

The Circumstances of the Korean Press under Japanese Ruling and the Formation of Discourse on Freedom of the Press in the 1920s

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This study examines what discourse was composed for freedom of the Korean press by analyzing related editorials concentrating on private newspapers and magazines published in the 1920s. After Imperial Japan altered its strategy for the governance of colonial Korea from Sward Rule to Cultural Rule, the publication of private Korean newspapers and magazines were allowed which had been strictly repressed. Newly rising Korean private newspapers were devoted themselves to the formation of discourse for expansion of freedom of press against the control by the Government General of Korea. Editorials of private newspapers and magazines in the 1920s criticized unreasonable control of Korean press carried out by the Government General of Korea. The contents of press-related editorials of Korean private newspapers in the 1920s can be divided into three categories: 1) Demands for freedom of the press; 2) Demands for an amendment of press-related laws such as the Newspaper Law and Publication Law, and; 3) Criticism and protest against administrative and judicial control. The amendment request of press-related laws and the criticism of the irrational administrative and judicial control led to the guarantee of freedom of press and formed the antagonistic discourse against the Government General of Korea which subdued the Korean press.

Key Words: Imperial Japan, press control in colonial Korea, Korean private newspapers and magazines in the 1920s, discourse for freedom of the press

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1. Introduction

Upon the annexation of Korea in 1910, Imperial Japan declared the “entire and permanent” control of Korea and set forth assimilation as its colonial policy. Generally, assimilation as the colonial policy of imperialism is what France pursued as a mission of so-called “civilization” of a colony and was a direct government policy, in which the same bureaucratic organization and laws of France were applied to its colonies. Yet, while Imperial Japan insisted on assimilation, it never applied the same set of rules in Japan and Korea (Lee, 2004). Furthermore, in order to curb dissension during its colonial rule in Korea, Imperial Japan professed Sward Rule policy and obliterated the nationalistic media of Korea.

However, this oppressive policy could not be continued due to the outbreak of March 1st Movement of 1919. When the nonviolent movement spread nationally, the imperialist government needed to revamp its ruling policy. Thus, Japan switched from Sward Rule to the Cultural Rule strategy, which was not an alteration of the nature of colonial rule, but was intended to paralyze the spirit of independence and to disunite the national movements.

The permission of private newspapers to be printed is one of the significant changes caused by the execution of the Cultural Rule. During this Cultural Rule period, Koreans were granted freedom of expression, publication, assembly and association, all of which had been strictly repressed in the 1910s, and the establishment of three Korean newspapers — the *Chosun*, *Dong-A* and *Sisa* newspapers — was allowed, followed by the founding of several Korean magazines. This means not just freedom of the press, but the generation of a sphere where new knowledge and power could be created through the formation of new discourse.

According to Carabine (2001), Foucault regarded discourse as the ways that an issue or topic is 'spoken of,' through such things as speech, texts, writing and practice. For Foucault, discourses are productive because they produce the objects of which they speak. Discourses are also productive in that they have power outcomes or effects. They define and establish what 'truth' is at particular moments. Foucault firmly claimed that power is organized from discourse. Fairclough (1992) also asserted that new discourse is articulated, dislocated and re-articulated according to conflicting social subjects and the consequence of the struggle of hegemony. With the argument of Fairclough, the assertion of Foucault has implications for examining the change of media discourse by the introduction of private newspaper in the 1920s. The induction of private newspaper led to the advent of new discursive subjects and the formation of a new power relationship.

Such shaping of discursive struggle was directed towards the securing sphere of discourse, which means the acquisition of freedom of the press in the point of the 1920s where the subjects of new discourse had just built up. Although the Government General of Korea permitted private newspapers, it did not want the Korean media to construct discourse that would threaten Japanese rule over Korea. Cultural Rule was introduced not to benefit the Korean people but to stabilize the Japanese domination by subduing the resistant spirit embodied in the March 1st Movement. Thus, the Government General of Korea retained all the legislation for press control which had already been applied in the 1910s, and suppressed the Korean press by taking administrative and judicial control.

As a result, newly rising Korean private newspapers devoted themselves to the formation of discourse for expansion of freedom of the press against the control of the Government General of Korea. Based on the above discussion, this study examines what discourse was composed of for

freedom of the press in the 1920s through an analysis of 66 editorials and articles relating to press control published in the main private newspapers and magazines. 57 editorials from the *Chosun Ilbo* and *Dong-A Ilbo* and nine articles from various magazines such as *Gaebuik*, *Chosunjikwang*, and *Hyundaepyungron* were collected. This study gathered all editorials in which the topic directly related to the press in the *Chosun Ilbo* and *Dong-A Ilbo* from 1920 to 1929.

This study will begin by introducing the historical context of shaping new subjects of discourse and will follow that with an examination of press control of the Korean press by Imperial Japan.

2. The Situation of Korean Press in the 1920s

1) The Advent of Private Newspaper in the 1920s

A newly appointed Governor General, Saito Makoto(齊藤實), permitted the publication of private newspapers through the official instruction. “The press, publication and assembly,” Makoto explained, “should be approved for the promotion of the people’s will, unless this approval harms the social order and the protection of public peace.” Hasegawa(長谷川好道), the Governor General of the Sward Rule period, also stated that the repression of the press and assembly was a bit excessive and that the permission to publish two or three newspapers was needed for the integration of the people’s mind and the promotion of colonial policies (Choi & M. J. Kim, 1978). Due to the spread of the underground press after the March First Movement, it was also necessary for Imperial Japan to disclose this underground press.

Therefore, Imperial Japan changed the policy that had for 10 years prohibited Korean private newspapers and permitted three daily newspapers and several magazines by way of the Newspaper Law. So in 1920, the *Chosun Ilbo* (March 5th), *Dong-A Ilbo* (April 1st), and the *Sisa Sinmun* (April 1st) were published for the first time (M. H. Kim, 1996).

As for magazines, *Gaebuik*(開關) was first issued in June 1920 and *Sinsaenghwal*(新生活), *Sinchunji*(新天地), and *Chosunjikwang*(朝鮮之光) were published in 1922 as a result of the new Newspaper Law. *Dongmyong*(東明), permitted as a weekly magazine in 1922, was renamed *Sidae Ilbo* and became a daily newspaper in succession to *Sisa Sinmun*. Among these magazines, *Sinsaenghwal* and *Sinchunji* could not be continued due to the indictment of writing incidents and only *Gaebuik* was issued until 1926. Eventually, the *Chosun Ilbo*, *Dong-A Ilbo* and *Sidae Ilbo* as private newspapers and the *Maeil Sinbo*, the organ of Government General of Korea, were published under the ruling of Imperial Japan (Jeong, 1983). The following is the circulation of these newspapers in 1929.

For colonial Korea, the advent of private newspapers and magazines had important meaning in that the possibility of making discourse, which was monopolized by the Government General of Korea by means of the government organ *Maeil Sinbo*, was open to Koreans.

<Table 1> The Circulation of Korean Newspapers in 1929 (Reorganized from Jeong (1983, p. 136)

Circulation (1929)	<i>Dong-A</i>	<i>Chosun Ilbo</i>	<i>Maeil Sinbo</i>
Korean	30,408	21,221	21,860
Foreigners	364	256	426
International	7,030	2,009	747
Total	37,802	23,486	23,033

2) The control of the Korean press by Imperial Japan

Although authorizing private newspapers and magazines, Imperial Japan ceased most publications and set the systematic device of pre- and post-censorship for repressing the arguments of the Korean press. Korean private newspapers were seized, suspended and prohibited as a result of this control. In other words, Korean newspapers were permitted in the hope of promoting the so-called cultural governance but were also strictly controlled, since the Japanese government did not want them to form new discourse or emerge as a new discursive power which in turn might threaten its colonial rule.

The regulation of the press was largely carried out in two types of measures: 1) administrative dispositions against the newspaper itself in the form of such punitive actions as release bans, seizures, suspension and closure, and; 2) judicial dispositions against involved journalists in the form of such measures as fines and suspensions (J. S. Jeong, 1975). The Government General of Korea prepared wide and detailed internal guidelines along with the standards and criteria of newspaper censorship, and accordingly took administrative measures.¹⁾ The number of seizure orders issued in the 1920s is shown in the following table.²⁾

As mentioned above, Imperial Japan restricted and controlled newspapers by taking such administrative measures as seizure. The number of seizure orders increased until mid-1920s but began to dwindle after 1925. Although data about the *Maeil Sinbo* before 1926 is not available, the number of seizure orders shows a big difference between nationalist Korean

1) Specifics of the internal guidelines can be found in 鈴木敬夫 (1988) and J. H. Kim (1975).

2) Data for suspension and ban are left out here due to space limit. They can be found in J. S. Jeong (1975).

<Table 2> The number of seizure orders against newspapers in the 1920s
(recomposed from Jeong (1975, pp. 61-62))

Year	<i>Dong-A</i>	<i>Chosun</i>	<i>Jung Woi</i>	<i>Maeil</i>	Total	Remark
1920	16	24			40	
1921	15	23			38	
1922	15	12			27	
1923	14	20			34	
1924	56	48	49		153	Establishment of <i>Sidae</i> , predecessor of <i>Jungwoi</i>
1925	57	56	38		151	
1926	33	53	26	3	115	Data for <i>Maeil</i> unavailable before 1926
1927	44	54	38	3	139	
1928	26	21	26	3	76	
1929	28	21	25	4	78	

newspapers and the *Maeil Sinbo*, which had become the official bulletin of the Government General. This illustrates that Japan used administrative measures as a way to control nationalist newspapers.³⁾

Also, Japan was able to control the press through suspension, which entailed discontinuing the issuing of a newspaper or magazine for a certain period of time. The numbers of ban/suspension orders against newspapers and magazines are shown in the <Table 3>. For instance, the Government General of Korea suspended the *Dong-A Ilbo* four times for a total of 569 days, the *Chosun Ilbo* four times for a total of 240 days, and the *Jungwoi Ilbo* once for 42 days (M. H. Kim, 1996). Eventually, the *Jungwoi Ilbo* was closed down completely.

Prohibition was a disposition of discontinuing a newspaper or a magazine

3) Notable studies on the administrative dispositions for press control have been done by J. S. Jeong (1975) and J. H. Kim (1975).

<Table 3> Number of suspension/ban against newspapers and magazines in the 1920s (recomposed from G. S. Kim (1974))

	1920	1921~1923	1924~1925	1926	1927~1928
<i>Chosun Ilbo</i>	Suspension 2		Suspension 1		Suspension 1
<i>Dong-A Ilbo</i>	Suspension 1			Suspension 1	
<i>JungWoi Ilbo</i>					Suspension 1
<i>Sinsaenghwal</i>		Suspension 1			
<i>Gaebuik</i>			Prohibition 1	Prohibition 1	
Total	3	1	2	1	2

and a more severe way of administrative actions against the newspaper. The Government General of Korea likewise arranged the prohibition of *Sinsaenghwal* and *Gaebuik*. In the case of *Gaebuik*, it was suspended in 1925 and then prohibited in August 1st, 1926 for allegedly interfering with public peace and order. The Government General of Korea ordered suspension and prohibition more harshly during the mid-1920s, which is similar to <Table 2>.

The first case of judicial dispositions was the penalty given to *Gaebuik*, which was first published on December 1st, 1920. Based on an analysis of the editorials, the chief editor of *Sinchunji*, Baik Dae-Jin, and the sales manager and typographer, Jang Jae-Huip, were accused on November 20th, 1922. Baik Dae-Jin was prosecuted for writing <An Announcement to Japanese Politicians> and causing disorder of the constitution, and was thereafter sentenced to six months of prison labor. On November 22nd, 1922, the president of *Sinsaenghwal*, Park Hee-Do and the typographer, Noh Ki-Jung were imprisoned for publishing a special edition on the Russian Revolution. The Government General of Korea ordered the discontinuance of *Sinsaenghwal* on January 8th, 1923.

3. Analysis of Editorials of Korean Private Newspapers and Magazine in the 1920s

Administrative and judicial dispositions against Korean private newspapers and magazines provoked reactions from the Korean press. They resisted this 'severe' regulation of the press by arguing it in their editorials and trying to form discourse on freedom of the press. Most editorials of the *Dong-A Ilbo* and *Chosun Ilbo* in the 1920s mentioned the severe and unreasonable press control carried out by the Government General of Korea. The greater part of editorials and articles were found in the first half of the 1920s, and particularly 32 editorials were published between 1923 and 1925, which is consistent with tables presented above. The number of editorials and administrative dispositions decreased in the late 1920s, and this was linked to the tightened press control due to the systematization of Japan's publication police (Choi & Jung, 2006) and the change in tone of the Korean press into pro-Japanese which was caused by the reinforcement of press repression and the commercialized press.⁴⁾

The contents of press-related editorials of the Korean private newspapers in the 1920s can be divided into three categories: 1) demands for freedom of the press; 2) demands for an amendment of press-related laws such as the Newspaper Law and Publication Law, and; 3) criticism and protest against administrative and judicial control.

4) According to Dachida (立田清辰, 1930) who was a head of the Book Department in Government General of Korea, the Korean press was improved and became moderate since the Gwangju Students' Incident in 1929. He also mentioned the caution and warning against the Korean press diminished as a result of this trend.

1) Demands for Freedom of the Press

Most of the editorials covering freedom of the press denounced the unjustifiable press control carried out by the Government General of Korea. These editorials fundamentally asserted that freedom of the press should be guaranteed for the progress of society. This justification of freedom of the press was stated in almost every single editorial. One editorial stating that there “could be different levels of development for society, but the press should be exist for people to maintain social life” (*Dong-A Ilbo*, August 4th, 1925 <Social Movement and Organs of the Expression>) and another talking about “the need for freedom of the press for rational social life and the progress of society” (*Chosun Ilbo*, June 14th, 1925 <Amendment of Newspaper Law>) were prime examples of this type of print criticism. Specifically, a *Dong-A Ilbo* editorial from June 10th, 1924 entitled <Resistance and Effect> said:

Society has possibilities of development. The instructor of development is ideology, and humans have a mind for improvement. Improvement needs ideology. From this point, the repression on the press and assembly is repression on ideology, and the repression on ideology is oppression on social development and human improvement.

In November 1925, the magazine *Keumji* also expressed a similar argument, stating that the progress of society existed on the freedom of ideology.

The justification of freedom of the press was connected to the censure of the Government General of Korea due to its oppressive press control. A *Chosun Ilbo* editorial entitled <The Freedom of Press> from December 2nd, 1920 demanded freedom of the press, stating that “due to 20 times seizure, suspension for a week and another suspension for an indefinite period, we

could not publish our newspaper for hundreds of days.”

The emphasis on the Cultural Rule was another ground for demanding press freedom. The *Dong-A Ilbo* discussed the difference between Cultural Rule and Sward Rule in the editorial, <Respect the Freedom of the Press, Difference between Sward and Culture> (January 26th, 1925):

What is the difference between Sward and Culture? According to our interpretation, the nature of Sward Rule is to subdue the freedom of the public and to compel obedience, whereas the main feature of Cultural Rule is to guarantee the freedom and to respect the intention of the public. ... Subjugating the freedom and coercing obedience under the name of Cultural Rule would be a mockery or, otherwise, a form of deception.

This editorial insisted that because “distinction between culture and sward is based on the guarantee of freedom of ideology, it is deceptive not to permit freedom of expression under the name of Cultural Rule.”

Editorials pushing for freedom of the press also criticized the press-related laws that applied specifically to oppress the press. An editorial of the *Chosun Ilbo* entitled <Press and Freedom> from December 15th, 1929 asserted that many press-related laws existed primarily for control of the Korean press. According to this editorial, not only the Publication Law and Newspaper Law but also the Security Law and the Peace Preservation Law were applied largely to press control. The commentary on unreasonable oppression through such laws has the same context as the next category, the amendment request on press-related law.

Meanwhile the recognition of heavy press control brought about the resolution of the so-called “Rally for Impeachment of Press Oppression.” Although this rally was unable to be carried out due to its prohibition by the Government General of Korea, it nevertheless represented the awareness of the crisis of the press situation at that time. (*Dong-A Ilbo*, June 10th,

1924 <Resistance and Effect> and June 22nd, <Prohibition of Accusation Rally>)

On the other hand, private newspapers arguing in favor of freedom of the press seemed to be in stark contrast to the perspectives being put forth in the *Maeil Sinbo*, the organ of the Government General of Korea, which rationalized press control based on the immaturity of the Korean press. For example, a *Maeil Sinbo* editorial entitled <Constructivity of the Press> from April 25th, 1925 justified the absence of the press freedom in Korea by stating that “*even though freedom of the press is the request of cultural necessity, it is possible only with strong responsibility and self-control.*” In other words, the Korean press could not have freedom of the press because it had no capability of ‘self-government’.

The difference of argument between the *Maeil Sinbo* and the Korean private newspapers reveals that discursive subjects formed discourses advocating their own standpoints.

2) The Amendment Request on Press-related Law

Demands for guaranteeing freedom of the press were necessarily linked to the amendment request on press-related laws which were the main grounds for repressing the Korean press. The focus of discussion related to this amendment was primarily on the Newspaper Law and the Publication Law. *Dong-A Ilbo* editorial, <A Suggestion on the Amendment of the Publication Law and the Newspaper Law in Korea, Keeping Abreast of the Times, Abolition of Discrimination> on March 24th, 1923 disputed the amendment of press-related laws in detail:

Two days ago, every publisher in Kyungseong (京城) city gathered and discussed the amendment of Korea’s current Publication Law and Newspaper

Law. After the discussion, they made a recommendation of the amendment clauses to the authorities The following are the amendment clauses.

- . Abolition of the discriminative law application to Japanese and Korean with regard to the current Korean Publication Law
- . Application of the Subscript Publication Law to Korean
- . Establishment of Copyright Registration Law
- . Amendment of Newspaper Law

According to this editorial, the Publication Law and the Newspaper Law were irrelevant to the realities of Korean life, since those had been enacted a long time before and had been applied to the discrimination of the Korean people. The Subscript Publication Law and Copyright Registration Law were applied discriminatively, but only to Japanese. The editorial asserted that this discrimination especially contradicted the colonial policy of 'Universal Benevolence (一視同仁主義),' which had been set by Japan.

The *Chosun Ilbo* cited a similar reason and asked for the amendment of press-related laws (*Chosun Ilb*, March 21st, 1925, <About Amendment of the Newspaper Law and the Publication Law>):

Since the current Korean Newspaper Law and Publication Law were enacted in the last Period of Chosun Dynasty, they can't keep abreast of the times. This is why these laws need to be amended. More importantly, these laws apply to Japanese and Koreans discriminatively We therefore demand that the license system, censorship, the distinction between laws applied to Japanese and Koreans and the excessive administrative control should be abrogated concerning the amendment of current Newspaper Law and Publication Law.

This editorial particularly focused on the removal of the "license system", "censorship", "discriminative laws against the Koreans" and "administrative control" with regard to the amendment of related laws, which shows the contents of laws applied to the press control during that period. The

following is an examination of how these laws were applied to the control of Korean private newspapers and magazines through administrative and judicial dispositions.

3) Administrative and Judicial Dispositions of the Korean Press

We have already examined the administrative and judicial dispositions of the private newspapers and magazines in the first part of this analysis. To analyze a specific example, let us begin with the case of *Gaebuik* as written about in an editorial of the *Dong-A Ilbo* from September 2nd, 1922 entitled <Frequent indictment of the writing of *Gaebuik*>:

Looking at the attitude and treatment of the Government General of Korea, this magazine, from its beginning till its 27th volume, had nine episodes of seizure, one episode of judicial penalty and an expurgate edition. Nine volumes are 1/3 of its total publications and 11 volumes are about half of its total publications. How can we say such severe treatment is an example of a tolerant government which guarantees the freedom of the press

According to this editorial, *Gaebuik* suffered the seizure of 1/3 to 1/2 of its total publications as a result of the administrative dispositions. The editorial also stated the reason for the seizure of the 27th volume, which was a disturbance of the public peace by way of ‘providing information about Koreans abroad’. This reason reveals the unjustifiable degree of press control.

Both cases of *Sinchunji* and *Sinsaenghwal* which appeared in a *Dong-A Ilbo* editorial on November 26th, 1922 entitled <The Indictment of Press, *Sinchunji* and *Sinsaenghwal* Incidents> were other examples of the frequent indictment of press writing. In these cases, the indictment of writing caused not only the punishment of the person concerned, but also a house

investigation and the seizure of the printing machine. Moreover, the reasons suggested for these actions in this editorial were the “inspiration of independence spirit” and for promoting “Red propaganda.” The editorial also mentioned that there was some suspicion about the reasons of these dispositions and insisted on clearing up any doubts by way of a fair solution. The writing indictment of *Sinchunji* and *Sinsaenghwal* revealed the Government General of Korea’s intention to eliminate independence movement and the widely ever-spreading wake of Communism at the same time. Particularly, the fact that *Sinchunji* was indicted although it did not directly insist or advocate independence showed not only actions but insinuations or propaganda would not be tolerated by the Government General of Korea. Also, this demonstrated that people could be punished by the interpretation of the Government General of Korea (S. Jang, 2004)

Sinsaenghwal was seized again on December 17th, 1922. The *Dong-A Ilbo* editorial, <Let Governor Saito know about the relationship of the Press and Life, *Sinsaenghwal* and Seizure> talked about the seizure of *Sinsaenghwal* Vol. 14 and the custody of its four executive members. The reason for the seizure remained ambiguous, but it was presumed that *Sinsaenghwal* intended to propagandize socialism and inspire independence spirit. The editorial criticized the Japanese government, saying “to control the press without considering the real life and social conditions of Korea is not the fundamental solution.”

Regardless of the criticism, the publication of *Sinsaenghwal* was eventually prohibited (*Dong-A Ilbo*, January 11th, 1923 <Suppression of *Sinsaenghwal*, Conflict between Principles>).

Administrative control of the Korean press was continued with the suspension of *Gaebuik* in 1925. On August 4th, 1925, the *Dong-A Ilbo* editorial, <Social Movement and Organs of the expression, Suspension of *Gaebuik* and Advent of Social Symbol> stated that it was autocracy to

ignore and coerce the press, and it evaluated the suspension of *Gaebuik* as despotism of authorities neglecting the real life of Koreans. It deplored the situation of Korea in that nobody could protest the suspension of its only magazine, *Gaebuik*. The editorial of the *Chosun Ilbo* also censured this suspension and strongly criticized the ‘irrational license system’ and “severe censorship of Imperial Japan” (*Chosun Ilbo*, August 3rd, 1925, <About the Suspension of *Gaebuik*>).

Private newspapers were no exceptions for such administrative dispositions. On September 10th, 1925, the *Dong-A Ilbo* editorial criticized the suspension of *Chosun Ilbo* ‘immediately after’ the suspension of *Gaebuik*. This editorial stated that these suspensions represented the harshness of the press policy of Imperial Japan and condemned the Government General of Korea for its autocracy. It asserted that since the press is a reflection of society, then it is free from fault. Moreover, it made cynical remarks on Cultural Rule by stating that it is “Cultural Oppression Rule rather than Cultural Rule if Imperial Japan continues to repress the whole press.”

Again on March 6th, 1926, the *Dong-A Ilbo* was suspended for publishing a whole essay from the International Agrarian Council, which was located in Moscow. On March 8th, the *Chosun Ilbo* commented that this treatment meant the repression of the Korean press and criticized the “prohibitivism” of the Government General of Korea in the editorial <Suspension of *Dong-A Ilbo*, The Extreme Repression on the Media>.

The last editorial to be examined here is from the *Chosun Ilbo*, <Suspension of *Jungwae Ilbo*>, from December 8th, 1928. This editorial, which represented the example of “a brick newspaper,” mentioned the situation of the Korean press as indicated below:

As ideology progresses, the regime should follow. However, the Publication

Law and Newspaper Law that were enacted in 1907 still remain and are still applied to Korea these days. Then, is Korean society the same society that it was back in 1907, without any progress having been made? (One line was expurgated.) The control of ideology was so rigorous that the intervention of assembly and the repression of media were much more severe than in the old days. (Six lines were expurgated.) Indictment of writing incidents happened one after the other. Among those, suspension cases have already happened twice this year. Even if there must have been some reasons, the number of cases was enough to astonish the public.

This editorial specifically described the severity of press control at that time. The *Jungwoi Ilbo* had ceased publication after all.

4. Conclusion

As examined so far, most press-related editorials of Korean private newspapers and magazines in the 1920s contained criticism for the unreasonable and rigorous control of the Korean press which was carried out by the Government General of Korea. They strongly denounced the Government General of Korea for the control of the Korean press, accusing it of autocracy and 'Cultural Oppression Rule'. This means that the Korean private newspapers and magazines which were newly emerging as a new discursive subject unfolded a discourse struggle for the extension of press freedom. This is revealed more obviously in comparison with the editorials of the *Maeil Sinbo*, the organ of the Government General of Korea. Although the private newspapers and magazines were allowed under Cultural Rule, they were at the same time strongly controlled and restricted via press-related laws and administrative dispositions. These laws and dispositions were especially applied to the case of interfering with public security by such ways as "inspiration of the independence movement" and

“propaganda of socialism.” Moreover, the standards of application were so ambiguous that they were able to be applied widely. The laws related to the press control, referred to in editorials, were the Newspaper Law and Publication Law, which had been enacted in the final days of the Chosun Dynasty and whose content did not change under Sward Rule or Cultural Rule. The Korean press thus argued against this and insisted on the amendment of these laws. Among the contents of these laws, the “license system” and “censorship” were especially the objects of criticism.

On the other hand, the administrative and judicial control of private newspapers and magazines were conducted frequently and severely, so that in case of *Gaebuik*, half of the publications became the object of control. About this frequent control, the private newspapers condemned the Government General of Korea for its unreasonable treatment of the media and the people.

The amendment request of press-related laws and the criticism of the irrational administrative and judicial control led to the guarantee of freedom of the press, and became the antagonistic discourse against the Government General of Korea which subdued the Korean press in the 1920s. In conclusion, in spite of permitting the Korean private press to ease the atmosphere of the March 1st Movement, Imperial Japan still tried to control the newly shaped discursive sphere. And against this control, the Korean private press was making discourse by censuring the unreasonable control of Imperial Japan.

The discourse on freedom of the press formed by Korean private newspapers and magazines during the 1920s was distinguished from that of the 1910s and 1930s. As the Government General of Korea obliterated the nationalistic press of Korea after annexation, discourse on freedom of the press could not be formed in the 1910s. And in the 1930s, due to the commercialization of the Korean private newspapers and tightened press

control by the Government General of Korea, the tone of the Korean press converted from antagonistic to pro-Japanese (Jang, 2005).

This study is significant in that it analyzed the contents of press-related editorials and articles published in Korean private newspapers and magazines to examine what discourse was composed in order to resist the press control carried out by the Government General of Korea. This can contribute to discussions about the Korean press under Japanese ruling.

Nonetheless, this study should be supplemented by more comprehensive concerns about the Korean press which review such circumstances as the management of the Korea press and policy of the Government General of Korea. General social conditions related to the Koreans should also be taken into consideration.

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