

“Malcontent Koreans (*Futei Senjin*)”: Towards a Genealogy of Colonial Representation of Koreans in the Japanese Empire*

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*[H]istory...teaches us that domination breeds resistance, and that the
violence inherent in
the imperial contest...is an impoverishment
for both sides.¹*

“Empire” is a relationship, and the enterprise of empire—formal or informal—depended in many ways upon the *idea* of having an empire.² Meiji Japan (1868-1912) began to penetrate the politics, economy, and culture of Korea in the late nineteenth century.³

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¹ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 288.

² Ibid., 9-11.

³ For an analysis of Japanese political and economic intrusion into Korea at the turn of the twentieth century, see Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910*.

However, by the early twentieth century, it was not only the Japanese metropole that penetrated the colonies; the colonized Koreans had penetrated the metropole as well. This context of Japan's colonial expansion into Korea prompted a large scale population movement and frequent contact between Japanese and Koreans, especially following Japan's unequal treaty with Korea (1876), subsequent wars with China (1894-1895) and Russia (1904-1905) over its interest in Korea, and eventual formal colonization of Korea (1910). It is also this background against which many Koreans were brought to the Japanese metropole during the early years of Japan's empire-building process.⁴ Since then the Korean community in Japan has never been free from the influence of colonialism and imperialism, nor the Japanese have in their relation to the colonized. Therefore, what we see in the quotidian lives of those who lived in Japanese *naichi* (inner lands or Japan proper) is not only the material impact of increased political and economic exchange with the *gaichi* (outer lands or Japan's colonies), but also the psychological and cultural effects of having an empire.⁵

In particular, as the number of Koreans grew in the metropole, the presence of the colonized began to matter to Japanese more and more, not only in a remote and abstract sense, but tangible

⁴ Important earlier works on the subject of the Korean community in Japan include Richard H. Mitchell, *The Korean Minority in Japan* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967); Changsoo Lee and George DeVos, *Koreans in Japan: Ethnic Conflict and Accommodation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981); Michael A. Weiner, *The Origins of the Korean Community in Japan, 1910-1923* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1989).

⁵ For example, the idea of having a colony in Northeast China made a tremendous domestic impact in the Japanese metropole. For further discussion, see Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).

and practical.⁶ And, having to justify and maintain the hierarchical relationship between the two people, the images of Koreans as immature and uncivilized—and thus in need of Japan’s “assistance” for their successful “assimilation” to the colonial master—were widely propagated by the colonial bureaucrats and ordinary Japanese alike.⁷ At the same time, the images of vengeful Koreans haunted their minds as it became increasingly difficult to distinguish Koreans from Japanese, not to mention distinguishing “bad” Koreans from “good” Koreans. These ambiguities frustrated many in the metropole, from children to intelligence officers, who sought to discern so-called “enemies from within.” How, then, the differences between Koreans and Japanese were observed, imagined, and iterated in colonial discourse? What kind of racial imaginary was constructed and circulated, and by whom? How did Koreans appear in government documents and mass media in the Japanese metropole? In what ways were these mechanisms of colonial representations appeared and proliferated?

Curiously enough, unlike in studies of European empires, the issue of race and racialized representations of the colonized *within* Asian empires have not received sufficient attention until recently, as in the case of the Japanese empire.⁸ What was the relationship

⁶ For a study on the ways in which Japanese settlers in Korea negotiated in this process of Japan’s colonial expansion, see Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empire: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea, 1868-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011).

⁷ For the numerous assimilation policies of Japan to integrate the Korean people as Japanese and their ultimate failure for the goals, see Mark Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2009).

⁸ I would like to thank Chris Hanscom and Dennis Washburn, the directors of the project on “The Affect of Difference: Representations of Race under Empire,” which gave me a valuable opportunity for stimulating dialogue on the subject

between race and empire in the case of imperial Japan which had similar looking Asians both as the colonizer and colonized? As the political economy of Japanese *naichi* and Korean *gaichi* became intertwined rapidly after the late nineteenth century, and while Koreans were hurriedly “catching up” with the “modern” lifestyle by emulating it as it was often interpreted by Japanese, Koreans exhibited little or no visible physical differences that were easily distinguishable from those of the Japanese. Although there were differences in degree depending on their class and gender identities, an undeniably increasing number of Koreans began to have similar outer appearance as the Japanese as Koreans adopted and shared more and more of the fashion and hairstyle of the metropole. The dilemma that Imperial Japan had to face, then, was how to identify the “inferior” elements of the empire’s subjects that were physically invisible, and preach to discipline and assimilate them while simultaneously keeping them inferior for the purpose of maintaining the hierarchical order in the empire.

In this paper, by placing the Japanese discourse of colonial representations of Koreans at the intersection of the racial and cultural politics of an empire-building process in Asia, I will explore the ways in which racialized Korean Others were differentiated in the context of the Japanese empire. In particular, I trace the genealogy of “malcontent Koreans” (J. *futei senjin*; K. *pullyŏng sŏnin*)—one of the most frequently appearing idioms used to represent the colonized

matter in its first workshop at Dartmouth College in 2009. For recent parallel studies of the struggle of the Japanese and U.S. empires in managing racialized populations in the context of total war, see Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011). For a related discussion on the assimilation of colonized Taiwanese to Japanese and their colonial identity formations and transformations in the Japanese empire, see Leo T. S. Ching, *Becoming Japanese: Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).

Koreans in Japanese official documents and popular media—in the context of Japan’s growing colonial expansion into Korea. For this purpose, I will explore the ways in which the phrase “malcontent Koreans” emerged, spread, and became ubiquitous in Japanese official and popular discourses during the first two decades of the twentieth century. As I analyze how this particular image of Koreans in the Japanese metropole exemplified the constructed and contradictory nature of colonial relation and representations, I argue that how such representation of Koreans was the manifestation of inherent fear of the colonized in the mind of the colonizer. I will next examine how such fear among the colonizer contributed to one of the most brutal massacres of the colonized by the authorities and ordinary citizens alike following the Great Kantō Earthquake in Japan in 1923.

Through the examination, I argue that, first, the emergence and consequences of the *futei senjin* discourse in the Japanese metropole—whether it concerns the fear, rumor, or the massacre—must be understood primarily in the context of Japan’s intensifying colonialism in Korea. Second, Koreans’ resilient resistance against Japan’s imperial aggression in Korea in and beyond Korean territory proliferated widespread fear of the colonized among the Japanese, and had profound effects on the colonial policies as well as the ordinary Japanese people’s conceptions of Koreans in the metropole. Third, the moments of mass-scale political crisis that Japan faced in its dealings with Koreans, such as the 1919 March First Independent Movement in colonial Korea and the 1923 massacre of Koreans in the Japanese metropole, were not just aberrational, trivial, and inconvenient “episodes” concerning the colonized, but reflection of the pervasive tension and instability of an empire which could not be resolved easily.⁹ And finally, it is my contention that the fear of *futei*

⁹ Unlike many official *and* popular narratives’ treatment of the mayhem, I refuse to take the 1923 massacre of Koreans as one of the many unfortunate, “indispensable (*yamuoeru*) disturbances (*sawagi*)” or “episodes” over Koreans (*Chosenjin*) in the

senji, a powerful and convenient taxonomy of colonial representation, obscured the ways in which these important moments of colonial violence were reported, registered, and narrated in official and popular discourses, thus resulting in justifying the mass killing with impunity and solidifying the exclusionary, ethnically defined boundary between the “Japanese public” and racialized Korean others. It is for these reasons that the genealogy of *futei senjin* needs to be squarely put in the context of the Japanese empire historicizing and contextualizing who those malcontent were, and the massacre must be revisited and rearticulated clarifying why they were killed, by whom, and how.

In these ways, the genealogy of colonial representation of Koreans in the name of *futei senjin* illuminates the intertwined realms of the linguistic, political, cultural, and most importantly, ethical practices in the multiethnic Japanese empire. It also exemplifies the arbitrary and ambivalent nature of colonial discourse in articulating the “differences” of the racialized others, as it ironically coexisted with the simultaneous rhetoric of assimilation. And the persistence of the particular logic behind the formation and maintenance of the discourse of *futei senjin* sheds light on the context in which Japan eventually set its path toward the doomed fate of colonialism and militarism into the 1930s and thereafter.

Fear, In/visible Bodies, and the Problem of Koreans in the

midst of the post-quake confusion. Instead, I call it “the Kantō Massacre” (*Kantō daigyakusatsu*), rather than the conventional name of the event, “the massacre of Koreans during the Great Kantō Earthquake” (*Kantō daishinsai ji no Chōsenjin gyakusatsu*), to highlight the importance of the colonial relations and representations behind the cause for the massacre, and not the earthquake itself. I share with Kang (1975, 2003), Chōng (2011), and Kim (1994) that, this way, the large scale of the collective violence as well as the systematic ways in which Koreans were identified and targeted for the pogrom by the authorizes and citizens alike come live for better understanding of the historical event.

Japanese Empire

“Enlightenment” thinking and “scientific” knowledge became powerful tools in the emergence and spread of a number of modern empires. Observation—supposedly objective and neutral—was the method of the era, and thanks to the accumulated empirical data on the materiality and the groups under their control, empires could benefit from such constructed “knowledge,” which became crucial in the maintenance and expansion of their colonial rhetoric as well as day-to-day operation. If the concept of “race” emerged and spread along with the practice of racism, it also provided a convenient tool to categorize human beings into biologically and genetically distinct groups in the process of producing specific “knowledge” on the subjugated Others. The assumption behind the construct of “race” was that distinct physical features were observable, recognizable, and could explain certain cultural, mental, and even moral behaviors of the targeted people. Such beliefs established a hierarchical distinction between “civilized” and “primitive” based on particular articulations on physical features of the racialized Others. Such rhetoric also justified the imperial businesses of subjugating and “enlightening” the colonized, who were degenerate and inferior to the observing eyes in the context of the spread of colonialism. While preaching the missions of “civilization and enlightenment” through “assimilation,” colonial masters employed various imperial projects which implied racial hierarchy, bringing forth *cultural* effects of colonial relations and representation in the context of multiracial empires.¹⁰

The concept of “assimilation,” by its nature, assumes differences between the involved groups and therefore accompanies inherent “tension between notions of incorporation and

¹⁰ For further theoretical discussion and a case study of the epistemological effects of colonial representations, see Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 1996.

differentiation.”¹¹ Therefore, unsurprisingly, assimilationist rhetoric had long been “compromised by the need to maintain distinctions against a colonized population.”¹² In the context of European colonial expansion into Africa and the Americas, the colonized bodies became crucial sites for imperial inscription of coloniality as they exhibited readily visible signs of physical differences. Their skin color, facial features, and hair type, for example, were important means to develop and reinforce prejudices against the subjugated. Particular cultural and political meanings were written and read in the bodily “evidence” of the colonized in constructing social taxonomies of convenience. As a result, “how a person was labeled could determine that a certain category of persons could be killed or raped with impunity, but not others,” thus justifying “specific forms of violence at specific times” based on such classification of human beings.¹³

However, such an understanding of colonial racialization raises a question: what happens, then, when the colonized bodies do not seem to exhibit any conveniently recognizable physical signs of difference, as in the case of Koreans in the early twentieth-century Japanese empire? How can a multiethnic empire of the modern era, which relies on mass production, mass consumption, mass politics, and mass culture, carry out cultural engineering for mass mobilization while maintaining hierarchical distinctions between the colonizer and colonized? What kinds of articulation of such indistinguishable bodies of the colonized arose in the service of empire? What became

¹¹ Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Introduction," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Culture in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 10.

¹² Stoler and Cooper, 22.

¹³ Stoler and Cooper, 6.

the criteria to discern such invisible bodily differences?

Being able to identify those deemed dangerous and rebellious against the maintenance of the “public” peace and order was a critical matter for the early years of Japan’s expansion into its resistant neighbor. In fact, Japanese imperial intelligence officers were keenly aware of this problem from early on, and were instructed to carry around an official manual to distinguish the physical features of “malcontent Koreans” from Japanese. What kind of differences were observed or imagined in the minds of Japanese in the metropole? How did the lack of discernible physical differences affect the colonial discourse of the *cultural* and *historical* gap that *must* exist between the dominant and the subjugated? Now I turn to the specific ways in which the *futei senjin* discourse emerged during the early years of Japanese colonial rule of Korea to demonstrate the power of fear—and the irony of it—which urged Japanese bureaucrats and ordinary people alike to look for visible signs of physical differences to “embody” the Korean enemy within the metropole.

What’s Petty and What’s Political: The Taxonomies of *Senjin* and *Futei*

Senjin (鮮人), along with *Senmin* (鮮民), was a denigrated short form of *Chōsenjin* (朝鮮人), which began to appear to address Koreans publicly in Japan since the time of Japan’s annexation of Korea in 1910, following the frequent use of the term employed by the colonial government officials.¹⁴ Prior to formal colonization, Korea

¹⁴ According to the annexation-related document by Terauchi *Chōsen sōtoku hōkoku Kankoku beigō shimatsu* (November 9, 1910), the titles of the Korean nation (国号) and its emperor (皇帝の尊稱) were the two most contentious issues between Terauchi and Yi Wanyong in their negotiation over the terms of the annexation. The final compromise resulted in the use of the name of the country from the days of Korean subordination to China, Chosŏn, while changing the Korean emperor’s title to *wang* which is a “king” rather than an emperor. The original annexation document is available at the Japanese National Archive (Kokuritsu kōbunshokan)

was referred to as *Kankoku* (*Hanguk* in K, 韓国) based on the country's official name, the Great Han Empire (大韓帝國; *Dai Kan teikoku*). Consequently, the people of Korea were referred to as *Kankokumin* (韓国民), *Kanmin* (韓民), *Kankokujin* (韓国人), or *Kanjin* (韓人) in Japanese official documents during the first decade of the twentieth century, while *Chōsenjin* also appeared in print media such as newspapers and magazines. However, after the formalization of Korea's status as an official colony of Japan in the summer of 1910, *Senjin* or *Senmin* along with *Chōsenjin* became the most frequently used title for Koreans both by the authorities and in popular media, which many of the colonized disliked due to the denigrated and pejorative nuance that these terms carried. For example, the Governor-General Terauchi began his rule in Korea by addressing the people of the newly acquired Japanese territory as *Senjin*, a homonym for the term "lowly people" (賤人) or outcasts (賤民) at a public meeting before his colonial bureaucrats and officials in the fall of 1910.¹⁵ By such a title, Koreans were reminded of their lowly sociopolitical position vis-à-vis the Japanese under Japan's political, economic, and military control of Korea.

According to *Nihon kokugo daijiten* by Shōgakukan, the history behind the usage of the term *futei* (不逞) goes back to the year of 718. Various Japanese dictionaries indicate that the literal meaning of the

and Kyujanggak Archive in Seoul. For further discussion on the issue, see Kūm Pyōngdong, ed. *Shiryō zasshi ni miru kindai Nihon no Chōsen ninshiki 1 Kankoku heigō ki zengo* (Tokyo: Ryokuin shobō, 1999), 547-574.

¹⁵ "Chōsen no ryūkōgo," *Chōsen kōron* 12 (December 1913): 67-68. According to an Asami Rintarō, *Senjin* might have come from a short form of *Nissenjin* (Japanese and Koreans) which gradually replaced *Nikkanjin* as Japan's annexation of Korea caused the change of name back to its old name Chosōn. Therefore, Asami argued that the term *Senjin* or *Senmin* did not necessarily contain any negative meaning. *Senmin* also appears in a classical Confucian text *Analects* which means "little one."

term includes “wrong in behavior;”¹⁶ “complaining, disobedient, brazen, doing things as one pleases;”¹⁷ or “insubordinate, recalcitrant, outlawry, refractory, malcontent, and rebellious.”¹⁸ In Meiji Japan, an official police document *The 1895 Index of Important Police Duties* (*Keisatsu yōmu mokuroku*) includes controlling (*torishimaru*) the crimes under the category of *futei* as one of the core duties of the police force.¹⁹ However, the recorded crimes under *futei torishimari* in this police manual indicate a group of relatively petty unlawful behaviors such as fraud and robbery, rather than top-class political or ideological crimes against the government or the emperor. Neither the document seems to indicate any particularly close connection between *futei* crimes and Koreans as of the late nineteenth century.

When, then, were these two terms, *futei* and *senjin*, combined to become one set phrase? Toward the end of the nineteenth century, socialist movements became increasingly visible in Japan amidst rising consciousness concerning various “social problems” (*shakai mondai*).²⁰ Their activities and publications addressed practical concerns for the oppressed, often challenging the authorities. In response, the government began surveillance on the activities of these first generation Japanese socialists, starting from the very

¹⁶ *Dai nihon tosho kokugo jiten* (Dainihon tosho)

¹⁷ *Kōjien* (Iwanami)

¹⁸ *New Japanese-English Dictionary* (Kenkyūsha)

¹⁹ Keishichō, *Keisatsu yōmu mokuroku* (Tokyo, 1895), 53.

²⁰ For example, the Socialism Study Group (*Shakaishugi kenkyūkai*) was formed in 1898, which took the new name of Socialism Association (*Shakaishugi kyōkai*) by 1900, and Socialist Democratic Party (*Shakai minshu tō*) was established only a year later. The Commoners' Society (*Heiminsha*) was formed in Tokyo by 1903, which began its weekly journal *Heimin shinbun* providing a space for the early socialists to discuss various social problems including labor, urban, and rural problems.

beginning years of the twentieth century. The result was the official publication of *The History of Socialists* (*Shakaishugisha shi*), which first appeared in 1908, a confidential document for internal use that later became a periodic governmental publication under the new title, *Information on the Matters of Special Blacklist Figures* (*Tokubetsu yōshisatsu jōsei ippan*).

Subsequently, anti-governmental non-conformers were entered into the blacklist and became major targets of systematic, routine government surveillance. The mass arrest of such dissidents manifested in the High Treason Incident of 1910, which resulted in the death sentences of twelve leading anarchists and socialists. The shocking case was followed by the establishment of the Special Higher Police (*Tokubetsu kōtō keisatsu*) the following year within the Tokyo Metropolitan Police (*Keishichō*) under the direct control of the Ministry of Home Affairs. This was a specialized police unit for thought control, especially targeting those blacklisted figures of socialists, communists, anarchists, and now Koreans, who were considered a threat to public order. Afterward, publications and activities deemed to be against the authority of the government or the emperor came under tight state surveillance and censorship.

As early as the turn of the nineteenth century, Japan's imperialist expansion met the formidable challenge of the Korean resistance. As Japan's aggression toward Korea became apparent through the first Sino-Japanese war (1894-1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), the persistent armed struggle by the Korean Righteous Army (*ūibyōng*)²¹ against the Japanese military

²¹ The etymology of the term *ūibyōng* and their anti-Japanese resistance can be traced back to the Japanese invasion of Korea led by Toyotomi Hideyoshi during the last decade of the sixteenth century. But the organized military resistance movement against Japanese aggression in modern Korea began during the last decade of the nineteenth century following the Kabo Peasants Movement and the assassination of the Queen of Korea by pro-Japanese cliques in 1895, which was fueled by the forced dissolution of the Korean military force by Japan in 1907.

weakened the authority and legitimacy of Japan to intervene in and control Korean matters. Although Japan put over 5,200 police forces and 6,000 military police forces in Korea, beginning in June of 1910, in preparation for the “smooth” annexation of Korea, the number of the Righteous Army grew during the first two decades of the twentieth century. They resisted Japan’s protectorate-ship over Korea against its sovereignty (1905-1910), the forced abdication of the Korean king Kojong, and the dismissal of the Korean military. Therefore, putting such armed resistance in Korea under control became one of the top priorities for the imperial government as well as the Governor-General of Korea (GGK) during the first two decades of the twentieth century.²² In addition, to the extent that the majority of such organized armed struggle was forced to move abroad to the border area between Korea and China through harsh military subjugation, Japan’s suppression of it was a “success” soon after the formal annexation of Korea in 1910.

While many Koreans called resisting Koreans the “Righteous Army,” Japanese imperial and colonial authorities, newspapers, and magazines often referred to them as “rioters” or “violent mob” (暴徒; *boto*) or a small number of malcontents (少数の不逞の徒; *shōsū no futei no yakara*). By also calling them vulgar and wild thieves or robbers, the colonial authorities sought to trivialize the existence of such organized Korean opposition to its colonial master. For example, the secretary of the Ch’ungch’ōng Province local government in Korea said that the majority of these “rioters” were in fact not a violent mob against Japan, but the fools who were

²² For example, according to *Chōsen bōto tōbatsu shi* (1913), a record of the headquarter of the Japanese military force stationed in Korea, there were 241 top rebel leaders and 31,245 anti-Japanese “rioters” in 1908 alone, and the Japanese military killed at least 17,779 of them from 1906 to 1911. *Chōsen heigōshi* also records that there were 50,000-70,000 rioters. Cited in Kūm, 1999 (v. 2), 9.

threatened by a few rebels to cooperate in their violent acts. He believed that the best way to deal with such rioters was conciliation and appeasement to convert them back into “good Koreans” (良民; *ryōmin*), that is, loyal subjects for the sake of Japanese empire.²³ Others argued that the rioters emerged due to the social problems of Korea rather than their will to go against their colonial masters.²⁴ Yet another Japanese journalist argued that Japan needed to take a harder line and crack them down.²⁵ In any case, in order for Japan to fight against such spirited armed resistance to Japan’s colonial rule in Korea and to protect the Japanese colonial authorities as well as civilians, close political surveillance of all Korean visitors and migrants to Japan proper became all the more important.

Those who appeared to be against the Japanese authorities were considered dangerous (*kiken*), subversive (*fuon*), and anti-Japanese (排日, *hainichi*) enemies. Consequently, such control of colonized Koreans became one of the most important duties for the Japanese Special Higher Police. These subversive Koreans were also called *blacklist Koreans* (*yōshisatsu senjin*), anti-Japanese Koreans (*hainichi senjin*), or simply “rioters” (*bōto*). As the threat of such “dangerous” thoughts of “violent mobs” of Koreans intensified against the order of the empire, those Koreans who might belong to one of those malcontent rebel groups against Japan (*futei no yakara*) needed to be kept under meticulous state surveillance.

²³ “Bōto chin'atsusaku,” *Chōsen* 1:2, April 1, 1908, 18-19.

²⁴ “Bōto shiron,” *Chōsen* 29, July 14, 1910, 20.

²⁵ A number of articles appeared on this controversy concerning how to deal with these Korean “rioters” in the newspapers and magazines in the first two decades of the twentieth century. For example, see “Bōto oyobi sono chin'atsu,” *Chōsen* 1:2, April 1, 1908: 1-7; “Kankoku bōto no tōbatsu,” *Tōkyō keizai zasshi* 1445 (June 27, 1908), 7-8.

While Japanese intelligence often failed to differentiate empirically between “good Koreans” from “bad Koreans,” as well as Japanese, the political icons of *ryōmin* (literally “good people” or “noble savage,” that is to say, the innocent, pure, primitive, yet malleable) and *futei no yakara* (“malcontent mob,” i.e. the rebellious, ungrateful, violent, and dangerous) were invented and spread among the colonial bureaucrats and ordinary Japanese alike through the means of official announcements, mass media, and word of mouth. The effects of such binarized representations of colonized Koreans manifested in a dramatic and violent manner, especially when facing moments of crisis during the first two decades of Japan’s colonial rule over Korea.

The internal ordinance (*naikun*) of 1911 is a document that illustrates the manners in which Koreans were documented and watched over by the police force in the metropole, illustrating the development of specific surveillance mechanisms to control the physical movement of Koreans in the metropole:

Upon the arrival of Korean migrants and temporary visitors to Japan (*naichi*), the appropriate district police must closely watch them according to the following instructions:

1. Register them under the district police station using the No. 1 Special Form and deliver a copy of the document promptly to the superior police office.
2. Keep watching all of their words and actions, especially to determine whether they exhibit any anti-Japanese thought (*hainichi shiso*).
3. Promptly report any important matters as you observe them.
4. Immediately report if they move their residence to another location along with their new address and anything that might require special attention.
5. Make a periodic report on their whereabouts at the end of each month, and submit it by the 5th day of the following

month using the No. 2 Special Form.²⁶

Later, the police responsibility to follow Koreans' movements in the metropole would also be imposed on the Japanese employers of Korean laborers following the First World War.

In addition to the close surveillance network of the metropolitan police, by 1913, the government published a confidential document of official guidance to aid the police force in their efforts to distinguish Koreans from Japanese. For example, the Ministry of Home Affairs compiled *The Source Material to Distinguish Koreans* (*Chōsenjin shikibetsu shiryō*) and distributed it among the top officials in each of the major government offices and in local prefectures. The document explains its purpose as follows:

There are an increasing number of Koreans who have short hair and wear western clothing these days. For this reason, *they look much like the Japanese of the metropole (naichijin)*. Consequently, it is getting more and more difficult to distinguish them from the Japanese. Therefore, at this time, a source material is provided from above so that you can make use of it in distinguishing Koreans from Japanese.²⁷

Until the 1910s, it was relatively easy to distinguish Koreans from Japanese in the metropole due to differences in their external appearance. For example, although there were a few mistakes, such as in a case in 1908 where a Japanese was killed in the midst of a Japanese military campaign against Korean “rioters” due to his long hair, which made him look more like one of the “rioters,” the

²⁶ “Chōsenjin meibo chōsei no ken.” *Jūhachi chiji naikun* No. 71. Reprinted in Pak Kyōngshik, ed. *Zainichi Chōsenjin kankei shiryō shūsei* v. 1 (Tokyo, 1975), 27. Hereafter, all translation of the Japanese language documents and emphases are mine unless otherwise specified.

²⁷ Keihokyoku, Ministry of Home Affairs, *Chōsenjin shikibetsu shiryō ni kansuru ken* (Naimushō hi No. 1-542), October 28, 1913. Reprinted in Pak, 28.

hairstyles and clothing helped distinguish Korean “rebels” from Japanese.²⁸ However, the detailed information contained in *The Source Material* of 1913 reveals the difficulties that the new modern lifestyle of Koreans created, which blurred the visible differences between the people of the metropole and the colony; and therefore, further meticulous attention to Korean facial and bodily features, language, rituals, customs, and culture was necessary in order to make proper distinction between Koreans and Japanese. For example, phrenological and other physical features of Koreans were described as following:

<Korean Physique (*kokkaku*) and Facial Shape>

- a. The height of Koreans is not much different from Japanese, but their posture is straighter. Fewer people in Korea have their backs bent or stoop-shouldered than Japanese.
- b. The shape of their face is also not much different from Japanese, but they tend to have fewer and smoother hairs. Also, their hair tends to grow straight down. Koreans tend to have less facial hair than Japanese. In general, Koreans tend to have flatter faces (*nopperi gao*), and their beard, mustache, and whisker tend to be thinner.
- c. As for the shape of their heads, due to their custom of putting their hair together using a head scarf (when they are young they pull their hairs together tightly from the top of their foreheads toward the back of the heads so the hair will not fall over the face), some of them have their head shape changed in the shape of that hairstyle. Also, children before marriage put their hair together in the back and have it straight down. So, to do this type of hair, the front and top portion of their hair is parted in the middle of their heads to

²⁸ The case is reported in *Chōsen*, 2:4 (December, 1908), 31-32.

the left and to the right. If you look at their heads closely, you will see many of them have the trace of this parting in their heads. The back side of their heads tends to be flatter than Japanese due to their use of wooden pillows.²⁹

According to the metropolitan government's observation of the bodies of Koreans, there were many similarities that prevented Japanese police from differentiating the potential "criminals" from Japanese. Nevertheless, differences could be found upon close observation—however generalized and exaggerated those characteristic features may be. Overall, what was highlighted in this guidance material was that Koreans have less hair both in their heads and faces, and that the back of their heads were flatter than those of Japanese. Knowing that this information was circulated primarily for the use of the authorities, it is difficult to know how widely such "knowledge" about the colonized bodies was spread among ordinary Japanese in the metropole prior to the rise of any triggering event that necessitated the use of such pseudo "knowledge" to distinguish Koreans among themselves in reality.

Koreans in the Japanese Metropole

As an empire in Asia, Japan had the advantage of physical proximity to its colonies, which allowed for easier access to their lands and people. Such a convenient geographical location allowed frequent physical exchange between the metropole and colonies. According to the Home Ministry's record, as of 1916, approximately 4,000 Koreans were living in Japan, mostly laborers and some students. However, by 1920, the number increased to 32,274 including over 800 students, and, by 1923, close to 80,000 including over 1,000 students. The Korean population in Japan reached 1.5 million by the early 1940s.³⁰

²⁹ *Chōsenjin shikibetsu shiryō ni kansuru ken.*

³⁰ Ministry of Home Affairs, *Chōsenjin gaikō* (1916 and 1920). Reprinted in Pak, 47-49 and 81-83. The statistics are also found in Tamura Hiroyuki, "Shokuminchi ki

The kinds of jobs and the lifestyle that Korean migrants had in Japan indicate that since the late Meiji era, they had been meeting their material and human needs for a rapidly industrializing and increasingly militarizing Japan. The majority of Koreans living in the Japanese metropole during the 1910s and the 1920s were manual laborers who had come to fill the demand of labor while suppressing the wage level in Japan.³¹ Many of these Korean laborers moved to Japan toward the end of World War I when the government eased travel regulations between the colony and the metropole due to a labor shortage during the wartime economic boom in Japan as Europe was preoccupied with WWI.³² This meant that, although the Korean population increased, they had little opportunity of social mobility in the metropole due to their little resources, education, and short residence in Japan. Therefore, they occupied the lowest rung of the socio-economic strata, and the situation did not change much until the end of the colonial period.³³ Furthermore, they had little

‘naichi’ zaijū Chōsenjin jinkō” in *Tokyo toritsu daigaku keizai gakubu keizai gakkai* 52 (1983), 31-36; Kim Indök, *Shikeminji shidae chaeil Chosōnin undong yōngu* (Seoul, 1996), 31 and 50; Tonomura Masaru, *Zainichi Chōsenjin shakai no rekishigakuteki kenkyū* (Tokyo, 2004), 83.

³¹ For example, in the year of 1920 close to 90 percent of the Korean population in Japan was working in the fields of mining, manufacturing, construction, and other physical labor. And, although the Korean population in Japan increased significantly during the next two decades, the percentage of manual laborers among Koreans mostly did not change. Kim, 39 (chart 3) and Tonomura, 83.

³² For further information on Korean laborers during this time, see Ken Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble: Korean Workers in Interwar Japan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

³³ Many farmers in Korea had extreme financial difficulty following the land reform and economic policy changes brought by the colonial government after the annexation of Korea in 1910. For further information on the place of origin and

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means to communicate with Japanese in the language of the metropole, nor much chance to intermingle with the Japanese, for many of those Korean laborers lived in segregated ghetto areas in industrial cities or near mines.

Koreans in Japan in the early twentieth century also included students who had little chance to get higher education in the colony since it was only in the 1920s that the colonial government allowed for Korea to have a public university.³⁴ What is interesting about Korean students in the Japanese cities was that, while they came from either the privileged elite class or were sponsored by the government until the early 1910s, those who came to Japan during the late 1910s and 1920s were largely self-supported. Many of the blacklist Koreans during the 1920s were in fact those student-workers who often delivered newspapers, drove rickshaws, and worked as menial laborers during the course of their study, thus dragging on the period of their stay in Japan before graduation. During these years, many of them became interested and more keenly aware of various social problems while engaging more actively with the laborers in their daily lives in such areas as Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto. For example, many of these self-supported students not only devoted themselves to their study in school but also organized themselves to protest and raise consciousness among themselves facing ethnic, class, and colonial discrimination in the metropole.³⁵ These students often wore Western

class composition of Koreans in Japan in the early twentieth century, see Tonomura, 2004.

³⁴ The Government General's Office of Korea prohibited not only the establishment of private colleges and universities but also public universities. It was not until 1924 that it finally found Kyōngsōng cheguk taehakkyo (Keijō Imperial University), the first and only university in Korea.

³⁵ Kim, 50 (chart 5) and 51. For example, many of these self-supported students were active members of the student organizations such as Haguhoe or Tokyo Korean YMCA.

clothes and hairstyles as well as spoke the language of the metropole, which made themselves more and more invisible to the eyes of surveillance, as it intensified the colonial anxiety of the authorities.

The biases and double standards against Koreans living in Japan had already developed as Japan sought to maximize its political, economic, and cultural control over Korea and its people. Now, such prejudices toward Koreans grew and spread as the Japanese observed the increasingly critical attitude that the progressive students, labor leaders, and independence movement activists took toward Japan's harsh military over the colonized. Furthermore, following the end of World War I, the Japanese economy began to slow down as the wartime economic boom came to an end, and the employers began to look for cheaper Korean laborers to replace Japanese laborers. Therefore, the animosity between Korean and Japanese laborers resurged in a competitive mode in the realm of the metropolitan economy, even as they were fed government propaganda for the mission of assimilating Koreans based on the geographical, historical, and cultural affinities between the two people.

The *futei senjin* discourse emerged in such a political, economic, and cultural context, and turned the colonized population into "invisible enemies" within the metropole. This process reveals not only the arbitrary nature of constructing "Koreanness" as Japan's ethnic and political Other but also the anxiety that Japanese had about Koreans, whether they agree or disagree to "assimilate" to their colonial master. However, the critical occasions where Japanese in the metropole exhibit a sense of urgency to distinguish the Korean population from Japanese the most did not come until moments of collective violence against the colonized: the March First Movement in 1919 and the Kantō Massacre in 1923.

Good Koreans and Bad Koreans: Cracking Down on the

Enemy Within

It was in the midst of the 1919 March First Independence Movement in Korea³⁶ that the label of *futei senjin* appeared frequently as the dominant phrase to refer to Koreans throughout official documents, newspapers, and magazines in the metropole. This politically charged term began to appear in newspaper reports concerning the March First protest and the subsequent governmental security ordinances to suppress it. In particular, when the contemporary Japanese Prime Minister Hara Takashi (1856-1921) decided to subdue the originally non-violent demonstration with military forces, he evoked the image of violent Koreans (*bōto*) and utilized such terms as *futei* as the reason why authorities adopted the policy of military suppression against the peaceful protesters.³⁷ Upon hearing of the eruption of the public protest in the colony, Hara in Tokyo sent the following message to the Governor-General of Korea:

Domestically and internationally, we must make this incident appear as a minor problem. However, as to the practical measure to respond to the incident, we must deal with it thoroughly and seriously so that such a thing will never happen again.³⁸

³⁶ The March First Movement in Korea was sparked by the Korean students' declaration of independence of Korea in Tokyo earlier that year, and began as a peaceful declaration of independence in colonial Korea. The violent military suppression of the protest resulted in the deaths of six to seven thousand Koreans in the colony, approximately the same number of victims as the massacre that took place in the Tokyo-Yokohama metropolitan area in about three years.

³⁷ For examples of such media reports on the March First Movement, see Asano Kenichi, "Futei no bōto to kimetsuketa nittei media: Kankoku San Ichi undō ha dou bōdō saretaka." *Hyōron shakai kagaku* 58 (Kyoto, 1998): 121- 134.

³⁸ *Hara Takashi Nikki*, v. 8 (Tokyo, 1998). Cited in Kūm Pyōngdong, *Nihonjin no Chōsenkan: so no hikari to kage* (Tokyo, 2006), 209.

Consequently, Hara sought a means to justify the use of increased Japanese military force to suppress the wide-spread protest against Japanese rule in the colony while avoiding embarrassment of the empire domestically and internationally. Hara recorded in his diary that he presented the following announcement as the reason why it was necessary to send additional troops to Korea:

We would be in trouble if such use of military force is understood simply as a punitive subjugation force. Therefore, we will announce that we do so in order to protect *good people* (*ryōmin*) from the violent behaviors of *a small number of the malcontent* (*ichibu futei no yakara*) in Korea.³⁹

Hara announced that although most Koreans do not oppose Japan's colonial rule, there are a few "malcontent" Koreans who are leading anti-Japanese riots; therefore it is indispensable to increase Japan's military force in the colony.

Since Hara's announcement, most of the subsequent Japanese newspaper articles that were published across Japan from March 1919 to August 1923 concerning the March First Movement and Koreans in general contained *futei senjin* in their headlines, and appeared under the section categories of "national movements" (*minzoku undō*), "national security" (*keibi*), and "labor movements" (*rōdō sōgi*) with headlines related to conspiracy, threat, robbery, anti-Japanese thought, secret meetings, secret codes, radicals, traitors, or bombs. While the root cause and the reality of Japan's brutal military rule in Korea behind the outbreak of the March First Movement rarely mentioned, most of these articles highlighted "ungrateful" Koreans' "crimes" in creating the threat to the peace and order of the empire. There were at least several hundreds of such

³⁹ Ibid.

newspaper headlines even within the following three year-period alone. Interestingly, however, many of those articles reported *alleged* crimes by those *futei senjin* rather than the *actual*.⁴⁰

The criteria for judging *futei senjin*, that is “wrong, malcontent, and rebellious Koreans,” were rooted in Korean efforts to restore national sovereignty at home.⁴¹ Thus, the frequent use of the term *futei senjin* reflected the increasing level of fear of widely organized independence movements that Koreans might be carrying out from within and without. Furthermore, such a possibility was manifested in the establishment of the Interim Government of Korea in exile in Shanghai immediately following the large-scale mass protest against Japan in 1919, which further signaled the potential for stronger resistance of Koreans against its colonial master. Assassination attempts targeting key colonial authorities and armed struggles against the Japanese military and police arose in the border areas of Korea, such as Manchuria, where Koreans had less strict surveillance of Japan. Following the annexation of Korea in 1910, and especially after the March First movement, many Koreans migrated to the northeastern borderland of Korea, China, and Russia, and this border region became one of the centers for increased military conflict

⁴⁰ For example, see the headlines such as “*futei senjin* entered with bombs, Tokyo threatened”(June 9, 1920), “Korean conspiracy revealed, many *futei senjin* secretly entered the capital city” (*Kōbe shinbun*, April 17, 1920), “Attempted bombing of *futei senjin*”(Yorozu chōbō, June 18, 1920), “*Futei senjin* conspiracy for independence movement” (Yorozu chōbō, August 24, 1920), “Organized *futei senjin*’s new plan revealed” (*Mōji shinbun*, September 3, 1920), “*Futei senjin*’s telegram with secret codes...” (*Osaka asahi shinbun*, December 17, 1920) and numerous other similar headlines following the year of the March First Movement.

⁴¹ Likewise, An Chung-gŭn, the assassin of Itō Hirobumi, Resident-General of Korea prior to Japan’s annexation of the country, questioned the meaning of “wrong and violent” when those who tried to protect their country and the independence of the nation were labeled as “rioters” in the late 1900s colonial Korea. Cited in Kŭm (1999), 21-22.

between the colonizers and the colonized. These movements were powerful enough to impress not only the colonial authorities⁴² but also the people in the metropole, as they learned about the news of Koreans' protest and armed struggle, which influenced the ways in which Koreans and "Koreanness" were associated with violence and danger in the minds of the metropolitans.

Japan's efforts to block Korean independence movements from being connected to Japanese radical revolutionary forces pushed the colonial force to establish punitive as well as preemptive expeditions against anti-Japanese, rebellious Koreans in Manchuria in 1920.⁴³ After 1920, the government also made concentrated efforts to crack down on both the blacklisted Koreans (now in the name of *futei senjin*)⁴⁴ and the "radicals" in the metropole. Thus, those who were labeled as "malcontent radical" Koreans, that is the "*Senjin* Reds" (*sekka Chōsenjin*), were the prime targets of the intelligence police. Both the radical Japanese elites and Koreans were challenging the authorities. If the Japanese and Korean radicals were to form a united front against the government, the matters would become more serious.

In this context, by 1921, the alleged *futei senjin*'s photos and handwritings were collected throughout the empire to crack them

⁴² For examples of the colonial authorities' prevalent use of the term *futei senjin* since March 1919, see v. 27 of *Kantōchō keimukyoku shiryō* (1919-1934; 80 vols), especially the section on "futei senjin dantai oyobi seiryoku chō"; Also see Chōsen Sōtokufu (GGK), *Taigai kyokuhai zaiigai futei senjin no kinjō*, 1921-1925 and the collection of the Government-General of Korea documents concerning the *futei senjin* crack-down plans in Kim Chōngju, *Chōsen tōchi shiryō series* v. 8, *Futei senjin*, (Tokyo, 1971).

⁴³ For example, see the example of an armed challenge to the Japanese office in the Hunchun area in Imai Seiichi, "Futei senjin to Hunchun jiken," in Fujiwara Akira et al., *Nihon kindai shi no kyojō to jitsjō* (Tokyo, 1990).

⁴⁴ Home Ministry, *Chōsenjin gaikyō*, 1920, 83.

down preemptively, using the police network and Korean language speaking spies. The Government General of Korea also researched the hometown of each of the identified *futei senjin* leaders, including those who continued their armed struggle against Japan. GGK drew a map of these locations and established the crack-down strategies. It also declared *futei* students dangerous objects that required stricter state surveillance.⁴⁵ It was for the authorities to prevent any potential cooperation between *futei senjin* and Japanese radicals, and such efforts to search for them went as far as Russian territories, Shanghai, the U.S., not to mention in their home front.⁴⁶ Soon, the term *futei senjin* became one of the most frequently appearing idioms in the newspaper and government reports representing Koreans, invoking the images of violent, radical, and fearsome Koreans who were threatening the Japanese authorities and its people.

Interestingly, as the images of *futei senjin* appeared frequently in official propaganda and newspapers in the metropole immediately following March 1919, some Koreans and those who were empathetic to the cause of Korean independence used the term in a subversive manner in their publications and activism. However, such efforts to reveal the contradictory nature of Japan's colonial policies toward Korea were put under harsh surveillance and could not continue, as in the case of the short-lived anarchist group *Futeisha* and its magazine *Futei Senjin*.⁴⁷ To them, *futeisha* meant those who resisted

⁴⁵ Chōsen Sōtokufu (GGK), *Imbodan kenkyō ichirannzu*, *Futei senjin shurei shuryō shusshinchi bunpozū*, *Bakudan tōteki hatsugen ichirannzu*, GGK documents, 1921. Also, see “Pullyōng haksang p’anjōng,” *Maeil shinbo*, May 16, 1919.

⁴⁶ “Introduction,” Kim, 1971.

⁴⁷ Quite comically, as a means to avoid the publication censorship, *Futeisha* used “Futoi” instead of “Futei” in the magazine title, thus meaning “fat” Koreans instead of “rebellious” Koreans.

against the authorities, and they used it for their journal title rather sarcastically. At the same time, as the colonial government's crackdown of *futei senjin* continued, the term gained popular perception in the colony as people associated it with the patriotic and heroic cause of the liberation of Korea from Japan's brutal colonial rule. However, the cost was great, the massacre of the so-called *futei senjin* immediately following the earthquake in the metropole in 1923.

***Futei Senjin* amidst the Earthquake, Rumor, and the Massacre**

As the fearsome images of Koreans spread, it took only a trigger for ordinary Japanese to act in response. On September 1st, 1923, the Great Kantō Earthquake brought over 100,000 deaths and the missing, marking a moment of unprecedented material and human destruction.⁴⁸ This biggest earthquake of twentieth-century Japan was soon followed by various rumors, including the impending arson, rape, and rebellious riots by malcontent Koreans. Such rumors created an urgent security threat, and to the government leaders with the shock of the 1917 Russian Revolution, the 1918 Rice Riots, and the 1919 mass protest of the colonized still haunting their minds, it was a time that required vigorous social control and maintenance of order. Accordingly, as early as the day following the earthquake the government imposed martial law. To the military leaders, it was an

⁴⁸ For further information on the scope of the material damage and the death toll caused by the earthquake, see Kaizōsha, ed., *Taishō daishinkasairoku* (Tokyo, 1924); Keishichō, *Taishō daishinkasaishi* (Tokyo, 1925); Ministry of Home Affairs, *The Great Earthquake of 1923 in Japan*, 2 vols. (Tokyo, 1926); Naimushō shakaikyoku, *Taishō shinsaiishi*, 2 vols. (Tokyo, 1926); Nihon sekijūjisha, ed., *Taishō jūni nen Kantō daishinsai nihon sekijūjisha kyūgoshi* (Tokyo, 1925); Tōkyōfu, *Tōkyōfu Taishō shinsai shi* (Tokyo, 1925); Tōkyōshi, *Tōkyō shinsai roku* (Tokyo, 1926-1927). Note that the recent scholarship tends to agree that the number of victims that appear in these original contemporary documents included double counting of some victims, thus reducing the figure from 140,000 to 100,000. See ch. 2 in Kitahara Itoko, *Kantō daishinsai no shakaigaku* (Tokyo, 2011).

opportunity to strengthen their status and authority in their struggle with the decreasing popularity of the military following the retreat from Siberia and the naval force reduction agreement with other world powers in 1922.⁴⁹ The rumors also evoked immediate “defense” against Koreans among ordinary Japanese in and beyond the disaster area. The result was the massacre of over six thousand Koreans in the Tokyo-Yokohama area perpetrated by Japanese soldiers, police, and vigilantes, mostly during the first week following the outbreak of the earthquake and the rumors.⁵⁰

Despite the absence of the usual means of communication in the midst of disaster, the rumors against *futei senjin* spread throughout Eastern Japan with surprising rapidity. The violent earth tremors stopped and the great winds and firestorms began to die down, but

⁴⁹ For further discussion on the rumors following the 1923 earthquake and the significance of analyzing rumors as a window to the contemporary Japanese society, see ch. 2 in Jinhee Lee, “Instability of Empire: Earthquake, Rumor, and the Massacre of Koreans in the Japanese Empire.” PhD dissertation (Urbana, 2004).

⁵⁰ Newspaper reports often indicated that the names and identities of the massacred Koreans were not known, as in the special edition of *Ōsaka mainichi* October 20 and 21, 1923. There is a wide range of discrepancy among the results of the “investigation” concerning the number of the massacre victims as in the case of: the Ministry of Justice (275), the newsletter of the Interim Government of Korea *Independence* (6,661), Tokyo Imperial University professor Yoshino Sakuzō (2,613), Kokuryūkai (722: Tokyo only), and the combination of the numbers that were published in the contemporary newspaper reports (1,464). Although it is extremely difficult to track down the exact Korean population in the Kantō area at the time of the disaster, most informed and widely accepted speculation among historians indicates approximately 20,000 Koreans living in the area as of the time of the earthquake in 1923 out of 60,000 in total across Japan. Among them the number of the massacre victims is known to be close to six thousand considering the estimated total population of Koreans in the area, the number who was interned by the authorities as well as returnees to Korea. For further discussion on the subject, see Kang Tök-sang, *Kantōdaishinsai gyakusatsu no keio* (Tokyo, 2003), 288-293.

people were terrified, not by the natural disaster but by the imagined impending attacks of arson, rape, poisoning, and organized riots by the subjugated in the center of the empire. Various records, including government documents, police officers' reports in different locations, and individual testimonies and memoirs indicate that the rumors began to prevail in multiple spots in the Tokyo-Yokohama area as early as the first night following the earthquake, and they spread to every town in the region after the second day of the disaster.⁵¹

The records of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department show how widespread such rumors were during the first few days following the earthquake. Eighty percent of Tokyo police precincts reported similar rumors, and the anxiety upon hearing such rumors compelled many Japanese citizens to search for *futei senjin* in their own towns and villages. For example, the Sugamo Precinct reported as early as the first day of the earthquake:

There was a rumor that said, "Koreans are trying to overthrow Tokyo as a whole, bombing, and murdering people with poison." People heard and believed it, so they organized the vigilantes and started persecuting Koreans.⁵²

On the second day of the earthquake, the Tomizaka Police Office reported:

Warning: Because *futei senjin* and others are poisoning the water source, it has become necessary to cut the water supply. They are poisoning the wells and food as well.⁵³

⁵¹ For example, see Keishichō, *Taishō daishinkasaishi*.

⁵² Keishichō, 1292.

⁵³ Keishichō, 1079-80.

As many survivors testified, there was a cry in the streets by government authorities and ordinary citizens alike warning against Koreans.⁵⁴ As waves of disaster refugees escaped to the outskirts of the metropolis along the major roads, the rumors and the subsequent reaction in the form of massacring Koreans spread quickly throughout the Kantō area. Until then, the alarm among the disaster survivors had been chiefly about surviving the quake and escaping from the fire. But when the rumors reached them, they were even more frightened than they had been by the earthquake they had just survived.

Jikeidan, or self-defense group, refers to the local security maintenance force that grew rapidly during the late 1910s and the early 1920s. The 1923 earthquake provided a watershed moment for such civilian organizations to exercise authority for the sake of “public security” facing the shortage of official police. One of the main purposes of these post-earthquake vigilantes was to patrol their hometown and take “appropriate” measures to preempt potential violence allegedly threatened by the “rebellious Koreans.” Numerous testimonies and official as well as individual records by the disaster survivors suggest that such “self-defense” vigilantism was widely practiced during the time of physical and social chaos. However, the total number of vigilante groups at the time of the earthquake is not clearly known, especially considering the arbitrary ways in which the criteria were established to label a defense group a systematic “organization.” There were vigilantes attacking Koreans following the spread of the rumors not only in the disaster-stricken area but across the nation.⁵⁵ As of mid-September, there were at least 1,145

⁵⁴ Ch’ae, P’ilgŭn. “Kwandong taejinjae tangshi rŭl chŭnggŏham.” *Sasanggye* (May 1964): 163.

⁵⁵ According to Yamada’s study of various contemporary newspapers across Japan, the existence of such anti-Korean vigilante organizations can be found well beyond the Kantō area ranging from Tōhoku (the Northeastern region) to Kansai (the

vigilante groups within the Tokyo metropolitan prefecture alone, which increased to 1,593 by the end of October. The total number of vigilante organizations throughout the Kantō area reached 3,689, close to half of which existed in the Tokyo metropolitan prefecture.⁵⁶

The activities by the vigilantes, often illegally armed with guns and Japanese swords or skewers, included setting up checkpoints to single out Koreans among the passers-by, either by asking for Japanese pronunciations which were difficult for Korean speakers, the lyrics of *Kimigayo* (the national anthem that praises the emperor), or observing their physical features such as the shape of the back of the head or the cheekbones, hair, and relatively tall height. Then, the vigilante groups either brought the Koreans to the police, military, or intern camps,⁵⁷ or killed them on the spot, thus making the vigilante activities not “defense” for themselves but an offense against the imagined enemy within.⁵⁸

To many children, the rumors and the following mayhem against Koreans were so traumatic that they, in response to schoolteachers’ surveys, listed *futei senjin* and the violent persecution

Southwestern region). See Yamada, 114-6. Also see his five volumes collection of the Japanese language local papers around the 1923 earthquake, Yamada ed., *Chōsenjin gyakusatsu kanren shinbun hōdō shiryō*. 5 vols (Tokyo, 2004).

⁵⁶ Yoshikawa Mitsusada. *Kantōdaishinsai no chian kaiko* (Tokyo, 1949), 43; Gendaishi no kai, ed. *Kikan gendaishi 9. Nihon gunkokushugi no soshiki teki kiban: zaiigō gunjinkai to seinendan* (Tokyo, 1978), 274.

⁵⁷ Yoshikawa records 3,412 for the number of Koreans whom the vigilantes handed over to the military or the police. See Yoshikawa, 52.

⁵⁸ The accounts of vigilante activities are included in various earthquake reports published by different organizations as well as newspaper reports during the first several months after the disaster, especially during the months of October and November when the official publication censorship was lifted following the Japanese government’s public announcement while the trials were going on concerning the vigilante violence related to Koreans.

of the Koreans among the top things that scared them most.⁵⁹ Remembering the first few nights she spent outdoors with her parents following the disaster, an elementary school girl saw the adults of the town getting nervous and excited. The “self-defense” vigilantes were spreading the rumors against *futei senjin*, which made her feel all the more terrified and helpless in her fear of attack by the savagery “enemies.” On the night she and her family were staying in the bamboo grove, she thought she “would die rather than endure the fear of attack by Koreans.”⁶⁰ Children’s fear of the imagined violence by *futei senjin* and the shock of observing such mass violence was one of the themes that frequently appeared in their writings and paintings when the schools reopened later that fall.⁶¹

Various theories have been developed concerning the origin of the rumors. It ranged from the political leaders, military, police, liberated prisoners, socialists, anarchists, and right-wing fanatics, to the witnesses of some random violence such as an accident caused by panicked horses in the streets in various parts of the earthquake-stricken area.⁶² Overall, the preserved documents suggest that the rumors began among the earthquake survivors and generally spread

⁵⁹ Tokyo shiyakusho and Yorozu chōhōsha eds., *Shinsai kinen juichi ji gojū bachi fun* (Tokyo, 1924).

⁶⁰ Quoted from a student writing in Kyōbashi Higher Elementary School in Tokyo, reprinted in Kūm Pyōng-dong, ed., *Chōsenjin gyakusatsu kanren jidō shōgen shiryō* vol.1 (Tokyo, 1989), 393.

⁶¹ For the analysis of one of the children’s drawings concerning their experiences of the earthquake and its aftermath, see Arai Katsuhiro, “Shōnen ga mita *Chōsenjin gyakusatsu*.” *Rekishi kagaku to kyōiku* (1997). For children’s writings, see Tokyo shiyakusho [Tokyo Municipal Office] and Yorozu chōhōsha, eds., *Shinsai kinen juichi ji gojū bachi fun* (Tokyo, 1924), 433-4. Also see the selected post-quake children’s writings in Kūm, ed., *Chōsenjin gyakusatsu kanren jidō shōgen shiryō*.

⁶² Hayakawa Tokuji, “Tsuma mo ko mo jigyo mo ubawarete,” *Ushio* (October 1974).

from Yokohama to Tokyo along the major routes taken by many of the disaster refugees. These highlight one of the key elements in the widely accepted rumors, revealing what was fearsome in the metropole: the pre-conceived images of Koreans as “malcontent” or “rebellious.” This representation of Japan’s Korean others in the metropole under the rubric of *futei senjin* revealed the dilemma of the contradictory simultaneous projects of Japan between differentiation and assimilation of the colonized: the very rationale behind the colonization of Korea based on the similarities between Japan and Korea *versus* ethnic hierarchy, with Japan on top of Korea based on their inherent differences.

The Phantom of *Futei Senjin*: The Imagined Inversion of Colonial Violence

A contemporary writer, Nakanishi Inosuke (1890-1958), aptly pointed out the ubiquitous negative images of Koreans as dangerous soon after the massacre, reflecting on the culture of the empire since the late 1910s across the metropole and the colony:

Look at the daily newspapers in Korea and Japan. What are they reporting concerning Koreans? I’ve never seen any article that talks about the natural beauty, artistic aesthetics, and grace of the people in Korea. They are reporting rebellious activities of so-called *futei senjin*, listing sensational words like bomb, gun, raid, and killing—and some papers even changed from *futei* to *fubei senjin* (“complaining Koreans”) lately I think that anyone with no previous knowledge of Korea and Koreans... who sees these papers will think that Korea is a country of bandits, and Koreans are as violent as wild animals Weren’t the rumors against Koreans at this time a natural explosion of such a Japanese subconscious? Wasn’t it

unreasonable fear of some sort of dark
phantom?⁶³

Indeed, the fear of violent attempts by Koreans captured the minds of many in the metropole immediately. The impact of such a colonial regime of representation was influential in creating the “phantom” images of Korean rebels in the midst of the disaster under the influence of imperialism. The fear and the effect of colonial representation of Koreans as violent were no longer limited to the ruling authority or a few imperial expansionists in Tokyo. These characterizations captured the minds of children and adults, men and women, and the entire political spectrum from left to right in the metropole. Such a colonial representation created and perpetuated the images of the subjugated people as “dangerous,” even to the degree that Japanese children would stop crying when their parents urged them to do so by telling them the “Koreans were coming.”⁶⁴ The images were also confirmed as they observed the public endorsement of the rumors and subsequent execution of the alleged *futei senjin* by the government as well as local leaders and vigilantes across the spectrum of their political or class disposition.

At the time of facing such a threat of impending attack, Japanese people practiced social inscription of their preconceived images of the Others on to the body of the persecuted for the purpose of distinguishing them from the community that needs to be protected. How people are perceived controls how they are treated, and the physical differences between Koreans and Japanese became crucial in such a moment of identifying the enemies within. The visible social markers were sought and found in Korean hair styles, facial features, and head shapes that had been observed and

⁶³ Nakanishi Inosuke, “Chōsenjin no tameni benzu,” *Fujin kōron* (November and December 1923). Reprinted in Kūm Pyōng-dong, ed. *Kantō daishinsai chōsenjin gyakusatsu mondai kankei shiryō* vol. 3, *Chishikijin no hannō*. 2 volumes (Tokyo, 1996), 267.

⁶⁴ Cited in Ch’ae, 163.

documented by the authorities earlier. Although they did not constitute any decisive genetic dissimilarity, nor the behavioral tendency toward violence in their character, these differences nevertheless constituted some of the prime means of developing and reinforcing the signs of difference. Such representation confirmed the colonial relations between Korea and Japan by publicly acknowledging and reproducing peculiar images of the colonized in the metropole.

Since by nature of rumors are collective, the imagination of the enemy within “us” required the rigorous task of differentiating those to be protected from those to be punished. To those who did not believe the rumors initially, the expected *disciplinary* responses to the rumors against imagined enemies posed the fear of the crowd. In the process of spreading the rumors and observing the post-quake turmoil, many of those who doubted the rumors initially appeared to have been either persuaded or compelled by the content of the rumors to embrace the shared concerns for “us.” Somekawa Ransen, a banker in Tokyo, laughed at the rumors on the second day after the quake, but soon realized that by the third day he, like his neighbors, had become increasingly thrilled at the vigilantes’ punishment of the alleged “enemies.”⁶⁵ Whether his reaction was a reflection of his newly found belief in the rumors against *futei senjin* or a disciplinary effect of the rhetoric of “us” and “them,” his changing responses led him to react differently as he faced the moment of practicing violence in the midst of the crowd.

An elementary school child wrote that he felt good and gained courage as he saw the vigilantes beating Koreans in his neighborhood. Other children expressed feelings of satisfaction and amusement when they observed the vigilante violence. Simultaneously, they showed sympathy toward the Korean victims of the brutal violence as well. Nevertheless, after the experiences of

⁶⁵ Somekawa Ransen, *Shinsai nisshi* (1923; repr., Tokyo, 1981).

such prolonged fear of the imagined enemies by hearing the rumors for many days in the midst of the turmoil, the children showed great relief in observing Koreans getting “arrested” before their eyes. It is not surprising, then, to see these ambivalent feelings of fear, anger, and sympathy toward Koreans in the eyes of children and many adults who were disciplined in their colonial views while responding to the rumors they had heard and the fictional “revenge” they saw in the murder of the subjugated people in their towns.

While some refused to be part of the collective violence, others were afraid to be excluded from the community, and thus from being “protected” from the imagined enemies. There was a sense of duty or requirement to perform as one of “us” in the vigilante activities. Also present was the threat that people felt signaling the violence that might be projected *onto themselves* by the collective body if they did not conform to the idea of persecuting *futei senjin*. Once they participated in the vigilante violence, some felt disillusionment at the violence itself while others were disciplined to commit themselves to mass murder by quickly *learning to believe* the rumors as truth in their collective “defense” against Koreans.

The mob psychology and peer pressure were so great that when police officers denied the Koreans’ impending attacks as unconfirmed, the vigilantes believed they could not trust the police to control the Koreans and refused to believe the innocence of the Koreans. The transcripts of the Fujioka vigilante trial recorded:

When the sheriff from the Prefecture Office had explained to the crowd that the Korean who was arrested was not a rebel, Kimura (the accused) claimed that the denial of the impending attack of Koreans in the police report was not true... and that to kill rebellious Koreans was *an*

appropriate measure of self-defense that needed to be rewarded.⁶⁶

In other words, the particular collective response to the rumors in the name of “self-defense” was powerful enough, not only to justify the violence against the innocent but also to claim reward from the society regardless of the reality. In this sense, not only the fear of the colonized but also the fear of the crowd became a significant source of sustaining and aggravating the rumors of *futei senjin* and the massacre among the participants and spectators of the vigilante violence.

Simultaneously, the public display of vigilante violence had the effect of “verifying” the rumors as truth, for the spectators of the vigilantes’ “defense” measures against the “captured enemies” educated them and confirmed their beliefs about their imagined “reality.”⁶⁷ Thus, the rumors became reality in their refusal to believe otherwise while they were sharing the cooperative practice of “self-protection” on behalf of the Japanese “public” (*kō*) against the imagined enemy within. These multilayered fears, which often worked simultaneously in the minds of the perpetrators justifying the collective violence, blurred the boundary between fact and fiction, and thus, reality and rumors in the metropole, reflecting the mechanism of cyclical violence under the influence of colonialism back home.

Kurosawa Akira (1910-1998), who later became a world famous filmmaker, recollected his troublesome experience in the

⁶⁶ Fujioka vigilante trial records at Maebashi District Court, November 14 1923, 2574-2575. For further discussion on the vigilante trials following the massacre, see ch. 3 in Lee, 2004.

⁶⁷ For example, the accused vigilantes’ defense in the trial transcripts from Saitama and Gunma prefectures indicates the gradual development of their motives in the mayhem while participating in group action, and being co-opted in the process of capturing and publicly “punishing” the *futei senjin*. For further analysis of the vigilante trial discourse, see Lee, 2008 and ch. 3 in Lee, 2004.

aftermath of the earthquake in his autobiography, describing both the unleashed fear of the colonized and the power of the crowd as important mechanisms in the spread of both rumors and participation in the violence:

With my own eyes I saw a mob of adults with contorted faces rushing like an avalanche in confusion, yelling, "This way!" "No, that way!" They were chasing a bearded man, thinking someone with so much facial hair could not be Japanese....Simply because my father had a full beard, he was surrounded by a mob carrying clubs. My heart pounded as I looked at my brother, who was with him. My brother was smiling sarcastically....⁶⁸

The episode illustrates the ways in which colonial representation was imposed on the physical body of the colonized, linking the arbitrary criterion and the imagined anti-colonial violence in an attempt to make the invisible enemy within as visible as possible. In the town where Kurosawa lived, as in many other communities, it was required for one male from each household to participate in the self-defense activities. Since his older brother and father dismissed the rumors and refused to join the vigilantes, Kurosawa himself had to represent his household, though he thought the reactions of the adults to the rumors rather odd:

In our neighborhood each household had to have one person stand guard at night. My brother, however, thumbed his nose at the whole idea and made no attempt to take his turn. Seeing no other solution, I took up my wooden sword and was led to a drainage pipe that was barely wide enough for

⁶⁸ Kurosawa Akira, *Something like an Autobiography*, Audie E. Bock, trans. (New York, NY: Vintage, 1983), 51. For Japanese version, Kurosawa Akira, *Gama no abura: jiden yōna mono* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1990 and 2001).

a cat to crawl through. They posted me here and said, “Koreans might be able to sneak in through here.” But there was an even more ridiculous incident. They told us not to drink the water from one of our neighborhood wells. The reason was that the wall surrounding the well had some kind of strange notation written on it in white chalk. This was supposedly a Korean code indication that the well water had been poisoned. I was flabbergasted. The truth was that the strange notation was a scribble I myself had written. Seeing adults behaving like this, I couldn’t help shaking my head and wondering what human beings are all about.⁶⁹

Rampant fear of the colonized disciplined the crowd to differentiate the imagined enemy from “us,” constantly drawing a line, even by such an arbitrary measure as a beard, turning children’s scribble and the marks of milk or newspaper delivery schedules on houses into fearful signs of imminent terror and conspiracy in their imagination. The arbitrariness was recognized by some of “us” but this recognition could not be spoken in public because “we” were expected to conform to the violence against the differentiated colonial Others.

Wachi Masataka was also stopped by the vigilantes as they observed the shape of his relatively flat back head. The vigilantes were sure that Wachi was a Korean based on his physical appearance. To make matters worse, Wachi was in a panic and could not speak any Japanese at their demand of pronouncing the Japanese words that Korean speakers supposedly find difficult to pronounce. As the police officer came, the vigilantes asked him: “Sir, this is a *futei senjin*.

⁶⁹ Kurosawa, 51-52. Also see Kurosawa’s video interview in *Kurosawa: A Documentary on the Acclaimed Director* (New York, 2002).

So, can we kill him now?” At this point, Wachi cried out that he was Japanese and survived the crisis moment.⁷⁰ Itō Seiichi also remembered that the vigilantes in Tokyo were looking for the signs of physical characteristics to distinguish Koreans, saying “Koreans have a long face” or “have few facial hairs.”⁷¹

Playwright Senda Koreya (1904-1994) also remembered the threatening moment of the earthquake, and witnessed the persecution of Koreans himself, surrounded by a violent crowd in Sendagaya, Tokyo:

On the second night after the earthquake, there were foolish rumors about Koreans who were allegedly on their way to raid the town to get revenge on the Japanese for their accumulated anger, and that sounded real....Then the vigilantes captured a Korean, bound him with wire, and harassed him in street. Everybody was shouting, “Kill! Kill!”⁷²

Senda’s real name was Itō Kunio, but when he was mistaken for Korean and experienced disillusionment with the outcome of the prevalent colonial relations between the colonizer and the imperial subjects—thus, sharing the critical experience of Kurosawa’s father and the famous filmmaker himself—Senda’s life was deeply affected by this violent experience to such a degree that he gave himself a new name:

In the midst of all that, someone suddenly hit me
from behind....It turned out that I was mistaken

⁷⁰ Nicchō kyōkai toyoshima shibu ed., *Minzoku no toge* (Tokyo, 1973), 38-39.

⁷¹ Nicchō kyōkai toyoshima shibu ed, 54.

⁷² Senda Koreya. Cited in Pae So, *Shashin bōkoku Kantō daishinsai Chōsenjin gyakusatsu* (Tokyo, 1988), 13.

for Korean, and they wouldn't believe me even though I denied it over and over saying, "I am Japanese...I am a student at Waseda University," with my student ID at hand. They asked me to say "a i u e o"⁷³ and recite the names of the emperors in Japanese history....Fortunately, there was a person who recognized me.... Afterward, my friends suggested that I take "Senda Koreya" (that is, "a Korean in Sendagaya") as my pen name.⁷⁴

It was a time when any Japanese had to be cautious not to be mistaken for a Korean, simply to survive. Indeed, the life-threatening experience of the power of the crowd was traumatic enough for the writer to change his name so that he would not forget this important moment of his life. A student from Kyūshū, Iwao Ken, had a similar experience in Mikawajima in Tokyo: Due to his Kyūshū accent in his language along with his student uniform, he was also mistaken for a *futei senjin* student.⁷⁵

Overall, the metropole in 1923 was in flux when rationality was most helpless. The culture of terror, fear, and violence pervaded. Torture was practiced, disseminated, and embodied through gossip and rumor against the colonized people. The torture on the bodies of Koreans revealed excesses that turned the projections of wildness and savagery back from the colonized onto the torturers themselves.⁷⁶ Not surprisingly, the confusion and contradiction in the

⁷³ The first line of Japanese alphabets.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Nicchō kyōkai toyoshima shibu ed., 52.

⁷⁶ Nicholas B. Dirks, *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 18.

mechanism of differentiating Koreans from Japanese caused the massacre of not only *futei senjin* but also at least fifty Japanese and two hundred Chinese who were mistaken for Koreans.⁷⁷ In some cases, the local populace attacked not only the police stations where Koreans were either temporarily interned or had sought refuge,⁷⁸ but also some Chinese and Japanese who were mistaken for Koreans.⁷⁹

For example, a contemporary newspaper article summarizes the atmosphere of the vigilante violence at one scene:

Because we believed that they were the ones who had killed our parents, children, wives and brothers, and robbed my house and caused me so much suffering, there could not be any peace . . . crying out “kill and get rid of them”. . . the police force could not interfere.... The people were hungry for the blood of *futei senjin*.... No use even if the victims were found to be Japanese.... Because of rampant cases of this sort, police had Japanese wear hair bands as a sign for Japanese.⁸⁰

Whether it was reflection or realization of the arbitrariness of such differentiated corporeal discourse of Koreans, the police eventually

⁷⁷ On Chinese victims of the 1923 massacre, see Niki Fumiko, *Shinsai ka no chūgokujin daigyakusatsu* (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1993) and *Kantō daishinsai chūgokujin daigyakusatsu* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1991). Also see Hiroshi Tahara. *Kantōdaishinsai to ō kiten jiken: mu hitsotsu no gyakusatsu hishi*. Tokyo: Sanichi shobō, 1982.

⁷⁸ Fujioka and Yorii cases are good examples. On the conflict between the police and the crowd in provoking the violence, see *Tōkyō asahi shinbun*, October 17, 1923.

⁷⁹ An example is the Fukudamura case. See Fukudamura jiken no shinsō henshū iinkai, ed. *Fukudamura jiken no shinsō* vols. 2 and 3. Chiba, Japan: Chibaken fukudamura jiken shinsō chōsakai. 2002 and 2003.

⁸⁰ Kahoku shinbun, September 7, 1923. Cited in Ch’oi, Sūng-man, *I p’al tongnip sōnōn kwa kwandong chinjae ūi silsang kwa sajōk ūūūi*. (Seoul, 1984), 42.

had to have Japanese wear hair bands as a sign for Japanese. If that did not work either, the crowd would beat up and knock one down until he or she groaned in their mother tongue, which “seemed to work the best.”⁸¹

The power of the phantom images of *futei senjin*, which began to penetrate the minds of the Japanese in the metropole following the news of Korean resistance against the colonial masters since the early twentieth century, continued to manifest in the cyclical violence against Koreans in Japan. Some participated in the violence because they uncritically accepted such images of “violent” Koreans. Others did so precisely because they “were well aware of the harsh treatment of Koreans”⁸² by Japanese and expected some kinds of counter-violence by the subjugated people.

The colonial structure of the empire and the reality of many colonized people’s lives made the rumors all the more credible and persuasive in the people’s minds back in the metropole. Furthermore, once the vigilante activities began, the mob violence took on its own life, disciplining the participants’ behaviors, if not their views on Koreans. These accepted fear and rumors among Japanese reflect not only the power of colonial representation, but also their acknowledgement of the political-economic violence that was done to Koreans. In a way, such recognition in the minds of Japanese provided a stimulus in fictional narratives of a power inversion between the victims and victimizers in the metropole. Thus, the violence of colonialism became projected onto Korean bodies, easily rendering the colonized subjects “imagined victimizers” through this doubled projection of colonial violence. This phenomenon of the Japanese massacre of *futei senjin*, which I call *the imagined inversion of colonial violence*, effectively sheds light on the nature and the

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ch’oi, 100.

mechanism of colonial violence, which is perpetuated cyclically not only because of what “they” did or looked like, but because of what “we” have done to them within the structure of racialized imperialism.⁸³

Nameless, Voiceless, Faceless Koreans: *Futei Senjin* in the Colonial Archive

Following the 1923 massacre of Koreans, the term *futei senjin* was censored in all publications, a ban which lasted about fifty days. Upon realizing that things had gone too far with the rumors and that the rampant killing of Koreans had to stop, such censorship policy was, in a way, an attempt to calm things down to reduce the harm against the public order. Nonetheless, the authorities ultimately failed to rectify the situation by acknowledging the government’s own responsibility in proliferating the rumors and killing the Koreans by using its military and police power while encouraging the rest of the citizens to join them in their “self-defense.” Therefore, as in the case of the ways in which the March First Movement was reported back in the metropole as mob violence (*bōdo*), overall the fear of and the images of violent and ungrateful *futei senjin* remained strong as the rumors were considered at least partial truth with the existence of such rioters. The alleged existence of the enemy within who were rebelling against Japan and Japanese seemed to have provided a powerful justification for massacring over six thousand Koreans both in the case of the March First Movement and the Kantō Massacre of Koreans. Thus, once the publication ban was lifted on October 20, 1923, the words *futei senjin* reappeared both in official and popular discourses, and the believability of the “rumors” about Koreans was never denied.⁸⁴

⁸³ Lee, 2004 and 2008b.

⁸⁴ It is interesting to note that by the time of Pearl Harbor, the term *futei* was mostly used to describe Japan’s most urgent enemies, Americans and British in newspapers.

On the same day when the Prime Minister announced his appeal to exercise self-control and keep the nation's peace, a secret meeting was held at the Police Department of the Emergency Earthquake Relief Bureau with representatives of the Army, Navy, Ministry of Home Affairs, Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department, and the Martial Law Command. They discussed strategies to minimize domestic and international criticism of the Japanese government's responses to the rumors and the subsequent violence in the metropole. The secret memorandum, "Chōsen mondai ni kansuru kyōtei" [Accord regarding the Korean Problem] reads:

1. Each government official must do his best to propagate the following as full fact and truth concerning the Korean problem [*senjin mondai*] in dealing with all domestic and international sectors both now and in the future. Accordingly,
 - a. Relay the following as facts to every general government official and any external sector;
 - b. Disseminate the following as a result of factual investigation in dealing with newspapers

Following:

"There were some instances and attempts of violence by Koreans, but currently the danger had completely passed. All the general populace of Koreans are gentle and obedient. Some small number of Koreans suffered from persecution in the midst of chaos, but many Japanese, too, suffered from such persecution. Since all of this had

happened under a circumstance of confusion, there was no massive persecution of Koreans.”

2. Investigate and confirm the instances of violence that Koreans committed or attempted to commit following the points below:

a. Investigate thoroughly rumors against Koreans and affirm those

as fact as much as possible;

b. Investigate thoroughly the basis of the rumors;

c....

d....

e....⁸⁵

f. Look for effective measures to stop Koreans and others from spreading negative publicity against Japan in Korea and Manchuria wherever they reach whether it is Japan or elsewhere.

g. Propagate, particularly overseas, that it was the “Reds” among both

Japanese and Koreans who instigated the unruly violence in the background.⁸⁶

The agreed policy of the authorities was also delivered to the Governor-General of Korea, Saitō Makoto. Visiting Tokyo to deal

⁸⁵ Points c through e are missing or censored in the original document.

⁸⁶ Kang and Kūm, 80. Kang Tōk-sang and Kūm Pyōng-dong revealed this secret meeting record which became newly available in the process of opening the prewar government documents in the 1960s. See the preface and introduction of Kang and Kūm, 1963 as well as the introduction in Kūm, 1989.

with the massacre of Koreans, Saitō appealed to the Japanese public in a newspaper:

During this disaster there were rumors about Koreans in the Tokyo-Yokohama area which made people feel insecure. I feel very sorry and cannot bear [this happening]. Among the large number of Koreans there were, in fact, some unruly ones; this I also regret. Those Koreans, however, are only a small portion. I declare that not all Koreans are unruly....⁸⁷

While appealing to the Japanese for their paternal “grace” for the colonized for the sake of smooth rule over the colony, Saitō confirmed the alleged crimes of Koreans following the government’s decision at the secret meeting.

Maruyama Tsurukichi (1883-1956), a chief official in the Governor-General’s Office under Saitō in Seoul and former Chief of the Special Higher Police (*tokkō*), also confirmed the policy from the imperial government in his dealing with the issue in Korea. He harshly rebuked Koreans for their alleged insurrections during the post-quake confusion as an unforgivable crime. He stated that the riots of those *pulhyang chosōnin* (*furyō chōsenjin*; bad Koreans) seemed clear from the result of thorough investigation of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department in the metropole. Maruyama highlighted Koreans’ sins against the earthquake-stricken metropolitan residents, and thus preemptively blocked any further discussion or protest concerning the persecution of Koreans: *they deserve it*, if not more.⁸⁸ The same logic was also implemented to keep the press from reporting on the persecution of Koreans by appealing to their sympathy for the residents of the earthquake-stricken

⁸⁷ *Asahi shinbun*, September 13, 1923. Quoted in Allen, 1996, 75.

⁸⁸ Maruyama, 53-55.

metropole. In a threatening tone, Maruyama warned Koreans that “the world would condemn Koreans as the cruelest people who did the most inhumane thing to the disaster refugees,” and “Japanese—with whom Koreans finally were able to make a desirable relationship—would turn them down.”⁸⁹

The results of the “thorough investigation,” as planned according to the confidential accord of September 5, were announced on October 21 the day after the press ban was lifted concerning Koreans. It reported that the police filed charges against a total of 140 Korean suspects. However, a closer look reveals that eighty six percent of them were unknown, had run away, or died. For this reason they had never been arrested, while of the remaining, sixteen had been caught for stealing food and other property. According to Yamada, between September and November of that year, there were over 4,400 cases of such crimes under the extraneous circumstances after the disaster. Only one person was charged for possible insurrection because he possessed some explosive material. Nevertheless, his motive of possessing the material was never clarified, not to mention having no evidence of revolt or treason.⁹⁰ In the case of Yokohama, too, although there was a thorough investigation, criminal charges were filed against a total of forty Koreans or so, most of whom were never identified or apprehended. Most of the cases against suspects, therefore, were dropped for lack of evidence.⁹¹ Above all, those *futei senjin*’s alleged crimes which “caused” the initial rumors and killing, thus the Martial Law and the

⁸⁹ Maruyama, 55.

⁹⁰ Ministry of Justice, “Shinsai go ni okeru keiji jihan oyobi soreni kanrenn suru jikô chôsasho” [Reports concerning the criminal offenses and related matters after the earthquake] 1923. Reprinted in Kang and Kūm, 420-432; Yamada, 2003, 91-96.

⁹¹ Weiner, 1989, 183.

preemptive mass killing, were never proved valid in any legal sense. The massacre victims appeared nameless and voiceless in those police reports, vigilante trial records, and even in their tomb stones for those who were fortunate enough to have a tomb after being massacred.

Perhaps it is not so surprising to see the result of sanitized official records concerning the massacre of Koreans in the Japanese archive. By definition, an archive refers to either a place in which public records or historical documents are preserved, or the materials themselves. The Latin root of *archivum*, stemming from the Greek *archeion* embodies the meaning of a government house, rule, or the government. Therefore, the term *archive* itself “reveals its proximity to law, power, and rule—a connection that is obscured by the more recent idea of the archive as a place for public use and scholarly activity.”⁹² Unfortunately, the Korean archive, too, reveals the lack of information on the event due to the censorship that existed under Japanese rule as well as the lack of document preservation from the colonial era. What is lost in this body of archival materials, then, are the names, voices, and faces of the Korean massacre victims. Despite some persistent demands for further investigation and a truthful account of the violence from in and outside of the empire, the post-massacre responses of the government authorities remained minimal without revealing the responsibility. As a result, there was a lack of clarification while the images of the rumors and vigilante violence were apparent and vivid.

Nevertheless, despite the general consensus on excusing the vigilante violence and the imperial narrative control over the meanings of the mayhem for the reconstruction of the imperial metropolis, there remained various forms of records of the violence, often accompanied by the critical voices toward the ruling authority

⁹² Betty Joseph, *Reading the East India Company, 1720-1840: Colonial Currencies of Gender*. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 5.

and in unexpected places.⁹³ For example, following the rumors and the mayhem, the school children expressed their fears and trauma concerning the violence both allegedly done by Koreans *and* by their own local vigilantes. Despite the fact that the main focus of the exhibition remained on the continuing efforts for Japan's reconstruction after the quake, the children's narratives and paintings made an entry into the Tokyo Metropolitan Reconstruction Memorial Hall. Their paintings in the Memorial Hall were submitted in response to their teacher's assignment to paint "the scariest thing at the time of the earthquake." Matsuyama Tatsuo, a ten year-old boy from one of the most devastated areas in Tokyo, drew the armed police officers in white summer uniforms and the soldiers in khaki uniforms, who were checking on the passers-by one by one. These scenes of "hunting Koreans" (*Chōsenjin gari*) were some of the scariest moments in the eyes of children at the time of the earthquake and the aftermath, and Koreans in their contemporary writings, such as diaries or school essay assignments, appear mostly as *Senjin* or *Chōsenjin* [Figures 1-5].

⁹³ For Korean language source materials as well as some of the key non-conventional archival source materials concerning the Kantō Massacre, see ch. 5 in Lee, 2004.



Figure 1. Matsuyama Tatsuo (Honyoko Elementary School), *Check Points for the Passers-by*. Crayon. Original housed in the Reconstruction Memorial Hall(Fukkō Kinenkan), Tokyo.



Figure 2. Collection of children's drawings for the first anniversary of the Great Kantō Earthquake (Sakamoto Elementary School, Tokyo. Original housed in the Reconstruction Memorial Hall, Tokyo.



Figure 3. *The soldier and night time patrol by a vigilante*. Collection of children's drawings for the first anniversary of the Great Kantō Earthquake (Sakamoto Elementary School, Tokyo). Original housed in the Reconstruction Memorial Hall, Tokyo.





Figures 4-5. Collection of children's earthquake memoirs. Yokogawa Normal Elementary School. Original housed in the Reconstruction Memorial Hall, Tokyo.

The violence was too vivid to be ignored, not only by the children but also by artists who survived and witnessed both the natural and manmade disasters. While photographs or printed matters were strictly censored avoiding mentioning of the massacre of Koreans, individual drawings and paintings were easier to create and preserve once artists decided to capture what they had seen in the form of drawings or paintings. These visual records include a contemporary entrepreneur's picture scroll which recorded a scene of the harassment of Koreans as *futei senjin*. The text tells the content of the rumors and the violent reaction to the alleged *futei senjin* by the Japanese citizens. It shows the direct involvement of police as well as a citizen in cracking on Koreans (in white summer uniforms). There are five passers-by who must have been witnesses of the scene. One

wonders where the police force is dragging the four Koreans whose faces are intentionally left blank. [Figure 6].

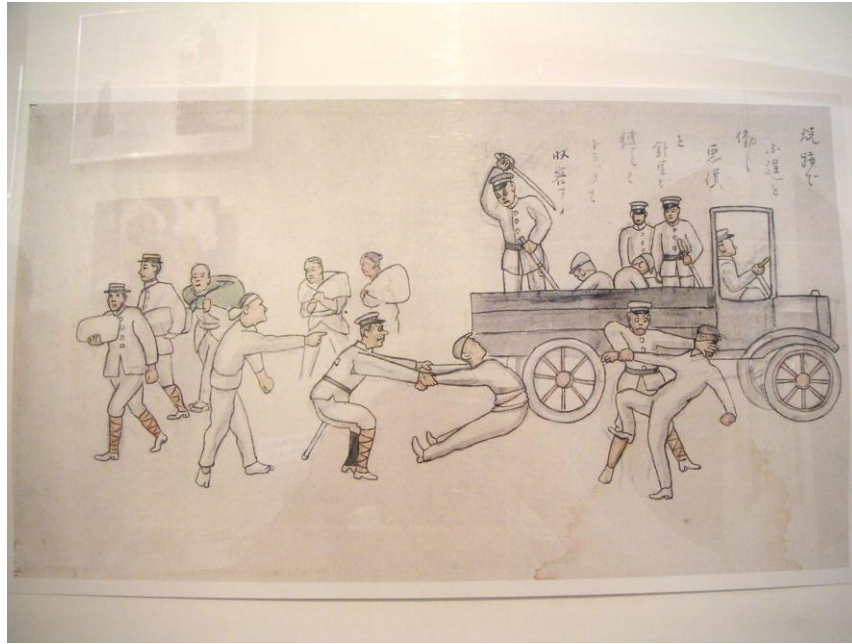


Figure 6. A contemporary Japanese entrepreneur's picture scroll of the 1923 Earthquake. Original housed in the National Museum of Japanese History, Japan.

Finally, there are extraordinary multiple sets of picture scroll by a young artist, Kayahara Hakudō (1896-1951). He was originally from Chiba Prefecture and when the earthquake took place he was training as a traditional Japanese painting (*Nihonga*) artist at his mentor's mansion located in the Shinjuku area. He narrates the story of the earthquake followed by the post-quake massacre of Koreans [Figures 7-8]. Entitled *Tōto daishinsai kaganroku* (The Visual Records of the Great Earthquake in Eastern Capital), the scrolls include the

scenes of the persecution of Koreans by war veterans, police, and numerous Japanese mobs in Kōtōku district in Tokyo. Tada Toshitsuka, an antiques and arts dealer in Osaka, discovered one of the first picture scrolls on the earthquake by Hakudō in the midst of another devastating earthquake in the Hanshin-Kobe area in 1996. The scenes portray the armed people arresting and killing the Korean victims as if one can almost hear the sound of the mobs. Hakudō worked on these grand scale picture scroll set between the time of the earthquake in September and finished the three volume set by December of 1923, which is in the Hakudō family's possession. The artist also worked on at least another three volume set sometime before February 1925, which is now housed in the National Museum of Japanese History, Chiba. The vol. 3 of this later set was discovered in the Kobe area in western Japan, and had been in display at the Ōsaka Museum of Human Rights as soon as the scroll was discovered in January.⁹⁴ Here, the people are portrayed more or less as a mass, both the victims and victimizers. However, the Korean dresses that the two victims are wearing on their way to the place of their final persecution seem to suggest that the artist was making a point about the victims' identity—however voiceless they appear.

⁹⁴ For further discussion on the discovery process of the scrolls, see Nakama Keiko, "kakareta *Chōsenjin gyakusatsu to sakusha* Kayahara Hakudō, Kantō daishinsai emaki kara miete kita koto," *Osaka jinken hakubutsukan kiyo* 1997 and also Lee, 2013.



Figure 7. Kayahara Hakudō, *Visual Records of the Great Earthquake in Eastern Capital (Tōto daishinsai kaganroku)*. Picture scroll vol. 3. Private Collection of Hakudō family.



Figure 8. Kayahara Hakudō, *Visual Records of the Great Earthquake in Eastern Capital* (*Tôto daishinsai kaganroku*). Picture scroll vol. 3. Original housed in the National Museum of Japanese History, Chiba..

These visual texts, in one way or another, indicate the significance of these artists' experience of the massacre of Koreans weighed heavily in their minds. They also demonstrate the close involvement of the soldiers, police, war veterans, and local fire brigades and other vigilante members in the massacre of alleged *futei senjin*. These actors were often identified by their uniforms and other clothes. While the Koreans still seem to remain largely nameless, faceless, and voiceless in these depictions, at least their existence in these visual records indicate the clear presence of the massacre memory in the minds of those who experienced the violence. Indeed, the Japanese state worked so hard and meticulously to argue that it was the vigilantes who carried out the massacre and not the

government. Yet, thanks to accumulated research in the post-war era, as well as these glimpses of the trace of the alleged *futei senjin* in the materials outside the conventional archive, we now know that the massacre itself cannot be denied, along with the government's responsibility.⁹⁵ Indeed, throughout the postwar era, the Japanese grassroots movement rose up to address this issue of the nameless, faceless, voiceless Korean massacre victims, confronting the deniers of the Kantō massacre of colonized Koreans.⁹⁶

Conclusion

The colonial rhetoric of assimilation was at odds with the efforts to differentiate Koreans from Japanese physically and culturally. Such efforts to produce a colonial taxonomy of the invisible enemy within, in turn, concretized what it meant to be "Japanese" and where to draw the boundary of the "Japanese public" in the reality of the multiethnic modern empire. Ironically, further assimilation efforts and the rhetoric of inclusive politics proliferated while categorizing Koreans in a new "scientific" language of racism, ethnology, ethnography, eugenics, criminology, and medicine.⁹⁷ Despite the frequent contradictions in the descriptions of their "unique" physical

⁹⁵ For example, for the evidence of the military involvement in the massacre, see Matsuo Matsuo Shōichi, ed. *Kantō daishinsai seifu riku kaigun kankei shiryō*. 3 vols. (Tokyo, 1997). For the evidence of the government authorities' involvement, see Kūm Pyōng-dong ed., *Chōsenjin gyakusatsu kanren kanchō shiryō* (Tokyo, 1991).

⁹⁶ For instance, see the introduction to these citizens' volunteer organizations to bring justice to the massacre victims and their descendants in their commemoration publications, including Kantō daishinsai kinen gyōji jikkō iinnkai, ed., 1993 and 2003.

⁹⁷ For example, see GKG, *Chōsenjin no shishō to seikaku*, 1927; On the development of ethnology in the Japanese empire, Kevin M. Doak, "What Is a Nation and Who Belongs? National Narratives and the Ethnic Imagination in Twentieth-Century Japan." *American Historical Review* 102:2 (1997), 283-309; On eugenics and sexology, Sabina Frūhsück, *Colonizing Sex: Sexology and Social Control in Modern Japan* (Berkeley, CA, 2003).

and cultural features as well as the irony in these mechanisms of the inclusion and exclusion of the empire, such rhetoric justified Japan's continuing rule over Korea by making use of colonial representations of the subjugated people as "petty" yet gravely "political," therefore, *futei*. The government's efforts in "scientific" research on the features of the colonized people were justified for the sake of improving the national character of the Korean race, which had *potential* to be assimilated to Japanese, as Japan belonged to the "honorary white race" due to its accomplishments and attributes in joining the imperial club of world empires.⁹⁸ Such colonial knowledge was utilized for the spider-web like network of police surveillance used to capture the anti-Japanese and therefore "dangerous" *futei senjin*.

The concentrated efforts and unsuccessful attempts to differentiate Korean bodies from Japanese revealed the dilemma that imperialism brought not only to the colony, but also back home in the metropole. The increasing invisibility of the colonized Others in the metropole intensified colonial anxiety among the authorities and the Japanese public alike. In addition, such images of violent and dangerous Koreans became intensified, especially going through the crisis moments in Japan's rule over its resistant colonial subjects.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ The Japanese Adam Smith, Taguchi Ukichi, for example, famously argued that the Japanese is not "yellow" race, but "white" because Japan's achievements in the early twentieth century does not correspond to the attributes given to the yellow race. Thus he suggested further social engineering to reveal the inherent "whiteness" of modern Japanese. This is a classic example which reveals the predicament of the problematic racial taxonomy and uncritical acceptance of such in the spread of the modern empires. I would like to thank Leo Ching for bringing this point to my attention.

⁹⁹ For example, in addition to various problems in the history textbook description concerning the 1923 massacre of Koreans which still obfuscate the historical truth and the issue of responsibility, the discussion of *sangokuujin* (the third nationals) and *kenkanron* (Korea bashing discourse) as well as the negative images attached to *zainichi* Koreans continue to reveal the fear of the subversive Koreans in postwar

The killing of imagined and alleged *futei senjin* was justified with impunity, as in the case of the government rhetoric following the massacre of Koreans both in 1919 and in 1923. Although the detailed methods vary, the same logic still permeates today's political controversies over the issue of the Kantō Massacre. For example, a pogrom can be excused because there *were futei senjin*, Kudō Miyoko argues; the Kantō massacre by the state and the people is justified since it was a self-defense measure against terrorists and rebels against Japan.¹⁰⁰ Another example of the continuing legacies of the obfuscated truth concerning the colonial violence against *futei senjin* includes a controversy over the Tokyo metropolitan school district's high school textbook revision concerning the Kantō Massacre. As of January 2013, that the education committee of Tokyo removed the word "massacre" in the description of an epithet dedicated to the Korean massacre victims in Yokoami Park in Tokyo was discovered because they believe what happened to those *futei senjin* is different from what "massacre" means.¹⁰¹

As Japan today strives to focus on its recovery from the devastating Great East Japan Earthquake two years ago, the tragedy of those who were persecuted in the name of *futei senjin* might have been forgotten in the midst of post-quake "reconstruction" campaign. However, as we commemorate the ninetieth anniversary of the Great Kantō Earthquake this year, there seem to be some important lessons we can take from the post-Kantō earthquake situation. Fear, imagination, and sense of shame can work powerfully in the minds of the people who lived through the traumatic natural and man-made

Japan testifying the long lasting legacies of imperialism and colonialism in the contemporary era.

¹⁰⁰ Kudō Miyoko, *Kanto daishinsai : Chōsenjin gyakusatsu no shinjitsu* (Tokyo, 2009).

¹⁰¹ *Asahi Shinbun*, January 25, 2013.

disasters, and these same affects can drive us to different ways of thoughts and actions from ninety years ago. So, how are we to understand the meanings and lessons from the disasters from the past for today? How responsibly can one share and read the information in and beyond the archives under the influence of colonialism and imperialism? What are the colonial legacies in the culture of the post-colonial era, and how can we fight against its continuing influence in our ways of thinking and living? How can we assure that reconstruction without reflection is a path to destruction? The question of Fanon certainly remains true to many Koreans and Japanese today: “colonialism is fighting...to maintain the identity of the image it has of the Algerian and the depreciated image that the Algerian has of himself...”¹⁰² Now, what kind of images do Tokyoites want from their past, to whom and for what kind of future?

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¹⁰² Franz Fanon, *Studies in a Dying Colonialism*, (New York, 1970 [originally 1959]), 30.

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