A Dissenting Voice from the Margins in Colonial Korea: Jōkō Yonetarō and the "Teachers Union Incident" of December 1930

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Introduction

In December 1930, at Konmei (Kongmyŏng) Common School near Shisen (Sach'ŏn) in South Kyŏngsang Province in Korea, police arrested its schoolmaster Jōkō Yonetarō on charges of breaking Article II of the Peace Preservation Law. Jōkō was suspected of planning to form a teachers union. Police had detected Jōkō's subscription to the monthly *Shinkō kyōiku* (Proletarian Pedagogical Review), an educational journal published in Japan Proper by the progressive and proletarian Shinkō kyōiku kenkyūjo, as well as his attempts to recruit former students and colleagues to organize a study group from September of the same year. After the arrest, Jōkō was immediately transferred to Seidaimon (Sŏdaemun) Prison in Keijō (present-day Seoul). The Japanese settler community in Korea was stunned by Jōkō's arrest and perplexed by his audacity, with many calling him "a madman."

This paper briefly introduces the life of Jōkō Yonetarō (1902–1989), a former primary schoolteacher in colonial Korea and the main protagonist of the incident described above, commonly referred to by historians as the "Teachers Union Incident of 1930." Jōkō is worthy of serious academic consideration for several reasons.

First, the importance of Jōkō's place in the history of Japanese settlers is underlined by the survival of his diary, which chronicled his years as a schoolteacher from 1922 to 1929. Jōkō's diary has significant value as a historical artifact because of its rarity. Personal diaries of Japanese settlers are difficult to locate, much less gain access to, for many of them have either not been disclosed to the public or have not survived. The Jōkō diary owes its survival to two factors: the timing of Jōkō's repatriation, and his strong attachment to the diary. The diary was brought back to Japan intact when he left Korea in 1942. On the other hand, many of the Japanese repatriates who left Korea in the confusion of the immediate postwar years could not bring back most of their personal belongings, including diaries, as their luggage was limited both by law and by circumstances. Jōkō's diary survived for 60 years after he wrote the entries, well taken care of by Jōkō himself, and after his death, by his children.

Second, and most importantly, Jōkō occupies a unique position in the history of Japanese settlers in colonial Korea, as he was one of very few who dared to voice dissent against Japan's colonial occupation. By the time Jōkō was arrested in 1930, Japanese settlers numbered over 500,000, accounting for nearly 2.5% of Korea's population[1)] and forming one of the largest colonial communities in the world. However, throughout the history of Japanese colonial occupation, there were only a handful of

Japanese who were involved in anti-colonial activity in Korea.[2] Moreover, their efforts remained sporadic and failed to grow into a collective movement, partly due to constant and systematic surveillance by the Japanese police. It was also partly due to a colonial settler culture that hardly questioned the legitimacy of Japanese rule, a culture that Jōkō described as "ideologically sterile."

This paper aims to shed light on Jōkō's life, drawing on ongoing research of his diary. The existence of the diary has been known to researchers, but because of the private nature of its entries, it was not publicly available in its entirety until 2005, when the surviving family of Jōkō Yonetarō decided to entrust the diary to the Yūhō Collection of the Research Institute of Oriental Cultures (Yūhō Bunko, Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo) at Gakushuin University, one of the foremost archives of Japan's colonial administration of Korea. The Jōkō family's decision to entrust Yonetarō's diary to the archive was, in part, a response to growing calls by graduate students and researchers who argued the need to study ordinary Japanese settlers and their experiences. The Jōkō family also hoped to have Yonetarō's diary transcribed and eventually published so that his experience in the history of Japanese colonialism would not be forgotten. The diary has since been undergoing transcription by members of the Group for Reading the Jōkō Yonetarō Diary (*Jōkō Yonetarō nikki o yomukai*). Some of the quotes used in this paper are taken from the transcription.

Scholars have traditionally approached the colonial period either from the top-down, focusing on the administration or exploitation of the colony, or from the bottom-up, focusing on Korean nationalist movements. Moving beyond this dichotomized approach and reconstructing and reinterpreting Jōkō's actions, goals, and the day-to-day conflicts that informed his choices, this paper hopes to identify the multiple levels of engagement that shaped the colonial relationship between Japanese and Koreans.

Japanese Colonial Settlers in Modern Japanese History

Since the mid-1970s academic efforts to understand Japan's imperial experience have shifted from analyses of classic political and economic history of Japan's colonization to one on the social and cultural history of ordinary Japanese settlers. Conventional histories have generally focused on explaining why the Japanese colonial occupation of Korea came about and how the course of colonial domination was decided among the Japanese political and business elites in Tokyo and those in the colonial regime in Keijō. However, such historical narratives fall short of providing a comprehensive framework in which to reconstruct Japan's colonial past, as they tend to leave non-elite, ordinary Japanese living in colonial Korea out of the picture.[3]

Calls to resituate ordinary Japanese colonial settlers into the landscape of the Japanese empire have emerged from several directions. And overall, it has been a natural response to the rising prominence of social history. Looking at history from the perspectives of "ordinary Japanese citizens" is now viewed as central to understanding the very nature of Japan's empire-building and colony-management, which mobilized vast material and human resources from Japan Proper and its colonies. Newer narratives offer insight into the instrumental relationship between the state and ordinary Japanese citizens in this process. These new explanations for Japan's colonization of Ko-

rea have exhibited two distinct dimensions. It had already been well established that the Meiji state built a formal ruling apparatus in the Korean peninsula and imposed new economic and social structures on the local society. However, the role of ordinary Japanese immigrants—who migrated and settled in Korea largely of their own volition, dominated treaty port commerce, and proceeded to press further into the interior—was now being equally emphasized.

By the 1970s, when historians began questioning and deconstructing agency attributed to ordinary Japanese in postwar popular memories and narratives of Japan's colonization of Korea, a number of former settlers had begun producing personal accounts reflecting upon their days in Korea. Their accounts often detailed what they saw and experienced on a day-to-day basis and what they knew about Korea and Koreans. While these recollections offered a window to some, though limited, aspects of social interactions between Japanese and Koreans, and the dominant chauvinistic mentality—whether at the conscious or unconscious level—seen among ordinary Japanese, they altogether provided a rather unprovocative narrative that failed to address the tensions, contradictions, and dilemmas Japanese colonization had brought upon local society. Although these personal recollections were "authentic" as they were based on real experiences, critical observers promptly launched skeptical and empirical rebuttals, pointing out that most Japanese had lived in closed settler communities with relatively little contact with Koreans, and therefore did not possess knowledge about colonial realities to which they claimed to be privy. These narratives, while expressing nostalgia for a homeland, hardly offered critical reflections on the role ordinary Japanese settlers played in making and maintaining the colonial order.

The dominant narrative of "giving" also had a converse version, one that focused on experiences of "deprivation." As many observers of modern Japanese history have argued, postwar popular narrative of the war years is characterized by the victim consciousness of ordinary Japanese citizens. In a similar vein, the experiences of ordinary Japanese colonial settlers are often reconstructed in a way that posits them as victims of the empire's expansion and collapse. Their victimhood has been ascribed to these two historical turning points in a way to highlight their instrumental position in the Japanese state's empire building and management. The narratives on early settlers who faced various difficulties in establishing themselves financially in Korea in the pre-annexation period around the turn of the century portray them as "victims" of Japanese political and business elites in the metropole. The other point that evokes the image of settlers as victims is repatriation. Their homecoming to Japan Proper was not an easy trip, neither physically nor psychologically. Many encountered difficulties boarding trains and boats bound for Japan and suffered physical harassment by anti-Japanese Koreans and Soviet soldiers, particularly in the northern half of Korea. Many former settlers recall feeling abandoned by the Japanese state and its officials. So traumatizing was the experience that none could go without dedicating pages of their memoirs to the event. What is notable about this victim consciousness is that it presumes a sharp distinction between the ordinary people and the political elite and others linked to the colonial regime; the latter is described as responsible not only for the colonization of Korea and the oppressive management of its people but also for deceiving ordinary Japanese settlers and leaving them behind in the chaotic former

colony.

In rewriting the social history of Japan's imperial expansion from the bottom up, newer narratives exposed chauvinism and a lack of sensitivity toward Koreans, which informed the attitudes, and behaviors of most Japanese settlers in colonial Korea. Jōkō Yonetarō was discovered in this process of reexamining history and singled out as one of few ordinary Japanese who questioned the Japanese colonial occupation. The unearthing of Jōkō placed questions about the agency of ordinary Japanese into a new context of international anti-imperial movements and resistance, suggesting that ordinary Japanese and Koreans formed a united front against the Japanese regime and colonial occupation.

Such examples, however, remained quite marginal in the overall experience of Japanese colonial settlers and have been narrated and historicized as cases of individual deviancy. Jōkō's arrest has been understood within the context of militant collective activism among leftist schoolteachers in Japan in the 1920s and 1930s, of which Jōkō is a symbolic figure, voicing anti-imperialist criticism from the colony where there were hardly any signs of schoolteachers questioning the exploitive nature of the Japanese colonial educational system.[4] Jōkō's actions have been interpreted as an attempt to achieve a certain degree of autonomy from the colonial administration, and to question the discrepancy that existed between the ideal of equality under the emperor's benevolence and the realities of ethnic discrimination.

More recent historical examinations characterize the experiences of ordinary Japanese in Korea as filled with tensions, contradictions, and ambivalence in their settler identity vis-à-vis the local society, the colonial regime, and the Japanese state. These studies have painted a picture of the Japanese colonial community in Korea as an aggregate whole of settlers divided by class, social status, and gender interests, often voicing competing political agendas.[5]

Jōkō Yonetarō and Korea

Immigration to Korea

Jōkō Yonetarō was born in April 1902, in the village of Senjō, Nishiuwa County (now the city of Yawatahama), Ehime Prefecture. Jōkō enjoyed a privileged childhood as the first son of a well-to-do family. When Jōkō was born, his father Keikichi was thirty-four years old and a prominent local landowner. His mother Kiyo, twenty-one, was from another established local family called the Aritomo, of nearby Ōzu, a family that had produced a number of statesmen and the first Christian converts in Ehime during the early Meiji period. While Jōkō was growing up, his father spent much time and energy introducing new kinds of commercial crops to the region—famous for citrus cultivation—and on the expansion of the family's farming operation. According to Yonetarō, Keikichi imported pomelo (*zabon*) trees and grafted them on mandarin orange trees, grew rice in dry fields, started mulberry farms and engaged in sericulture.

Jōkō's financially and socially blessed childhood eventually came to an end in the mid-1900s as the family's financial situation deteriorated. Depression in the post Russo-Japanese-War years had devastating impacts on farmers in rural Japan, and Keikichi went bankrupt. In 1912, unable to pay back debts and get back on their feet in Japan

Proper, Keikichi and Kiyo migrated to the recently annexed Korea with the support of Keikichi's younger brother, Fujita Kaoru, who was then working for the Bank of Chōsen. Keikichi eventually assumed the position of postmaster at a special post office (*tokutei yūbinkyoku*) in Shinkyō-men (*Chingyo-myŏn*), Katō-gun (Hadong-gun), South Kyŏngsang Province.

Meanwhile, Jōkō and his younger brother were left in Japan in the care of their maternal grandparents living in Ōzu. Jōkō attended Ōzu Middle School from his grandparents' house. The economic difficulties of his family beleaguered him, as it forced him to give up continuing his education beyond middle school. Moreover, moving into a rented house located in front of Ōzu Middle School to live with his grandparents made him miserable.

Perhaps to compensate for his material deprivation, Jōkō sought meaning in his life through the idea of the "coalescence of thoughts and deeds" (*chikō gōitsu*) developed by Nakae Tōju, a Tokugawa-period Confucian scholar, who had served the Ōzu Domain. Jōkō also found solace in Christianity. He was influenced by his maternal relatives, many of whom were Christians, and attended Sunday School during his childhood. He was baptized in June 1917. Eventually, when it became clear to him that going to higher school was no longer a realistic option, he started considering a career in the Christian priesthood.

However, as the Jōkō family's economic difficulties dragged on, Jōkō's aspirations to become a Christian priest gave way to a more pragmatic career choice that would keep the family financially afloat. In his third year of middle school, he decided to go to Korea to become a primary school teacher. The teachers' training school in Keijō offered a tuition waver, and the average male Japanese schoolteacher received a monthly salary twice that of his counterparts in Japan Proper. On the decision to move to Korea, Jōkō later recalled, "[I]t was the spring of my seventeenth year [that] I gave up all hope and decided to come to Korea."[6] He graduated from Ōzu Middle School in March 1920 and enrolled in the Keijō Temporary Teachers' Training School (*Keijō rinji kyōin yōseijo*) in April, the only institution in colonial Korea that provided normal education programs at the time.

Keijō Temporary Teachers Training School was established in 1913. But it offered only a one-year curriculum. In the first decade of Japanese colonization under the First Chōsen Educational Ordinance, relatively little emphasis was placed on teacher training in the Government-General of Korea's educational administration. It was in the wake of the March First movement when the Government-General of Korea revised the educational ordinance in 1922, that more emphasis was placed on training teachers both Korean and Japanese. Thus, Jōkō's enrollment in Keijō Temporary Teachers' Training School fell in the transitional period between the first and second ordinances. Jōkō joined the last entering class of the Keijō Temporary Teachers' Training School, which was restructured and expanded into Keijō Teachers' College (*Keijō shihan gakkō*). He received a year of intensive teacher training and graduated in March 1921.

The Kan'an Years, 1922–1924

Having served one year in the 78th regiment in Keijō after graduating from the

Teachers' Training School, Jōkō was assigned to Kan'an (Haman) Public Common School in South Kyŏngsang Province in April 1922. Jōkō's placement in South Kyŏngsang Province made it possible for him to stay in close contact with his parents, who lived in the same province. As of 1922, Kan'an Common School was one of 98 public common schools located in the province. As the Second Chōsen Educational Ordinance, which went into effect in February 1922, stipulated that primary education for Koreans be extended from four to six years, Kan'an Common School established a fifth-grade class. Jōkō was assigned to be a homeroom teacher for the new fifth-graders. He thought his students were "not innocent but rather precocious, too cunning, and too wise."[7)]

Jōkō's diary in the summer of 1922 captures his growing frustration with teaching Koreans. His had arrived at Kan'an, anticipating his pupils to be as innocent and obedient as those he had taught during his teacher training in Keijō one year previously. In Kan'an, he had to deal with many returned students who were in their late-teens, in addition to a 20-year-old student and three married male students. One of his female students tried to seduce him. By the time the first semester ended, he felt these precocious students were completely beyond his control.

While school was out for the summer in 1922, Jōkō paid a visit to Mr. Takeda, his former teacher at the Teachers' Training School, for his advice. Takeda told Jōkō that he was asking for too much from his first year of teaching. Takeda continued, "There are twenty million Koreans and sixty million Japanese. If one [Japanese] can turn one [Korean] pupil into a fine human being, that will be good enough."[8)] When the second semester started in September, Jōkō, who took Takeda's advice literally, singled out a few pupils in his class and devoted himself to their learning until they graduated.

Jōkō's frustration likely grew out of his strong sense of "calling" (*shimei*), which informed his attitude toward teaching from the outset of his career. He appears to have tried to justify his becoming a teacher instead of a Christian priest by doing his best to educate and improve the lives of his students. His writing is filled with phrases such as "Chōsen no tsuchi ni naritai," or "I want to be buried in Korea's soil," and "Chōsen no tame ni tsukushitai," or, "I want to serve Korea and Koreans."

Two of Jōkō's favorite students in his first class at Kan'an played a crucial role in shaping his experience in colonial Korea. One was Cho P'anch'ul, who was arrested with Jōkō in December 1930 for participating in his study group. The other student was Kim Chaeyong, a seventeen-year-old girl, who later developed a romantic relationship with Jōkō. In his diary Jōkō often used her initials "S.K." to refer to her, as her name is pronounced as Kin Saiyō in the Japanese rendering. The diary offers detailed and sometimes cryptic accounts of Jōkō's relationship with Kim Chaeyong.

The Yaro Years, 1924–26

Having completed a half-year term as a reservist in Keijō, in September 1924, Jōkō was appointed schoolmaster of Yaro (Yaro) Public Common School. Yaro was a remote village deep in the mountains in the northern part of South Kyŏngsang Province. Because of its location, Yaro School had experienced a very high turnover of its schoolmasters, having replaced four schoolmasters within the first four years. Jōkō was appointed to fill the position for his earnestness and enthusiasm, and also for his

young age, after the previous schoolmaster left after just a few months.

In Yaro, a community circumscribed by mountains, Jōkō witnessed firsthand the economically strained lives of rural Koreans. Life for the villagers was unstable and precarious as the village economy was vulnerable to periodic crop failures and the harsh climate. The village was deprived of basic infrastructure Jōkō had taken for granted. For instance, the village had no doctor, and it usually took two days for mail deliveries to arrive in Yaro. The sense of material deprivation and social disconnectedness from the outside world plagued Jōkō throughout his days in the village.

Diary entries written in the Yaro years offer the multiple faces of young Jōkō—sensitive, humanistic, and yearning for change. He remained too sentimental, however, to make objective assessments of the realities around him. In the first several months of his two-year stint, Jōkō fell into a depression because he felt desolate and disconnected from his family and those he knew well, including his former students, Kim Chaeyong and Cho P'anch'ul. His diary tells of how desperately he waited for letters from them every day. When Jōkō fell seriously ill at some point in the first several months, he was overcome by the fear that he would die and left a will in the diary addressed to his parents, siblings, Kim Chaeyong, and his closest friends. To Kim Chaeyong, who was then attending Shinshū (Chinju) Normal School, he wrote, "Aim to be an honest teacher, not a person of high position," and to his siblings, "Dedicate your lives to loving Koreans peacefully and be buried in Korea's soil."[9)]

What especially characterized his Yaro years was the deepening of his Christian faith. To overcome his psychological and physical hardships, Jōkō turned to religion. He filled diary entries with references to the Bible. One of the diary volumes written in this period—of which there were a total of 10—was titled "Mikokoro no mama ni" (In the Will of God), in which Jōkō compared his experience at Yaro to the forty days Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness after which he was tempted by Satan.[10)] Of living in the mountain village, Jōkō wrote that he must listen to what God tells him through the natural environment surrounding him, understand the voice of poor people, and love those around him. He also admonished himself to read widely. Things he read then included Japanese publications published for Christians, through which he learned of Kagawa Toyohiko, a Christian reformer and labor activist. Jōkō was highly impressed by Kagawa's ideas and activities, and admired his intense focus on social ills.

Jōkō was a vigorous schoolmaster at Yaro Common School. Yaro Common School was much smaller in size than his previous school, Kan'an, with only three other male Korean teachers besides him. Whereas Kan'an had classes from grades one through six, Yaro offered only four years of education because of its size. Eventually Jōkō reached out to the province to ask for the extension of school years at Yaro from four to six years, but his attempt proved unsuccessful. In 1926, Jōkō passed the Government-General of Korea's Korean language examination and was given second-level certification.[11)] He even taught some of his classes in Korean.

In April 1927, Jōkō was transferred to Konmei Public Common School to become its schoolmaster. During the Konmei years, Jōkō married a Japanese woman, but his marriage was short-lived. He was preoccupied with his marriage, singing his wife's praises as a symbol of the modern woman and even planning a move back to Japan

Proper so that she could pursue higher education. However, his wife's insistence on living independently crushed the hopes of Jōkō's parents. Torn between his wife and his parents, Jōkō grew increasingly indecisive, unable to decide what would be best for his wife, his parents, and himself. His diary entries around this time tell us nothing but the fact that he was on an emotional roller coaster. His marriage eventually failed, after his wife left him to go to Tokyo and he failed to persuade her to come back.

By this time, Jōkō had started to read more leftist books and magazines, including *Kaizō*, which introduced him to a body of social and political criticism. His leftist inclination was gradually strengthened, while his association with Christian humanism started to dwindle. He also became interested in the proletarian literature movement and started reading proletarian literature magazines, such as *Senki* and *Puroretaria kagaku* (Proletarian Science).

In the summer of 1930, Jōkō began subscribing to the leftist educational magazine *Shinkō kyōiku*, which was advertised in *Puroretaria kagaku*. National magazines published in the 1920s in Japan often invited readers' participation in the form of essays and letters to the editor, providing a public space for the readers to discuss. *Shinkō kyōiku* was no exception, and Jōkō sent in letters to its editor. His first piece of correspondence was published in the magazine's second issue, in which he reported that he had been trying to organize a teachers' union but that there was only one more person interested in the idea.[12] The second (and the last) report from Jōkō was published in the magazine's third issue. It was an exposé of Japanese teachers in Korea, portraying them as only interested in making money and Korea's Japanese teacher community as "deprived of love for students and of passion to help emancipate the oppressed people."[13]

Facing difficulty drawing sympathy and gaining understanding among his Japanese colleagues, Jōkō turned to future teachers and organized a small study group with them. Jōkō first contacted Cho P'anch'ul, his former student at Kan'an, who had received financial assistance from Jōkō in order to pursue his studies at Keijō. Jōkō's recruitment of Cho was an expression of his wish that the future of Korea's education be constructed by younger generations of Koreans.

Jōkō began organizing a teachers' union in September 1930, when he first sent *Shinkō kyōiku* to Cho, recommending he should read it. (Around the same time, Jōkō gave out copies of the magazine to a couple of Japanese teachers at other common schools.) Jōkō's correspondence with the Keijō Normal School group was carried out mostly through letters. Jōkō insisted that their actions remain within the limit of laws, but the naïve Jōkō could not anticipate that his subscription to the lawful magazine that progressively urged teachers to unite and his frequent correspondence with a former student about forming a study group would appear subversive enough to draw the police's attention. Meanwhile, in late October, Jōkō, Cho, and a Japanese member, Kikuchi, held a meeting at an inn in Shinshū (Chinju) in South Kyŏngsang Province, when Keijō Normal School students were visiting the city on a school trip. In the meeting, they agreed to continue reaching out to potential sympathizers among their classmates and colleagues and studying more about teachers' unions in Japan Proper and other parts of the world.

On the morning of December 5, 1930, Special Higher Police officer Miwa Wasabu-

rō and three other police officers arrived at Konmei Common School. The police officers called for Jōkō, who was teaching at the time, and proceeded to investigate his classrooms and house built on the same premises. Police arrested Jōkō on charges of violating the Peace Preservation Law prohibiting ideologies, conspiracy, or revolt that would threaten Japan's social order centered around the emperor. Jōkō was first put into a police cell at the Shinshū Police Station and was then transferred to Keijō to be questioned by the Kyŏnggi Province Police Department. Meanwhile, police confiscated his diary, magazines, and books thought to support the allegations against him. Prior to Jōkō's arrest, Cho had already been detained in Keijō. The other members of the study group also followed Jōkō's fate. The wave of arrests spilled over from Keijō to Tokyo. On December 6, police arrested Yamashita Tokuji, the editor in chief of *Shinkō kyōiku*, in Tokyo. Together with another editor of the magazine, Yamashita was eventually transferred to Keijō to be tried for breaking the Peace Preservation Law.

The trials of Jōkō and others were held in Keijō District Court. Yamashita's defense attorney for his trial in Keijō was Fuse Tatsuji, an experienced and well-known lawyer who had defended many Korean pro-independence activists. Jōkō's defense was handled by a Korean attorney at Fuse's request. Jōkō's first and second hearings took place at the Keijō District Court in May 1931 and August 1931, respectively. However, his trial dragged on for another year. In December 1932, the Keijō Higher Court concluded Jōkō's trial (it was well into his third hearing) and sentenced him to two years in prison which was suspended for four years.

After having spent two years in Seidaimon Prison until his hearings ended, Jōkō returned to South Kyŏngsang Province. He was unable to find a teaching job, because his teaching license had been rescinded due to his arrest. He first worked as a bookkeeper at a construction site near Pusan. Then, he moved to Shinshū and became an insurance salesperson, and a correspondent for the *Keijō Nippō*.

Jōkō's life had already been full of twists and turns, but the next one unfolded as he was recommended to a position in personnel administration of Korean laborers at the Taiheiyō Coal Mine in Kushiro, Hokkaido. The recommendation came from a Special Higher Police officer who had been assigned to oversee Jōkō after his release from the prison. (Jōkō later recalled that the officer had probably wanted to remove Jōkō from his jurisdiction.) Jōkō and his family—his third wife and two children—moved to Japan Proper in 1941. At the Taiheiyō Mine, he once attended an interrogation of a Korean laborer who had been captured after running away. As he translated the interrogator's words into Korean, he secretly advised the Korean man not to say any more than the bare minimum. In 1942, Jōkō was transferred to Mitsui Miike Mine in Ōmuta, Fukuoka. He worked at Miike until he was red purged in 1949.

Jōkō lived in Ōmuta till 1966. After he was laid off by Miike Mine, he never held a regular job. In the early 1950s he became a *kamishibai* (picture-show) storyteller, going around the city on a bike with a small stage for the show. He was also involved in local organizations dedicated to children and education. In 1966, two local historians published the first biography on Jōkō based on interviews and his diary. After publication of the biography, Jōkō moved to Tokyo to join his son and daughter, who were working there. Public response to the biography was greater than Jōkō had anticipated, leading him to do a number of interviews with historians and educators in Tokyo.

His daughter Machiko recalls, "My father always regretted he hadn't done anything for Koreans while in Korea. So he was extremely grateful for the scholars and teachers who discovered and gave high praise for what he did there. He felt blessed."[14] Jōkō died of cancer in 1987.

The Jōkō Diary

The Jōkō Yonetarō Diary in the Yūhō Collection consists of 39 notebooks (some are fragmentary) along with records of the preliminary hearing of his trial. Jōkō numbered each notebook up to his 32nd in chronological order. There are other notebooks that followed but were not numbered. Notebooks from the years after 1928 are badly damaged, with some parts missing. As mentioned above, Jōkō wrote in his diary until December 1930, but portions from his 1930 entries are missing, as they were never returned by police who confiscated the diary for use as the prosecution's evidence. The process of re-ordering and re-numbering the fragmented notebooks is now being undertaken by the Group for Reading the Jōkō Yonetarō Diary.

The notebooks used by Jōkō are all 20 cm × 16 cm (about A5 size) foolscap with about 120 pages each. Jōkō used regular notebooks, but after 1928 he used fancier ones—thinner but with illustrated covers in color. Most of the notebook covers have dates, volume numbers, titles and sometimes his name written on them. Jōkō used Western dominical years instead of the imperial era name, a practice that was unusual for a Japanese person of his generation. At times, Jōkō also used Hangŭl to write cover titles and entries.

The titles given to the notebooks reflected the important events and topics of Jōkō's life at the time of writing. This practice starts with volume 3, which was titled "Watashi no koto hito no koto" (About myself, about others). The diaries written in 1922, when he became a reservist in the 78th Regiment in Keijō, were all titled "Heitai-san" (A soldier). The titles between the fall of 1924 and 1927 were variations on either "Yama no seikatsu" (Life in the mountains) or "Agohige no testugaku" (The philosophy of [growing] beards). At the time he was suffering from extreme solitude in a mountain village to which he had been transferred, and growing beards was one of the leitmotifs he liked to associate with his entry into full-fledged manhood. Then, in 1928, when he was going through the demise of his first marriage, the title "Shinsaku-ro (Sinchangno)" (New roads) was given to each notebook. Jōkō usually used the first couple of pages in each notebook to explain why he had chosen the title and what he meant to focus in his writing.

The first notebook, which has no title, but with Jōkō's name and "Keijō rinji kyōin yōseijo" (Keijō Temporary Teachers' Training School) written on the cover, is his old school notebook that he had recycled into a diary. The first notebook contains his class notes and copies of his letters written in 1920–1921 while he was still attending the Teachers' Training School. They consist of information he copied from teachers' rules (*kyōin kokoroe*), his class schedule, and notes taken when he was in the practical training portion of his teacher training at the elementary school attached to Keijō Common School. The letters were written to his relatives in Japan Proper, updating them on his studies in Korea. They are the only records of the period from his arrival in Korea to the beginning of his teaching career in April 1922.

It was when his first semester as a teacher was drawing to a close that Jōkō decided to start a diary. In his first diary entry dated July 20, 1922, he wrote, "Just writing down my daily thoughts in letters [to be sent to others] won't leave anything behind. / I feel like keeping a diary. I am starting to do so. / In one way or another, I want to recount [the thoughts in] my heart."[15]

Jōkō was an avid writer and filled one notebook in under six to seven weeks. The length of his diary entries varies; he could limit himself to one page or go on for ten pages. The style of his writing is colloquial, and Hangŭl is interspersed in entries written in 1925 and 1926.

The diary covers eight years between 1922 and 1929, during which Jōkō taught at Kan'an, Yaro, and Konmei Common Schools in South Kyŏngsang Province, and went twice into the reserve of the 78th Regiment in Keijō. As we go through its pages, we find that most of the events in the diary involve personal issues and his tangled relationships with those around him.

Conventional narratives on Jōkō take his sympathies with anti-imperialist, bellicose, class-conscious, ideology-driven discourse of radicalism for granted. However, the diary offers another picture of the young man, one who was still in the process of intellectual coalescence. In fact, it was not until 1927 that he began to pick up the language of socialism to address the issues of poverty and economic deprivation of Korean peasants and petty farmers, which he observed in a distressed rural village in colonial Korea.

Jōkō's accounts often lack references to the social contexts and discourse surrounding Japanese settlers in colonial Korea in the 1920s. Moreover, his narratives are full of inconsistencies, biases, premature judgments, and clashes between differing values. The diary should be read as a record of such tensions—not as a linear and consistent narrative—and should be valued as evidence of the social and cultural contradictions and ambivalence of colonial modernity which Japanese settlers and Koreans faced in the 1920s. The following sections will focus on two domains of such tensions in his life: Jōkō's views of Koreans and colonial education.

Though the eight years of Jōkō's life recorded in his diary reflect the contradictions and limits of social criticism, and perceptions of his time, they provide evidence of his sincere devotion to a better relationship between Japanese and Koreans. Jōkō might not have been a typical Japanese settler in Korea, but his voice and particular experience add complexity to our accounts of Japan's colonial experience.

Jōkō's Views of Korea and Koreans

Jōkō's sympathy for Koreans and his critical attitude toward colonialism were already evident in his early diary entries. The first entry in Jōkō's diary was written in July 1922, three months after he started teaching at Kan'an Public Common School. In one of the very first pages, Jōkō jotted down with the blitheness and eagerness of a hopeful young teacher, "Education is my life-long calling," and "I want to [dedicate myself to Korea and] be buried in Korean soil."[16] In August 1922, after attending a teachers' workshop, Jōkō noted, "As I understand, [the Japanese settlers] have, merchants or bureaucrats or all alike, come [to Korea] to earn money. … Those who grew bigger thanks to Koreans, you are too arrogant. … Even teachers are like this.

Their dream is to save 10,000 yen, or whatever, and return home."[17] In the same entry, he wonders, "Is there any [among Japanese settlers] who wants to be buried in Korea? … How can Koreans treat Japanese as close friends, who are represented by those people showing no love for Koreans?"[18]

The diary offers a glimpse into Jōkō's various efforts to put his belief into action, including boarding with a Korean family, seriously considering marrying a Korean woman, and learning to read and speak Korean. In 1925 when he returned to his hometown Ōzu, he became acquainted with a young Korean man who confessed that he could not speak Korean fluently nor read Hangŭl at all. Jōkō told the Korean man, "You must not forget that you are Korean; your life will be meaningless if you don't understand the Korean language," and encouraged him to learn the language.[19] He also sought out other Japanese with similar passions. In 1926, he applied for membership in a Keijō-based Japanese organization called Seidōsha—in Jōkō's words, a movement by Japanese settlers in Korea "to become friends of Koreans," thinking: "I want to serve for Korea as much as I can and … know more and more about Korea."[20] In 1927, when he returned to Japan for the New Year's holidays, he wore *hanbok* clothing to show his friends and relatives his dedication to Korea and Koreans.[21]

However, Jōkō's early accounts also reveal that his passion and sense of responsibility to teach Koreans were founded on a sense of patronization to some degree. In one of his earliest entries, wondering what had made Koreans a lazy people—a prejudice widely and uncritically shared among Japanese settlers—he wrote, "Even though they [Koreans] are optimistic people, they must be suffering from their own laziness, or, many years of misrule [by the former Korean governments] might have made them this way. … The great responsibility of guiding them overwhelms me. They are sick. They suffer from an intoxication of gasping [sic], to which they have long developed immunity. It is impossible to make them separated from the disease immediately. Education should be able to make their future generation flawless."[22]

Jōkō's view on the nature of Korean people seems to have persisted well into his Yaro years. He attributed the village's poverty to the alleged laziness of Koreans. When the school janitor told him there was no charcoal to use the following day at school and that the village's charcoal merchant had not come because there was no charcoal available in the mountains, Jōkō wrote, "It didn't snow, so why didn't they burn charcoal? People in the mountains must be being lazy."[23]

It was sometime between late 1927 and mid-1928 that the recurring themes in Jōkō's diary entries underwent change. Jōkō's interest in the social ills overshadowing the lives of his pupils in poverty-stricken rural Korea moved to the foreground. This shift was in a way catalyzed by the failure of his first marriage, which brought closure to his preoccupation with personal issues amid a growing realization of the gaps between the ideals and realities of colonialism. His ready employment of socialist analyses and interpretations of social ills also helped to bring about this transformation.

The diary displays Jōkō's growing awareness of how landowner-tenant relations had strained rural Koreans' lives. He was now clearly convinced that the uneven distribution of wealth in rural Korea had roots in the socio-economic structure of rural Korean villages, replacing his earlier conviction that Koreans' lack of effort and laziness were responsible. He investigated landownership in his village and found that tenants were

practically unable to borrow money from public credit unions and were forced to rely on usurers, only to fall heavily in debt.[24]

Rural Korea from the mid-1920s to the 1930s experienced a high occurrence of tenant disputes. Right after Jōkō moved to Konmei, he taught a history class on the Taika Reforms. When he talked about the nationalization of landownership undertaken in the reforms, his students asked, "Can that be carried out today?" Jōkō subsequently noted in his diary, "This feeling was also shared by other students. … I can feel how strongly rural Korean children wish for that. [The problem of] the relationship between landowners and tenants is so deep that even children could recognize it. It has caused real sufferings."[25] He continued, "Everyone must be looking forward to the Taika Reforms, but there have been very few calls for it. This is because those in the position of educating people and those in the position of leadership do not acknowledge it even in the least."[26]

Meanwhile, Jōkō's interest in the potential of collective actions to bring changes to landownership in rural Korea grew. Upon reading *Akai mizuumi* (The Red Lake), a Japanese novel on tenant disputes in Hachirōgata, he asked, "Why doesn't it [tenant disputes] happen here? It should take place here. I must think more and more about this. I must study these problems more and more to be able to lead [such actions] from the front."[27] This suggested that Jōkō now saw Koreans as oppressed and as agents of change, an obvious contrast to his earlier perception of Koreans as subjects of his paternalistic gaze.

School Education's Role in Koreans' Lives

Tensions over the meaning of primary education surfaced in Yaro between Jōkō and his students. The diary records Jōkō's busy days as a schoolmaster responding to the rising interest in education in Korean society in the 1920s. He helped a student who wanted to transfer to a six-year common school because Yaro only provided four-year education and discussed student recruitment with fellow colleagues.[28] Many of his students were from middle class families who believed that better education should be provided for Koreans, so that more of them would be able to pursue careers as mid-level public servants, teachers, and police officers.[29] In fact, their opinions reflected changing social expectations toward Japanese rule among middle-class Koreans in the 1920s, the result of the "divide and rule" policy adopted by the Japanese colonial administration after 1919.

Jōkō's response to the growing expectation for education among Koreans was mixed. While he was busy recruiting prospective students and planning an expansion of the school on the one hand, he was critical of his students' anticipation on the other. Of their pursuing clerical work, to which colonial primary education was geared, he wrote, "They [students] are mistaken that they earn their living by just doing desk work. When I tell them to live on by using their hands, they only turn a deaf ear to me. My advice is of no use. This is a big problem for Korea."[30]

On the other hand, Jōkō also hoped education would help empower Korean children and provide more future options. He once came across a *Pusan Daily* article reporting that the majority of Korean common school students in rural areas did not wish to engage in agriculture due to the economic hardships it entailed. In response

to the author of the article who had criticized such students for failing to acknowledge the sanctity of agriculture, Jōkō wrote in his diary, "I wonder if it's right to teach students that farming is inviolable, that it's their only true vocation to inherit their parents' land and farm. Then they might just end up producing raw materials for urbanites and the bourgeoisie, or turning into tenant farmers. The outcome of education should be a lot more different from this, though. … I wonder how many people are truly worried about Korea. Not everyone has to farm. Make the most of the conditions given to you. If this helps everyone sufficiently, Korea will revive."[31)]

Eventually, Jōkō's expectation that education would empower Korean youths gave way to a disappointment that it did not help improve their lives. Diary entries written during Jōkō's Konmei Public Common school years include many references to social problems, namely springtime poverty, job shortages, and the lack of social mobility for Koreans living in rural areas. The diary reveals Jōkō's deepening worries about the difficulty many of his students encountered in finding work after graduating from common school.

> Received a letter from Pak Ch'unwŏn, for whom I helped find a job as mail deliveryman. [It reads:] "Sensei, thank you very much. I finally landed a job and am very happy. It is all thanks to your help. There is a common school in the village on my delivery route. Many children are playing cheerfully. When I see that, I feel saddened. Even one graduates from common school, he can't farm his family's tenanted land because there's no room for him to work, nor can he find any work in Korea, so he has no other option than migrating to *naichi* [Japan proper] to work. Of my job which I had great difficulty in finding, other parents spoke in my hearing, 'That deliveryman was educated at common school! I would never let my son become a deliveryman, even if I have to thrive on rice porridge.'" … Of the 30 students who graduated this year, one migrated to Japan Proper to become a farmhand; another got a job as a live-in craftsman because I beseeched the staffs for the job at the employment office in Pusan, and this Pak Ch'unwŏn, who became a postman. Only these three could manage to find work—how arrogant these parents were to talk like that? But, who is responsible for this?[32)]

Notes

1) Kajimura Hideki, "Shokuminchi Chōsen de no Nihonjin," in Kajimura Hideki Chosakushū Kankō Iinkai, ed., *Kajimura Hideki chosakushū, vol. 1: Chōsenshi to Nihonjin*, (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1992), 225.
2) Kajimura, "Shokuminchi Chōsen de no Nihonjin," 239; Sonobe Hiroyuki, "Zaichō Nihonjin no sanka shita kyōsanshugi undō," *Chōsenshi kenkyūkai ronbunshū* no. 26 (March 1989), 213–239.
3) Kajimura Hideki, "Shokuminchi to Nihonjin," in Kajimura Hideki Chosakushū Kankō Iinkai, ed., *Kajimura Hideki chosakushū, vol. 1: Chōsenshi to Nihonjin*, (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1992), 193; Takasaki Sōji, *Shokuminchi Chōsen no Nihonjin*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002).
4) Shindō Toyoo and Ikegami Chikaharu, *Zaichō Nihonjin kyōshi no tatakai no kiroku*, (Ōmuta, Japan: Jinken Minzoku Mondai Kenkyūkai, 1966); Jōkō Yonetarō, "Chōsen no shinkō kyōiku undō: Minzoku kyōiku no reimei o mezashite," in Ebihara Haruyoshi, ed., *Shōwa kyōikushi e no shōgen*, (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 1969); Jōkō Yonetarō, "Chōsen ni okeru shinkyō shikyoku junbi e no dan'atsu," in Inokawa Kiyoshi, et al., *Arashi no naka no kyōiku: 1930 nendai no kyōiku undō*, (Tokyo: Shin Nihon Shuppansha, 1971); Shindō Toyoo, *Zaichō Nihonjin kyōshi: Hanshokuminchi kyōiku undō no kiroku*, (Tokyo: Shiraishi Shoten,

1981).

5) For instance, Kimura Kenji, *Zaichō Nihonjin no shakaishi*, (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1989); Jun Uchida, "Brokers of Empire: Japanese and Korean Business Elites in Colonial Korea," in Caroline Elkins and Susan Pedersen, eds., *Settler Colonialism in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Routledge, 2005); Yi Sŭngyŏp, "San-ichi undōki ni okeru Chōsen zaijū Nihonjin shakai no taiō to dōkō," *Jinbun gakuhō* no. 92 (March 2005).
6) July 1922.
7) Jōkō Yonetarō, "Shunkyū no nōson kara: Shokuminchi Chōsen de no tatakai," in Ōtsuki Takeshi, et al., *Ibara no michi o fumikoete: Chian ijihō to kyōiku*, (Tokyo: Minshūsha, 1976), 45–46.
8) Ibid., 45.
9) February 15, 1925.
10) February 22, 1926.
11) The Government-General of Korea's gazette (*kanpō*), October 13, 1926.
12) *Shinkō kyōiku* no. 2 (October 1930), 59–60.
13) *Shinkō kyōiku* no. 3 (November 1930), 42.
14) Interview of Jōkō Machiko, September 5, 2008.
15) July 20, 1922.
16) July 21, 1922.
17) August 8, 1922.
18) August 8, 1922.
19) September 13, 1925.
20) June 8, 1926.
21) January 1927.
22) August 10, 1922.
23) February 22, 1925.
24) August 26, 1928, and September 1, 1928.
25) June 3, 1927.
26) June 3, 1927.
27) Ca. December 8, 1928.
28) January 31, 1935, and February 4, 1925.
29) Jōkō Yonetarō, "Chōsen no shinkō kyōiku undō," 75–76.
30) February 4, 1925.
31) June 14, 1925.
32) Jōkō Yonetarō, "Chōsen ni okeru shinkyō shikyoku junbi e no dan'atsu," 254–255.