church in Che'am-Ni, and heard the story of all the Christian and Cheondogyo members of the village being rounded up, locked in the church, shot and bayoneted, and then subsequently burned alive.<sup>199</sup> According to reports from the villagers, thirty men were killed this way, along with two women who fought back when they realized what was happening.<sup>200</sup> When these missionaries returned to Seoul they spread this knowledge to American media sources, and sent photographers to investigate, who spoke with villagers and photographed the destruction. These photographs along with the stories of the massacre caused an outcry from Americans, especially Protestants who saw this as another religious persecution.

Foreign media decried the violent massacre of civilians. Reverend Pieters from Japan published an article titled "The Moral Failure of Japan in Korea – Responsibility of the Japanese Government and Nation" stating regarding the action of the Japanese soldiers that:

The " capacity for moral indignation " is lacking, and hence, it is a matter of no concern to the Japanese that unarmed Koreans are shot, bayoneted and burned by men in the uniform of the Empire. Do not the Japanese people see that such things inevitably affect the worlds judgement of them?<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> One missionary arrived at Su-Chon to find the town largely devastated by a fire. His report from the Koreans of the village was that "On April 6, before daybreak, while all were sleeping, some soldiers had entered the village and had gone from house to house firing the thatched roofs, which quickly caught and destroyed the houses. The people rushed out and found the whole village blazing. Some tried to put out the fire, but were soon stopped by the soldiers who shot at them, stabbed them with their bayonets or beat them. They were compelled to stand by and watch their village burn to ashes." Chung, Henry; *The Case of Korea*, (New York, NY: 1921), 236.

<sup>199</sup> Clark, Donald N. ""Surely God Will Work Out Their Salvation:" Protestant Missionaries in the March First Movement."(University of Hawaii Press: 1989), 57.

<sup>200</sup> Carlton Waldo Kendall, *The Truth About Korea* (San Francisco, CA: The Korean National Association, 1919), 45.

<sup>201</sup> Pieters, Albertus, "The Moral Failure of Japan in Korea – Responsibility of the Japanese Government and Nation", *The Shanghai Gazette*, June 5, 1919.



Again, reference was made to Japan's international standing. Missionaries published information of the atrocities committed in the March First Movement on the world stage, forcing Japan to lose face if it did not respond.<sup>202</sup>

Although ultimately Koreans did not achieve independence in 1919, Japan needed to respond in some way to the concerns of the Korean populous, deciding to put educational reform on the forefront of their proposed solution. Many of the prior restrictions on mission schools were lifted, and they were given official recognition by the new Governor General Admiral Saito Makoto (1919-27 and 1929-31).<sup>203</sup> In 1920, the *Regulations for Private Schools* added supplementary rules making it easier to employ Korean teachers, while abrogating the 1915 law forbidding the teaching of the Bible in schools.<sup>204</sup> With greater autonomy over their curriculums and teachers, mission schools were renewed in their ability to teach the curriculum missionaries desired. Coupled with the belief that missionaries had aided in the March First Movement which caused a resurgence in mission school attendance, mission schools rose like a phoenix from the ashes of the March First Movement.

While mission schools experienced a new sense of freedom, they were still carefully monitored, and missionaries needed to refrain from carrying out any actions that could be seen as subversive to Japan. During the March First Movement, multiple American missionaries had been convicted of crimes, and most notably Protestant Reverend, Eli Mowry, was sentenced to

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<sup>202</sup> Not every American politician acted on such information, but notably Nebraskan Senator George W. Norris used the example of Japanese massacring Koreans in Churches to argue against the United States joining the League of Nations. Caprio, Mark E. *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*. (Seattle; London: University of Washington Press, 2009), 113.

<sup>203</sup> Clark, Donald N. "'Surely God Will Work Out Their Salvation:' Protestant Missionaries in the March First Movement." (University of Hawaii Press: 1989), 66.

<sup>204</sup> *Regulations for Private Schools, 1911*, Cited from Government General of Chosen Korean Bureau of Education; *Manual of Education in Chosen*, (Seoul, Chosen, Japan: 1920), Appendix 111.

six months of labor for supposedly sheltering his Korean students who took part in the demonstrations.<sup>205</sup> While this sentence was reduced after subsequent appeals it displayed to missionaries that they were still in danger, and to the Korean people that there were missionaries who had been willing to sacrifice their personal well-being to protect demonstrators.

The case of Eli Mowery was important in that it affirmed that missionaries were no longer protected by extraterritoriality. While this reality was never formally expressed by the Japanese authorities, the loss of this privilege made missionaries more exposed to danger if they committed any actions seen as subversive to the Government General. Another example was Rev. Eugene Bell who while driving collided with a train, resulting in the death of both his wife and an American Dr. Paul Crane. He was tried by the Japanese in the Suwon district for manslaughter for the driving incident, and many missionaries felt it was payback for the exposing of the massacre at Che'am-Ni.<sup>206</sup> By displaying a willingness to prosecute American missionaries, the Government General caused missionaries to take the utmost care in speaking publicly, while warning other missionaries of the potential danger of coming to Korea.

On the one-year anniversary of the March First Movement, mission schools were warned to forbid their students from shouting "Mansai". When the chant arose at Ewha Girls' School the principal Bertha Smith was immediately removed by the Government General, and when this cry went up at Paejae school under principal Henry Appenzeller 14 boys were

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<sup>205</sup> Even though the large majority of missionaries had stayed out of the movement there were stories of participation, such as the trial of Eli Mowry. Rev. Mowry had been found sheltered Koreans taking part in the demonstrations and after a public trial, was sentenced to six months of hard labor. His sentence was reduced after appeals. Sacramento Union, "Conviction of Eli Mowry Upheld", Volume 211, Number 38, 8 December 1919.

<sup>206</sup> Clark, Donald N. "'Surely God Will Work Out Their Salvation:' Protestant Missionaries in the March First Movement." (University of Hawaii Press: 1989), 66.

arrested and Appenzeller later lost his educators permit.<sup>207</sup> Despite the precarious situation of missionaries, the rule of Governor General Saito after the March First Movement created an environment where mission schools were more free in their teachings, and did not have to worry as much about forcible closure. While the new decade did not bring mission schools to their former status, but it did save them from extinction from the Korean peninsula. There were no new surges in mission school establishment in Korea, but the ones remaining were able to run largely uninterrupted for the next decade and a half. Of course, there was the constant threat of what would happen should demonstrations break out, but otherwise the rules of Governor General Saito and his immediate successors were remarkably lenient.

#### **Government General Rhetoric on Mission Schools Following the March First Movement:**

Following the March First Movement, much of the official rhetoric from Japan explained why the worst mission schools had left the peninsula, and why students should enroll in the common schools instead, which began to surge in number in the 1920s. Included in the Government General's plan to revitalize the education system was an explanation of the history of mission schools. Towards this end, Saito wrote that most of the private schools in Korea were "ill-founded and imperfectly organized. Not only were teachers inadequate but textbooks also were defective. In short, only a few established were worthy of the name school."<sup>208</sup> In speaking of the history of mission schools on the Korean peninsula, he framed it like this:

From the time of the Korean Government, the control of private schools was much labored since some of the schools were impure in their motive for establishment, used improper textbooks, infused disquieting ideas, blew their own trumpets and beat their own drums, drilled the students in military exercises, held joint athletic sports meeting thereby encouraging chauvinism in hot blooded young men, took from them all soundness and simplicity and the good habits of thrift and diligence. Mission schools managed by

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>208</sup> Government General of Chosen Korean Bureau of Education; *Manual of Education in Chosen*, (Seoul, Chosen, Japan: 1920), 86.

foreigners failed not infrequently to come to proper understanding with the government with the result that the real intention of the government was far from grasped by them. Accordingly the government endeavored to enlighten the founders and managers of these schools by showing them the right way to follow, and set forth standards for teaching and model to be followed by the teachers, selected suitable textbooks and prohibited the use of improper ones exercised control over the collecting of contributions in order to prevent forced contributions and set forth the ways and means to be followed by schools in case circumstances necessitated such measures."<sup>209</sup>

Encapsulated in the Government General's explanation were the main Japanese arguments for why mission schools had to be closed in the decade prior. Mission schools were slandered, accused of being the ones inciting rebellion and imbuing Koreans with negative morals, reflecting the reality that over the past decade missionaries had been consistently blamed for Korean resistance. He justified the narrative that mission schools would have closed naturally, and that it was the missionaries, not the Japanese who were in the wrong.

Included with all the usual remarks of the problems of mission schools was the admission that many of the remaining schools had begun to align with the regulations established by the Government General. Thus, the explanation for the closure of mission schools was accompanied by a justification for allowing the remainder to stay.

From 1920 through the late 1930s mission schools faced less persecution than they had in the first decade of colonial rule. Less mission schools were closed, despite a rapidly increasing common school system imposed by the Government General of Korea. By missionary accounts, in the 1920s the relationship between missionaries and Japanese "continued to steadily improve".<sup>210</sup> A Japanese Christian was promoted to be Civil Governor as of 1922, and the new Governor General, Baron Saito held a meeting to decide whether to form a National

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid, 87-88.

<sup>210</sup> "A Missionary Survey of the Year 1922" *International Review of Missions*, (April, 1923) Vol. 12, Is. 2, 196-7.

Christian Council.<sup>211</sup> In this same year notable Christian colleges, Chosen Christian College, and Severance Medical College were allowed to continue teaching religious studies meaning they would not have to make serious curricular changes to avoid closure.

### **Treatment of mission schools 1922-1939 according to Annual Reports:**

After the reforms that were enacted in response to the March First Movement the position of Mission Schools remained quite stable. Spreading the idea that the most harmful mission schools either left or changed significantly allowed the Government General to take a more conciliatory tone towards mission schools from 1922-1939. In the *Annual Report on the Reforms and Progress in Chosen* for each two-year period during this time, the rhetoric used in discussing mission schools changed very little. The reports published from 1923 to 1939 explained that “For the governing of private schools for Koreans special regulations were issued in 1911 and revised in 1915, but in 1920 further revision was made, by which all former restrictions were removed save for the inclusion of morals and the national language as compulsory subjects in all private schools, and freedom was given them to include religious instruction in their curricula.”<sup>212213</sup> The Government General did not deny the push to ban religious instruction in schools in providing their timeline for mission schools. Nothing in the

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<sup>211</sup> Although the report did not make it clear, the Japanese Christian was likely Ariyoshi Chuichi. Chuichi went on to be the head of Keijo Imperial University in 1924. He notably argued that “there must be organizations apart from public schools that inculcate a religion into the rising generation.” While he was referring to Japan in this statement, he continued on to deride Buddhism as insufficient towards these ends. Giving Chuichi a position of power in the government could be a symbolic move more than one indicative of fundamental change, yet his appointment displays a consideration on the part of the Government General towards conciliation with Christians. Davidann, Jon Thares. *A World of Crisis and Progress: Christianity, National Identity, and the American YMCA in Japan, 1890-1930*, 1995, 102.

<sup>212</sup>Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1922-1923)*, (Kiejo: December 1923).

<sup>213</sup> Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1938-1939)*, (Kiejo: December 1939).

paragraph including this explanation changed in nearly two decades, meaning that according to official accounts there was no significant troubles between the Government General and mission schools.

In the years 1922-1930 this explanation was categorized under “Private Schools”, but in the years 1930-1939 this exact same explanation was categorized under “Mission Schools and Other Private Schools”. While adding mission schools to the categorization the Government General also published a message about mission schools and their place in Korea stating that “The Government-General appreciates the education work of the foreign missionaries for the younger generation of this country. From their first, arrival some fifty years ago they established schools of elementary grades which have been gradually increased until now they have schools of college grade. They may be said to have been the pioneers of modern education here.”.<sup>214</sup> While this admission ignored the figures of declining mission schools from 1910-1919, and glossed over the reality of missionary colleges preceding those established by the Government General, the praising of mission schools as pioneers of education in Korea was significantly more positive than the disparaging rhetoric embedded throughout the reports from 1910-1919.

The section in the 1936 annual report explaining mission schools included figures for the higher educational organs from the mission schools, numbered at 4 colleges, 4 high schools, and 6 girls’ high schools. As of 1921 in the first report after the March First Movement, no mention was made of these higher institutions existing on the peninsula, despite their certain

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<sup>214</sup> Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1930-1932)*, (Kiejo: December 1932), 30.

existence. These institutions for higher learning had received recognition from the Government General in the years following 1920. The missionary colleges existing at that time, many of which have been mentioned before, were Chosen Christian College, Soong Sil College, Severance Medical College, and Ewha College for Women. With official recognition their influence would continue to grow.<sup>215</sup>

### **Rapid Growth of Common Schools:**

Of the numerous facets of the Government General's policies that the March First Movement illuminated as urgently requiring reform, the education system was deemed one of the most important. The issues of an unequal education system in terms of resources and opportunities came to the forefront, and it was decided that taking too harsh a stance towards Koreans would not aid in assimilation, rather the opposite. The power of the March First demonstrations highlighted that assimilation of Koreans might be more difficult a task than many Japanese had previously believed.<sup>216</sup>

In proposing reforms on the Korean peninsula, Japanese press at the time, such as Aoyagi Tsunatarō, urged so-called "positive assimilation practices", which centered around increasing opportunities for education and teaching the Japanese language, concurrently with Japanese migration to Korea. Such rhetoric was steeped in prejudice, portraying the Korean people to be both backwards technologically and in need of saving, as well as uncivilized based

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<sup>215</sup> In the Annual Report published in 1939 however, the number of higher educational institutions formed by missionaries decreased as the Presbyterian Soong Sil College was omitted from official records. No attention was however devoted to this omission in the Annual Report, but it is likely a result of the formal outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War which happened in 1937. The rhetoric regarding mission schools in this year did not change however, as they remained praised as important educational organs in Korea. Government General of Chosen; *Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen (1938-1939)*, (Kiejo: December 1939).

<sup>216</sup> Caprio, Mark E. *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*. (Seattle; London: University of Washington Press, 2009), 112.

on their actions towards Japan.<sup>217</sup> In expanding educational organs for student-age Koreans, the most justifiable and comprehensive method of assimilation, the Government General sought to flood the market, so to speak, with education that could fulfil the dual role of inculcating Japanese cultural norms in students, while simultaneously providing a Japanese institution for Koreans to (as they hoped) take pride in.<sup>218</sup>

The result then was a push to rapidly expand the number and scope of common schools for Korean students. Numerically, the Government General opened 472 common schools between 1919 and 1923, roughly doubling the number of common schools for Korean students in the course of 4 years.<sup>219</sup> The dramatic push to establish common schools for Koreans continued over the next decades, as more Korean students indeed began attending common schools. At the same time, these schools were made to be more comprehensive for Korean students, mandating more instructional hours per week for all core subjects.<sup>220</sup> The reforms

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<sup>217</sup> A quote of his highlighting this view is as follows: “Our great national abilities can advance the Korean culture; they can also raise the achievements of Korean development. By creating a harmonious balance between intellectual and moral education, within 50 to 100 years that which is known to be Japanese-Korean will cease to exist...” Cited from Caprio, Mark E. *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*. (Seattle; London: University of Washington Press, 2009), 115.

<sup>218</sup> It is worth noting as well that in the aftermath of the March First Movement, the focus on promoting religiosity for Koreans by way of Buddhism would theoretically assuage the concerns of Korean Buddhists who had risen up while at the same time looking to take power away from the Christian faith; A faith seen as subversive to Japanese aims as having incited the March First Movement to begin with. Many facets of this movement however pose a striking similarity to methods in which Christianity was originally disseminated in the early 1900s. Buddhist propagation measures included the establishment of Sunday schools, literacy classes for illiterate Koreans, and Women’s Buddhist Associations (Puinhoe). In this way Buddhism was to appeal to the next generations through education, those forgotten by mainstream society, and women. These groups were all the same as those serviced by Protestant Missionaries. Indeed, it seems the in their efficacy, missionaries had established a precedent on an effective method to reach the Korean people, as Buddhism targeted groups seen as most susceptible to propagation. Kim, Hwansoo Ilmee. *The Korean Buddhist Empire: A Transnational History (1910-1945)*. (Harvard: Harvard East Asian Monographs, 2018), 32.

<sup>219</sup> By 1923 there were 959 schools for Koreans established by the Japanese in Korea. Underwood, Horace H., *Modern Education in Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926), 221, 229-231.

<sup>220</sup> Baron Saito Makoto made it clear in his instructions in December 1919 that schools would be a priority and that it would mean the expansion of classes. The orders were called Government General order 187, and 188. From “The Instructions Issued by Baron Saito, Governor General, to Provincial Governors and Principals Concerned”



mandated 5-6 years of education for primary schools for Koreans, and included drafts of plans to provide more secondary and university education for Koreans.

The expansion of educational opportunities following the March First movement cannot be viewed as concessions born out of altruism. Japanese theorists looked to examples of European colonies drawing examples to shape policy in Korea. Ishimori Hisane, the publisher of the *Korea Review* (Chosen Koron) for example wrote a piece on his fears of the “educational poisoning” of Korea.<sup>221</sup> He on the one hand argued that “The education and enlightenment of the indigenous peoples of a colony constitute in fact the most urgent priority task of the colonial rulers if they are to improve social conditions and advance the economic development of the colony,”.<sup>222</sup> His follow up however was that too much education, or liberal arts education would just produce more revolutionary movements and impede Japan’s extraction of value from Korea.<sup>223</sup> He argued then, that instead of providing “Koreans a taste of Japanese literature and drama,” that instruction should focus on “how to grow more rice and potatoes. The need for rural village education, for the dissemination of vocational training,” arriving at the point, “let us change from educating consumers to educating producers”.<sup>224</sup> It is important that he argued against imposing too much Japanese culture upon Koreans, yet the focus was on

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included in: Government General of Chosen Korean Bureau of Education; *Manual of Education in Chosen*, (Seoul, Chosen, Japan: 1920), Appendix page 72.

<sup>221</sup> His full book was titled *On Colonial Policy*, with a chapter on Korea titled “National Awakening and the Education of Indigenous Colonial Peoples”. Toby, Ronald, “Education in Korea under the Japanese: Attitudes and Manifestations.” *Occasional Papers on Korea*, no. 1 (1974): 57.

<sup>222</sup> Quote found in Toby, Ronald, “Education in Korea under the Japanese: Attitudes and Manifestations.” *Occasional Papers on Korea*, no. 1 (1974): 57.

<sup>223</sup> Although Ishimori did not use the words “extract”, his account was steeped in colonial attitudes of Korean inferiority. *Ibid*, 57.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid*, 57.

providing education that would serve Japanese goals economically while not providing avenues of resistance.

Inciting less resistance however meant easing off on forcing Japanese culture upon Koreans. Reforming the common schools also meant allowing for greater instruction in Korean and the easing of restrictive policies towards Korean culture. According to Marc Caprio, following the March First Movement Koreans had the chance to “experience culture on their own terms—that is, as Koreans through their indigenous language”, as colonial policies loosened in their repression of Korean culture.<sup>225</sup> Assimilation did not leave the education system entirely however, in fact the general attitude was that a more permissive attitude towards Korean nationalistic expression could be condoned since Koreans would eventually choose “Japanese culture once they realized its superiority over the weaker Korean culture.”<sup>226</sup>

Creating more opportunities for Korean students then ensured that students could be exposed to the assimilation inherent in the education system, now in a less repressive manner, while maintaining that the Japanese were instituting reforms to fix the problems that caused the March First demonstrations. In previous sections I have consistently reinforced the point that such an education was a tool of assimilation, but as I near the conclusion I will also offer an alternative outcome, one not foreseen by the administration at the time. While the common schools were tools with which the government general could launch an attack on Korean culture and instill Japanese cultural norms, they still succeeded in providing education for

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<sup>225</sup> Caprio, Mark E. “The 1920 Colonial Reforms and the June 10 (1926) Movement: A Korean Search for Ethnic Space” *Lee, Hong Yung, Ha, Yong-ch'ul, and Sorensen, Clark W. Colonial Rule and Social Change in Korea, 1910-1945.* 2013. 175.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid*, 175.

Korean students. In an effort to expand educational opportunities for Koreans, the Government General allocated funds that led to the building of 2,601 primary schools and 513 secondary schools for Koreans by the year 1937.<sup>227</sup> The subject of the legacy of Japanese schools is not a subject of uniform agreement, but the reality is that they offered classes in math, science, and literature, among other courses that some school age Koreans would not have been able to study otherwise. Some Japanese teachers developed relationships with Korean students that helped foster their inquisitiveness, and many Koreans were able to use their teachings to resist the colonial administration.<sup>228</sup> The oppressive goals underlying the establishment of mass public education for Koreans, and the reality of expanded educational opportunities were not always one and the same, especially since for a time the more repressive assimilation policies were shelved.

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<sup>227</sup> I use this year as a breaking point, since after the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese war, schools were turned even more strongly into tools of assimilation. Korean students were made to take Japanese names and taught to take excessive pride in Japan in order to be groomed for military service. For a more comprehensive analysis see: Caprio, Mark E. "Radical Assimilation Under Wartime Conditions" *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*. (Seattle; London: University of Washington Press, 2009), 141-170.

<sup>228</sup> One example is the story of Kim Sobun, who had a Japanese teacher who "really put himself out for us (her and two friends)". He reportedly devoted great hours every night to travel to her and each of her friends to private tutor them, even after they moved. He worked hard towards their education, albeit in the Japanese language, and she was happy to be reunited with him 40 years later. Hildi, Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2001), 44.

## Conclusion:

In 1937, when the Second Sino-Japanese war began, Korean students were subjected to more pressure than ever before to conform to a Japanese cultural identity, and mission schools were once again viewed as subversive to Japan. As the United States intervened, albeit at first only economically, many missionaries realized that no matter the importance of their work, their lives could soon be in danger. In the year 1940, most American Missionaries evacuated on the USS Mariposa, with only a few Presbyterian missionaries remaining behind.<sup>229</sup> This may seem a sad end to the story for missionaries that have occupied center stage in this analysis, but in truth the lasting effect of American missionaries in Korea was in an ideological influence more than the longevity of each and every school.

Long before 1937, mission schools themselves had been nearly drowned by the deluge of common schools. Ewha Women's University, Chosen Christian College, Soong Sil College, and Severance Medical College persevered in offering further opportunities for Koreans, but the numerical influence of Protestant mission schools at the primary level was negligible by this point. It was their impact in the early years of Japanese colonial rule, the promotion and spread of Korean, especially the *hangul* script, and space that they created for Korean nationalism to thrive that then cemented missionaries' place as paramount to the development and preservation of Korean culture in the face of a violent occupation.

The Japanese Government General sought to mold Korean culture and nationality to that of Japanese, an attempted suppression of Korean culture; destruction masquerading as

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<sup>229</sup> Clark, Donald N. "Surely God Will Work Out Their Salvation:" Protestant Missionaries in the March First Movement." (University of Hawaii Press: 1989), 68.

benevolence, purportedly to save the Koreans from themselves. In the same way Americans sought to save the Native Americans, by teaching them to be less Native and more (Euro)American, the vision of Korea projected by the Government General was one where Koreans were loyal and thankful Japanese citizens. Mission schools to an extent sought to accomplish similar goals, bringing an American Protestant culture, yet their practices instead helped Korean nationalism and culture spread and flourish. Learning *hangul* in order to best reach the Korean populace, and bringing with them methods of mass printing, missionaries laid the foundation for early nationalism before colonization. After Japanese annexation, the existence of the mission schools teaching Korean language concurrently with more western ideals assisted in creating the space for Korean nationalism to continue developing. When the March First Movement broke out, ideals brought by missionaries were a central catalyst, while missionaries themselves aided in spreading news of the movement far and wide.

I have time and again, used numbers of schools as a barometer for the influence of missionaries on the peninsula, as they represent a numerical, and thereby measurable value of missionary influence. Certainly, their numbers reached great heights, but ultimately it was not the number of schools or students that made the legacy of missionaries in Korea so important. It was instead the very existence of these schools that allowed the aforementioned actions, and created a space that could be utilized by Koreans. It was not the conviction of missionaries to fight for a free Korea that in the end was so important, but rather the conviction of American Protestant missionaries to bringing the word of god to the Korean people. That is to say, missionaries worked diligently and devoted their lives to a cause that was truly important in the early development of Korean nationalism, albeit that cause was proselytization.

Criticism of colonial mentalities aside, the legacy of missionaries remains important in both perception and reality. In perception, the view of missionaries as fighting against the Japanese, and helping catalyze the March First Movement remains in popular history. Such a view is easily supported by the religiosity of some of the most prominent anti-Japanese leaders, Yun Chi-Ho, Syghman Rhee, Anh Chang Ho, along with the parents of Kim Il Sung. In reality as well, the aforementioned universities established by missionaries still operate and graduate thousands of new students every year. Most importantly, the education disseminated in such institutions, is free to foster in students critical thinking and modern science, along with undeniable elements of Korean language and heritage. They may have been “impure in their motives of establishment”, but the legacy left by mission schools in Korea was one of fostering nationalism, and offering educational opportunities, opportunities that persist today.

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