

The Theory of a Government Plot?: The Massacre of Koreans in Japan in September 1923

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Immediately after the Second World War, I had the opportunity of meeting Ōkubo Tomejirō [大久保留次郎], the man allegedly responsible for manufacturing rumors about a Korean riot and for causing the subsequent mass murder of Koreans in 1923. Ōkubo, who was a minor official — a subordinate of Mizuno Rentarō [水野錬太郎 Home Minister] — in the Home Ministry at the time of the earthquake, did not deny it. Although Ōkubo did not deny having started the 1923 riot and the murder of Koreans, he replied that he had no alternative in order to maintain Japanese safety. Ōkubo continued saying that if he had not done it, a revolution might have occurred in Japan.

Shin Hong-shick 申鴻湜, 1983.¹⁾

Introduction

From today's viewpoint, the persecution of Koreans following the Great Kanto²⁾ Earthquake of 1923 might be judged as a 'crime against humanity.' Owing to unsubstantiated reports about a Korean riot circulated following the earthquake, members of the Japanese army, police, and a number of vigilante corps lost their cools and embarked upon a relentless hunt for any Koreans who might be responsible for the reported riots. As a result, over 6,000 innocent Korean residents were killed.

In the early morning of 1 September, heavy rain, accompanied by a south wind, hit the Tokyo and Kanagawa regions. The rain finally stopped at about 10:00 a.m., and a bright sun appeared in the sky. As noon approached, housewives were busy preparing lunch as usual. At approximately two minutes before noon, a series of violent tremors registering as much as 7.9 on the Richter scale suddenly hit much of the densely populated and heavily industrialised areas of the Kanto region. The total number of deaths attributed to the earthquake and the subsequent fires reached 91,224 and an estimated 381,090 houses were entirely burnt to the ground.³⁾ The damage to government and other public offices densely concentrated in the Tokyo metropolis was also significant. It ranged from the Department of Home Ministry to the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department and the Central Telegraph Office, and to many foreign embassies in the area. The government thus virtually ceased to exist.

It was in the midst of this devastation that rumors about a Korean riot began to circulate among the masses. Faced with widespread rumors about Koreans setting fires, poisoning wells and throwing bombs, in the afternoon of 2 September 1923, the Japanese government imposed "martial law" (*kaigen rei* 戒嚴令) on both the "City of Tokyo" (*Tōkyōshi* 東京市) and the five surrounding districts to maintain public order

and peace.⁴⁾ The area affected by martial law was extended to adjacent prefectures over the following days, but the actions of the civilian and military leadership added to the already confused situation in the devastated area. They lent credence to the unsubstantiated reports of Korean uprisings and fostered their dissemination.⁵⁾ These actions caused anti-Korean feelings to erupt throughout the country: not only did they lead to a proliferation of vigilante corps throughout much of the Kanto region, but they also became the defining factors in transforming already existing social groups whose principal object was caring for victims of the earthquake into ‘armed mobs.’⁶⁾ Checkpoints manned by soldiers and members of these vigilante corps were established in many cities to investigate the movement of Korean subjects. Language was the main criterion used to distinguish Koreans from Japanese. Any trace of a Korean accent marked a person for extermination. Some Koreans were haunted and slaughtered on the streets, while others were harassed in police stations or other places of relative safety in the name of protective custody.

What or who was responsible for starting rumors about Korean rioting? Rumors of a Korean riot provided the immediate cause of the mass murder that followed. Thus any study of this atrocity must examine the origin of reports about violent acts by Koreans. This attempt, however, seems almost impossible, for the Korean rumor might have its origin in more than two people.⁷⁾ Not only is it likely that each rumor developed independently and became a torrent of the Korean rumors throughout the country, but one can just as well infer that anti-Korean rumors were already widespread in the general public before the authorities facilitated their dissemination. Investigations into the root-cause of the Korean rumors cannot be accomplished satisfactorily until the sufficient evidence shed new light on the question.

On the other hand, analysis of the actions taken by the civilian and military leadership during the first critical days following the earthquake leads us to become suspicious about the involvement of the Japanese government in the Korean affairs. As will be examined, the theory of a government plot — that the Japanese elite intentionally manufactured and circulated anti-Korean rumors in the interests of the government — is highly possible because: ① the Japanese elite tended to define Koreans as both to be biased and feared; ② their steps to sanction unsubstantiated reports of a Korean riot operated in such a way as to enrol the Japanese public in the service of the authorities and played it off against the whole Korean community in Japan; ③ thus the Japanese government was able to prevent a perceived repetition of popular uprisings; ④ after the incident, the high-ranking officials tried to create and disseminate an impression that Koreans had actually engaged in disturbing acts of violence.⁸⁾ The evidence does not point to the government’s conspiracy theory, but given these facts, one can argue that anti-Korean rumors took shape in official resentment toward Koreans, rather than merely being a spontaneous generation among the general public.

Despite considerable research into the massacre of the Koreans in September 1923, the issue of the root-cause of Korean rumors has rarely been treated as a major topic by academics. Many scholars apply the theory of a government plot to explain the question, but left open wide scope for further research into the subject.⁹⁾ This has left a void in the historiography of the Korean community in Japan. Analysis of official

resentment toward Koreans and their actions during the first critical days following the earthquake enables us to provide a more convincing explanation of how anti-Korean rumors took shape in official minds. This article is an attempt to fill that void and illuminate much about the theory of a government plot. It will be argued that the Japanese elite tended to define the Koreans as both to be despised and feared and these strong anti-Korean sentiments contributed to their willingness to use rumors about Korean uprisings. Drawing extensively on the varied contemporary discourses, which clearly express official resentment toward Koreans, this article raises important questions about how the authorities came to embrace anti-Korean rumors, which set off the massacre of Korean residents in Japan.

Prejudice and Fear

Despite the brief reign of Emperor Taisho 大正天皇 (1912–1926), this era became famous as it encompassed enormous social and economic changes throughout Japan. From a small agricultural nation, Japan suddenly rose, within just one generation, to become East Asia's first modern power. In addition, joining the allies in the First World War against Germany in 1914 allowed Japan to seize German-held territories in China and the Pacific and the war-industry boom helped to give her an opportunity to enter easily into the colonial markets of Asia, which had been cut off from Europe. By the end of the First World War, Japan had successfully established her empire over East Asia, stretching from Taiwan to the Kuriles, southern Sakhalin and Manchuria, including Korea, which was annexed in 1910. Japan's dreams of becoming a rich nation with strong army (*fukoku kyōhei* 富国強兵) seemed to come true.

However, the years that followed the First World War were disappointing to the Japanese government. The outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the subsequent Rice Riots (*Komesōdō* 米騒動) in Japan the following year¹⁰ seemed to both Japanese imperialists and capitalists to be events that fundamentally threatened Japan's Imperial System (*Tennōsei* 天皇制). In addition, the March First Korean Independence Movement of 1919 symbolised how enthusiastic the Korean people were for their independence from Japan. Influenced by the foreign-inspired ideology of socialism, the Japanese working class too began to form their own self-interest groups in order to resist further exploitation by Japan's ruling elite. In 1921 Japanese workers established the Japan Federation of Labour (*Nihon Rōdō Sōdōmei* 日本労働総同盟), aiming at improvement in workplace conditions, and in the following year the Japan Farmers' Union (*Nihon Nōmin Kumiai* 日本農民組合) was founded to protect farmers. Furthermore, in 1922, inspired by the independence movement in Korea, the Burakumin, outcaste people, too formed the Japan Leveling Society (*Nihon Suiheisha* 日本水平社) in order to abolish various kinds of institutionalised discrimination within Japanese society.

These social movements were all considered contrary to the national polity (*kokutai* 国体)¹¹ that was based on Japan's Imperial System. They also reinforced a long-standing and obsessive fear of foreign-inspired radicalism among the Japanese ruling elite.¹² Such anxieties were not only based on political, but psychological concerns that the diffusion of alien and radical ideologies might sully the theory of Japanese uniqueness based on culture, race and the superiority of their national polity itself.¹³

The initial response of the government toward the rumors about a Korean riot following the Great Kanto Earthquake, viz., the encouragement of the formation of vigilante corps and the introduction of martial law, were the most significant reflections of this uneasiness.

Immediately after the circulation of the rumors about a Korean uprising, the civilian and military leadership urged the Japanese citizens to form vigilante corps to disperse the reported Korean rioters. This measure was not only designed to cope with the Korean problem, but also to control the Japanese masses, especially those from the lower classes who had previously constituted the main force both in the Hibiya Riots (*Hibiya Yakiuchi Jiken* 日比谷焼討事件) of 1905¹⁴⁾ and the Rice Riots of 1918.¹⁵⁾ Since, in the aftermath of the earthquake, the Japanese masses were viewed as having the potential to repeat past riots, the Japanese authorities absorbed them into vigilante corps by lending credence to the rumors about a Korean riot. Consequently, they were enrolled in the service of the authorities and used as chauvinistic agents against the reported Korean rioters.¹⁶⁾ Meanwhile, martial law served to strengthen the government's control over both the "Koreans requiring surveillance" (*yōshisatsu Chōsenjin* 要視察朝鮮人) and Japanese progressives. It was under martial law that the Japanese authorities charged the noted Korean radical Pak Yōl and his wife with plotting the assassination of the emperor; and executed a group of Japanese socialists and the famous anarchist Ōsugi Sakae 大杉栄.¹⁷⁾

The way in which these attitudes came to a head in the government during the first critical week of September 1923 can best be illustrated by briefly looking at the respective actions of two senior officials, one in the Metropolitan Police Department (*Keishichō* 警視庁) and the other in the Home Ministry.

Akaike Atsushi 赤池濃, the Inspector General of the Tokyo M.P.D., (*Keishisōkan* 警視總監) was reportedly the man who pressed most emphatically for the imposition of martial law.¹⁸⁾ In retrospect, Akaike wrote about his role in the introduction of martial law: "Confronted with reports of increasingly mad firestorms in the capital, ... I requested Home Minister, Mizuno Rentarō 水野錬太郎, through Chief of the Bureau of Police Affairs in the Home Ministry, Gotō Fumio 後藤文夫, the imposition of martial law." He further stated: "What most concerned me at that time was the possibility that the shortage of food might lead to unrest and that civil discontent might erupt into some kind of rioting in the metropolis."¹⁹⁾

Mizuno Rentarō, Home Minister in the Katō Tomosaburō Cabinet 加藤友三郎内閣 (12 June 1922–2 September 1923), whom Akaike had asked to impose martial law, later also recalled: "On the following day [2 September], public anxieties were increasing in the capital. I felt that there was no predicting what might happen if we did not take decisive measures. I thus decided to impose martial law to pacify the unrest among the people."²⁰⁾

A pattern of human behaviour at a time of unrest seems to come from the mesmerising functions of habit both in action and thought. These senior officials had a common experience in dealing with civil disturbances in the past. In 1918 Mizuno, as Home Minister, had been instrumental in the government's handling of the Rice Riots. He was also a strong supporter of the District Committeeman system (*Hōmeniin* 方面委員), which was established by the government to contain social unrest in urban areas.²¹⁾

Perhaps, because of this experience, Mizuno was appointed as the Civil Governor of Korea (*Seimu Sōkan* 政務総監) under Governor-General Admiral Saitō Makoto 朝鮮総督海軍大将斎藤実 in September 1919, when the March First Korean Independence Movement posed a threat to Japanese colonial rule.²²⁾ Akaike Atsushi, then Governor of Shizuoka Prefecture, was one of the senior officials whom Mizuno persuaded to accompany him to Korea. He was appointed by Mizuno as the Director of the Police Affairs Bureau (*Keimu Kyokuchō* 警務局長) in Korea.²³⁾ On their first day in Korea, 2 September, they were confronted by an assassination attempt against Governor-General Saitō by a Korean throwing bombs at the Seoul Railway Station.²⁴⁾ It would be hard to deny that Mizuno and Akaike, faced with the vigorous protests of Korean nationalists, had developed a kind of “Koreanophobia” marked by fear that Korean extremists capable of attempting acts of sedition were harmful to Japan’s imperial interests.²⁵⁾ It was under Mizuno and Akaike that the Korean Independence Movement was ruthlessly suppressed.²⁶⁾

This Koreanophobia was still well alive in the *Weltanschauung* of Mizuno and Akaike, the two senior officials directly responsible for public order following the Kantō Earthquake. Akaike showed his Koreanophobia in his reflections about the rumors concerning Koreans engaging in acts of sedition. He stated, “When I received reports that 2,000 Koreans had crossed the [Tama] River and were committing violent acts in the city [of Tokyo], I was soon convinced that extremists in the Korean community were fomenting unrest, ...”²⁷⁾ Akaike immediately concluded that *certain* Koreans were the instigators of the reported riot. Similarly, Mizuno, while defending the imposition of martial law as a means to prevent the Japanese people from causing any sort of turmoil, admitted that it also was to deal with the reported Korean uprisings. He described his feelings as follows:

On the following morning [of 2 September], while people were still in a state of panic, unconfirmed rumors of a Korean riot arose ... I soon sent for the Inspector General of the Tokyo M.P.D. [Akaike Atsushi] and asked him about it. He replied that there were many rumors circulating. After taking everything into consideration, I came to the conclusion that the only course of action available was to impose martial law.²⁸⁾

For those officials most concerned with the civil disturbance because of their experiences of the Rice Riots and the Korean independence movement, the confusion during the critical hours following the earthquake seemed nothing less than an impending incarnation of their worst nightmares. In view of this, their desire to impose martial law as soon as possible to prevent a perceived repetition of the civil riots and their initial response to rumors about a Korean uprising become highly understandable.

Rumors and Massacre

Rumors about a Korean riot were first reported to the Tokyo M.P.D. and the Kawasaki Police Station 川崎警察署 in Kanagawa Prefecture 神奈川県 at midday on 1 of September.²⁹⁾ This first report said, “Many fires are being lit by both Japanese

socialists and Koreans.” Similar reports were submitted to other police stations in the Tokyo and Kanagawa areas the same day. Although some of these rumors on investigation proved to be false,³⁰⁾ a trickle of reports about violent acts by Korean malcontents became a torrent by the late afternoon of the following day.³¹⁾ There may be several reasons for this, but the main one lay in the actions taken by the civilian and military leadership. In the aftermath of the earthquake, the Japanese authorities took extreme measures to lend credence to these Korean rumors and facilitate their dissemination.³²⁾ On 2 September, for example, Gotō Fumio, Chief of the Police Affairs Bureau within the Home Ministry, sent a message by courier to the naval transmission station at Funabashi in Chiba Prefecture.³³⁾ This telegram was then relayed to all prefectural governors the following morning. It read in part:

Groups of Korean extremists are taking advantage of the disaster in Tokyo and attempting acts of sedition. In fact it is reported that some carry bombs, spread oil and set fires alight. Partial martial law has already been imposed in Tokyo. We, therefore, request that you increase surveillance in all areas and take rigorous action in coping with the activities of *Senjin* [鮮人].³⁴⁾

As the limited communication system in devastated areas was restored, the Home Ministry hastened to inform adjacent local authorities of the situation in Tokyo, requiring them to take decisive measures to maintain public order in their jurisdictions. According to remarks made by Nagai Ryōtarō 永井柳太郎 in the National Diet, during the afternoon of 2 September, the Home Ministry gave an instruction to the Saitama Prefectural government 埼玉県庁 which in turn proceeded to relay the following advice to the county officials under its jurisdiction:

It may be that a number of *futei Senjin* [不逞鮮人] who are taking advantage of the situation and committing acts of violence in Tokyo are crossing from the Kawaguchi side into Saitama Prefecture. ... Due to the weakness of the police at the present time, I encourage you to cooperate with local chapters of the “Imperial Reserves” (*Zaigō Gunjinkai* 在郷軍人会), “Fire Brigades” (*Shōbōdan* 消防団) and “Youth Association” (*Seinenkai* 青年会). In case of an emergency, you should immediately take suitable measures ...³⁵⁾

While messages of this nature continued to be circulated throughout the country, in devastated areas the authorities took steps to disseminate rumors about a Korean riot. The Tokyo M.P.D. began putting up posters and distributing leaflets, urging the still bewildered and incredulous public to be vigilant and to cooperate with the police since bands of Korean extremists were committing acts of sedition.³⁶⁾ For instance, a big poster appeared on 2 September on a wall in Koishikawa 小石川, Tokyo City, alongside an official announcement informing the people of the formation of the new Yamamoto Gombei (Gonnohyōe) cabinet 山本権兵衛内閣. It stated:

BE CAREFUL OF WELL WATER! As among the groups of Koreans and socialists there are those who would attempt seditious acts. To prevent these acts,

people are urged to be ever vigilant and cooperate with the police. Even women and children are poisoning wells.³⁷⁾

Similarly, the Imperial Army acted as a catalyst to disseminate information regarding the dangers posed by dissident groups within the Korean community. Official records show that around 10:00 a.m. on 2 September on the wall outside the Army Academy 陸軍士官学校 at Ichigaya 市ヶ谷 a notice had been posted warning of possible attacks by groups of armed Koreans.³⁸⁾ The Army also distributed leaflets throughout much of the Tokyo area, urging the public to be vigilant since attempts had been made by a small group of Korean malcontents. Toida Michizō 戸井田道三 recalled it in the following way:

I remember a leaflet which I saw at home in Aoyama in Tokyo city. On the notification it was written that Koreans poisoned wells and marked their targets ... It was a military officer living nearby who distributed it to my house. I had later heard that he was an officer at the “[Army] General Staff Office” (*Sambō Honbu* 參謀本部).³⁹⁾

On the other hand, both the police and the Imperial Army issued instructions to the men under their respective commands to use weapons against any Koreans reported to be committing acts of insurgency. On 2 September the Tokyo M.P.D. sent an order to the police chiefs of Shibuya, Setagaya and Shinagawa Police Stations, instructing them to be aware of any Koreans committing acts of sedition: “You should mobilise your officers on the roads and annihilate those Korean traitors.”⁴⁰⁾ Meanwhile, Army Lieutenant General Moriyama Saneyoshi 森山守成, the Commander of the Imperial Guard Division, issued the following instructions to troops under his command: “At this time of great panic, you must prevent the people from taking advantage of the disaster and disturbing public order. If they refuse to obey after receiving a warning, you may use your weapons.”⁴¹⁾ These instructions proved to be the trigger, which set off a relentless hunt for Koreans. As Ecchūya Rūichi 越中谷利一, a member of the 13th regiment of the Narashino Cavalry 習志野騎兵团, recalled:

It was approximately 2:00 p.m. [2 September] when we arrived in Kameido, and the victims of the earthquake were like an overflowing flood. As the first action of the regiment, we searched trains. Officers drew swords and inspected both inside and outside every train. Every train was overcrowded ..., and Koreans who were among the passengers were dragged off. They were immediately thrown under our swords and bayonets. From the midst of the Japanese victims came a tempestuous chorus of “Banzai!, Traitors [*Kokuzoku* 国賊]!, Kill all Koreans!” Following this bloodshed, our regiment embarked upon a hunt for Koreans from the evening until nightfall.⁴²⁾

These official notifications and actions were effective enough to provoke anti-Korean riots among the Japanese population. Accepting the rumors about a Korean riot sanctioned by the Japanese authorities, they began to follow in the footsteps of the

military officers. As Kubono Shigeji 久保野茂次, an army soldier at that time, described it: “No sooner had we arrived than members of local reservists began to kill Koreans, and abandoned their bodies to the river. A band of twenty Koreans, to my knowledge, were massacred [by them].”⁴³⁾

As the violence of the vigilante corps posed a threat to social order and public safety, the Japanese government found it necessary to contain their anti-Korean activities.⁴⁴⁾ On 3 September the civilian and military leadership prohibited the possession of any weapons by members of the vigilante corps, while denying many of the previously reported incidents involving acts of sedition committed by Koreans as no more than rumors.⁴⁵⁾ The authorities also agreed that, although the incidents involving members of vigilante corps should not be overlooked in legal terms, due to many extenuating circumstances the scope of arrests and prosecutions would be only limited to extreme cases.⁴⁶⁾ Moreover, those arrests should be delayed in light of the present social unrest.⁴⁷⁾

Although estimates vary, government reports indicated that by the end of November the official investigation had led to the arrest of between 600 and 700 members of vigilante corps throughout the Kanto region.⁴⁸⁾ Not all the accused were indicted. According to statistics compiled by Matsuo Takayoshi, only 125 were prosecuted in the trials; two were acquitted, ninety-one received suspended sentences, and thirty-two actually served their sentences.⁴⁹⁾ The maximum penalty imposed on them was a four-year sentence; only two received this penalty. Similar investigations concerning the trial cases of vigilante corps members have been conducted by Yamada Shōji 山田昭次. Of the eighty-five accused of committing murder of Koreans in Saitama Prefecture, seventy-four received suspended sentences, and in only eleven cases (12.9 per cent) were the formal sentences actually carried out.⁵⁰⁾ Yamada has also claimed that of the eighty-two accused of attacking the Honjō 本庄 and other police stations and killing Koreans who were housed in these stations, roughly half (thirty-nine, 47.6 per cent) were exempt from prison sentence; thirty-six received suspended sentences; and three were found not guilty.⁵¹⁾ A police officer of the Funabashi Police Station 船橋警察署, Chiba Prefecture 千葉県 revealed the way in which the authorities conducted an investigation into members of the vigilante corps for the murder of Koreans:

From around 20 September [1923], the authorities began to prosecute members of the vigilante corps and others committing murder. ... We travelled on business to Urayasu 浦安 and Gyōtoku 行徳, and took a number of suspects [to the Funabashi Police Station.] A judge, a prosecutor and some clerks, all of whom came from Chiba City, waited at Restaurant *Imageya* in Funabashi City and summoned the suspects one by one. The prosecutor began an investigation on one of the suspects by saying, “I will give you a suspended sentence.” The suspect thus freely confessed his acts. Then the judge declared: “You killed two [Koreans], did you not? So, I will give you a two-year prison sentence and a three-year suspended sentence, understood?” The judge also asked the suspect, “are you entering an appeal?” The suspect replied, “no, I will not, sir.” “OK, you can go home.” ... We called these investigations “one-day trials” (*ichinichi saiban* 一日裁判).⁵²⁾

The number of Koreans massacred by members of the Imperial Army, the police and members of the vigilante corps throughout the Kantō area following the Great Kantō Earthquake remains the subject of considerable controversy. According to a survey carried out by correspondents of a Korean newspaper, it was estimated that in the Kantō area alone a total of 6,661 Koreans were slain following the earthquake;⁵³⁾ whereas a Home Ministry report limited the figure of those Koreans killed by Japanese to just 303.⁵⁴⁾ This lower estimate by the Police Affairs Bureau, however, was later challenged by Fuse Tatsuji 布施辰治, a lawyer belonging to the Civil Liberties Legal Association (*Jiyū Hōsōdan* 自由法曹団) who conducted his own investigations into the number of Koreans killed. In his findings he stated that there had been as many as 20,000 Korean residents in the Kantō area at the time of the earthquake and, according to the survey, there were only 12,000–13,000 whose whereabouts were able to be confirmed after the Korean hunt. Fuse therefore argued that the government's estimate of 300 was far too low, and concluded that the whereabouts of at least 6,000 to 7,000 Koreans could not be traced.⁵⁵⁾

On 22 October, 1923, the Japanese government announced to the press that the police were filing charges against a total of twenty-three Koreans. According to an article in the *Jiji Shimpō* 時事新報, of the twenty-three Koreans, the surnames of sixteen were unknown, and thus they were never caught.⁵⁶⁾ The identities of the remaining suspects were also doubtful: one committed suicide by taking poison; two ran away after firing shots at the members of vigilante groups who had caught them; and four were never apprehended.⁵⁷⁾ Similarly, the result of the investigation by the Justice Ministry concerning the crimes committed by Koreans was open to question. A Justice Ministry report stated that forty-nine crimes had been committed by Koreans in the Tokyo and Yokohama 横浜 areas during the first two weeks of September 1923; namely, two murders, three acts of arson, four burglaries, and forty miscellaneous offences.⁵⁸⁾ Of the more than 250 suspected Koreans rounded up by the authorities, the police were only able to identify and charge twenty-five; moreover, the police were unable to identify nine of the Japanese victims.⁵⁹⁾

What or Who was Responsible for Anti-Korean Rumors

While government reports claimed that there had been reckless behaviour on the part of a small minority of Korean malcontents following the earthquake, they significantly remained silent on the important question: what or who was directly responsible for starting rumors about a Korean riot, and causing the subsequent mass murder of Koreans. Yamaguchi Seiken 山口正憲, a labour union activist in the Yokohama area, was the only man accused of starting rumors about a Korean riot,⁶⁰⁾ but he was arrested as the leader of Korean malcontents on 10 September.⁶¹⁾ On the other hand, the evidence strongly suggests that the responsibility for the dissemination of anti-Korean rumors lay with the actions taken by the Japanese authorities during the first days following the earthquake. This, coupled with the respective careers of Mizuno and Akaike and the implausibility of official reports concerning the crimes committed by Koreans, later led some commentators, such as Kang Tōk-sang 姜徳相, and Saitō Hideo 齋藤秀夫, to become suspicious about the involvement of the government. These commentators have argued that the Japanese government

intentionally manufactured anti-Korean rumors in an attempt to impose martial law and thus maintain public safety.⁶²⁾ On the other hand, Michael Weiner is of the opposite view. In *The Origins of The Korean Community in Japan 1910–1923*, Weiner firmly rejects the theory of a government plot because:

Given the immediacy of the crisis which confronted men like Mizuno and the disruption of nearly all means of communication, this conspiracy theory must be regarded as merely speculative. Not only is it likely that martial law would have been imposed even in the absence of anti-Korean rumors, but, given the overall situation, the Government can hardly be criticised for expecting the presence of the army to have a calming effect.⁶³⁾

As Weiner points out, confronted with the terrible catastrophe, officials like Mizuno and Akaike who were responsible for internal security might have “lost their cool.” Given the food shortage and social unrest, it is likely that even if there were no rumors about a Korean riot, martial law would have been imposed soon after the earthquake, for one can infer that its imposition would be necessary to maintain social order and public safety.

However, the motion to introduce martial law met with a strong opposition within the government and was once withdrawn in the afternoon of 1 September. Amendments were made to the bill as a result of Akaike’s strong arguments and martial law was imposed the next day.⁶⁴⁾ Gotō Shimpei 後藤新平, who succeeded Mizuno as Home Minister in the Yamamoto Gombei Cabinet formed on 2 September, later complained of the measures carried out by the previous Katō Tomosaburō Cabinet. Gotō argued that since the earthquake constituted neither an external war nor an internal riot, the imposition of martial law had been without precedent.⁶⁵⁾ His statement was indicative of the background against which the imposition of martial law was forcibly and arbitrarily determined.

Martial law was put into effect on the evening of 2 September. This suggests that the government’s decisions to introduce martial law were made by the late evening of the day before or at least the early morning of that day. It was during this period that the police and the Imperial Army actively began to disseminate rumors about Koreans poisoning wells, throwing bombs and raping Japanese women. As the proposal of martial law had been turned down once, Akaike might have needed other, more powerful, reasons to convince his colleagues within the government to agree to its introduction: he used a series of rumors about Korean disturbances to get it introduced. Moreover, given the significant role that the police played in facilitating the spread of the rumors during the period in question, it can also be inferred that Akaike ordered his junior officers to foster their dissemination in order to put pressure on other government officials that the imposition of martial law was the only course available to deal with impending Korean riots.

Haunted by the experiences of the past, both Mizuno and Akaike duly overreacted. While the rumors about a Korean riot were investigated and found to be utterly groundless, these senior officials intentionally fostered the anti-Korean rumors in order to impose martial law as a means of strengthening their control over the masses.

Following the promulgation of martial law, they also issued, on 7 September, Imperial Ordinance No. 403, known as the Peace Preservation Act (*Chian iji rei* 治安維持令).⁶⁶⁾ Both of these ordinances were quite effective in not only exercising control over the publication of newspaper and magazine articles which were considered to be opposed to the government's handling of the Korean affair,⁶⁷⁾ but in stifling any sort of social movements among the Koreans and Japanese. During the Korean witch-hunt, the Japanese government set up temporary "reception centers" in many parts of Japan to safeguard the lives of Korean residents. According to a Home Ministry report, 23,715 Koreans were housed in these centers after the earthquake.⁶⁸⁾ It appears, however, that this "protective custody" was confused with "preventive detention." Among the first to be interned were those "requiring surveillance" like Pak Yōl 朴烈,⁶⁹⁾ and in Chiba Prefecture, the police themselves committed mass murder of Koreans in their protective custody.⁷⁰⁾ The police also seized nine members of the Nankatsu Labour Association 南葛労働会 in Tokyo and took them to the Kameido Police Station 亀戸警察署 where they were murdered, either by members of the police or by soldiers assigned to maintain public order in the area.⁷¹⁾

Moreover, in order to examine the government plot theory, attention should be given again to the first rumor reported to the Tokyo M.P.D. and the Kawasaki Police Station 川崎警察署, which said, "Many fires are being lit by both Japanese socialists and Koreans." It needs to be noted that there were only two reports concerning socialists committing subversive acts,⁷²⁾ and for the most parts, socialists tended to join vigilante corps, engaged in social activities in their neighbourhoods.⁷³⁾ Given these factors, it can hardly be possible that the first rumor about acts of sedition by socialists and Koreans spontaneously appeared among the Japanese public.⁷⁴⁾

As has been demonstrated in this article, it was Japanese officials most concerned with the political activities of socialists and Koreans during the years prior to the earthquake who took the lead in circulating rumors about Koreans. Such government uneasiness is best illustrated by a discussion held at the Police Department of the Emergency Earthquake Relief Bureau (*Rinji Shinsai Kyūgo Jimukyoku Keibibu* 臨時震災救護事務局警備部) on 5 September. Present at this meeting were representatives of the Imperial Army, Navy, Home Ministry, the Tokyo M.P.D. and the Martial Law Command (*Kaigenrei Shireibu* 戒嚴令司令部).⁷⁵⁾ They discussed the best course for limiting both international and domestic criticism of the government's handling of the Korean issue during the preceding week, and ways of creating a 'plot' by both Koreans and Japanese socialists. In a secret memorandum entitled "Policy Concerning the Korean Problem" (*Chōsen mondai ni kansuru kyōtei* 朝鮮問題に関する協定), they agreed:

- (a) To investigate and, if possible, confirm incidents in which Koreans attempted to commit acts of sedition;
- (b) To take suitable measures to prevent Koreans from spreading rumors [unfavourable to Japan] in either Korea or Manchuria;
- (c) To create and disseminate an impression, particularly overseas, that both Koreans and Japanese "Reds" had actually engaged in disturbing acts of violence.⁷⁶⁾

Here we quote at length from Serizawa Mitsuyoshi's 芹沢光治良 book, *Lost Persons* (*Ushinawareta Hito* 失われた人). Although this is a novel, the story was based on the experiences of Serizawa himself at the time of the earthquake, and the following observations within the work are indicative of the forces at work in the minds of Japanese officials during the first critical week of September 1923. It reads, in part:

..., the government's proposal for the Peace Preservation Law was rejected in the Diet last year [1922], was it not? But, the formation of the Japan Communist Party was disclosed in June this year, and this led to the mass arrest of its members. The police also rounded up communist members of a revolutionary labour union in Nagoya, did they not? I assume that the development of communism and syndicalism added fuel to official anxieties. Therefore, ... the Japanese government imposed martial law on 2 September, and five days later issued the Peace Preservation Act. This act was the de facto Peace Preservation Law. It may be that the authorities seized this opportunity to suppress and persecute socialists.

It also added that:

Banzai Jiken [万歳事件 the March First Korean Independence Movement] occurred just three or four years ago, did it not? These demonstrations were so dreadful that the Japanese authorities were barely able to suppress them. Since then, I suppose, they came to embrace a suspicion and anxiety that Koreans might repeat their resistance to Japanese domination. Therefore, they lost their cool in a state of confusion following the earthquake, spreading [anti-Korean] rumors, and urging the formation of vigilante corps ...⁷⁷⁾

Some may argue that rumors about Korean uprisings emanated spontaneously from the Japanese public because they too shared anxieties about the Korean community in Japan. Others may insist that the responsibility lay with those Japanese who committed crimes in devastated areas and then spread rumors that these crimes were committed by Koreans.⁷⁸⁾ Both of these suggestions may be true. But doubt is cast upon the ability of the general public to manipulate the latent Koreanophobia, which affected many Japanese at the time. While there is no decisive evidence that the Japanese government manufactured rumors about a Korean riot in order to impose martial law, it was the authorities most concerned with the Korean problem, who knew about public prejudice against and fear of the Korean minority, who took the lead. The following extract from Hasegawa Nyozeikan 長谷川如是閑, a highly acclaimed liberal journalist at the time, indicated this:

... there is no doubt that the recent rumors about a Korean riot have their origins in the minds of those people most concerned with the Korean problem from the viewpoint of 'occupation' (*shokugyō* 職業), 'interests' (*shumi* 趣味) or 'ideology' (*shisō* 思想). It is wrong to suggest that rumors emerged from an 'ignorant public' (*gumin* 愚民). In 'civilised countries' (*bummeikoku* 文明国), for the most part, rumors emanate from 'well informed men' (*jijōtsū* 事情通). As ancient rumors developed

mainly from magicians who belonged to the intellectual class at the time, an ignorant public can never manipulate a psychology which lies dormant in the minds of the majority population.⁷⁹⁾

Ōkubo's words, which were quoted at the beginning of this paper, are indicative of his admission that the Japanese government manufactured and circulated rumors about a Korean riot following the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. Prejudice and fear, which affected many Japanese officials at that time, encouraged the use of inhumane measures against powerless Koreans. In the Kanto Earthquake, it was neither Japanese extremists nor other minority groups, but the Korean community that was targeted as the great menace to social harmony and was assigned the role of scapegoat by the authorities through which the unease and anger of the indigenous population were to be directed in the interests of the government of Japan.

The politically vulnerable Koreans, in the meanwhile, would not understand the Koreanophobia so prevalent in the society into which they had immigrated. So it was possible for this minuscule minority to be attacked without a full and thorough appreciation of what had happened to them. They could only wonder how their fellow men could treat them in this way when their only crime was being Korean. The Koreans could neither rely upon legislative measures, nor provoke international debate, but there could be no doubt that the Great Kanto Earthquake sowed the seeds of Korean hatred for government's officials, particularly Mizuno and Akaike. At no time was their resentment toward both Mizuno and Akaike more explicitly disclosed than on 1 September 1924, when the following leaflet was distributed by the Corps of Koreans in Japan (*Zai-Nichi Senjindan* 在日鮮人団):

[Officials of the Home Ministry] made use of Koreans [to prevent an internal riot] because they knew that negative images of Koreans have been ingrained in the minds of Japanese citizens through the propaganda of bourgeoisie officials, intellectuals and journalists. The Home Ministry also realized that even if Koreans were murdered, the Koreans could neither rely upon legislative measures, nor provoke international debate. Akaike Atsushi [Inspector General of the Tokyo M.P.D.] and Mizuno Rentarō [Home Minister] were well aware of this, for they have suppressed a great number of our comrades by any means since the March First Korean Independence Movement. ... [Therefore], the final targets of our struggle are Mizuno Rentarō and Akaike Atsushi. It was they who were directly responsible for causing and facilitating the mass murder of Koreans [following the earthquake].

Corps of Koreans in Japan
(*Zai-Nichi Senjindan* 在日鮮人団), 1924.⁸⁰⁾

Conclusion

The principal explanation for the anti-Korean rumors that came to a head in the massacre of 1923 is that these rumors took shape in official resentment toward the Korean community in Japan. Japanese high-ranking officials, particularly Mizuno and Akaike, defined the Koreans as ungrateful and anti-Japanese through their past

experiences. They were aware of the Korean hatred for the Japanese government, which encouraged the Koreans, on the one hand to assimilate completely, while despising them as an inferior race. Thus, when faced with the state of the confusion following the earthquake, the Japanese elite were already predisposed to target the Korean minority as the great menace to social harmony, which called for still more forceful demonstration of Japanese strength and superiority. These perceptions provoked a distorted view of Koreans that saw them as inferior against whom any action was permissible. In this view, the theory of a government plot — that the Japanese ruling class manufactured and spread rumors about Korean rioting in order to maintain social order and public safety — becomes highly understandable.

In sum, official resentment toward Korean people illuminates much about the massacre of the Koreans following the Great Kanto Earthquake, for it offers unique insights into the question of how anti-Korean rumors crossed official minds. A study of their anti-Korean sentiments enables us to provide a more convincing explanation about how they came to embrace anti-Korean rumors in the interests of the government. In fact, the issue of the Korean rumors cannot be fully explained without a thorough appreciation of anti-Korean racism engrained in the thinking of many Japanese elites.

End Notes

- 1) Shin Hong-shick, “Shūyōjo kara tsuredasarete” [“収容所から連れ出されて Placed in Harms Way”] in Chiba ken ni okeru Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin Giseisha Tsuitō Chōsa Jikkō Inikai [千葉県における関東大震災と朝鮮人犠牲者追悼・調査実行委員会 A Memorial Survey Executive Committee for Korean Victims in Chiba Prefecture at the time of the Great Kanto Earthquake], ed., *Iwarenaku Korosareta Hitobito* [いわれなく殺された人びと The Unjustifiable Slaughter of Persons] (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1983), 236 (hereafter referred to as *Iwarenaku Korosareta Hitobito*).
- 2) Kanto is an area of Japan including Tokyo and the adjacent prefectures. Today, they are Kanagawa, Chiba, Saitama, Tochigi, Gumma, Ibaragi Prefectures and Tokyo.
- 3) Keishichō Hensan Inikai [警視庁編纂委員会 The Metropolitan Police Department Compilation Committee], ed., *Keishichō Shi, dai 2 kan: Taishō hen* [警視庁史第二卷：大正編 The History of the Metropolitan Police Department, vol. 2: A Chapter of Taishō Period] (Tokyo: Keishichō Hensai Inikai, n. d.), 408. Hugh Borton presents different figures, stating that: “An estimated 157,000 persons had lost their lives.” See Hugh Borton, *Japan’s Modern Century From Perry to 1970* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1970), 348.
- 4) Martial law was extended to include Kanagawa Prefecture on 3 September, and Chiba and Saitama Prefectures on the following day.
- 5) “Saitamaken Tsūtatsubun” [“埼玉県通達文 A Notification of Saitama Prefecture”] in *Fukuoka Nichinichi* newspaper 福岡日日新聞, 19 October 1923. Quoted in Kang Tōk-sang 姜徳相 and Kūm Pyōng-dong 琴秉洞, *Gendaishi Shiryō 6: Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin* [現代史資料第六卷：関東大震災と朝鮮人 Source Materials on Contemporary History, vol. 6: Great Kantō Earthquake and Koreans] (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobō, 1967), 145 (hereafter referred to as Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin).
- 6) According to a Home Ministry report, approximately 3,700 vigilante corps were organized in the Kantō area in the first week of September, with the figure in Tokyo alone estimated at 1,593. Home Ministry [内務省 Japan’s Home Ministry], “Jikeidan no Torishimari” [“自警団の取締り Regulation of Vigilante Corps”]. Quoted in Kūm Pyōng-dong 琴秉洞, ed., *Kantō Daishinsai Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu Mondai Kankei Shiryō II: Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu Kanren Kanchō Shiryō* [関東大震災朝鮮人虐殺問題関係資料 II：朝鮮人虐殺関連官庁資料 Historical Materials Concerning the Massacre of the Koreans after the Great Kanto Earthquake, vol. 2: Official Materials Concerning the Massacre of Koreans] (Tokyo: Ryokuin Shobō, 1991), 11 (hereafter referred to as *Kanchō Shiryō*). Also see Imai Seiichi 今井精一 and

- Saitō Hideo 斎藤秀夫, “Daishinsai to Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu no Kyūmei” [“大震災と朝鮮人虐殺の究明 The Examination of the Korean Massacre and the Great Kanto Earthquake”] in *Kantō Daishinsai Gojūshūnen Chōsenjin Giseisha Tsuitō Gyōji Jikkō Inkai* [関東大震災 50 周年朝鮮人犠牲者追悼行事実行委員会 A Memorial Event Executive Committee for Korean Victims on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Great Kanto Earthquake], ed., *Rekishi no Shinjitsu: Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu* [歴史の真実：関東大震災と朝鮮人虐殺 Fact of History: The Great Kanto Earthquake and the Korean Massacre] (Tokyo: Gendaishi Shuppankai, 1975), 76 (hereafter referred to as *Rekishi no Shinjitsu*).
- 7) Hayakawa Hiroyuki 早川洋行, *Ryūgen no Shakaigaku — Keishiki Shakaigaku karano Sekkin* [流言の社会学：形式社会学からの接近 Sociology of Rumor — Approach from Formal Sociology], (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2002), 48.
 - 8) Of the commentators, who have dedicated to the task of examining the root-cause of anti-Korean rumors after the Great Kanto Earthquake, the majority support the theory of a government plot. For example, see Kang Tōk-sang 姜徳相, *Kantō Daishinsai* [関東大震災 The Great Kanto Earthquake] (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1975), Yamada Shōji 山田昭次, *Kantō Daishinsaiji no Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu — Sono Kokkan Sekinin to Minshū Sekinin* [関東大震災時の朝鮮人虐殺—その国家責任と民衆責任: The Massacre of Koreans after the Great Kanto Earthquake — The Responsibility of the State and Citizens for the Incident] (Tokyo: Sōshisha, 2003), Matsuo Shōichi 松尾章一, *Kantō Daishinsai to Kaigenrei* [関東大震災と戒厳令 The Great Kanto Earthquake and Martial Law] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2003).
 - 9) Only Kang Tōk-sang dedicated to the task of examining what or who was directly responsible for starting reports of violent acts by Koreans. In his *Kantō Daishinsai*, published in 1975, Kang spent many pages in treating this issue and convincingly argued that the civilian and military leadership intentionally manufactured anti-Korean rumors in order to maintain social order. See Kang Tōk-sang, *Kantō Daishinsai* [関東大震災 The Great Kanto Earthquake] (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1975).
 - 10) The Rice Riots were nationwide popular uprisings against a sudden rise in the price of rice. These movements affected thirty prefectures in which tens of thousands of people were arrested and over 7,000 charged; some even received the death penalty. These riots caused the corruption of the Terauchi Masatake Cabinet 寺内正毅内閣 (9 Oct. 1916–29 Sept. 1918).
 - 11) The fundamental concept behind the ‘national polity’ was the existence of the emperor as the highest power in the state, and the statement of a morality of filial piety and loyalty governing the relationship between the emperor and his people which made the nation an organic whole. See *CDMJH*, 98–9.
 - 12) Michael Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan* (London: Routledge, 1994), 64.
 - 13) *Ibid.*
 - 14) See Kokushi Daijiten Hensan Inkai [国史大辞典編纂委員会 National History Compilation Committee], ed., *Kokushi Daijiten dai 11 kan* [国史大辞典第十一卷 Dictionary of National History, vol. 11] (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1989), 978 (hereafter referred to as *KDJ*).
 - 15) Iwamura Toshio 岩村登志男, *Zainichi Chōsenjin to Nihon rōdōsha kaikyū* [在日朝鮮人と日本労働者階級 Koreans in Japan and the Japanese working class] (Tokyo: Azekura Shobō, 1972), 88–90.
 - 16) Iwamura, *Zainichi Chōsenjin to Nihon rōdōsha kaikyū*, 88–90.
 - 17) Hsü Shih-k'ai 許世楷, “Boku Retsu Jiken — Shiitageraretamono no Hangyaku” [“朴烈事件—虐げられたものの反逆 Incident of Pak Yōl — Rebellion of the Oppressed”] in Wagatsuma Sakae 我妻栄, ed., *Nihon Seiji Saiban Shiroku 3: Taishō hen* [日本政治裁判史録三：大正編 Historical Documents Concerning Political Trial in Japan, vol. 3: Taishō Version] (Tokyo: Daiichi Shuppan, 1977), 379–411. Wagatsuma Sakae, “Amakasu Jiken — Kempei ni Gyakusatsu saretā Museifushugisha, Ōsugi Sakae” [“Incident of Amakasu — The Anarchist Ōsugi Sakae killed by a Gendarme”] in *ibid.*, 412–38.
 - 18) *Ōsaka Asahi* newspaper 大阪朝日新聞, 5 October 1923, quoted in Kang, *Kantō Daishinsai*, 20.
 - 19) Akaike Atsushi 赤池濃, “Daishinsai tōji ni okeru Shokan” [“大震災当時に於ける所感 My Thoughts on the Time of the Great Kanto Earthquake”], in *Jikei* [自警], vol. 51 (November 1923). Quoted in *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 5–6.
 - 20) Mizuno Rentarō 水野鍊太郎, *Gakan Dankuzu* 我観談屑. Quoted in *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 12.
 - 21) Weiner, *The Origins of the Korean Community in Japan*, 186.
 - 22) Ku Dae-yeol, *Korea under Colonialism: The March First Movement and Anglo-Japanese Relations* (Seoul: Seoul Computer Press, 1985), 122.

- 23) Frank Prentiss Baldwin Jr., *The March First Movement Korean Challenge and Japanese Response*, Ph. D. dissertation Columbia University, 1969. Quoted in Weiner, *The Origins of the Korean Community in Japan 1910–1923*, 186.
- 24) Ku, *Korea under Colonialism*, 200.
- 25) Eguchi Kiyoshi 江口渙, “Daishinsai to Facism X no Shippai” [“大震災とファシズム X の失敗 The Great Earthquake and the Failure of Facism X”] in *Sekai* [世界], the September 1930 issue. Quoted in Küm Pyöng-dong 琴秉洞, ed., *Kantō Daishinsai Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu Mondai Kankei Shiryo III: Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu ni Kansuru Chishikijin no Hannō 2* [関東大震災朝鮮人虐殺問題関係資料 III：朝鮮人虐殺に関する知識人の反応 2 Historical Materials Concerning the Massacre of the Koreans after the Great Kanto Earthquake, vol. 3: Intellectual Response to the Massacre of the Koreans after the Great Shobō, 1996], 86–93 (hereafter referred to as *Chishikijin no Hannō*, vol. 2).
- 26) Baldwin, *The March First Movement Korean Challenge and Japanese Response*, 186–213. Quoted in Weiner, *The Origins of the Korean Community in Japan 1910–1923*, 187.
- 27) Akaike, “Daishinsai tōji ni okeru Shokan,” quoted in *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 9–11.
- 28) Mizuno Rentarō, “Teito Fukkō Hiroku” [“帝都復興秘録 Confidential Reports on the Reconstruction of the Capital”] in Tokyo Shiseichōsakai 東京市政調査会, ed., *Mizuno Rentarō Danwa* [水野錬太郎談話 Mizuno Rentarō Conversation]. Quoted in *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 11.
- 29) Imai and Saitō, ‘Daishinsai to Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu no Kyūmei,’ in *Rekishi no Shinjitsu*, 36–8.
- 30) Shōriki Matsutarō 正力松太郎, “Kome Sōdō to Daishinsai no Omoide” [“米騒動と大震災の思い出 Memories of the Rice Riots and the Great Kanto Earthquake”] in *Akusenkutō* [悪戦苦闘 Desperate fights, and Bitter Struggles]. Quoted in Matsuo and Kitō, ‘Shōgen to Shiryo,’ 237–8. Shōriki Matsutarō was Secretary General in the Tokyo M.P.D. at the time of the Great Kanto Earthquake.
- 31) Imai and Saitō, “Daishinsai to Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu no Kyūmei,” in *Rekishi no Shinjitsu*, 36–9.
- 32) Due to both the disruption of nearly all means of communication in Tokyo, and the government control over the publication of newspapers and magazine articles dealing with the Korean affairs, Japan’s leading newspapers played only a minor role in disseminating rumors about a Korean riot. Only *Tōkyō Nichinichi* newspaper 東京日日新聞 issued an article dealing with Korean riots in Tokyo on 3 September 1923. Meanwhile, as will be examined later in this article, local newspapers acted as a catalyst to spread rumors about Korean uprisings over the whole country. See Matsuo Takayoshi 松尾尊兌, “Kantō Daishinsai kano Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu Jiken, jō” [“関東大震災下の朝鮮人虐殺事件(上) The Massacre of the Koreans after the Great Kanto Earthquake, the First Volume”] in *Shisō* [思想] 471 (September 1963), 56.
- 33) This telegram was carried by a courier from the Home Ministry in Tokyo to Funabashi because all means of communication in Tokyo at that time were completely destroyed by the earthquake and subsequent fires. According to the testimony of Captain Ōmori Ryōzō 大森良三 who was in charge of the Funabashi Station during that time, he received the message about the Koreans in the afternoon of 2 September and relayed it to the Kure Naval Station the following morning. Ōmori Ryōzō 大森良三, “Sōshinjo nite toritaru Shochi narabini Jōkyō” [“送信所にて採りたる処置竝に状況 Disposition and Situation taken in the Funabashi Naval Transmission Station”] in *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 23–30.
- 34) Quoted in *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 18. Similar telegrams were also sent to the Government-Generals of both Korea and Taiwan on the same day. See, *ibid.*, 18–9.
- 35) This notification was reported in the 19 October 1923 edition of the *Fukuoka Nichinichi* newspaper. Quoted in *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, p. 145. Also see Kantō Daishinsai Gojūshūnen Chōsenjin Giseisha Chōsa Tsuitō Jigyō Jikkō Iinkai [関東大震災五十周年朝鮮人犠牲者調査追悼事業実行委員会 The Standing Committee for Investigative and Memorial Enterprises, Fifty-Year Memorial for Korean Victims of the Great Kanto Earthquake], *Kakusareteita Rekishi: Kantō Daishinsai to Saitama no Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu Jiken* [かくされていた歴史：関東大震災と埼玉の朝鮮人虐殺事件 The Hidden History: The Great Kanto Earthquake and the Massacre of Koreans in Saitama] (Ōmiya: Nicchō Kyōkai Saitama Rengōkai, 1974), 18–24 (hereafter referred to as *Kakusareteita Rekishi*).
- 36) *Kokumin* newspaper 国民新聞, 14 October 1923. This is taken from an article of Uesugi Shingo 上杉慎吾, “Keisatsu Kanken ni Kaitō o Motomu” [“警察官憲に回答を求む Requesting a Definite Response from Police Officials”]. Quoted in *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 148.

- 37) Eguchi Kiyoshi, “Kantō Daishinsai Kaisōki” [“関東大震災回想記 Memories of the Great Kanto Earthquake”] in *Gunzō* [群像] (September 1954). Quoted in *Chishikijin no Hannō*, vol. 2, 437.
- 38) *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 52–3.
- 39) Toida Michizō 戸井田道三, *Nobinobi Jinseiron Series (5): Ikirukoto ni Maru Batsu ha nai* [のびのび人生シリーズ(5)：生きることに○×はない Collected Eassays for Way of Life, vol. 5: There is Neither Maru Nor Batsu in Life]. Quoted in Kim Tal-su 金達寿, *Nobinobi Jinseiron Series (16): Watashi no Shōnen Jidai, Sabetsu no naka ni Ikiru* [のびのび人生シリーズ(16)：私の少年時代差別の中に生きる Collected Eassys for Way of Life, vol. 16: My Childhood, A Life in Discrimination] (Tokyo: Ppurasha, 1982), 112. During the Pacific War, Toida was made aware that the man who had distributed the leaflet was Lieutenant General Mutaguchi Renya 牟田口廉也, who was a commander of the Imperial Army to lead the fight to take Singapore during the war.
- 40) Keishichō [The Tokyo M.P.D.], ed., *Taishō Daishin Kasaishi* [大正大震災史 History of Taisho Earthquake and the Subsequent Fires] (Tokyo: Keishichō, 1925), 30–1. Quoted in Imai and Saitō, “Daishinsai to Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu no Kyūmei,” in *Rekishi no Shinjitsu*, 35.
- 41) *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 100.
- 42) Ecchūya Riichi 越中谷利一, “Kantō Daishinsai no Omoide” [“関東大震災の思い出 Memories of the Great Kantō Earthquake”] in *Nihon to Chōsen* [日本と朝鮮 Japan and Korea], 1 September 1961. Quoted in Iwamura, *Zai-Nichi Chōsenjin to Nihon Rōdōsha Kaikyū*, 85. Also see Eba Osamu 江馬修, “Chi no 9 gatsu” [“血の九月 Blood September”]. Quoted in *Chishikijin no Hannō*, vol. 2, 421–4.
- 43) Kubono Shigeji 久保野茂次, “Taishō 12 nen ji 7 gatsu 5 ka itaru 12 gatsu 31 nichi Nikki” [“大正十二年自七月五日至十二月三十一日日記 Diary from 5 July to 31 December 1923”]. Quoted in *Chishikijin no Hannō*, vol. 2, 415. Shinohara Kyōko 篠原京子, “Chōsenjin wo Yakikoroshita Hitotachi” [“朝鮮人を焼き殺した人たち People who burned Koreans to Death”] in *Rekishi no Shinjitsu*, 182–4.
- 44) Matsuo, “Kantō Daishinsai kano Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu Jiken, jō,” 53.
- 45) *Ibid.*, 55–7.
- 46) *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 82.
- 47) *Ibid.* The arrests of the vigilante corps began in Tokyo on 17 September, in Gumma and Saitama on 19 September, and in Yokohama and Chiba on 20 September. See Kang, *Kantō Daishinsai*, 173. Meanwhile, Imai and Saitō argued that the arrests of the vigilante corps in Yokohama began on 10 September. Imai and Saitō, “Daishinsai to Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu no Kyūmei,” in *Rekishi no Shinjitsu*, 81.
- 48) Matsuo, “Kantō Daishinsai ka no Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu Jiken, jō,” 59–60.
- 49) *Ibid.*, p. 60.
- 50) Yamada Shōji 山田昭次, “Kantō Daishinsai ji no Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu Sekinin no Yukue” [“関東大震災時の朝鮮人虐殺責任のゆくえ The Responsibility for the murder of Koreans following the Great Kanto Earthquake”] in *Rekishi Hyōron* [歴史評論], vol. 521 (August 1993), 22.
- 51) *Ibid.*
- 52) Quoted in Yamada Shōji, “Kantō Daishinsai ji no Chōsenjin Gyakusatsujiken Saiban to Gyakusatsu Sekinin no Yukue” [“関東大震災時の朝鮮人虐殺事件裁判と虐殺責任のゆくえ Trials for Massacre of Koreans at the Time of the Great Kanto Earthquake and the Responsibility for the Massacre”] in *Zai-Nichi Chōsenjinshi Undō*, vol. 20 (October 1990), 81.
- 53) Aikoku Dōshi Engokai, ed., *Kankoku dokuritsu undōshi* [韓国独立運動史 A History of Korean Independence Movement]. Quoted in *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 338–41.
- 54) Quoted in *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 426–7.
- 55) Fuse Tatsuji 布施辰治, “Senjin Sawagi no Chōsa” [“朝鮮人騒ぎの調査 Survey Concerning the Korean Problem”] in *Nihon Bengoshi Kyōkai Rokuji: Taishō 13 nen 9 gatsu* [日本弁護士協会録事：大正十三年九月 Record of the Japan Lawyers Association in September, 1924]. Quoted in *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 587–588.
- 56) *Jiji Shimpō* 時事新報, 21 October 1923. Quoted in *Taishō Nyūsu Jiten dai 6 kan: Taishō 12 nen-Taishō 13 nen* [大正ニュース事典第六卷：大正十二年—大正十三年 Dictionaries of Taisho News, vol. 6: 1923–1924] (Tokyo: Mainichi Komyunikēshonzu, 1988), 168–9 (hereafter referred to as *Taishō Nyūsu Jiten*).
- 57) *Ibid.*

- 58) Shihōshō [司法省 Japan's Ministry of Justice], ed., *Shinsaigo ni okeru Keijijihan oyobi Koreni Kansuru Jiko Chōsasho: Senjin no Hanzai* [震災後に於ける刑事事犯及之に關聯する事項調査書：朝鮮人の犯罪 A Matter Examination Document of Criminal Case and Its Related Ones after the Earthquake: Crime by Koreans]. Quoted in *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 420–426.
- 59) *Ibid.* The failure of the police to identify many Korean suspects does not necessarily mean that they lost its grip on the Korean community in Japan. According to Imai and Saitō, members of the Korean Section (*Naisengakari* 内鮮係) in the Tokyo M.P.D. had detained 168 Koreans in “reception centers” within just a few hours after a direction to protect Koreans was issued. See Imai and Saitō, “Daishinsai to Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu no Kyūmei,” in *Rekishi no Shinjitsu*, 45–6.
- 60) Matsuo, “Kantō Daishinsai ka no Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu Jiken, jō,” 45–6.
- 61) *Tōkyō Nichinichi* newspaper, 13 September 1923. Quoted in Kang, *Kantō Daishinsai*, 41.
- 62) See, for example, Kang, *Kantō Daishinsai*, 31–60.
- 63) Weiner, *The Origins of the Korean Community in Japan 1910–1923*, 186.
- 64) *Tōkyō Asahi* newspaper, 9 October 1923. Quoted in Kang, *Kantō Daishinsai*, 17.
- 65) *Jiji Shimpō*, 15 September 1923. Quoted in Kang, *Kantō Daishinsai*, 18.
- 66) The Peace Preservation Act was designed to punish any person who instigated others to acts of sedition or endangering the lives, physical safety, property of the public by any means, or spread rumors harmful to public order. See *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 75. In the previous year (1922), the Japanese government proposed to the Diet so-called Peace Preservation Law (*Chian Iji Hō* 治安維持法) to deal with socialist movements within the country. This proposal met with strong opposition from both Houses and was rejected.
- 67) On 3 September Home Ministry Police Affairs Bureau notified Japan's newspapers that since any rumors about a Korean riot would only increase social unrest, the publication of articles concerning Koreans would culminate in a ban on the sale and distribution of the offending newspaper. It was not until 20 October that the Japanese government lifted censorship on publication of newspaper and magazine articles dealing with the Korean issue. See Matsuo, “Kantō Daishinsai kano Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu Jiken, jō,” 56.
- 68) Home Ministry, ed., “Shinsai ni tomonau Chōsenjin Hogo Shūyōjin'in Shirabe” [震災に伴う朝鮮人保護收容人員調 Studies of the Number of Protected Koreans at the time of the Earthquake]. Quoted in *Kanchō Shiryō*, 23–6.
- 69) *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 264–5. On 3 September Pak Yōl and other radical student leaders were housed in the Setagaya 世田谷, Yodobashi 淀橋 and other police stations in Tokyo. See Hsü, “Boku Retsu Jiken,” 379–411.
- 70) *Iwarenaku Korosareta Hitobito*, 116–31.
- 71) Iwamura, *Zai-Nichi Chōsenjin to Nihon Rōdōsha Kaikyū*, 93–4.
- 72) Imai and Saitō, “Daishinsai to Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu no Kyūmei,” in *Rekishi no Shinjitsu*, pp. 36–8.
- 73) *Chishikijin no Hannō*, vol. 1, p. 10. Also see *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 183. Hijikata Umeko 土方梅子, “Hijikata Umeko Jiden” [土方梅子自伝 Autobiography of Hijikata Umeko] (Tokyo: Hayakawa Shobō, 1976). Quoted in *Chishikijin no Hannō*, vol. 2, 494–5.
- 74) On the other hand, there was an attempt on the part of a fanatic Japanese group to kill the noted socialist Yamakawa Hitoshi 山川均. See Yamakawa Kikue 山川菊枝, “Onna Nidai no Ki” [“女二代の記 An Account of A Woman over Two Generation”] (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1972). Quoted in *Chishikijin no Hannō*, vol. 2, 487–8.
- 75) Matsuo, “Kantō Daishinsai kano Chōsenjin Gyakusatsu Jiken, jō,” 57.
- 76) The Police Department of the Emergency Earthquake Relief Bureau [臨時震災救護事務局警備部 *Rinji Shinsai Kyūgo Jimukyoku Keibibu*], “Chōsen Mondai ni Kansuru Kyōtei” [“朝鮮問題に関する協定 Policy Concerning the Korean Problem”]. Quoted in *Kantō Daishinsai to Chōsenjin*, 79–80. For example, Army Colonel Izome Rokurō 井染六郎 is reported to have argued that “there appears to have been a conspiracy involving socialists and Russian radicals behind the recent seditious acts of Korean malcontents.” See Izome Rokurō 井染六郎, “Konkai no Futei Senjin no Kōdō” [“今回の不逞朝鮮人の行動 The Recent Behaviour of Korean Malcontents”] in *Shimotsuke* newspaper, 7 September 1923. Quoted in *Chishikijin no Hannō*, vol. 1, 46.
- 77) Serizawa Mitsuyoshi 芹沢光治良, “Ushinawareta Hito” [“失われた人 Lost Persons”] in *Ningen no*

- Ummei dai 5 kan Ushinawareta Hito* [人間の運命第 5 卷 失われた人 Fate of Man, vol. 5, Lost Persons]. Quoted in *Chishikijin no Hannō*, vol. 2, 475–6.
- 78) Eguchi, “Kantō Daishinsai Kaisōki” in *Chishikijin no Hannō*, vol. 2, 443.
- 79) Hasegawa Nyozeikan 長谷川如是閑, “Rugen to Bōkō no Shakai teki Seishitsu” [“流言と暴行の社会的性質 The Social Nature of Rumor and Violence”] in *Warewa* [我等], the Combined Issue of November and December of 1923. Quoted in *Chishikijin no Hannō*, vol. 1, 141.
- 80) Zai-Nichi Senjindan 在日鮮人団, “Kiokuseyo, Waga Dōhō Nihonjin yo! Mizuno Rentarō to Akaike Atsushi towo!” [“記憶せよ我が同胞日本人よ！ 水野廉太郎と赤池濃とを！ Our Comrades Japanese, Remember Mizuno and Akaike!”] in *Saitō Makoto Bunsho 9* [齊藤実文書第九卷 Collected Materials of Saitō Makoto, vol. 9] (Seoul: Koryō Sōrim, 1990), 892–4.